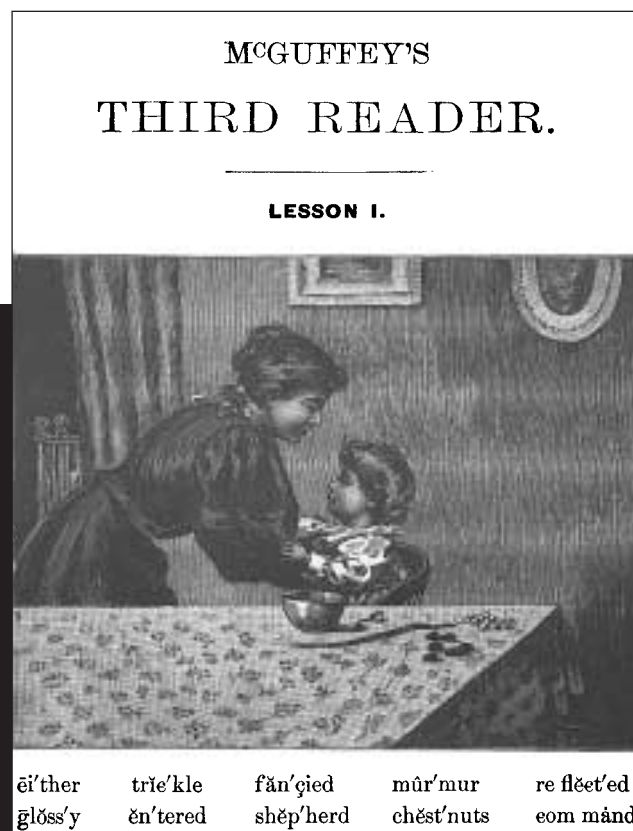


Educational Aims in Historical Perspective

1. Introduction: Understanding School and Society
2. Liberty and Literacy: The Jeffersonian Ideal
3. School as a Public Institution: The Common-School Era
4. Social Diversity and Differentiated Schooling: The Progressive Era
5. Diversity and Equity: Schooling Girls and Women
6. Diversity and Equity: Schooling and African-Americans
7. Diversity and Equity: Schooling and American Indians
8. National School Reform: The Early Cold War Era



Introduction

Understanding School and Society

Chapter Overview

Chapter 1 introduces students to the basic analytic vocabulary, or “tools of inquiry,” used throughout *School and Society*, emphasizing why *social context* is important to consider if we want to understand schooling. The chapter challenges the common view that *theory* and *practice* are opposites, arguing instead that good social theory seeks to describe and explain the real world, including the world of practice. It also presents the three-part *analytic framework*, or organizing ideas, used throughout the book, in which the terms “political economy,” “ideology,” and “schooling” are under-

stood as interactively influencing one another. To illustrate how the analytic framework can be used to interpret the way school and society relate to each other, brief sketches of feudal Europe and classical Athens are presented. These examples raise the question of *why* teachers need to study the history, philosophy, and social context of education—and how such study applies to teaching practices. Finally, the special relationship between democratic values and educational practice is introduced—a relationship that will be explored throughout the volume.



In Classical Athens, education was the birthright of the citizen, to be pursued throughout life.

Chapter Objectives

Among the objectives that Chapter 1 seeks to achieve are these:

1. You should become acquainted with the basic conceptual tools used throughout the book, especially political economy, ideology, and schooling. You should begin to understand how they influence one another, although that influence is not of equal proportion.
2. By entertaining the view that good theorizing explains practical phenomena and therefore can guide practice, you should begin to question the idea that theory and practice are opposed to one another, or the idea that if something is theoretical, it probably is not practical.
3. You should consider basic distinctions among schooling, training, and education. You should recognize that *education* is a value-laden ideal that allows one to evaluate schooling and training practices for their *educational* worth.
4. You should consider the feudal European and classical Athenian periods as occasions for interpreting relationships among political economy, ideology, and schooling practices. Note how these basic tools of inquiry operate in historical cultural contexts different from ours.
5. You should begin considering the meanings and limitations of the concept of democracy in cultural context. Note the egalitarian impulses of an Athenian society that selected legislators by lottery and reflect critically on how a "democratic" culture can exclude most of its residents from political participation.
6. Finally, you should be able to provide examples that illustrate why it is important to understand the social contexts of schooling if we are to understand what takes place *in* schools.

Introduction: Conducting Inquiry into School and Society

The public schools are perhaps the most familiar but least understood institution in our society. Most Americans spend over 12 years attending public schools and later, as adults, confront a wide array of school-related issues. School board elections, school tax referendums, PTA meetings, and their children's school experiences all require immediate personal attention.

Individuals and the mass media often express concern about the overall quality of the public school system. Is it equipping the young to support themselves in a changing economy? Is it promoting an equitable society by educating all our students? Is it equipping them with the skills and attitudes needed to live in a society that is increasingly diverse and pluralistic? Is it teaching them to respect and protect an increasingly endangered environment? In short, how well does our nation's public school system serve the major needs of our society?

These are complicated questions open to competing interpretations, and not just any interpretation will do. Schools are complex institutions with varied and intricate relationships to their surrounding communities, and a great deal of scholarship has been conducted in an effort to understand these relationships. Explaining why children from some social and economic groups tend to perform better than others do in schools, for example, may require reliance on a variety of historical, sociological, and theoretical arguments that most editorial writers and newspaper readers don't have at hand. Such explanations are not a part of commonsense knowledge, but they can and should be a part of a teacher's professional expertise.

The development of such professional levels of interpretation and understanding is a major purpose of this text. Achieving such understanding, however, requires that students engage not in "learning the text" but in actively inquiring into important questions about the purposes and consequences of education and schooling.

The Place of Social Foundations in Teacher Education

You may well think, "That's all very interesting, but how is it going to make me a better teacher? Wouldn't it be better to spend this time studying methods that are successful in today's classrooms?"

While study and practice of teaching methods are a central part of teacher preparation, methods make sense only in particular social contexts and to achieve specific goals. These goals, for students and for the wider society, are not always agreed upon. In the last analysis, teachers must make decisions about goals and methods for themselves. How to educate teachers to make the best decisions on these matters has long been a topic of debate.

In the 1930s, for example, teacher educators at Teachers College, Columbia University, began developing a new program of study for school teachers and administrators called "social foundations of education." Rather than have teachers and administrators study such fields as philosophy of education, history of education, and sociology of education in isolation from one another, the scholars at Teachers College believed that school practitioners would benefit most if they integrated the study of all these fields around perennial school-society issues. Who should be educated? What knowledge and values should be taught? Who should control the curriculum and for what purposes? When, where, and how should education be delivered? To study such issues, they believed, required historical perspective, philosophical insights, and sociological knowledge. The problems to be understood, they reasoned, were multidimensional and did not fit neatly into any one of those disciplines. To study schooling required studying the social underpinnings (social foundations) of education, and they believed that the better teachers understood the larger society in which schools are embedded, the better they would understand the particular school problems they faced. The schools, in their view, were an important *expression* of the surrounding society—expressing its political and economic systems as well as its ideological commitments.

The authors of this text share this view. It is our conviction that teachers should have the best possible understanding of the relations between their schools and the larger society in which those schools are embedded. We think teachers need more than *training* in how to deliver a set curriculum or technique, though such training can be valuable. Teachers also need to be *educated* as critical thinkers who have the ability to diagnose unique and complicated situations and create original solutions to these problems (more on training versus education shortly). Such professional education should take place in all components of a teacher education program. We believe that the purpose of studying social foundations of education is to equip teachers to make sense of classroom situations by understanding the larger social context that surrounds and shapes what goes on in classrooms.

Study in the social foundations of education, then, provides background information about school-society relationships that helps teachers contextualize classroom events and thereby enables them better to understand and adjust their teaching practices. For example, unless you understand the effects that school culture can have on students from minority cultures in the United States, you may not be able to discriminate between a child with a learning disability and a child whose home culture differs so markedly from that of the school that he or she encounters academic and social adjustment problems. When is it fair to have different educational goals for different students, and when might different goals categorize students and lead to discriminatory practices on the part of teachers or other students?

The purpose of this book is, in part, to give you practice in thinking through issues such as these. By reflectively engaging such social and educational issues (including their historical origins), you will be developing as an educational thinker and decision maker whose ability to define and solve school problems is more highly developed than that of the everyday citizen who has not received such specialized education. Two examples will now illustrate these points.

The Meaning of Democracy in Educational Practice

One illustration of how teachers can apply social foundations knowledge to their teaching practice concerns the aims of teaching. Teachers typically accept the notion that a major goal of teaching is to prepare citizens for life in a democratic society, and most teachers believe that their teaching contributes to achieving this goal. Yet college students preparing to teach are rarely given an opportunity to engage in a sustained study of what life in a democratic society really means or how to go about educating students for participation in such a society. To understand the meaning of democracy and to fit students for life in a democratic society require careful analysis. It is obvious, for example, that school systems in all cultures seek to fit people to their surrounding societies. It is not so obvious, however, that in a democratic society this process should involve equipping people to think critically about the degree to which their society is in fact democratic and to participate effectively in overcoming its undemocratic aspects. Thus, to prepare students for participation in a democratic society, a teacher may have to consider how well his or her choice of teaching and management strategies fosters critical thinking and active political participation.

Similarly, the classical notion that the moral basis of democracy is not only fairness or even equality but human development through participation in decision making needs to be explored. Consideration of this point might lead a democratically oriented teacher toward a policy of greater student participation in problem solving and classroom decision making, in which students are encouraged to learn from their mistakes. Whether a classroom is more student-centered or teacher-centered often stems from the teacher's belief concerning this basic issue.

Such sustained inquiry into democratic ideals might well lead prospective teachers to modify their teaching goals and then identify classroom problems differently than before. For example, whereas an obedient and unquestioning classroom might have seemed desirable at one time, that orderliness might seem alarming in a classroom focused on student development through shared decision making. One important goal of this book is to provide you with the opportunity to rethink what democracy means in practice and then reevaluate your teaching goals and methods accordingly.

Education of Diverse Students

A second illustration concerns problems confronting teachers in multicultural classrooms. Teachers are increasingly called upon to teach students who are racially or ethnically different from themselves and to recognize that students of all races have the same academic potential. Yet new teachers' experiences seem at first to tell them otherwise. How can they avoid stereotyping certain groups as more or less academically able when they see significant differences in academic performance and attitudes toward school?

To understand and nurture the learning potential of *all* students, teachers need to understand the influences that culture and social class exert on both students and schools. The differences in the performance of different ethnic groups in this nation's schools have historical and socio-linguistic dimensions. In the case of African-American students, for example, teachers need to understand how schools have systematically discriminated against African-American children and realize that black English vernacular is not indicative of impaired intellectual ability to learn standard English. They also need to understand that students from lower socioeconomic classes and lower-achieving ethnic groups tend to engage in resistant behaviors as they encounter a school environment that they sometimes experience as hostile. Well-informed teachers could then respond to those

resistance strategies not as behavior problems but as intelligent yet counterproductive responses to school culture. Teachers who have studied the social contexts of schooling are able to view old school problems with new eyes and, as a result, approach those problems with fresh ideas and open minds.

To summarize, prospective teachers need to recognize that problems in classroom learning are inevitably embedded in the broader social and cultural contexts that surround their schools and classrooms. Perceptions of gender differences, racial and ethnic attitudes, school organization and culture, social class differences, and prevailing ideologies are only some of the factors teachers need to study to understand their workplace. Failure to understand these factors inevitably impairs their ability to interpret school and classroom events and consequently to construct meaningful solutions to perennial problems.

Tools of Inquiry

This text uses six main tools of inquiry to assist students in developing critical understandings of school and society. These tools of inquiry are six analytic concepts: social theory, schooling, training, education, political economy, and ideology. Each of these will be examined, and then the three most fundamental ones will be arranged into an analytic framework. The final part of this chapter will provide two historical illustrations of the analytic framework in action, one dealing with education in European feudal society and the other dealing with education in classical Athens. The following chapters will use this analytic framework to examine the evolution of American public schools (Part 1 of this textbook) and some of the most significant contemporary issues facing the public school system (Part 2).

Social Theory

The term “theory” is often scorned by critics of higher education, as if college education were “too theoretical.” Frequently, educators in public schools and colleges of education proclaim that they are interested in “practice,” not “theory.” Such announcements should make us pause to consider what the term “theory” means. It does not really have a complex meaning. Very simply, a theory is an interpretation and explanation of phenomena. A social theory is an attempt to make sense of and explain social phenomena. A theory attempts to answer the

questions how and why. It is not something separate from “reality” and “practice”; rather, it attempts to explain reality and practice. Thus, to say that we are not interested in theory is to say that we are not interested in knowing how or why something occurs.

We might be interested, for example, in the rise in public school attendance during the past century. Why did increasing percentages of American children attend school for increasing lengths of time? One explanation (i.e., theory) is that the increase reflected the rise in democratic sentiment and greater potential for social mobility in the United States. An alternative theory emphasizes economic factors, such as the decreased dependence on child labor on farms and in factories, accompanied by the need for adult workers with specialized skills (e.g., clerical training) and work force behaviors (e.g., punctuality).

These potentially conflicting theories raise an important question: How do we judge theories? Is it simply a matter of opinion or personal taste? If there were not adequate ways to evaluate theories, those who assert that they are not interested in theory might be on sounder ground. Fortunately, there are criteria and procedures we can use to intelligently accept or reject a theory. First, we ask whether the theory is internally consistent. That is, are there contradictions within the theory? If so, the explanatory power of the theory is weakened. Second, how well does the theory account for the data (i.e., information) we have amassed about what we are trying to understand? Few theories, if any, will be able to account for all the data; nevertheless, the more data it can account for, the better the theory. Third, how well does a theory agree with other theories we have accepted that relate to what we are trying to understand? A theory that conflicts less with other theories is generally judged as more satisfactory.

A cautionary note to students: When we have subjected our theories to these evaluative procedures, we should not believe that we have achieved something called Truth. The notion that humans can achieve absolute, eternal truth is an ambitious goal that Western civilization has long cherished. It found expression in 5th-century Athens with Plato, in the early Christian era with Augustine of Hippo, and in the 18th century with the Enlightenment philosophers. The evolution of 20th-century science has made us less optimistic about discovering absolute truth, especially in the human sciences. When we argue that it is possible to judge theories, we are simply asserting that some theories explain social phenomena better than others do, not that the ones we judge as better are absolutely true. Social theories will always need

further refinement. What we seek are the best available explanations on which to base our understanding and our most enlightened choices for social action.

Our theory-based explanations are not infallible, but neither are they “just an interpretation,” if by that we mean that they are no better or worse than any other explanation. Our explanations may be strong or weak, more valid or less valid, depending on how well they stand up to critical investigation, that is, how thoroughly and consistently they explain the phenomena we are trying to understand. *Throughout this book, it is important to remember that you are reading neither “the absolute truth” nor “just another interpretation.”* Instead, you are reading the best efforts of scholars who are trying to understand both the historical and the contemporary relationships between schooling and society. You should read these theoretical explanations critically, asking yourself if they do in fact help you better understand your experience with schools and the wider culture.

Schooling

Schooling is also a relatively simple concept but one that is often confused with education. Schooling simply refers to the totality of experiences that occur within the institution called school, not all of which are educational. Schooling includes all the activities that take place within the curriculum of a school—that is, within courses and programs of study. It also includes the activities called “extracurricular,” such as sports, clubs, school newspapers, and other activities not included in the formal curriculum. In addition, schooling involves teaching and learning not included in either curricular or extracurricular activities. This type of learning occurs in the school’s “hidden curriculum” and is generally not spoken of as curriculum by school authorities. Such learning often occurs because of the way schools are structured: their organization, architecture, time management, teaching methods, and authority structures. In the hidden curriculum, students learn powerful “lessons,” for example, about punctuality, respect for and even fear of authority, time organization, and competition for limited rewards.¹

Focusing on schooling as opposed to focusing more broadly on education can reveal the relation of the state to schooling. State governments provide for school buildings and establish length of school terms and teachers’ qualifications. Those of us who have always believed that there was a special connection between public (i.e., state) schools and democracy should remember that for

most of Western history this was not the case. Democratic Athens and republican Rome did not have state schools. For most of Western history, state schooling supported nondemocratic governments. The state schools of Sparta, the Roman Empire, the German states during the Reformation, and until recently 20th-century Soviet Russia all utilized state schooling for nondemocratic ends. All these state schools sacrificed individualism, creativity, and independent judgment in the interest of “citizenship.”

Training

Training, like schooling, is often confused with education. Training may be described as a set of experiences provided to some organism (human or not) in an attempt to render its responses predictable according to the goals of the trainer. After the development of behavioral psychology in the 20th century, training techniques became more sophisticated and took on the aura of science. The increased efficiency of training techniques has led many astute social observers to become pessimistic about the future of creative individualism. This pessimism can perhaps best be seen in the “anti-utopia” novels of that century, such as Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* and George Orwell’s *1984*. What these anti-utopian writers fear is the vast potential for social control and manipulation inherent in training techniques. The potential for indoctrination certainly should be of concern for all educators. However, this does not mean that all training is to be shunned. For example, when approaching a busy intersection, most motorists hope that all other drivers approaching that intersection have been trained to automatically use their brakes when they see a red or yellow traffic light. We all want that response to be predictable. Other examples of the value of training include memorizing multiplication tables and irregular verbs in Spanish. At a more ambitious level, we might refer to a musician’s training in classical piano or a doctor’s medical training, both of which indicate preparation for specific roles. Training, then, has an important but specifically limited value in both schooling and education.

Education

Education is related to training but is more difficult to explain. The educational reformer Abraham Flexner tried this explanation in 1927:

Between education and training there exists a vast distinction. Education is an intellectual and spiritual process.

It has to do with opening the windows of the human mind and the human soul. It involves the effort to understand, to comprehend, to be sensitive to ideas, aspirations, and interests to which the individual might otherwise be indifferent. Not so with training. Training connotes improved ability to do something, without deepened understanding, widened sympathy, or heightened aspirations. One can train a brick layer to lay three hundred bricks instead of one hundred and fifty. One can train a stenographer to increase her speed and skill. . . . But one educates in the realm of thought, feeling, and intelligence. Occasionally, to be sure, training must precede education. One must be trained to read before one can become educated in literature; one must be trained to add and multiply before one can be educated in the higher mathematics; one must be trained to use a fever thermometer, before one can be educated as a physician. But always training concerns itself with tools and devices, while education concerns itself with something that has intellectual or spiritual content and motive. Training is means; education is end.²

Although Flexner's explanation could be more thorough (one can certainly construe medical training to

mean medical education, for example), he does identify significant differences between education and training. Education certainly involves some training. Moreover, it involves some of the processes that make communal living possible. But it is more. Education involves reason, the intellect, intuition, creativity. It is a process or set of experiences which allows humans to "create" themselves. The educated person's responses to a problematic situation are based on trying to understand and make calculations about that situation, hypothesizing possible outcomes, and choosing among possible courses of action. Education builds on the successes and failures of ancestors, whereas training tends to reproduce the response(s) of the trainer. Education produces responses which the educator may not have contemplated.

Because of these differences between training and education, we typically think of training as preparing a person for a specific social or economic role, while education seeks to prepare an individual for a wide range of roles. For example, we typically speak of a nurse's training or a boxer's or a musician's training, emphasizing by this term the skills and understandings needed for each specific role. To be educated, however, is to develop a wide range of human capacities that equip one to fill a variety of roles in one's culture: as a worker, a citizen, a parent, a person who relates ethically to others, a person who uses leisure in productive ways, and so on. Think about it: would you rather be trained or educated—or both?



Learning to use a computer in school is an example of schooling that can help achieve a good education as well as a program of training.

thinking critically about the issues

#1

Identify a classroom experience you can recall from your elementary or secondary education and indicate whether that experience primarily reflected a context of schooling, training, or education or a combination of these. Explain your assessment.

Political Economy

Political economy is a durable, flexible concept that includes the social, cultural, economic, political, and demographic dimensions of a society. To study the political economy of a particular society is to examine how that society is organized—how its structures, processes, and physical and mental resources give it its character and distinctiveness. The school, like the family, the police force, and the banking industry, is one of the institutions that make up the political economy of American society. This book will focus on analyzing those aspects of the political economy which are of special relevance to

American public schools. Crucial to the method of analysis is the assumption that when any part of the political economy experiences significant change, other parts of it are likely to be affected.

thinking critically about the issues #2

Identify a prominent schooling practice—curricular or extracurricular—that most American students have experienced and explain how that practice prepares students for the political economy of the United States. In your view, how educationally beneficial to the student is this practice? Explain.

Ideology

Ideology, like education, is a frequently used concept that is difficult to define. If “political economy” refers to the *material* components of a culture, “ideology” refers to its *ideas*. Every society explains and justifies its social, political, and economic arrangements and its relations to the outside world in terms of what its members understand and value about the world. Members of one society might explain and justify their “free enterprise” system on the basis of beliefs in the importance of private property and individual freedom. Members of another society might justify their military dictatorship on the grounds that social order and control are more fundamental to human well-being than is equality or civil rights. In each case, those who are doing the explaining and justifying are revealing the underlying values that support their respective ideologies.

It may be useful to think of an ideology as an interpretive lens through which a society looks to organize its experiences. Although the notion of a “system of ideas” is no doubt too simplistic and neat, it holds some value for understanding the term.

Ideology does not refer primarily to how individuals think; rather, it refers to the beliefs, value systems, and understandings of social groups. In this book, the term “ideology” refers to the beliefs, values, and ways of understanding that guide policy formation in any society and that are *intended* to explain and justify the society’s institutions and social arrangements—intended, because the ideas and values which explain and justify major social institutions may not be satisfactory to all members of society. The ideology which becomes dominant in a society is almost always articulated by those who derive the most power, goods, and prestige from the existing social organization. Generally, those who bene-

fit most from the social arrangement are more satisfied with the “dominant” ideology than are group members who benefit less. Those who wield less power or are oppressed by society understandably are less satisfied by justifications of existing social arrangements. In many cases, such groups may embrace conflicting ideologies or variants of the dominant ideology. The result can be social unrest and even revolution. Colonial Americans of Benjamin Franklin’s persuasion, for example, shared the same society, but not the same ideology, as loyalists to the king. Similarly, slaves and masters in the pre-Civil War South shared the same society but usually not the same ideology.

Even in relatively stable societies in which social unrest does not approach revolution, it should not be assumed that the dominant ideology is fully endorsed by all social groups and economic classes. It is safe to assume that a society’s dominant economic class can explain and justify the prevailing social arrangements according to the dominant ideology, but such explanations may not accurately reflect the views of people from less privileged economic classes. The police force in U.S. society, for example, may be understood by middle and upper classes as an institution which benevolently enforces the law and protects the rights and well-being of all members of society. People from less privileged economic classes, however, may have experienced the police as an organization which uses its special powers to harass and interfere with their lives in order to protect the advantages of wealth.

This does not mean that various segments of society necessarily develop entirely different ideologies; often they share important parts of the dominant ideology. It does suggest, however, that all classes do not necessarily accept all parts of the ideology that the dominant class most fully articulates.

The history of the term “ideology” is marked by many different uses, but all fall more or less into two main categories: (1) ideology as “false belief” and (2) ideology as a universal condition that underlies all social understanding. Ideology as false belief is illustrated by the statement “Of course they don’t understand freedom; they’re blinded by their ideology.” The underlying assumption here is that ideology is something that distorts “their” vision and prohibits understanding. Central to this notion is that ideology is something that “others,” especially our opponents, have, while we are free of ideology and consequently can see things clearly. However, this is not the view of ideology used in this text.

The view employed here is that ideologies are embedded in all societies, that they facilitate the organization of a

society's perceptions and understandings, and that it is important to recognize ideologies, both our own and others'. To argue that ideologies are embedded in all societies is not to say that we cannot make judgments about ideologies or that the values of a given ideology are as "good" or as true as those of any other. We can, for example, use our own ideology to judge the dominant ideology of Nazi Germany as being morally corrupt. We need not hesitate to make moral judgments just because we recognize they are grounded in our own ideological framework. Without the values and beliefs that our cultural history provides us, we would not be able to make moral judgments at all. Nevertheless, the beliefs and values of any culture should be critically examined for their internal consistency and their consequences in practice.

thinking critically about the issues

#3

Identify a practice in school that you think reflects some component of the prevailing belief system, or ideology, of the contemporary culture and show how the prevailing ideology might be used both to explain and to justify that schooling practice. In your view, is that justification adequate? Explain your position.

Schooling plays an important role in teaching and legitimating a society's ideology. The ideology served by the public school is almost inevitably the dominant ideology of the larger society. This suggests both potential strengths and weaknesses in schooling. Whereas schooling may help people share in the life of their society, it may also help blind them to problems within it. Schooling prepares people to participate in a society's political economy and share its dominant ideology, but by doing so, it may further disadvantage those from the less-advantaged groups while contributing to the already privileged position of the more powerful.

This ideological sharing need not be done in a mindless and uncritical manner that "indoctrinates" students into beliefs and values that might better be questioned. However, the danger is always there. At the heart of the democratic ideal is the belief that children will be afforded the opportunity to mature into independently thinking adults who can analyze and criticize their society and its dominant ideology, who can recognize where its ways of thinking and ways of life are inadequate and in need of improvement. One of the aims of this book is to employ these analytic concepts to help students develop that kind of critical understanding.

Analytic Framework

The relationship between American society and its public schools can best be understood by examining the relationship between three of the six analytic terms: political economy, ideology, and schooling. The relationship is pictured schematically in Exhibit 1.1.

A basic premise of this analytic framework is that an ecological relationship exists among the three components. Any significant change or disturbance in one of them will set off a ripple effect through the others until a new state of equilibrium is achieved. Put another way, this framework shows how political economy (social conditions) and ideology influence each other and how both influence educational practice. It also shows how educational practice in turn influences a society's ideology and political economy. This is not to claim that each of these elements is equally powerful in bringing about change in the others. It seems clear, for example, that changes in the political economy are more influential in causing changes in the schools than vice versa. The important point here is that any one of these elements can be influenced by any one of the others.

The interactive relationship between political economy, ideology, and schooling becomes clearer when they are examined in different historical circumstances. Two different examples from very different societies, feudal Europe and classical Greece, underscore this point. Part 1 of this text will apply the same analytic framework to each of the major historical periods of American education. Part 2 will apply it to some of the most perplexing issues facing today's schools.

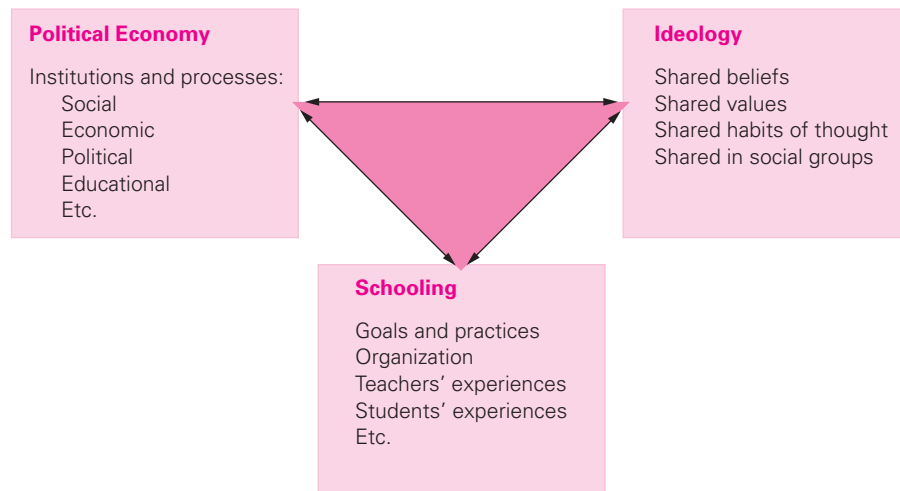
developing your professional vocabulary

A good understanding of this chapter's content would include an understanding of why each of these terms is important to education.

Athenian citizenship	schooling versus
Athenian slavery	education
democracy	social foundations
education through	of education
participation	social theory
ideology	training versus
political economy	education

exhibit 1.1 Analytic Framework

The analytic framework illustrated here appears in every chapter, but it will be different every time. This is because each chapter looks at a different era of schooling or, in Part Two of the book, a different feature of schooling in the contemporary era. The framework in each chapter won't mean a lot to you until you read that chapter but once you have read it, it will serve as a good organizer that summarizes a great deal of information about how schools in Jefferson's era, or in the Progressive era, or in our own era are closely related to the political economy and ideology of that time. The authors selected certain elements of each era to represent the political economy, and other elements to represent the ideology and features of schools at that time. You should be able to see relationships among them. *You might also have chosen differently.* That is, there may be different elements of schooling, or political economy, or ideology that you believe are just as important as those the authors have selected. If you can support your choices with evidence and reasoning, you are demonstrating a good understanding of this material.



Applying the Terms of Inquiry: Two Illustrations

European Feudal Society and Education

Although feudalism took different forms in England, France, and Germany, some fundamental features existed throughout Europe. One such feature was the prevalence of rigid social hierarchies. The feudal social structure has been likened to a pyramid in which very few nobles and landholding clergy occupied the peak, and the remainder of society filled the widening base below. The feudal economy was agrarian, and those few who owned the land ruled the serfs, who farmed the land and gave their crops as rent. The landholder's power over the serfs was absolute, unless it conflicted with the rule of nobility higher up in the hierarchy. At the very peak of this social order stood the king or queen, whose power

was originally based on superior wealth and military force. The monarch protected his or her royal position through wealth and force, and the nobles protected their estates in the same way. Once granted by the monarch or acquired in battle, land was passed down through family inheritance. Since there was no way a serf could acquire land, it is more accurate to say that the serfs belonged to the land they worked. Serfs simply inherited their families' status and their ties to some estate.

The feudal ideology that explained and justified this stratified political-economic order was characterized by a belief—held at least among the nobility—in the divine right of kings. In the seventeenth century, James I of England stated boldly that to dispute the word of a king was the same as disputing the word of God. He reasoned that kings ruled only at God's pleasure and that whatever a king did or declared was an act of God's will. The divine right of kings, therefore, constituted an explanation and justification for the absolute power of the ruler. This justification of power extended down through the dukes,

counts, viscounts, and squires who ruled parcels of the king's land. The leading clergy, who benefited from the extensive landholdings of the church, supported this ideology.

In such a context, it is not surprising that the education of serfs differed entirely from that of nobles and clergy at the top of the social order. The clergy was educated to read and write in order to interpret the Bible and other religious texts. Members of the nobility were educated in the refined manners and culture of the courtly aristocracy, a refinement that distinguished them from the masses of peasants throughout Europe. It has been argued that in language, values, and customs, more similarity existed among nobles from different parts of Europe than between nobles and serfs in their home regions. Serfs were not expected to read religious texts or aspire to the cultural literacy of the courtly society. There were no economic reasons for serfs to become literate, for the barter system consisted of trading goods and services rather than calculating sums of money. Further, the nobles' accountants, not the serfs, determined the proportion of crops due to the landholding families. Similarly, the prevailing political processes required literacy for the ruling classes only, as serfs did not have a voice in the decisions affecting feudal estates. The education of serfs was almost entirely vocational and consisted of on-the-job training to do the work of their mothers and fathers before them. Schools were not needed for such an education. Although numerous exceptions have been documented, this general pattern held true.

The nobles, by contrast, received formal tutoring in the homes of their parents and were occasionally sent away to schools run by famous tutors. In Italy, as early as the 1400s, male children of the nobility received instruction in Latin and Greek, rhetoric, and other "liberal studies" considered appropriate to men freed of labor for the pursuit of culture and leisure. Such educational differences between the courtly and servant classes helped maintain the great gulf between them. Thus the hierarchical nature of feudal political economy and ideology was reflected in the hierarchy of education. Our theoretical perspective here is that any effort to understand feudal schooling would be enhanced by understanding that ideology and political economy.

Schooling and Culture in Classical Greece

To a great extent the courtly society of feudal Europe adopted its ideals of cultured refinement from classical Greek civilization of the 4th and 5th centuries B.C. Like-

wise, many contemporary educational debates can be profitably viewed through the Greek conceptions of reason, freedom, and citizenship and especially through the Greek contribution to the modern conception of democracy. Pluralistic democracy today continues to struggle with the status of groups who, because of class, gender, race, and ethnic prejudice, are systematically excluded from decision-making processes, just as similar groups were excluded from Athenian democracy. However, an understanding of Greek ideals in education first requires an understanding of the historical setting—the political economy and ideology—in which those ideals made sense.

The historical context from which classical educational ideals emerged is perhaps best illustrated by Athens. Although Athens was only one of many Greek city-states, it was the intellectual and creative heart of classical Greece, the home of both Plato and his teacher Socrates and the adopted home of Plato's student Aristotle, all of whose ideas have influenced Western educational thought.

Athenian Political Economy Athens was first of all a city-state: a political and geographical unit which included a central city and the surrounding villages and lands under its protection. During the 5th-century Golden Age of Athens, its population was 350,000 to 400,000 people, including citizens, slaves, metics (neither citizens nor slaves), and children. The foundation of the economy was agriculture, although there was some limited trade, substantial handcrafting of goods for sale, and significant wealth achieved through victory in war. Most of the productive labor was done not by citizens but by metics and slaves.³

The most prominent Athenian social category was that of citizen. There were perhaps 50,000 to 70,000 citizens in Athens, less than one-fifth of the population, but they constituted the governing membership of the city-state. Citizens came from several social classes, ranging from the old Athenian aristocracy to peasants in remote Athenian villages. What these citizens had in common is that they were male, adult, and (with few exceptions) born in Athens. Unless they were very wealthy, they were expected to serve in the military, which the very wealthy supported through taxes rather than combat.

Some citizens farmed, a few did craft work, and a very few pursued commerce, which was considered unseemly. All citizens owned property, sometimes in very small plots, sometimes in great tracts. The wealthiest did not labor on the land, but had their slaves do the work.

Leisure was considered very desirable since it brought an opportunity to cultivate the mind and character and to participate in the city's governance. Consequently, citizens avoided labor if they could afford to.

The most distinctive feature of citizenship was the opportunity to be a voting member of the Athenian general assembly and to serve on the legislative council. It was the business of the council—formally called the Council of Five Hundred because of the number of citizens who served on its various committees—to propose legislation to the assembly, which consisted of all citizens who wished to attend its meetings. Typically, about one citizen in eight attended the meetings of the assembly, at which time they could approve or reject the proposals of the Council of Five Hundred.

Membership on the council lasted only one year, and only two consecutive terms were permitted. Any citizen could run for council membership, but since the work and time required were considerable, the poorer citizens and those who lived far from the center of the city-state were not likely to serve. After candidates were identified, they were chosen by lottery rather than by election. Athenians considered it an important mark of their democratic way that they could trust any citizen, chosen by the luck of the draw, to serve in their legislative council.

It is probable that selection by lot came to an end shortly after Aristotle's death in 322 B.C., as the classical period drew to a close. During the time of his teacher, Plato, oligarchy (government by the privileged few) had ruled briefly from 404 to 403 B.C. Therefore, it should not be assumed that the stable democratic processes that prevailed at the time of Plato's birth (429 B.C.) continued unbroken throughout the Golden Age. Plato's career was a time of tension between the established aristocratic families of Athens and others who sought democracy. Although Aristotle's life spanned a more stable period of Greek democracy than Plato's, the rift between the wealthy few and the poorer common citizen remained.

Despite the achievements of the Athenians in establishing a more democratic way of life, the overwhelming majority of inhabitants were systematically excluded from citizenship. Among these were Athenian women, slaves, children, and metics. Women were not allowed to participate in public life either socially or politically. The "proper" place for the wife of a citizen was in the household, where she could supervise domestic slaves, do household chores, and teach her daughters how to weave, garden, and so on. Women who were not wives or daughters of citizens were slaves or metics.

historical context: classical Athens and feudal Europe

The few selected events in this table help situate the discussion of education in Athens among cultural events that may already be familiar to you. Each of these events provides a clue about the cultural practices and institutions (political economy) and/or the beliefs and values (ideology) of classical Athens. As this chapter shows, education in Athens would reflect the culture's practices, beliefs, and values.

Before the Classical Athenian Era

800 B.C.	Homer writes the first epic poems, including the <i>Iliad</i> and the <i>Odyssey</i>
800	Sparta and other Greek city-states established
776	Olympic games begin
750	Greeks adapt alphabet for writing
594	Solon establishes government reforms that lay basis for Athenian democracy by property owners; serfdom is abolished

Classical Athens

508	Athenian democracy extended to all Athenian freemen rather than only landed aristocrats
496	The playwright Sophocles is born
484	The historian Herodotus is born
469	Socrates, philosopher and teacher of Plato, is born
450	The age of Pericles begins and will last until 429 B.C.
450	The Greek war against Persia ends
447	The Parthenon and other buildings are erected on the Acropolis
428	Plato, student of Socrates and founder of European philosophy, is born
411	An oligarchic regime briefly rules Athens, followed by Spartan rule
403	Athenian democracy is restored
387	Plato founds Academy at Athens
384	Plato's student Aristotle is born
~335	Lyceum, Aristotle's school, is opened
334–324	Aristotle's student Alexander the Great conquers vast empire, including parts of Asia and Africa

Despite major differences, the institution of slavery in Athens bears some similarity to the historical institution of slavery in the United States. Athenian slavery, like that in the southern United States, was chattel slavery, in which slaves were private property. This was not the case in Sparta, where slaves were state-owned. Also like U.S. slavery 2,000 years later, slavery in Athens was fundamental to the life of leisure that the upper-class citizen could expect to pursue. Without slavery, the economic and class systems could not have been what they were.

This does not mean that only the wealthy owned slaves. As was later true of southern white farmers in the United States, poorer Athenians could sometimes afford one or two slaves, who might be required to labor in the house, the field, the shop, or all three. Some slaves also managed farms and shops for their owners.

As was later true in the United States, the Greeks justified the institution of slavery on racist grounds. Non-Greeks were judged fit only to be slaves on the view that the Greeks were a separate and superior race of people. When Athenians defeated other Greeks in battle, men from opposing city-states were rarely made slaves, although women and children might be enslaved. Most slaves, however, came to Athens through a vigorous trade with eastern slave dealers.

Metics were a class of Athenian residents who were neither slaves nor citizens. They came freely to Athens from other lands and were allowed to pursue their lives, but were not granted the voting rights of citizenship. Some farmed, some became successful traders and bankers—occupations which were considered beneath the dignity of a citizen—and many became craftsmen. Some were allowed the privilege of going to battle for Athens if they were able to purchase armor, for each soldier supplied his own.

Metics worked side by side with slaves and citizens in a variety of occupations. Except for slaves, workers controlled the conditions of their labor, owning their tools, setting their own schedules, and setting the prices on finished products. Even massive projects, such as the building of the Parthenon, were contracted in small portions to individual teams of workers—citizens, slaves, and metics together—each man taking responsibility for his own piecework. On such civic projects, these craftsmen contracted individually with the city for their services, and were not employed by a large, wage-paying construction contractor, as is typically the case today. For one citizen to hire out his labor to another was, for an Athenian, a violation of his status as a free person.

The military, for which all male citizens were trained, was a significant feature of the political economy. First, of course, it protected the city-state against aggressive neighbors, such as Sparta. Second, it helped shape the classical conception of citizenship by replacing the great warrior hero of Homer's time with multitudes of common men who could win honor for themselves and their city. The army was supported by taxes paid by the wealthy as well as by the soldiers, whose honor it was to defend Athens.

Athenian Ideology To classical Athenians, the ideal life was one led in accord with Reason and Virtue. Through reason humans could perceive the true realities of the universe, and through virtue they could live in harmony with that universe. Athenians viewed the world not as a random tangle of hostile mysteries beyond human understanding but as an orderly system governed by principles of nature that are discoverable through observation and logical reflection. They believed that humankind, particularly male Athenians, was distinctively equipped with powers of reason that revealed the workings of the natural world. It was this rationality, they believed, that equipped common citizens to govern and be governed by turn in the Athenian democracy.

To live in accord with reason and with the virtues of Athenian culture, rather than according to arbitrary authority or in accord with momentary desires or inclinations, was, in the Athenian view, to live freely. Political democracy was important so that each citizen might live as reason and virtue dictated—to live as one chose and to choose wisely. Women, metics, and slaves were believed to be inferior in rational capacity, and thus their relative lack of freedom and political participation was justified by the dominant ideology.

Athenians believed that the road to virtue as well as to freedom was paved with reason. Virtue resided in acting justly, and justice was determined by reason. They believed that virtue resided in a harmony among the physical, emotional, and rational dimensions of each human being and that it was the rational dimension which must ultimately determine the proper harmony. Virtue also was to be found in moderation in all things, and the slogan “Nothing in excess” served as a guide for daily living. Athenians sought virtue in balancing the needs of the individual with the needs of society, balancing work with leisure, balancing cultivation of the mind and the body, and so on.

Athenian Schooling The schools of classical Athens clearly reflected the political-economic and ideological traits of Athenian society. Schools were available to all young male Athenians, for as citizenship was their birthright, so was the education needed for enlightened citizenship. Females and slaves did not attend schools, although they often received tutoring in order to conduct their affairs and to teach young males at home. Early schooling was not compulsory; it was assumed that all Athenian boys would attend in order to develop their minds and bodies for virtue and wisdom. Boys attended primary school from about age 6 to age 14, and the cur-



Plato taught at the school he founded, the Academy, with the aim of developing an ideal balance of reasoning powers, emotional moderation, and physical fitness.

riculum consisted of gymnastics, literature, and music. Those who could afford further schooling from private teachers—and those lucky enough to find teachers like Plato, who taught free of charge—went to secondary school from age 14 to age 18. There they continued their work in gymnastics, literature, and music but studied dialectic and philosophy as well. From age 18 to age 20, military training was compulsory for all males. The city-state's security, after all, depended on its ability to defend itself against enemy states.

The curriculum of gymnastics combined with music and literature was grounded partly in the Athenian respect for a balance of healthy mind and healthy body. It was grounded also in the view that rigorous gymnastics, including boxing and wrestling, contributed to the preparation for military service. The attention to music and literature was preparation for a life of wisdom, virtue, citizenship, and appreciation of the arts of leisure, such as poetry and drama. The school curriculum did not directly or specifically prepare youths for vocations or occupations. Plato noted that “technical instruction

and all instruction which aimed only at money-making was vulgar and did not deserve the name education. True education aimed solely at virtue, making the child yearn to be a good citizen, skilled to rule and obey.”⁴

Such a position is understandable in light of the Athenian regard for the leisurely pursuits of contemplation, politics, and appreciation of the arts. These leisurely aspirations are in turn understandable within the context of a society in which a privileged minority of citizens was able to rely on a slave and noncitizen population to do the hard work of producing necessary goods. For Athenian citizens, the most important aspect of life was not material wealth but the development of wisdom and virtue. The school curriculum reflected these priorities in its concentration on activities of body and mind that would help develop the good man and citizen.

The case of classical Athens has been given extended treatment in order to introduce issues that will recur throughout the book. For example, the Athenian notion of democracy becomes subject to criticism when it is seen that the majority of Athenians were excluded from

political decision making. This historical backdrop enables us to examine more clearly whether major segments of our society have been, and continue to be, similarly excluded.

Further, Aristotle's notion that a democratic society seeks to provide the same basic education to all its citizens, so that all may be prepared to exercise rational judgment in ruling and being ruled, raises questions about whether our society seeks to provide a similar education to all its citizens or whether, as in feudal Europe, different kinds of education are deemed suitable for different people according to their station in life. At issue too is the degree to which contemporary society embodies the Athenian faith that all citizens are endowed with sufficient rationality to be entrusted with public decision-making powers and whether the primary goals of schooling include the greatest possible development of those powers for all citizens.

Finally, the Athenian notion that individual freedom should include self-governance in the workplace, not just periodic civic participation, raises questions about our limited view of what freedom means in contemporary society. Many other points of contact between Athenian and contemporary social and educational ideals exist. Several will emerge in subsequent chapters.

Concluding Remarks

Chapter 1 introduces the basic analytic vocabulary, or tools of inquiry, used throughout *School and Society*. These tools of inquiry include political economy, ideology, schooling, and social theory. This chapter challenges the common view that good theory is impractical. Instead, it should be recognized that good social theory tries to identify and explain actual phenomena, including the phenomena of practice.

Questions for Discussion and Examination

1. Aristotle believed that in a democratic society all citizens ought to have the same basic education: one that would equip them to serve as legislators and obey laws intelligently. In a nondemocratic society, the basic education people received would be different for different people, for some would be equipped to rule, and others to follow. Judging from your experience in schools, which of Aristotle's

Political economy, ideology, and schooling constitute the three-part analytic framework used throughout this book. These terms should be understood in interaction with one another; each can influence the others. The concept "ideology" is a particularly difficult one. It is easy, but mistaken, to think of ideology only as consciously held views that can be stated as articles of belief, for example, the belief that "all men are created equal." It is important to recognize that behind statements of belief are many assumptions, values, and habits of thought that are less consciously held and that shape the meaning of "all men are created equal." An understanding of ideology helps us understand what words mean for different actors in different historical settings.

This chapter presents brief sketches of feudal Europe and classical Athens to illustrate how schooling, political economy, and ideology are related to each other in particular cultural settings. Investigating how political economy and ideology underlie schooling in these cultures is an exercise in understanding the social foundations of education.

This chapter addresses the question of how to study in social foundations of education can help teachers in their classrooms. It is argued that study of social foundations provides background information about the social contexts of schooling that teachers need to understand the contexts and consequences of their teaching practices. Because meaning depends on context, teachers need to understand the social context of schooling to better understand the meanings of student behaviors and other classroom events. Because different theoretical perspectives may lead to different understandings, students are urged to engage actively in this inquiry, not simply to "learn the text." The authors, after all, are employing their own theoretical lenses as they try to understand the social contexts of education and schooling.

models more resembles American schooling?
Explain your position.

2. Aristotle argued that the primary purpose of education should be to develop human reason. In your view, how does this compare with the primary purpose(s) of education in U.S. schools today? Support your view with evidence from your experience.

3. Choose any single feature of schooling as you have experienced it—organization, rules, processes, subjects taught—and explain how that feature reflects elements of the ideology and political economy of the larger society.



Using the World Wide Web

If you want to know more about classical Athens, its culture, history, and educational ideals, a good place to start is the following website:

**[http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/
ptext?doc=1999.04.0009](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=1999.04.0009)**

What other issues from this chapter might you pursue on the Web for further inquiry?