**QUESTION 1**

Explain the concept of cultural capital and provide an example, considering the following:

* To explain this concept, use 6 authors we have discussed in this class (of course, not all of them refer to cultural capital, but you can refer to them to situate the creation of “cultural capital”).
* To provide an example, describe a situation which you have witnessed or experienced. The situation should describe how a particular individual had enough economic and social capital, but lacked in enough cultural capital to succeed to complete a specific task.
* To conclude your answer, explain if cultural capital is needed (or not) in the educational system in the U.S.
* Usually, good answers are 250-300 words.
* Rubric:
* 2 points for a critical use of authors’ ideas and concepts to situate cultural capital.
* 2 points for a meaningful example of cultural capital.
* 1 point for a well-supported conclusion.

**ANSWER:**

Cultural capital, a concept expounded by Pierre Bourdieu and discussed in Ballantine, J & Spade, J’s “Schools and Society,” encompasses the social assets individuals gain from their experiences, social settings, and interactions. These assets encompass practices, knowledge, language, behaviors, and attitudes rooted in upbringing, family, and cultural exposure. For instance, Alice Sullivan's study as discussed in the video “Education and Cultural Capital” revealed that middle-class students engaging in complex activities and having educated parents tend to excel, indicating the role of cultural capital in educational success. Luis Moll's "Funds of Knowledge" further underlines cultural capital, emphasizing the importance of valuing diverse cultural backgrounds for educational achievement. However, Sonia Nieto highlights how educational institutions can perpetuate inequalities, impacting the distribution of cultural capital, particularly for marginalized students. David C. Berliner's work demonstrates how out-of-school factors contribute to the creation of cultural capital, affecting students' cognitive abilities and academic performance. Furthermore, in the documentary “The Finland Phenomenon”, cultural capital is evident with the value of education and Finland's emphasis on equal access to quality education as it helps minimize disparities in cultural capital among students.

In a 10th-grade English class, I observed students struggling with analyses of MLK’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail.” One student, in particular, came from a family with strong social networks. Despite economic and social capital, this student’s limited exposure to cultural contexts hindered a comprehensive understanding of the assigned literature. As a result, the analysis remained superficial, lacking the crucial historical and cultural nuances necessary for a deeper and more meaningful interpretation.  While this student was able to express his thoughts in a clear and organized manner, the absence of necessary cultural capital limited the depth and insight of his work.

Cultural capital is undoubtedly necessary for the U.S. educational system. Acknowledging diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences enriches learning environments, fostering understanding, empathy, and critical thinking. Integrating culturally responsive curricula and teaching practices can bridge cultural gaps, promoting equitable educational outcomes.

**References:**

Ballantine, J & Spade, J. Z. (2012). Schools and Society. A Sociological Approach to

Education (*Fourth Edition*). Reading 1, 32 and 38

Berliner, D. 2009. Poverty and Potential: Out-of-School Factors and School Success.

Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of Knowledge for Teaching:

Using a Qualitative Approach to Connect Homes and Classrooms. *Theory Into Practice*,

*31*(2), 132

Nieto, S. (2010). Racism, discrimination and expectations of student achievement. In S. Nieto

and P. Bode (Eds). *Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural*

*Education* (Chapter 3)

YouTube. (2020, December 16). Cultural capital - A level sociology revision - top marx. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TU5\_z1dvqME

YouTube. (2012a, November 4). The finland phenomenon 1 4 2011 full documentary. YouTube. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=70AlyhEGWf4

**QUESTION 2**

Use our syllabus. Go to the section “Course Objectives”. Select one of the “learning outcomes” and copy paste it. Based on this learning outcome, write a 250-300-word reflection in regards to how this learning outcome can contribute to your current or future position as educator/administrator/researcher. In your reflection, refer to:

* 5 or more authors we have discussed in this class, and
* the concept of agency as point of departure to create a better society.
* Rubric:
* 2.5 points for a critical use of authors’ ideas and concepts to support learning outcomes.
* 2.5 points for using the concept of agency as point of departure to create a better society.

*Course Objectives:*

* *Identify the philosophical and sociohistorical roots of education, and connect their knowledge of foundational educational thinkers to their own participation in schooling*
* *Explain different theoretical perspectives for viewing schooling and make connections between local, state, national, and international, contexts of schooling.*
* *Examine categories, such as race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, language, religion, and physical and mental abilities and disabilities, as social relations of power that impact school experiences and individual and collective identities in a democratic society*
* *Apply and connect key ideas from scholarship on socio-cultural foundations with the lived reality of students and teachers in their schools and communities.*
* *Reflect and analyze the challenges of educating a diverse population and policies and practices for serving them effectively and ethically in a democratic society*
* *Develop skills and a positive attitude towards collaboration and team work*

**NOTES:**

* Focus on educator

**ANSWER:**

**Objective:** *Reflect and analyze the challenges of educating a diverse population and policies and practices for serving them effectively and ethically in a democratic society*

To better serve students, it is important that we create a school environment in which our mindset focuses on equity, and not equality, something that was stressed in our reading from Orfield. Many would think giving everyone the same resources would be beneficial, but as we have learned we do not all start from the same place. As teachers we serve as the agents who help obtain the resources that our students need, providing them with what will allow for the best opportunities. We learned from reading the work of Berlin, that there are factors outside of school that we, as teachers, may have to help a student find. Knowing that students who come from a low socioeconomic home are at a disadvantage, we are the ones that can help provide them with better quality instruction. It was Linda Darling-Hammond who questioned if money made a difference. As teachers, we can be the ones making a difference and providing students opportunities inside the classroom, using the resources that we are able to obtain. It just may require some creativity and the love we have for what we do, it is why we became teachers.

We have learned from our readings how many do not have access to high quality curriculums or technology, two things that are very important, and play a large role in students' success. In many cases, funds are given to schools based on taxpayer dollars.  This means that students living in more affluent neighborhoods will see more money being given to their campuses. As a teacher we must work towards equitable inequalities that reflect the needs and strengths of our students (Secada, Walter 1989). We must also take into account those who come from different housing situations and how that plays a role in the way they learn and the needs they have.

**References:**

Secada, W. G. (1989). Educational equity versus equality of education: An alternative

conception. In Secada, W. G. (Ed.), Equity and Education, pp. 68-88. New York: Falmer.

Orfield, Gary. *Lessons Forgotten. In* Ballantine, J & Spade, J. Z. (2012). Schools and Society. A Sociological Approach to Education (*Fourth Edition*). Reading 38: *Available at: http://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/40352\_8.pdf*

Darling-Hammond, L. Inequality and School Resources (Chapter 6). In Carter, P & Welner. K. (2013) Closing the Opportunity Gap

Ornestein, A., & Levine, D. (2011). Foundations of Education. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.  Chapter 11: Social Class, Race and School Achievement. (pp-336-359)

Berliner, D. 2009. Poverty and Potential: Out-of-School Factors and School Success.

**QUESTION 3**

Use our syllabus. Go to the section “Course Objectives”. Select one of the “learning outcomes” and copy paste it. Based on this learning outcome, write a 250-300-word reflection in regards to how this learning outcome emphasizes the importance of intersectionality in educational settings. Provide an example how the lack of intersectionality can provide a sense of false inclusion in schools.

* Rubric
* 1 points for analyzing the importance of intersectionality in educational settings.
* 4 points for a meaningful example that explains that the lack of intersectionality can perpetuate a false sense of inclusion.

*Course Objectives:*

* *Identify the philosophical and sociohistorical roots of education, and connect their knowledge of foundational educational thinkers to their own participation in schooling*
* *Explain different theoretical perspectives for viewing schooling and make connections between local, state, national, and international, contexts of schooling.*
* *Examine categories, such as race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, language, religion, and physical and mental abilities and disabilities, as social relations of power that impact school experiences and individual and collective identities in a democratic society*
* *Apply and connect key ideas from scholarship on socio-cultural foundations with the lived reality of students and teachers in their schools and communities.*
* *Reflect and analyze the challenges of educating a diverse population and policies and practices for serving them effectively and ethically in a democratic society*
* *Develop skills and a positive attitude towards collaboration and team work*

**ANSWER:**

**Objective***: Examine categories, such as race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, language, religion, and physical and mental abilities and disabilities, as social relations of power that impact school experiences and individual and collective identities in a democratic society*

A lack of intersectionality can provide a sense of false inclusion in schools because it dismisses the oppression or privilege that students face and influences their academic performance. Sonia Nieto mentions that “given the increasing diversity in our public schools, the problem is even more acute because many teachers know little or nothing about the background of their students.” This disregards the student’s identity and the sense of inclusion that students feel in the classroom. It is important for teachers to actively find ways to tap into the student’s funds of knowledge in order to create culturally responsive lessons that enhance student achievement and promote inclusivity.

In a study done by Marcos Pizarro, it was found that students of different groups were “profiled” based on their identities. He mentioned that “just as the police often use racial profiles to determine who are potential criminals and who does not need to be pulled over, teachers use racial profiles to determine who will and will not benefit from opportunities to excel in school.” This profiling influenced the student’s experiences and performances. He found that the most successful students were those who had teachers who mentored them through different issues. When teachers connected the student’s identities with success in learning, students were self-assured in their own identities and dedicated to their schooling.  It is the educators’ job to ensure that students feel part of the society they are in. Validating the students identity will empower them to try their best and fight for a more equitable system.

**References:**

Nieto, S. (2010). Racism, discrimination and expectations of student achievement. In S. Nieto and P. Bode (Eds). Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education, Chapter 3

**QUESTION 4**

* Find 3 items in any test designed for a high school student (from Texas or any other state). Analyze the hidden curriculum behind these 3 items. Conclude your analysis by explaining how “teachers should receive more training from their districts, so students’ test scores can improve” might perpetuate the status quo. Usually, good answers are 300-400 words.
* Rubric
* 3 points for a critical examination of the items in terms of the hidden curriculum.
* 2 points for a critical response to the statement ““teachers should receive more training from their districts, so students’ test scores can improve” in terms of the hidden curriculum.

**ANSWER:**

***from Texas Education Agency, STAAR English 2 End of Course Exam, 2022***

**Question 10**: What change is needed in sentence 6?

**F**  Change ***explained*** to **has explained**

**G** Change ***then*** to **than**

**H** Change ***fell*** to **falls**

**J** Delete the comma after ***ground***

(6) He explained that water is heated by the sun, evaporates up into the air, condenses into drops, then fell back to the ground, pure and free of contaminants.

The editing test question presented relates to linguistic and cultural biases within the education system.  Students learn that only “Standard English” that aligns with a middle-class, white cultural norm is accurate and acceptable and any deviation is considered incorrect.  Furthermore, students are taught through these types of questions that any language variations are not valued and may be seen as deficient while also implying that students can not understand or convey meaning if they do not use standard English.  These types of questions tend to “punish” students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

***from Texas Education Agency, STAAR English 2 End of Course Exam, 2022***

**Written Composition: Persuasive**

Read the following information.

In today’s world, many people are choosing to communicate through texting rather than conversing with others in person or by phone.  Texting is quick and convenient, but it may lack the emotional elements of more personal communication styles.

Can text messages be misinterpreted or misunderstood because they are typed?  Carefully consider this question.

Write an essay stating your position on whether texting is an effective method of communication.

The hidden curriculum in this writing prompt involves several assumptions and biases that are present within the prompt itself.  The prompt assumes that all students have access to and use cell phones to text regularly overlooking the digital divide and favoring students who are more technologically privileged.  These biases and assumptions can shape students’ responses.  Students who may be unable to relate to the information provided can and who do not have the same experiences outlined in the prompt are conditioned to believe they are not as intelligent as those that do.

***from Texas Education Agency, STAAR English 2 End of Course Exam, 2015***

The question is based on the poem “The Fox” by Faith Shearin

**Question 50:** In the poem, the fox is a symbol of —

F  certainty

**G** courage

H  mortality

J  freedom

This question and the answer choices available do not take into consideration historical, geographical, or biographical context that might influence the symbolism chosen by the author.  By providing a predefined list of options, the question teaches students through a hidden curriculum that their interpretations are incorrect and reduces the process of literary analysis to a multiple-choice exercise.  It undermines the skills required for students to explore and make meaning from a text essentially teaching them their ideas and experiences.

When aiming to enhance students’ test scores through teacher training, we need to look beyond the numbers, instead learning about the hidden curriculum within the tests.  Training would include ways of finding the hidden curriculum, which many new teachers may not know how to identify and to push students to think critically when presented with questions that may ignore their identity. This includes giving them the space to answer questions in a way that relates to their experiences while still recognizing that standardized tests aren’t testing their skills and knowledge, but how well they can take a test.