



The Sociology of Education: A Systematic Analysis (5th Edition)

By Jeanne H. Ballantine



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Editorial Review

From the Publisher

Comprehensive, contemporary, and cross-cultural in perspective, this text provides a sociological approach to education -- from several theoretical approaches and their practical application to current educational issues, to the structure and processes that make education systems work.

From the Back Cover

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Preface

Integrating the important and diverse topics in the field of sociology of education by showing how they are related is the main goal of this text. It emphasizes the diversity of theoretical approaches and issues in the field and the application of this knowledge to the understanding of education and schooling. Education is changing rapidly; it is no easy task to present the excitement of a dynamic field with diverse and disparate topics. To present the material to students in a meaningful way, a unifying framework—an open systems approach—is used. It is meant to provide coherent structure, not to detract from the theory and empirical content of sociology of education. In the fifth edition of the text, several changes are noted. There are three new chapters. One is on students in the educational system, including factors affecting achievement, in particular family and peers. The former chapter on schools around the world has been divided and expanded into two chapters: one dealing with theories of varying educational systems, the other providing case studies of educational systems within a framework representing several different types -of societies, from core to periphery and developed to developing, with different political-economic systems. In addition, extensive updating of findings on educational problems and additional updated data have been included.

After teaching sociology of education to many undergraduate and graduate students and using a variety of materials, I was concerned that the materials available, though excellent in quality, were not reaching undergraduate students who were from sociology, education, and other majors. The level of many texts is quite advanced, the themes of some books make their coverage or approach limited, or the books present research in such depth that they are beyond the grasp of undergraduates. During my work with the Project on Teaching Undergraduate Sociology, I focused on presentation of materials to undergraduates, and I have attempted to translate the ideas developed there to this text. The book is best suited for sociology of education and social foundations of education courses at the undergraduate or beginning graduate level.

Several goals guided the writing:

1. *To make the book comprehensible and useful to students.* Realizing that most students are interested in how the field can help them deal with issues they will face, I emphasize the usefulness of research findings. Choices had to be made concerning which studies and topics to cover. Those chosen should have high interest for students and help them as they interact with school systems.
2. *To present material in a coherent framework.* The instructor has leeway within the open systems approach to add topics, exclude sections of the text, and rearrange the order of topics without losing the continuity and integration present in this framework.
3. *To present diverse theoretical approaches in sociology of education.* Several valuable perspectives exist today; the book gives examples throughout of theories and how they approach issues in the field.
4. *To include as major sections several topics that have not been singled out by many authors but are important current or emerging topics and are of interest to students.* Separate chapters are devoted to higher education, informal education ("climate" and the "hidden curriculum"), the school environment, education around the world, and educational movements and alternatives.
5. *To indicate how change takes place and what role sociologists play.* With the increasing emphasis on applied sociology, more courses are including information on applied aspects of topics covered. This is the focus of the final chapter but is covered throughout the text.
6. *To stimulate students to become involved with educational systems where they can put to use the knowledge available in textbooks.* This text can be used to stimulate discussion and encourage other topics of interest to be introduced into the course in a logical way. Useful features of the book to enhance teaching effectiveness include projects at the end of each chapter; the coverage of issues; and the Instructor's Manual complete with classroom teaching aids, techniques, and test questions.

The book does not attempt to use one theoretical approach to the exclusion of others. Rather, it focuses on the value of several approaches and their different emphases in dealing with the same issue. Because the book is meant as an overview, it surveys the field rather than providing comprehensive coverage of a few topics. This allows instructors flexibility to expand where desired.

The fifth edition provides an update of issues and data, as well as revisions in theories when new trends or developments have occurred.

Thanks go to many people for suggestions on early drafts of the first edition: Peggy Hazen, Paul Mohr, Alan McEvoy, Reece McGee, Matthew Melko, Darryl Poole, Ted Wagenaar, and colleagues at Bulmershe College of Higher Education in England. For reviews of the manuscript of the fifth edition, I am grateful to Edythe M. Krampe, University of California-Irvine; James P Marshall, University of North Colorado; and Lewis A. Mennerick, University of Kansas. Thanks for help on the research go to Jeffrey Dixon, graduate student at Indiana University, and Harden Ballantine, Ed.D., for the section on alternatives in education. For providing the materials and atmosphere for producing the end product, thanks go to Antioch University Library, University of Reading (England) Library, and the University of London and Bodleian libraries. A special thanks go to the supportive group at Prentice Hall, especially Nancy Roberts and Sharon Chambliss who provided expert editorial assistance.

Finally, my interest in this field is constantly stimulated by the diverse and everchanging experiences of my children as they pass through the stages of schooling and share their experiences, and by Hardy, whose knowledge and creative ideas in the field of education gave original impetus and continuing support and encouragement to this work.

Jeanne H. Ballantine

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