

Social Issues Assessment

Question 1

The primary objective of schools in the United States is to provide capable citizens who contribute to the economy, to improve equality, and address other issues within the society (Labaree, 2012). Consequently, the goals of education such as an improvement in equality, reduction of crime, and protection of the environment are all public goods. In essence, they contribute to an improvement in the social welfare more than they address private welfare. On the other hand, access to opportunity implies personal benefits from education as would be explained by working opportunities derived from academic qualifications. Therefore, education is both a private and a public good due to the varied benefits accrued by beneficiaries of the American education system.

Question 2

Based on the readings this week, education in the modern American society intends to equip learners with a predetermined set of principles, considered critical to their future success. Such principles could make a large contribution to individual welfare of the learners, with the impact dependent on the concepts in question. For instance, acquisition of skills that help the learners within the labor market are a source of positive impact on the learners (Labaree, 2012). On the other hand, the hidden curriculum works at the society's expense, perpetuating a continuous disregard of some cultures as a result of hegemony (Apple, 1982). Therefore, although the society may be quick to hail the significance of education in advancing economic interests, the curriculum's focus on impacting specific knowledge rather than facilitating an improvement in the thought process is one of the primary issues facing the contemporary education system.

Question 3

Human capital is critical to development of any economy. Consequently, organizations and the government will often make an effort to ensure that the people within the economy are well versed on issues in addition to being in a position to appropriately engage in productive activities. To private individuals, education is a resource that makes significant contribution to the potential economic success of the individual in question. The quality of education influences the chances of success, which in turn raises concerns over the differences in quality of education across learning institutions. Therefore, as long as one does not have the necessary resources to acquire high quality education, he or she would be less competitive in the job market. Ultimately, the chances of achieving social parity are limited due to the dystopian social net created by varying degrees of education quality in the society.

Question 4

According to the readings, education is a tool used to advance social agendas inadvertently. The hidden curriculum is especially a significant factor as it infers that students will gain more insight on some cultures, while neglecting others. However, the objective of education processes should be to educate by giving the learners an opportunity to gather as much insight from experiences, which would ultimately enable them make better decisions in future. As opposed to advancing the thought process, education ends up advancing hegemonic ideas, by indicating to the learners that some cultures are more important than others through the attention paid in history curriculums. Therefore, education programs in the contemporary society are significantly involved in the socialization of students, helping the learners understand the society's expectations from a social perspective.

Question 5

The superstructure views the economy's success as a result of interaction between different systems within the economy. In this case, culture plays a critical role in the development of social aspects of the economy, without which success would not be a guarantee. Consequently, a sizeable population in the United States views education as a primary route towards achieving the American dream. Students will always strive to achieve the most from the curriculum, focusing on the aspects that are most tested in the school assessment programs. The attention paid to the concepts within the curriculum, most of which include hegemony of the dominant cultures ends up influencing the socialization process of the students therein. Ultimately, the achievement of the American dream ends up being influenced by the understanding of the dominant cultures, as was inadvertently taught in the hidden curriculum. The differences generated therein end up creating a dystopian social net based on the principles of the dominant culture.

Question 6

Different types of citizens have different beliefs on the most effective ways through which they could achieve change in the society. While the responsible citizen believes in appropriate behavior, the participatory citizen believes in taking positions within the established system. On the other hand, social justice-oriented citizens believe in challenging the established systems to guarantee access to the necessary welfare for all citizens. However, without an education system that fosters the development of citizens to all the three categories, it would be difficult to develop a society in which all the three types exist. Consequently, an ideal education system would be one which is thought provocative, prompting the citizens to think of which is the most appropriate way is to initiate change. Such would lead the citizens into developing the most appropriate system based on individual beliefs.

References

Apple, M. W. (1982). *Ideology and curriculum* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

Labaree, D. F. (2012). *Someone has to fail: The zero-sum game of public schooling*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press,