Sociology of Education Section Newsletter
Volume 14 >> Number 1 >> Spring 2011

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A Note from Chandra Muller, Chair

Please take a moment our of your busy end-of-the-term Spring schedule to read this awesome SOE newsletter. You will be glad that you did. Thank you to Anne McDaniel, our outgoing newsletter editor, for the fabulous newsletters that she's contributed to our section and to April Sutton, our incoming newsletter editor, for a seamless transition. In this newsletter, we have an article by Josipa Roska on her new book that is getting well-deserved attention. It's provocative and timely. Brian Gillespie reports on words of wisdom from George Farkas. And Maureen Hallinan shares thoughtful insights in the "It Should Have Been a Classic." These contributions are much appreciated.

We also have an abridged list of the Sociology of Education section sessions at ASA—in Las Vegas this year! Oh come on, it will be fun. The complete program will be announced later this month but you can get a sneak peak in the newsletter. Thanks so much to Catherine Riegle-Crumb, Bill Carbonaro, Keith Robinson, and Hyunjoon Park for organizing a great program. The Sociology of Education section day is Monday, August 22. Most sessions will be held on Monday, with a few sessions on Tuesday the 23rd. The section reception and dinner will be held Monday evening, beginning at 6:30 pm. The business meeting will be held after the roundtables on Monday. Please attend. We have invited several guests to the business meeting talk about funding opportunities and because we are shameless when it comes to trying to encourage member involvement, there will be door prizes and opportunities to volunteer.

Our section has an active and devoted membership. In the spirit of maintaining it, please encourage your colleagues to join. Faculty section members, please consider sponsoring your students' section memberships. It is a great gift. To further recognize the value of our early career colleagues, the section newsletter will launch a new column featuring short profiles of advanced graduate students and post-doctoral scholars. If you would like to nominate someone (self-nominations are fine) please submit a brief profile (250 words, max) to April Sutton (aprilsutton@mail.utexas.edu).

And finally, please remember to vote in the section elections. Ballots will be distributed later this month. We have a wealth of talent in our section. Thank you to our members who were generous enough to run for office. And, thank you to Irenee Beattie, chair of the nominations committee, and to committee members Mark Berends, Pat Rubio Goldsmith, Lori Dianne Hill, and Elizabeth Sterns for compiling such a terrific slate of candidates.

Hope you have an enjoyable completion of Spring term, and I look forward to seeing you in August.

Chandra

The State of Higher Education: How Little Students Learn and How Little We Know About It

by Josipa Roksa

Josipa Roksa is an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Virginia (UVA), with a courtesy appointment in the Curry School of Education. She is also a Fellow of the National Forum on the Future of Liberal Education. Richard Arum is professor in the Department of Sociology with a joint appointment in the Steinhardt School of Education at New York University (NYU). He is also director of the Education Research Program of the Social Science Research Council. They are co-authors of ***Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses*** *(University of Chicago Press, 2011) and can be reached at* ***jroksa@virginia.edu*** *and* ***richard.arum@nyu.edu****.*

One of the cherished traditions in sociology of education is the study of academic achievement, assessed through objective measures of students' skills in math, English, science, and other areas. Sociologists have studied differences in academic achievement across tracks and school types, and have dedicated themselves to understanding socioeconomic and racial/ethnic gaps in achievement and the extent to which those gaps reflect family and/or school contexts. With research on seasonal learning and advancement in multilevel statistical models, sociologists have developed ever more sophisticated accounts of the predictors of academic achievement in K-12 education.

What about higher education? How much are students improving their generic skills during college, such as critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing, which are often considered the hallmark of higher education? When asked, students report that they are making notable gains in these skills, and they may conclude that in part from the high grades that they are getting. Historical record, however, places doubt on grades as a useful indicator of learning. As Philip Babcock and Mindy Marks recently demonstrated, the amount of time full-time college students spend studying decreased by approximately 50 percent since the 1960s. At the same time, students' grade expectations increased. HERI surveys indicate that the proportion of students who expect to have a B average or higher more than doubled from 1970s to today (Pryor et al. 2010). And in our own study, seniors who spent five or fewer hours studying alone had an impressive 3.16 GPA.

Without grades to rely on, researchers need a different strategy for assessing students' skills in higher education. We followed several thousand traditional-age students as they progressed through higher education from the Fall of 2005, the beginning of their freshman year, through Spring of 2007, the end of their sophomore year, and finally to the Spring of 2009, the end of their senior year. Students in the study attended a wide range of four-year colleges and universities that on demographic and academic preparation measures are largely representative of four-year institutions across the nation. In addition to completing surveys about their high school and college experiences, students took the Collegiate Learning

Assessment (CLA), an objective measure of generic skills, including critical thinking, complex reasoning and writing (see http://www.collegiatelearningassessment.org). The first two years of our findings are reported in *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses*.

Our findings reveal a set of conditions suggesting that something is seriously amiss in higher education. Large numbers of four-year college students experience only limited academic demands, invest only modest levels of effort, and demonstrate limited or no growth on CLA. Fifty percent of sophomores in our sample reported that they had not taken a single course the prior semester that required more than twenty pages of writing over the course of the semester; one-third did not take a single course the prior semester that required on average even more than 40 pages of reading per week. Students in our sample reported studying on average only 12 hours per week during their sophomore year, one third of which was spent studying with peers. Even more alarming, 37 percent dedicated five or fewer hours per week to studying alone. These patterns persisted through the senior year and are broadly consistent with findings on academic engagement from the National Survey of Student Engagement.

Given the limited academic engagement shown by many students, it is not surprising that we find that gains in student performance are disturbingly low. Average gains in critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing skills are either exceedingly small or empirically non-existent for a large proportion of students. On average, students improved their performance on the CLA by only 0.18 standard deviations over the first two years of college and 0.47 standard deviations over the full four years of college. Moreover, if one were to report descriptively the number of students showing little or no gains, at least forty-five percent of students did not demonstrate any significant improvement in learning, as measured by CLA performance, during their first two years of college (i.e., these students gained less than 8.5 points – or 0.04 standard deviations—on the CLA measure that ranged over one thousand points in our data). And thirty-six percent demonstrated no significant gains on the CLA over the whole four years of college.

Of particular interest to sociologists of education may be our findings that higher education is characterized by persisting and/or growing inequality. There are significant differences in critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing skills across students from different family backgrounds and racial/ethnic groups. Students who come from families with different levels of parental education enter college with different levels of performance but learn at approximately equivalent rates while attending four-year colleges and universities, revealing a pattern of persisting inequality. Black-white gaps in student test score performance, however, increase in magnitude over four years of college. African American students not only enter college with lower CLA scores than their white counterparts, they also improve their CLA performance less than white students during four years of college. These findings of persisting and/or growing inequality in test score performance are consistent with research on K-12 education. While we have spent decades studying these patterns in K-12, they remain largely unexplored in higher education.

Where do we go from here? In our work, we raise the issue of better aligning institutional incentives with academic rigor in higher education. Recent decades have seen an increasing shift toward treating students (and their parents) as clients and consumers, hiring staff to attend to students' numerous social and developmental needs, focusing on research productivity across a wide range of institutional types, and keeping students enrolled and graduating, without due consideration of what they are learning during their years in college. Halting, and indeed reversing, these trends for policy makers and practitioners will be no small task.

A less ambitious and perhaps more pertinent task for scholars of education is to gather more and better data on how much students are improving different types of skills in higher education, including generic skills, such as critical thinking, complex reasoning and writing. While individual researchers can make small dents in this endeavor, the federal government has the necessary infrastructure to collect this data on a large scale and make it available to the larger social science research community. The federal government has been collecting and disseminating data on student academic achievement for decades on representative random national samples of elementary and secondary school students. However, once students finish high school, objective measures of their skills disappear from nationally representative datasets. It is a significant obstacle to the advancement of the field that such information has not been made available for social science and educational researchers to explore individual and institutional factors associated with improved performance of students in colleges and universities. In terms of federal expenditures on higher education, it would take a relatively modest outlay (likely on the order of $10-15 million) to provide the necessary resources for the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) to embed longitudinal measures of student performance while they track individuals as they progress through college. A strategic opportunity presents itself in the current study NCES is conducting that is already tracking students through high school and into college: the High School Longitudinal Study (HSLS:09). Join us in urging the NCES to collect and disseminate longitudinal data from a national random sample of students that would track student performance to advance research knowledge and improve understanding of student learning in higher education.

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Pryor, John H., Sylvia Hurtado, Linda DeAngelo, Laura Palucki Blake, and Serge Tran. 2010. *The American Freshman: National Norms Fall 2010.* Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA.

Five Questions to … George Farkas

by Brian Joseph Gillespie

George Farkas is Professor of Education and (by courtesy) Sociology at the University of California, Irvine, where he has been since 2008. He received his Ph.D. in Sociology at Cornell (1973), and served on the sociology faculties of Yale, the University of Texas at Dallas, and Penn State. He was also employed by Abt Associates. His research centers on educational inequality and how it can be reduced. He is author or editor of four books and 62 articles in peer reviewed journals. In the 1990s he developed Reading One-to-One, a paraprofessional tutoring program that helped invent President Clinton's America Reads initiative. He has served on the editorial board of the American Sociological Review and other publications and as Editor of the Rose Monograph Series of the ASA. He is a past president of the Sociological Research Association and a Fellow of the American Educational Research Association

Brian Gillespie is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Irvine. His research interests center on the formation of adolescent educational aspirations, educational inequalities, and the effects of residential mobility on educational outcomes.

You have been studying issues regarding educational inequality for nearly 30 years. What are some areas you think haven't received any or enough attention by sociologists of education?

Both the sociology of education and K – 12 schools would benefit from a comprehensive analysis of the *cultural and social structural* conditions necessary for policies and interventions to succeed. More of us should get involved in designing, evaluating, and implementing interventions to improve schooling outcomes, particularly those for disadvantaged students. Such intervention research provides the opportunity to engage in public sociology while moving basic social science forward – the two need not conflict. Indeed, doing so successfully will require that we dig deeper to understand topics near the heart of our interests – including student and teacher motivation, student skill development, and peer group effects. Personally, I found that the effort to master the reading research field and to create a paraprofessional tutoring program (*Reading One-to-One* that helped create President Clinton's *America Reads*) operating as a pullout during school hours taught me much about teachers, administrators, and students that would have been difficult to learn any other way. More generally, sociological understanding of the educational enterprise would be enriched by the study of programs and policies as heterogeneous as Head Start, Success for All, Reading Recovery, Title I, Moving to Opportunity, busing, reduced class size, teacher professional development, teacher pay for "value-added," direct instruction, constructivist instruction, de-tracking experiments, career academies, financial incentives for student performance, laptops in schools, KIPP-type schools, policies to close "failing" schools, voucher programs and Pell grants. Some of these have been more successful than others. Surprisingly, sociologists have been slow to

address these topics. We should be asking questions such as: Are the financial incentive experiments of Roland Fryer (2010) affected by student cultures? By what mechanisms do KIPP schools achieve their positive effects for low-income and ethnic minority students? Are educational interventions in schools with concentrations of low income Asians, Latinos, and/or African Americans more or less successful when ethnic peer groups are large? Is teacher effectiveness enhanced by high quality peer teachers as suggested by Jackson and Kirabo (2009)? How do such effects differ across different types of interventions? Why did Moving to Opportunity have positive behavioral effects for girls but negative effects for boys (Katz, Kling, and Liebman 2007), while the positive effects of career academies occurred for boys rather than for girls (Kemple and Wilner 2008)? Sociologists should seek greater involvement in evaluating these programs. Stefanie DeLuca's work illustrates the sociological usefulness of this approach.

The creation of the Institute of Education Sciences in 2002 and the Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness (SREE) in 2005 have greatly increased the focus on randomized clinical trials in education. What implications does this movement have for research in the sociology of education?

When I recently had a root canal, my dentist showed me real-time pictures inside my gums and proudly announced that he practiced "evidence-based" dentistry. Hopefully the move toward "evidence-based" judgments of educational programs and policies based on randomized clinical trials will not be as painful for us. But seriously, the past eight years have been a watershed period in which the education field has been pushed toward the biomedical model of research and practice. This model is here to stay. It will not eliminate regression analysis studies of standardized databases or qualitative research efforts (in fact, the need to study "fidelity of implementation" may give a boost to observational data collection). But it has already increased the focus on "what works" in education. This will certainly affect our field, but perhaps positively. Most of us want to make a difference, and it is difficult to turn down the invitation to focus our research on efforts to make students and schools more successful. The trend is toward a "big science" model -- larger, longer-term projects involving interdisciplinary collaborative research teams, more secure inferences, access to many more districts and schools within a single project, and the creation of ever more databases for secondary analysis. Yet single scholars or small groups conducting qualitative or mixed methods research will still be important. The work of Jim Rosenbaum, Annette Lareau, Kathy Edin, and others clearly demonstrates this.

Your article in the October 2010 *Sociology of Education* is about placement into special education. In the past two years, you and your co-authors have published 10 articles about disability and special education. Should sociologists of education be giving more attention to this research area?

Students with cognitive and behavioral impairments are among the most disadvantaged in our schools. They are also the most expensive to educate. Yet despite our field's focus on inequality, we rarely study these groups. Working as part of an interdisciplinary research team, and analyzing the ECLS-B and ECLS-K data, I have been able to uncover a number of new facts about these children and their families before and after they enter school. And

yet, we still don't know whether parents should desire the assistance that special education can offer their children or avoid this program as stigmatizing. Nor do we really know how to effectively remediate these children. Controversy still exists over the benefits versus costs of having a low-performing student repeat a grade. These are potential growth areas for research in our field.

You have written extensively on class- and race-based achievement gaps. What causes them? Are they closing? Will they ever close?

Differential parenting and home environments appear to be the strongest determinants of achievement gaps. Analyzing the ECLS-B, my colleagues and I have found that at 24 months of age, and with many control variables, ethnic minority children and the children of poorly educated mothers have lower cognitive performance and more problems maintaining attention on task than white children and the children of better educated mothers. Further, it is well established that by 36 months of age, ethnic minority and lower SES children have heard many fewer words from their parents than white and higher SES children, and this is reflected in their lower receptive and expressive vocabularies. Class- and race-based reading and math gaps are large when students enter kindergarten, and increase as they move up through the grades. In general, large-scale interventions have yielded disappointing results. Home visiting programs, Early Head Start and Head Start show some positive effects, but these are modest in size and are far from closing the achievement gaps. The Title I program of federal aid to low-achieving K – 12 schools has had little effect on achievement.

The Black-White achievement gap narrowed in the 1970s and 1980s, and has been relatively constant since then, with some indication of modest narrowing since 2000. As Sean Reardon has recently shown, income-based achievement gaps have increased substantially since the 1960s. Closing these gaps is made particularly difficult by the fact that the cognitive performance of middle and upper class and white and Asian students are moving targets. And technological change appears to favor higher SES families. Efforts to narrow these gaps must increase in intensity. Because "catch-up" is difficult, the best strategy is to reduce or eliminate the gaps at kindergarten entry, followed by school organization and policies to keep them from reappearing later. Thus, the first goal should be to bring low-income children up to reading and math readiness when they enter kindergarten. To achieve this goal it would be useful to locate Head Start within school buildings, place it under the control of principals, and focus it more intensively on academic and behavioral readiness. The second goal is to maintain low-income children at grade-level performance during K - 12. To achieve this, it would be useful to decrease the hold that "the street" (Anderson 1999;Sampson, Sharkey, and Raudenbush 2008) has over students in low income and ethnic minority neighborhoods, as well as to lengthen the school day and year and focus students on pride and academic achievement. KIPP schools appear to be succeeding at these goals, and significantly decreasing achievement gaps for their students (Angrist et al 2010; Clark Tuttle et al 2010). Thus, every school in low-income neighborhoods should, at a minimum, have a KIPP-style intensity, schedule, and curriculum. Ideally, this would be accompanied by one-to-one tutoring for those who need such assistance to stay at grade level as they grow older. Achievement gaps will be closed

most effectively by school-level efforts, implemented nationally, and impacting students and their peer groups on a daily basis. The issue is one of implementation and politics – if most schools in low-income neighborhoods were similar to the KIPP model, achievement gaps would certainly narrow and possibly close.

Throughout your career you have published with economists, psychologists, policy analysts, and education researchers. What advice do you have for young sociologists wishing to have an interdisciplinary career?

To succeed at interdisciplinary research these days it is useful to understand and practice cutting edge statistical methods, including propensity score matching, multiple imputation, multilevel models, instrumental variables, statistical meta-analysis, and power calculations for multilevel experimental designs. Sources for these methods include the monograph on estimating causal effects by Schneider et al (2007), the methods book by Murnane and Willett (2011), the Meta-Analysis book by Borenstein et al (2009), the econometrics book by Angrist and Pischke (2009), and the manual for the Optimal Design Software on the website of the William T. Grant Foundation. In addition, learn to use software for coding qualitative data and consider employing mixed methods on your next project. Second, become knowledgeable about, and if possible participate in evaluations of educational programs and policies. Third, consider joining at least one of the following: the Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, the American Educational Research Association, the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, and the Society for Research on Child Development. Browse the journals and attend the meetings of one or more of these organizations. If at all possible, seek out collaborations with researchers from other fields, and publish your work so as to develop credentials for further efforts. Read the reports and consider employment with research organizations such as MDRC and Mathematica Policy Research. Finally, keep an open mind and develop a thick skin. Interdisciplinary research is not always easy, but I have found it to be meaningful and fun.

It Should Have Been a Classic: James Coleman's *Equality and Achievement in Education*

by Maureen Hallinan

Maureen Hallinan is the William P. and Hazel B. White Professor of Sociology in the Department of Sociology and the Center for Research on Educational Opportunity, Institute for Educational Initiatives at the University of Notre Dame. She studies the effects of the formal and informal organization of schools on students' cognitive and social development. Her current research investigates sector effects on student achievement. Dr. Hallinan has published eight books and over 120 articles in peer-reviewed journals. She has received numerous awards for her research, including the University of Notre Dame's Presidential Citation Award (1997) and the Sociology of Education Section's Willard Waller Award for lifetime achievement (2004). She has served as president of the American Sociological Association, president of the Sociological Research Association, chair of ASA's Sociology of Education Section, and editor of Sociology of Education.

Given the impressive body of scholarship that James Coleman has contributed to our understanding of schools and their role in society, one might consider it sacrilegious to propose that one of his books "should have been a classic". Nevertheless, I make bold to suggest that

Coleman, James S., *Equality and Achievement in Education* Boulder: Westview Press, 1990

deserves more attention than it has received. The citation counts of Coleman's major books, listed here by publication date and taken from http://scholar.google.com/ , are as follows: *The Adolescent Society: 2,143; Equality of Educational Opportunity: 6,590; Public and Private High Schools:1,400; The Foundations of Social Theory:13,413; and Equality and Achievement in Education*: 333. Clearly, compared to Coleman's other works, *Equality of Achievement in Education* (EAE) received the fewest citations. While most sociologists of education have read this book, I recommend that it be read again, as a model of how to construct theory for an empirical analysis.

EAE is divided into five sections. Part 1 is devoted to formulating a theoretical framework for the concept of equality of educational opportunity. Parts 2-4 present reports based on Coleman's three major studies on educational opportunities: school effects on achievement, school desegregation, and public and private schools. These studies are commonly referred to as the first, second and third Coleman Reports. Part 5 relates the findings of these studies to public policy issues, including local control of schools, states' rights, school financing, and family effects on student achievement

The first Coleman Report presents the results of the survey commissioned by the Office of Education in 1966 to explain gaps in educational opportunities for individuals who differ by race and ethnicity. The study showed that family characteristics have a stronger effect on student achievement than school characteristics and that greater variation in

achievement occurs within schools than between schools. In general, students in majority white schools had greater input resources than those in schools with a smaller percentage of white students, although the differences were small. In the analysis, Coleman shifted the emphasis from equality of school inputs, such as per pupil expenditure, to equality of school outputs, primarily achievement. By changing the focus to school outcomes, Coleman opened the black box of HOW schools affect learning. This new paradigm irrevocably changed the relationship between social science research and educational policy.

The second Coleman Report was a response to the Civil Rights movement and specifically, to the finding in Coleman's first report that Black students attain higher achievement in majority white schools than in majority black schools. The study documents changes in school segregation from 1968-1973 with a follow-up in 1975. This was a time when the country was slowly moving from de jure to de facto desegregation. The mechanism designed to achieve integration was busing. Large numbers of students in majority black schools were bused to suburban schools in order to comply with federal policies governing desegregation. An unintended consequence of busing was an increase in the segregation of blacks in urban schools and whites in suburban schools. Many advocates of desegregation opposed busing and were quick to blame Coleman's study for leading to white flight. Coleman, himself, regretted that supporters of desegregation did not have an alternative mechanism to effectively desegregate the schools. As time passed, educators abandoned busing and developed different and more effective incentives to encourage desegregation.

The third Coleman Report was based on data from the initial wave of the High School and Beyond survey. Coleman and Hoffer's empirical analyses found that students attending Catholic schools attained higher test scores than their peers in public schools. This finding became known as the Catholic school advantage. Current scholarship suggests that this finding is less stable today than when the data were collected in 1980. The study also showed that Catholic schools were less racially integrated than public schools. In addition, the research raised conceptual issues, such as whether public or private schools more successfully attain the common school ideal.

PART 1 is the section of EAE that leads me to believe that sociologists of education have given insufficient attention to this book. Summaries of the Coleman Reports appear in numerous publications. But Part 1 is a rarity in the way it focuses attention on the theoretical framework that Coleman formulated for studies of equality of educational opportunity. He notes that the ideal state of social science research occurs when "questions of fact and cause flow from theoretical, philosophical and normative discourse" and that "the wisdom from such discourse would [should] guide and inform subsequent empirical research" (Coleman, (EAE), p.5). The first Coleman Report did not follow this template because the empirical study was conducted under severe time pressure, precluding the opportunity to ground it in theory. It was only after the survey data were collected and analyzed, and public policies based on the results were implemented, that Coleman began to conceptualize the study.

First, Coleman traced the evolution of the concept of equality of educational opportunity as it was influenced by historical, social, and political forces and by legal challenges. He points

out that due to the absence of a clear definition of equal educational opportunity, the survey on which the first Coleman Report was based included questions that would measure several aspects of the concept. Building on the philosophical treatises of Rawls and Norwicki, Coleman describes what equality of educational opportunity would look like. He concludes that it cannot be attained unless one is willing to violate principles of justice. Equalizing educational opportunity would require that "all the divergent out- of- school influences vanish"(Coleman, EAE, p.29). However, he reminds the reader that these influences cannot be eliminated without excessive and possibly discriminatory interference on the part of some authoritative body. He also notes that school influences vary in their intensity depending on student characteristics. Given these realizations, Coleman concludes that "equality of educational opportunity can be approached but never fully reached (Coleman, EAE p.29)". Hence, rather than talking about equality of educational opportunity, he tells us that we should be discussing and measuring degrees of inequality.

This brief and partial summary of Coleman's thoughts on educational opportunity fails to do justice to his theoretical contribution. In its entirety, his analysis provides a model of rigorous and comprehensive theory building. Hopefully, identifying *Equality of Achievement in Education* as a "classic" will encourage sociologists of education to re-read the book, especially Part 1, in order to enrich our own scholarship by engaging in the deep thought that characterizes this work.

Sociology of Education at the 2011 ASA Meeting

Paper sessions and roundtables will be held on Monday, August 22nd and Tuesday, August 23rd. Please check ASA's website (www.asanet.org) on April 29th for a complete copy of the ASA program. Any changes or updates must be submitted to meetings@asanet.org by June 1st in order to be included in the final ASA meeting program.

Section Sessions

New Perspectives on Gender Inequality in Education

Discussant: Maria Charles, UC-Santa Barbara

- "Girls Just Care about It More:" Femininity and Achievement as Resistance, *Edward W. Morris, University of Kentucky*
- What Happens to High-Achieving Females after High School? Gender and Persistence on the Postsecondary STEM Pipeline, *Lara Cristina Perez-Felkner, NORC at The University of Chicago; Sarah-Kathryn McDonald, NORC at the University of Chicago; Barbara L. Schneider, Michigan State University*
- Universities as Gendered Organizations: How University Characteristics Influence Gender Divides in Undergraduate Fields of Study, *Ann L. Mullen, University of Toronto; Jayne Baker, University of Toronto*
- Better Together? Single Gender Education and Boundary Transgression, *Karen Marie Powroznik, Stanford University*
- Same-Sex Attraction and Educational Attainment during the Transition to Adulthood, *Jennifer Pearson, Wichita State University; Lindsey Wilkinson, Portland State University*

Exploring Racial-Ethnic Inequalities from Kindergarten to College

Discussant: Stephen L. Morgan, Cornell University

- A Meta-Regression Analysis of the Effects of School Racial Composition on K-12 Mathematics Achievement, *Roslyn A. Mickelson, UNC Charlotte; Martha Bottia, UNC Charlotte; Richard Lambert, UNC Charlotte*
- Does Ability Grouping Increase the Black-White Achievement Gap in the Early Grades? *Sophia Catsambis, Queens College, CUNY; Gregory M. Eirich, Columbia University; Anthony Buttaro, Jr., The Graduate Center-CUNY*
- Educational Commitment: The Immigrant Advantage, *David Edward Biagas, University of Iowa; Mary Elizabeth Campbell, University of Iowa; Freda B. Lynn, University of Iowa*
- Mathematics Curricular Intensification and Inequality in American High Schools, 1982-2004, *Thurston A. Domina, UC Irvine; Joshua Saldana, UC Irvine*
- More Like Us: The Effect of Immigrant Generation on College Success in Mathematics, *Melissa Barnett, Harvard University; Gerhard Sonnert, Harvard Universityt; Philip M. Sadler, Harvard University*

Making a Difference?: Educational Policies and Inequality

Discussant: Mark Berends, University of Notre Dame

- Putting College First: How Social and Financial Capital Impact Labor Market Participation Among Low-Income Undergraduates, *James G. Benson, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Sara Goldrick-Rab, University of Wisconsin-Madison*
- Explicit and Implicit Inequalities: Curricular Tracking in Cross-National Perspective, *Anna Katyn Chmielewski, Stanford University*
- Can Expansion Equalize Opportunity? *Emily Rauscher, New York University*
- Nothing Gold Can Stay: Accountability, Inequality and Achievement, *Douglas Lee Lauen, University of North Carolina; Jennifer L. Jennings, New York University*
- Who Chooses? A Sociological Portrait of Families Active in School Choice, *Peter C. Weitzel, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

Transitions, Adjustment, and Mobility in Educational Attainment

Discussant: Ruth Turley Lopez, Rice University

- The Shape of the River from Middle School through High School: Transitions and Race Gaps in Academic Performance, *April Sutton, University of Texas-Austin; Amy Gill Langenkamp, Georgia State University; Chandra Muller, University of Texas-Austin; Kathryn S. Schiller, State University of New York at Albany*
- "I thought I was SO dumb...": Low-Income, First Generation College Students and Academic Inequities, *Ashley Rondini, Brandeis University*
- Social Class at an Elite, Private University: Cultural Mobility or Cultural Reproduction? *Nathan D. Martin, University of South Carolina*
- Disappointment Set-ups?: Differences in College Expectations Among Middle, Poor and Working Class High School Seniors, *Michelle E. Naffziger, Northwestern University; James Rosenbaum, Northwestern University*
- Social Background and Educational Transitions in England, *Michelle Jackson, Stanford University*

Regular Sessions

1. How Does Family Influence Children's Education
2. School, District, Neighborhood, State and Education

Sociology of Education Roundtables

Table 1: Gender Inequality in Education
Table 2: Racial/Ethnic Educational Disparities
Table 3: Exploring the Effects of Social Background on Educational Outcomes
Table 4: Charter Schools
Table 5: Schools as Organizations: Processes and Politics
Table 6: Navigating Success in Secondary Education
Table 7: Academic and Social Determinants of College Attainment
Table 8: International and Comparative Perspectives on Educational Outcomes

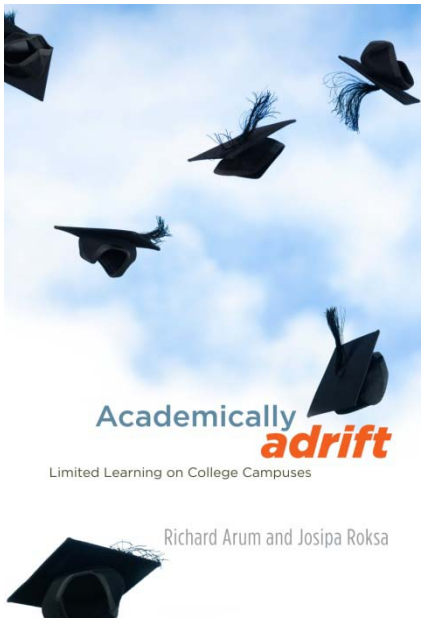
Annual Sociology of Education Reception and Dinner

The Sociology of Education Section reception will be held on August 22nd at 6:30 p.m. The annual SOE dinner will follow. More detailed information on the dinner will be announced through the SOE Listserv and summer newsletter.

News from Section Members: Books

Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses

By Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa (University of Chicago Press)



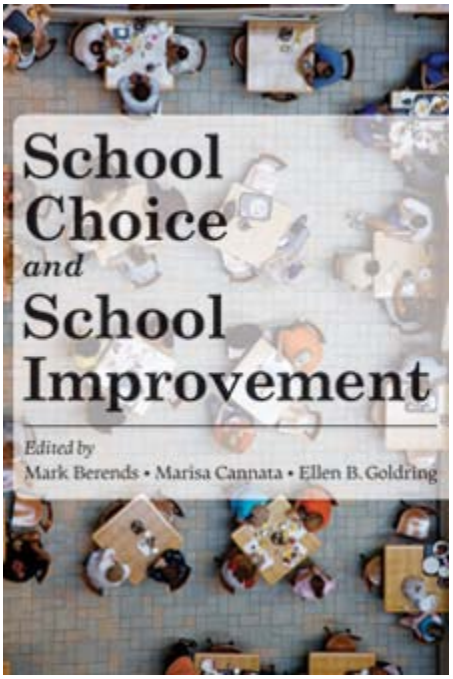
In spite of soaring tuition costs, more and more students go to college every year. A bachelor's degree is now required for entry into a growing number of professions. And some parents begin planning for the expense of sending their kids to college when they're born. Almost everyone strives to go, but almost no one asks the fundamental question posed by *Academically Adrift*: are undergraduates really learning anything once they get there?

For a large proportion of students, Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa's answer to that question is a definitive no. Their extensive research draws on survey responses, transcript data, and, for the first time, the state-of-the-art Collegiate Learning Assessment, a standardized test administered to students in their first semester and then again at the end of their second year. According to their analysis of more than 2,300 undergraduates at twenty-four institutions, 45 percent of these students demonstrate no significant improvement in a range of skills—including critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing—during their first two years of college. As troubling as their findings are, Arum and Roksa argue that for many faculty and administrators they will come as no surprise—instead, they are the expected result of a student body distracted by socializing or working and an institutional culture that puts undergraduate learning close to the bottom of the priority list.

Academically Adrift holds sobering lessons for students, faculty, administrators, policy makers, and parents—all of whom are implicated in promoting or at least ignoring contemporary campus culture. Higher education faces crises on a number of fronts, but Arum and Roksa's report that colleges are failing at their most basic mission will demand the attention of us all.

School Choice and School Improvement

Edited by Mark Berends, Marisa Cannata, and Ellen B. Goldring (Harvard Education Press)

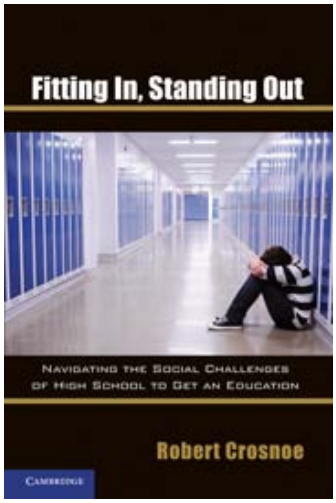


Designed to address common concerns of parents, policymakers, and the broader public the book examines how communities, districts, and states use choice as a strategy for improving schools and student learning. Their investigations into the effects and effectiveness of school choice – including charter schools, private school vouchers, and within-district transfers – build on debates about the thorniest issues arising from school choice: Why do parents decide to switch schools? How good is the information provided by districts to guide those decisions? How do traditional public schools respond to competition from charters? Do choice options exacerbate segregation by skimming off the best students? And do vouchers, charter schools, and within-district choice plans appear to improve student achievement?

One lesson from school choice research in recent years is that location is important. This book specifically notes the importance of local political and social conditions, and focuses on cities and states with some of the country's most interesting school choice scenarios, including Washington, D.C., New York, Indianapolis, Chicago, and Michigan. A chapter on the Netherlands, with its long history of parental choice and school autonomy, provides international context on socioeconomic segregation, an issue of ongoing importance in U.S. schools.

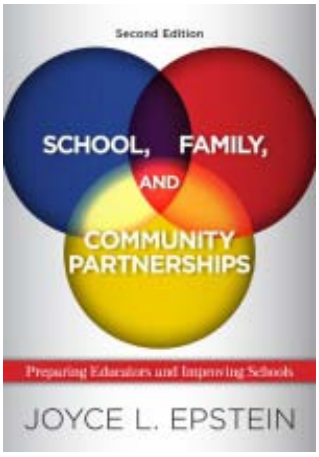
The book's chapters are based on papers presented at a major national invitational conference titled "School Choice and School Improvement: Research in State, District and Community Contexts" sponsored by Vanderbilt University's National Center on School Choice and the University of Notre Dame's Center for Research on Educational Opportunity.

Fitting In, Standing Out: Navigating the Social Challenges of High School to Get an Education *by Robert Crosnoe* (Cambridge University Press)



In American high schools, teenagers must navigate complex youth cultures that often prize being "real" while punishing difference. Adults may view such social turbulence as a timeless, ultimately harmless rite of passage, but changes in American society are intensifying this rite and allowing its effects to cascade into adulthood. Integrating national statistics with interviews and observations from a single school, this book explores this phenomenon. It makes the case that recent macro-level trends, such as economic restructuring and technological change, mean that the social dynamics of high school can disrupt educational trajectories after high school; it looks at teenagers who do not fit in socially at school – including many who are obese or gay – to illustrate this phenomenon; and it crafts recommendations for parents, teachers, and policymakers about how to protect teenagers in trouble. The end result is a story of adolescence that hits home with anyone who remembers high school.

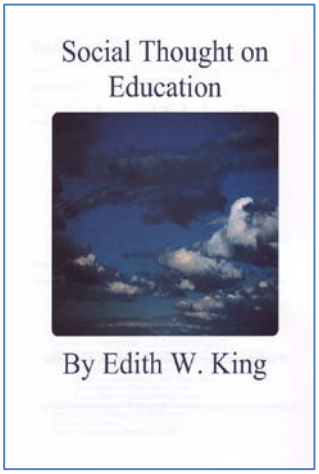
School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Preparing Educators and Improving Schools, 2nd Edition, *by Joyce L. Epstein* (Westview Press)



How can teachers and administrators be prepared to organize and implement partnerships with families and communities? This volume, based on thirty years of original research and national fieldwork, addresses the growing field of school, family, and community partnerships. The chapters on theory, research, policy, and practice prepare educators to think about, talk about, and take action to develop comprehensive programs of family and community involvement linked to student success in school. One goal of the book is to connect sociology of education and sociology of the family in meaningful ways across the school years. Readings, discussion topics, activities, and projects help professors guide students in sociology of education, educational administration, methods of teaching, and related courses to understand new directions in research and in practice for developing effective partnership programs.

The new edition will help professors of sociology of education and other education-related courses to prepare future educators to work with families of students of all backgrounds and cultures.

Social Thought on Education *by Edith King* (Amazon: Kindle 2011)



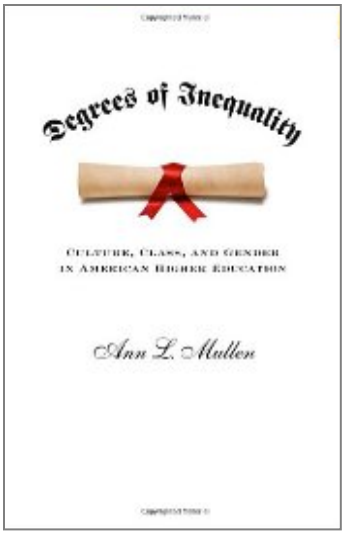
In *Social Thought on Education* the lens of eminent social thinkers' writings are brought to bear on education at all levels. After an introductory chapter the book is divided into three sections. The first section contains sociological thought from the Pre-911 world. The theories of 20th century sociologists, Robert K. Merton, David Riesman, Erving Goffman, Elise Boulding and anthropologist, Margaret Mead are exemplified by anecdotes, stories, and accounts drawn from educational settings. The book continues with three of the classical social thinkers of the 19th century, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Karl Marx applying their theories to schools, classrooms and higher education settings. The final section presents a chapter on contemporary uses of social thought developed by Ray P. Cuzzort. An Epilogue concludes the book emphasizing social thought for contemporary educators.

This book is for sociologists, educators, school administrators, social workers and all other people concerned with how society impacts schools and education in the Post-9/11 world.

Degrees of Inequality: Culture, Class, and Gender in American Higher Education

by Ann L. Mullen (Johns Hopkins University Press)

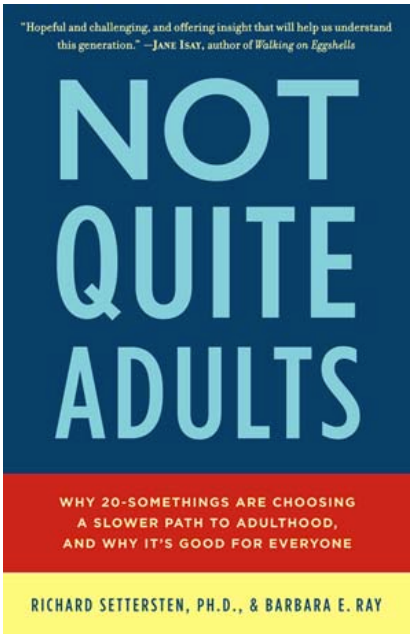
Degrees of Inequality reveals the powerful patterns of social inequality in American higher education by analyzing how the social background of students shapes nearly every facet of the college experience.



Even as the most prestigious institutions claim to open their doors to students from diverse backgrounds, class disparities remain. Just two miles apart stand two institutions that represent the stark class contrast in American higher education. Yale, an elite Ivy League university, boasts accomplished alumni, including national and world leaders in business and politics. Southern Connecticut State University graduates mostly commuter students seeking credential degrees in fields with good job prospects.

Ann L. Mullen interviewed students from both universities and found that their college choices and experiences were strongly linked to social background and gender. Yale students, most having generations of family members with college degrees, are encouraged to approach their college years as an opportunity for intellectual and personal enrichment. Southern students, however, perceive a college degree as a path to a better career, and many work full- or part-time jobs to help fund their education. Moving interviews with 100 students at the two institutions highlight how American higher education reinforces the same inequities it has been aiming to transcend.

Not Quite Adults: Why 20-Somethings are Choosing a Slower Path to Adulthood, and Why It's Good for Everyone *by Richard A. Settersten and Barbara E. Ray* (Random House)



The media has been flooded with negative headlines about 20-somethings, from their sense of entitlement to their immaturity to their dependence on their parents' purse strings. The message is that these young people need to shape up and grow up—that they should take a fast track to adulthood just like their parents did. Now, drawing on almost a decade of cutting-edge scientific research sponsored by the MacArthur foundation, including analyses of over two dozen national data sets and 500 interviews with young people, Richard Settersten, Ph.D., and Barbara Ray shatter these widespread stereotypes. Settersten and Ray bring us a more nuanced understanding of this generation, and of the unique challenges they are facing as they come of age.

Not Quite Adults gets to the heart of how and why the course to adulthood has become so complicated, what these changes mean for families and for our country, and what we should do about it. Rather than playing the blame game by pointing fingers at helicopter parents or entitled teenagers, the authors show how cultural and economic forces have radically transformed the "traditional" path to adulthood, creating a very different set of challenges as well as opportunities for today's young adults.

Filled with timely information and illuminating case histories, *Not Quite Adults* is a fascinating and enlightening look at an often misunderstood generation. It is a must-read for parents, teachers, psychologists, sociologists, and anyone interested in today's youth culture.

News from Section Members: Awards and Announcements

Alan Sadovnik, Professor of Education, Sociology and Public Administration, was recently named **Board of Governors Distinguished Service Professor** at Rutgers University. In accepting the award he honored his mother, Ruth Haas Sadovnik, who escaped Berlin on the Kindertransport during World War II and committed her life to service.

Roslyn Mickelson, Professor of Sociology at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte was selected as the recipient of the **First Citizens Bank Scholars Medal Award**. The award is given each year by the University and the Bank to recognize the recipient's career of scholarship and intellectual inquiry. It is UNC Charlotte's highest honor for research and scholarship.

Barbara Schneider, Professor of Educational Administration and Sociology at Michigan State University, recently received the **Elizabeth G. Cohen Distinguished Career in Applied Sociology of Education Award.** This award is given to a senior scholar every two years by the Sociology of Education SIG of AERA in recognition of a researcher whose career is an exemplar of how to successfully bring rigorous research to bear on solutions to problems in practical and policy settings.

Marisol Clark-Ibáñez, Assistant Professor of Sociology at California State University-San Marcos, was awarded a sabbatical to study the (leaking) educational pipeline for undocumented Latino students in the San Diego area. She and her research team will use the method called photo-elicitation interviews for elementary school and middle school children. Qualitative interviews will be used for high school, community college, and 4-year university students.

A Conference on "Transitions" to be held in Tampa, Florida from January 13-15, 2012

Sponsored by RC04 (Sociology of Education) and RC34 (Sociology of Youth), International Sociological Association, and the University of South Florida

Transitions between social statuses and institutions have interested scholars from around the world and raise critical issues regarding the roles of governments and businesses in providing resources to construct institutional bridges and to promote successful transitions. The conference will review models of age-status and educational transitions in different societies; discuss problems, such as gaps and difficulties in transitions; and propose policy recommendations at the national, regional, and global levels. This conference continues discussions begun at the ISA meetings last summer in Sweden. The organizing committee includes Kathryn Borman (University of South Florida), Jeanne Ballantine (Wright State University), Joan Spade (State University of New York, Brockport), Jeylan Mortimer (University of Minnesota), Gary Dworkin (President of RC04, University of Houston) and James Côté (President of RC34, University of Western Ontario).

Diverse formats, including paper sessions, expert panels, poster sessions, and policy discussions will be included, involving academics as well as policy makers from government(s), the United Nations, and think tanks or NGOs.

Whereas RC04 focuses on educational institutions and processes, and RC34 examines youth (generally defined as between age 18 and 34), the interests of these research committees converge in their focus on role/status entries and exits that have important consequences for the ensuing life course. Members of RC04 examine educational transitions by students (e.g., from kindergarten to primary school) and educators; members of RC34 assess transitions to adulthood (e.g., becoming a parent). Joining these approaches to transitions offers the opportunity for examination of convergences between different types of transitions. Moreover, both research committees share many interests in common: for example, transitions from school to work, school to school, and from school back to work; how participation in educational programs (vocational training in schools and apprenticeships, four-year colleges) influences the duration and character of the youth phase of life; and many other topics.

For further details regarding the conference, or to propose a session for the conference individuals are asked to contact organizers Kathy Borman (borman@cas.usf.edu), representing RC04, and Jeylan Mortimer (morti002@umn.edu) representing RC34. The deadline to submit session proposals to either organizer is May 15, 2011. The deadline to submit abstracts for papers will occur later in the year.

Obituaries

Warren Kubitschek

1954-2011

Our dear friend and colleague, Warren Kubitschek, 56, died on April 3, 2011. Warren did his graduate work at the University of Wisconsin, and he joined the University of Notre Dame as a professional specialist in 1985. During his time at Notre Dame, Warren published many papers in leading sociology journals, and made numerous contributions to the field of education. He served as a project manager for several large scale data collection efforts led by Maureen Hallinan, most recently, the Chicago School Study. As a member of the Center for Research on Educational Opportunity (CREO), Warren worked closely with many graduate students and faculty during his career. He was an exacting critic whose kindness, warmth, and good humor made him an invaluable colleague and friend. We will miss him greatly.

William Carbonaro, University of Notre Dame

Elise Boulding

1920-2010

Elise Boulding, who passed away in 2010 just before her ninetieth birthday, should be held in our highest esteem for her vision of a world where people of all nations could live in peace. Befitting this world renowned sociologist and leader in the field of peace studies, the *New York Times,* in July, 2010, carried an eloquent obituary.

Boulding's writings are well known to educational sociologists and educators endeavoring to implement cross-cultural awareness and conflict resolution in the school curriculum. She asserted that our students live in such a technologically shielded society that they receive the majority of understanding of world society, not firsthand, but through the mass media. Her efforts to emphasize a culture of peace, strategies for conflict resolution, and the role of women in the peacemaking process are among the foremost contributions to the sociology of education.

Edith King, Worldmindedness Institute of Colorado

In the next issue.....

- Five questions to another senior sociology of education scholar
- It should have been a classic
- Showcase of new career scholars
- Detailed Information about ASA 2011

Submit contributions for the next newsletter to
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