

**Department of Sociology  
University of California-Berkeley  
Professor Samuel R. Lucas  
Ph.D. Qualifying Exam, Written Portion (Practice # 2 of 2)**

**Part I -- Morning**

**ANSWER QUESTION 1 AND EITHER QUESTION 2 OR 3 (Devote approximately two hours to question 1, and one hour to either question 2 or 3.)**

(1) [REQUIRED: ANSWER BOTH PARTS A AND B.]

Part A: For each of **SIX (6)** of the following concepts or terms, provide a definition, discuss its significance in the sociology of education, and cite the principal sources in which the concept or term figures prominently.

- (a) social capital
- (b) professional community of teachers
- (c) selection bias
- (d) tipping point
- (e) correspondence principle
- (f) classroom social system
- (g) world system theory
- (h) cultural arbitrary
- (i) contradictory course locations
- (j) tournament model

**Part B:** For **FOUR (4)** of the following datasets, describe the dataset (including the sample population and nature of the sample), discuss their strengths and weaknesses for studying questions in the sociology of education, and identify one important work that used the dataset.

- (a) Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)
- (b) General Social Survey (GSS)
- (c) High School and Beyond (HS&B)
- (d) National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)
- (e) National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY)
- (f) National Educational Longitudinal Surveys (NELS)
- (g) Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)
- (h) Census Public Use Microsamples (PUMS)

**AND**

(2) Some scholars have claimed that the apparent ascendancy of quantitative methodology within the sociology of education has severely limited or even distorted our understanding of schooling. Write an essay in which you:

(a) Identify critics of the predominance of quantitative methods in the sociology of education, and discuss the criticisms they have advanced..

(b) Illustrate the distinctive contributions that qualitative, interpretivist, or ethnographic methodology has made to one area of inquiry within sociology of education. In your response, be sure to give details of specific studies.

(c) Address the question of whether quantitative and nonquantitative methodologies within the sociology of education can usefully complement one another, or whether they are necessarily antagonistic and irreconcilable.

**OR**

(3) Analysts have proposed a variety of ways of thinking about the work that teachers do. Assess these different conceptions of teachers work and the implications these conceptions have for how teachers teach and organize to further their individual and/or collective interest. And, be sure to attend to related literature on the workplace.

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**Part II -- Afternoon**

**ANSWER TWO (2) OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS (Devote approximately one and one-half hours to each question.)**

(1) Sociology of education has been of interest not only to social scientists, but also to policy-makers and others concerned with addressing social problems.

Select **ONE (1)** of the following issues, and discuss how theory and research in the sociology of education has contributed and/or potentially can contribute to understanding the problem and to assessing the merits of possible solutions:

- (a) High school dropout rates that are considered too high.
- (b) The effects of maternal employment on children's educational outcomes
- (c) Disparities between African Americans and Latinos, on the one hand, and Whites and Asian Americans, on the other hand, in academic achievement and educational attainment.
- (d) Disparities in the enrollment rates of males and females in high school courses and in college majors.
- (e) Difficulties in "restructuring" roles and practices within schools and classrooms.
- (f) Women obtain lower test scores than men in mathematics.

(2) Write an essay in which you describe and analyze the major trends in educational attainment in the United States population during the 20th Century. In your essay address the following topics:

- (a) The trend in levels of educational attainment in the population as a whole.
- (b) Trends in the DIFFERENCES in educational attainment by gender, race and ethnicity, and socioeconomic background.
- (c) Theory and research proposing and evaluating explanations for the trends identified in Parts (a) and (b).

(3) Over the last one hundred and fifty years, formal schooling has become a worldwide phenomenon that increasingly embraces large numbers of students for longer periods of time. Write an essay in which you:

- (a) Identify and explicate the distinctive theories that sociologists have advanced to account for the enormous expansion of schooling that has occurred worldwide.
- (b) Discuss the extent to which each of the theories you have identified enjoys empirical support, and the extent to which empirical evidence places in doubt the validity or applicability of each theory.
- (c) Propose additional research that might further illuminate or clarify the reasons for the worldwide expansion of schooling.