

Tutorial Letter 201/2/2019

Sociology of Education

SED2601

Semester 2

Department of Educational Foundations

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

This tutorial letter contains important information
about your module.

BARCODE

CONTENTS

	Page
1. MEMORANDUM OF ASSIGNMENT 01.....	3
2. MEMORANDUM OF ASSIGNMENT 02.....	3
3. EXAMINATION PREPARATION.....	11
4. CONCLUSION.....	13

1. MEMORANDUM OF ASSIGNMENT 01**Multiple Choice Questions**

Question	Answer
1	1
2	3
3	1
4	1
5	4
6	1
7	3
8	1
9	4
10	2
11	3
12	1
13	4
14	4
15	4
16	2
17	1
18	4
19	1
20	2
21	2
22	3
23	4
24	4
25	2
26	4

27	1
28	1
29	3
30	4
31	2
32	3
33	3
34	3
35	2
36	4
37	4
38	3
39	3
40	1

TOTAL: [40 MARKS]

2. MEMORANDUM OF ASSIGNMENT 02

Question 1

a) Describe in your own words the following concepts and give one example for each concept:

- i) macrosociological (3)
- ii) microsociological (3)
- iii) socialisation (3)
- iv) transmission of culture (3)
- v) social class (3)

i) **Macrosociological:** this perspective focuses on the 'bigger' picture in sociology. It also looks at issues that have developed over a long period of time. So, it can address issues which involve large numbers of people (such as social class in society (e.g. the working class). An example would be if, as a sociologist, you are examining how the working class operates in a society such as South Africa, you will be using a macro perspective. **Page 98 in the textbook, Sociology of Education (SOE).**

ii) **Microsociological:** this perspective focuses on 'small' encounters with others. It examines everyday encounters between human beings. A good example is the interaction between a teacher and a learner.

Page 98, SOE.

- iii) Socialisation: is always an on-going, flexible social process. It demonstrates how people learn from each other in a society. Socialisation is also internalised which means that we absorb certain social patterns and make them our own. An example of this is children adopt certain gender roles, that is, how to behave like a girl or a boy from an early age. Schools are also important socialising agents and learners internalise the social norms of, for example, discipline and punctuality. **Pages 30, 101, SOE.**
- iv) Transmission of culture: this entails the dissemination (or spreading or conveying) of cultural habits, practices and patterns in a society. A school can spread certain 'traditions' amongst learners such as holding assemblies or annual functions such as Heritage Days. **Pages 82-84, 102, SOE.**
- v) Social class: where you are positioned in society in relation to your employment and how you make your income. So, if you are a cleaner in a school you would generally be seen as working class and if you are a school principal you would be in the middle class. Social class also relates to power and prestige (or lack of it) in society. **Page 100, SOE.**

Any relevant examples of the above are acceptable.

(15)

- b) Functionalists argue that for societies to survive and develop there needs to be some agreement or consensus on norms and values. Briefly discuss whether you think we have agreement on norms and values in South African schools. (5)**

Norms and values are similar to good behaviour and morals in society. Norms relate to how one behaves in certain circumstances such as a staff meeting at school. Values are like morals: how to behave in relation to what is considered by society to be good and bad. Society requires us to hold norms and values in common so that it can function. For example, we need to agree (or have consensus) that murder is wrong or bullying in schools is unacceptable.

Do we have agreement on norms and values in schools?

Yes: schools have codes of conduct, disciplinary procedures. Schools are obliged to follow the constitution and respect human rights. Any relevant examples.

No: schools do not uphold their codes of conduct, learners are considered to be undisciplined and do not take responsibility for their conduct. Any relevant examples. **Pages 98, 102, SOE.**

[20]

Question 2

a) Diversity and culture in education:

- i) What is diversity? Explain in your own words and provide a school-based example. (4)

Diversity: the inclusion/addition of different people/communities in a society. A diverse society includes different cultures, groups, individuals and engenders respect and tolerance for different cultures. Diversity in schools means that there are learners in the same school who speak different languages and come from different regions. School-based examples could include the teacher who provides information about different cultures to encourage respect for learners in a 'multicultural' classroom.

Pages 77-78, 96, SOE

- ii) What is culture? Explain in your own words and provide a school-based example.

Culture is about a way of life in society and includes dress, religion, sport. It also can refer to how we adapt to certain environmental conditions. Culture is often transmitted from generation to generation and is an important component of social identity. Examples could include dance, music and language in the South African context.

Pages 82-84, SOE.

(4)

Any relevant examples are acceptable.

b) How is the concept 'identity' explained by the following theorists:

Firstly, identity can be defined as how we understand ourselves. Our identities are socially shaped by our interactions with other people such as family members, teachers.

- i) a functionalist (2)

Functionalists see identity as created by socialisation by the family, school, social institutions such as sport. Identity is shaped in relation to the individual's integration into broader society. We are socialised into becoming citizens who internalise society's norms and values and agree to comply with them. Schools play an important role in identity-formation as they help learners become aware of the demands of a world which goes beyond their families.

- ii) a conflict theorist (2)

Conflict theorists argue that our identities are formed by group identities such as social classes. So, working class people have a particular identity which differs from that of middle class people. The context in which identity is formed is one of inequality. Some people have more opportunities than others and this impacts on their identities.

- iii) a symbolic interactionist (2)

Symbolic interactionists argue that identity is a social construct (it is socially 'made') and because of our interactions with other members of society, identity is in a state of flux or change. Childhood is socially constructed in that children develop their

identities through interacting, interpreting others and learning via aspects such as language and observation.

Pages 79-81, SOE

c) Identify yourself with a teacher. How would you apply gender fair teaching in your classroom? (6)

Gender fair teaching needs to be continuous and part of day-to-day classroom activities. So, as a teacher, one needs to be aware of language and images in text books, readers. One needs to be aware of stereotyping learners. This often appears in teachers' attitudes e.g. when they describe boys as 'naturally aggressive'. Gender can result in discrimination, in some schools: girls are discouraged from doing mathematics or from playing certain sports. Gender fair teaching needs to go beyond the school and include parents and community members. This could mean that it becomes an issue discussed in meetings with parents. Gender issues should be part of all classroom activities, for example, different tasks could be assigned to learners regularly. Gender fair teaching should consider emotional aspects and is not merely about changing behaviour. Gender fair teaching should not be punitive (about punishment) but should affirm learners.

Any relevant examples accepted. Marks will be assigned to a critical reading of gender fair teaching and any discussion of problems that could arise with its implementation is acceptable.

Page 87, SOE

[20]

Question 3

a) Summarise the following paragraph in your own words:

Keep in mind that when you summarise, you need to read the paragraph, look up any difficult words, identify the most important word/s and then write a **shorter** version of the paragraph (such as when you summarise a book). Only write down the most important points!

"It was mentioned earlier that Bowles and Gintis were of the view that the education system serves the objectives of capitalist societies. Research on class in South African schools show that many things are happening in wealthy schools that conspire to keep the poor child out. According to Sketeet *al.* (2001:67), the move from township schools has a lot to do with a search for better education. However, it also has to do with costs. In a study conducted by Soudien and Sayed (2209:39), it was found that finances proved to be either exclusionary or inhibitory." (SOE, p 91) (8)

Model answer: Conflict theory authors, such as Bowles and Gintis, argue that schools are part of the capitalist system and as such reflect the aims and the interests of capitalist societies. This means that there are schools for the wealthy (middle class) and schools for the poor (working class) which reflect class divisions in society. The costs of moving from township schools is far

too high for most families which results in children being excluded from better, more expensive schools.

Any reasonable, accurate summary is acceptable. At markers' discretion.

b) Define the following concepts:

- i) Social class
 - ii) Gender
 - iii) Race
 - iv) Access to education
- (8)

i) Social class: Social class is a large grouping of people which comprises, for example, middle- and working- class people. Social class is achieved and not something people are born with and this means that social class is fluid in that people can move from one class to another.

See Chapter 4 page 90, SOE.

ii) Gender:

c) Briefly explain the two systems of stratification? Provide examples of the two systems. (4)

A cast or closed system: ranking is based on characteristics over which most people have little or no control. Example: a rigid system in which there are strict hierarchies and economic roles are fixed, for instance, in a society where the minority are rulers (kings, queens) and the majority are 'peasants'.

A class or open system: this is a system based on merit, talent and ability. It is more fluid and flexible than a closed system. A class system means that people can shift from one class to the next e.g. from the working class to the middle class. It is a system which is associated with modern capitalism.

Any relevant examples are acceptable.

Pages 84-85, SOE

[20]

Question 4

a) In a paragraph discuss what is meant by democracy. Discuss both ancient and modern concepts of democracy in your outline. (10)

A democracy is a political system in which citizens are supposed to participate in decision making and running affairs in their group, community or their nation state. In modern societies citizens over a certain age (18 in South Africa) can vote in elections. In an Athenian democracy citizenship included status (a citizen); a sense of belonging and active participation in public affairs. Active participation meant that citizens were exercising their agency.

In a modern democracy, personal and public dimensions of citizenship are not mutually exclusive but are reciprocal (give- and -take). So, if you want to live a green, eco-friendly life you need to ensure that the state legislates around environmental issues and you yourself live a 'green' life. Modern democracies are inclusive and do not exclude women and slaves (as in ancient democracies) nor do they exclude people based on their race as in apartheid South Africa. Modern

democracies can be representational (you vote for someone to represent you in parliament) or they can be active and participatory (you are an active agent for change and development in your community). **Pages 52-60, SOE.**

b) Explain 'soft' and 'hard' notions of community participation in citizenship education. (4)

A soft notion of community participation entails that learners rely on the school curriculum to learn about citizenship education. By extension it is a more 'passive' way to learn about the topic. So citizenship is 'taught'.

A hard notion of community participation refers to learning by doing and creating opportunities to learn about citizenship in school but also outside of the school walls. So citizenship is 'caught' not 'taught'. **Page 62, SOE: 62.**

c) Draw out some of the differences between citizenship education in the United Kingdom and citizenship education in post-Apartheid, democratic South Africa. (6)

Citizenship education in the United Kingdom: there is a mixture of hard and soft curriculum approaches in the United Kingdom, that is, it is curriculum based as well as encouraging learning by doing. Children are taught from an early age about social and moral responsibility through being involved in their communities. They are taught political literacy about public life and government.

Citizenship in post- Apartheid South Africa: is based on the Constitution of South Africa. There is an emphasis on equality, human rights, tolerance. There is not a specific subject in the timetable called citizenship education, instead, it is incorporated into the social sciences and life orientation. History and geography are also subjects that include citizenship education. Both countries focus on the socialisation of learners into 'good', responsible citizens.

The major differences are: citizenship education in the UK is compulsory and it is part of the national curriculum. It supports both hard and soft notions of learning. It is cross-curricular (meaning across subjects) and non-statutory in foundation and intermediate phases. The senior phase has a more formal curriculum and is statutory (it has been legislated).

In South Africa citizenship education is provided for in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (2012) but it has a less formalised structure. The approach is more cross-curricula. There is an emphasis on practice and activity and not on a formal curriculum. There is a focus on instilling democratic values in a new democracy.

Pages 62-66, SOE

[20]

Question 5

a) Do you agree that gender and race are social constructs and not biological? Discuss with reference to the sections in SOE on *gender and race* to back up your argument. Pages 85 – 90, SOE. (12)

NB: As this is a sociology of education course, hence, a stronger response will be to answer 'yes' to the above question. You also will have access to more examples to back up your response. (See SoE: 85 – 90) In addition, you have been asked to address issues of gender (socially constructed) not biological (sex) issues. Race too has a strong socially shaped component.

Yes: The distinction between the terms gender and sex is important. Gender refers to the qualities between women and men. These are social qualities and are created by culture. Sex relates to biological differences between females and males. As we are examining gender, we can argue that gender is socially conveyed and comprises learned behaviours, attitudes and expectations. Families and schools (which are social constructs) play a significant role in encouraging different gender roles. Functionalists argue that schools should teach learners gender roles that are appropriate to the society that the school is part of. Conflict theorists argue that women are often exploited in the workplace (for example they get lower salaries) and that men often devalue women's work. Symbolic interactionists agree that gender is constantly constructed in society and is produced, and reproduced or perpetuated, through social interactions. By behaving in gender-specific ways we are confirming the current, dominant social order.

Race is socially constructed: "society assigns people to racial categories such as Black, White and so on not because of science logic or fact, but because of opinion and social experience." (SOE: 88). Sociologists have different approaches to the issues of race and schooling. Functionalists argue that minority groups should assimilate into mainstream, dominant society. Hence learners from minority groups should fit into the dominant culture of the school (for example in some American schools). Some conflict theorists argue that not only is race a factor in schools, but social class also plays a major role in school achievement and life chances. It is more important to make changes in economic and class structures than to focus on race. However, other conflict theorists argue that the issue of race and racism should be confronted. Symbolic interactionists who make use of contact theory argue that conflict between races is reduced if contact is among people of equal status, is long-term and there is consensus among participants about what equality means.

Any relevant examples will be considered.

No: If you disagree with the above position you will need to focus on biological arguments. The argument will follow that gender is not a social construct, rather people behave in certain ways because they are born that way. Our emotions and attitudes are also dominated by our biology. It is 'natural' for us to behave like women and like men. Differences between men and women are also not socially constructed but are 'innate' (we are born with them) and as such they are unchanging and not subject to social change.

Race from a biological perspective pertains to a person's distinctive gene frequencies. Race is hence about innate physical characteristics and social factors do not play an influential role in this perspective. This position is problematic if one considers that 'race' also includes historical, cultural and economic factors. Any relevant examples will be considered.

Pages 88-89, SOE.

b) Social class is 'achieved' rather than 'given' at birth? Briefly discuss this statement. (4)

In modern, capitalist democracies social status is not necessarily inherited, as in historic kingdoms. Instead, social status is achieved through education, hard work and economic success. Economic resources influence the status

and the type of lifestyle people have and these are generally achieved not inherited. Conflict theorists would be critical of aspects of this position as they argue there are inequalities of opportunity in society.

Page 90, SOE

- c) **What is meant by access to education? Do you think there are groups in society that have greater access to education than others? (4)**
- d) Access, or entrance into the educational system, includes several different factors including the state provision of education. Functionalists suggest that education is an equalising force and all learners have equal access and equal opportunities in school. On the other hand, conflict theorists propose that schools perpetuate inequalities and that access is reliant on whether there are resources available for learners to attend schools. Access is not neutral and is also dependent on historical influences and the race, sex and class of the learner. Some learners are denied access to schools because of one or more of the latter factors.

Page 92, SOE

[20]

TOTAL: [100 marks]

3. EXAMINATION PREPARATION

The end of the semester means it is time to prepare for the examination. We want to bring the following to your attention with regard to examination preparation:

3.1 Material to study

The tables of content in the prescribed book and study guide offer a good summary of the content to be examined.

For the examination please study the following:

- Prescribed textbook
- Wrap-around guide
- Assignment 01
- Assignment 02

Test your understanding of the learning content and your examination readiness by working through previous examination papers, which you can access on myUnisa at Official Study Material. Do not expect questions from previous examination papers or assignments in the examination. **In this module, new questions are set for each examination.**

3.2 Position of the College of Education regarding the demarcation of the examination contents

I present verbatim communication that we have received from college management with regard to detailed demarcation of content for examination also known as scope

Demarcation or “scoping” for examinations and assessments

NB: In terms of a decision reached by the College, lecturers may not demarcate or “scope” specific work for examination purposes and examination questions should be based on all the work covering the notional hours of modules. Lecturers should encourage students to learn everything. In cases where competencies or skills are assessed differently during the tuition period, the various methods of assessment will be spelled out clearly by the lecturer in Tutorial Letter 201.

According to Assessment Procedure Manual 2013, paragraph 4.5.2(e), the examination memoranda (guidelines, rubrics, and so on) shall not be made available to students.

3.3 Tips on answering examination questions

In answering questions in the examination, please pay special attention to the following:

- The instructional verbs like *list*, *define* and *discuss* instruct you on how to answer each question. Please make sure you understand these verbs beforehand and adhere to their instructions in the examination. For example, do not list when the question instructs you to discuss.
- Use full and meaningful sentences, and avoid answering using phrases and one word answers (except in multiple-choice questions). Answer questions in full and explain the questions as clearly as possible. If necessary, give an example to demonstrate the meaning.
- Make sure you answer the posed question and not the question that you would have wanted in the examination, but is not there. Read the question several times, if necessary, before you answer it.
- Good advice: Start IMMEDIATELY to study, prepare well in time and compile mind maps to understand the contents. Remember, your common sense and experience as a student or as a teacher are also valid sources of information.

3.4 Structure of the examination paper

- The duration of the examination is TWO HOURS and the paper counts 100 MARKS.
- This paper consists of FIVE MAIN QUESTIONS with a total of 20 marks each [5x 20 = 100]
- QUESTION 1 consists of 20 multiple-choice questions.
- QUESTIONS 2 TO 5 consist of sub-questions counting 10 marks each.

4. CONCLUSION

I hope that you have enjoyed your studies related to this module and that you have broadened your academic reasoning and writing skills, and found the contents informative and applicable to the classroom and to the social sphere where you reside.

Finally, I wish you all the best with your examination. Persevere and discipline yourself to work diligently to achieve your goal. Should you experience any academic problems, do not hesitate to contact me.

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