Chapter 8

Discussion Questions.

1. As reported in the textbook, although the United States spends more per capita on education than other high-income countries, our literacy scores are average in a world comparison. The literacy scores of native-born U.S. adults rank 10th among the 17 high-income nations. The nations that scored higher were Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Germany, Canada, Belgium, and Australia (Sum et al. 2002). What are we doing wrong and what do we need to do to correct this problem?
2. Education is assumed to be the “great equalizer” in our society. After having read this chapter you quickly discover that it is not. Has education truly ever been the “great equalizer” in our society or have certain groups always been left behind?
3. Every president since Ronald Reagan has claimed to be the “Education President” promoting new laws and programs to reform American education. During his first year in office, President Barack Obama set a goal for the United States to have the highest proportion of college students in the world. Have any of the ideals for education reform promoted by the president, been realistic (e.g., economically funded, high standards set and measured, etc)? In your opinion, is education truly a top priority for a president or does it just sound good to talk about education as a politician?
4. In your opinion, is public education in crisis as many believe it to be? If so, what was the catalyst and what, if anything should be done about it?
5. Ask the students what they feel is the most pressing issue in the American educational system and what they think can be done to resolve this issue.
6. As discussed in the textbook the “hidden curriculum” perpetuates gender inequalities in math and science courses. What can school administrators do to address this issue?