

Discussion Guide

EDPL 301
Foundations of Education

For use with:
Joel Spring, *The American School 1642-2004*, New York:
McGraw-Hill, 2005, sixth edition.

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Chapter 1, pp. 1-8

Spring states that “one’s knowledge, images, and emotions regarding the past have an impact on future actions. Individuals often make decisions based on what they believe to be the historical purposes and goals of an institution.” Explain.

What is the meaning of the term “culture war?” Why is this concept particularly relevant to the United States? Today?

What does Spring mean when he contends that ideological management is a product of the struggle between differing political and economic groups?

What does Spring mean when he states that for some Americans “racism and religious intolerance have been part of their beliefs in republicanism, democracy, and equality?”

How are economic issues reflected in public schools?

Identify specific ways that public schools are now associated with consumerism and environmentalism. What is the struggle between the two?

Chapter 2, pp. 9-43

The author suggests, “Colonial education illustrates some important social functions of education....” What are these? What similar functions do schools address today?

Kaestle, Cubberly, Curti and Welter have different interpretations of colonial education. What are they? How are these interpretations reflected in schools today?

The author emphasizes the distinction between education as a means of conferring status and education as a means of confirming status. Explain. How is education used today?

What was the distinction between reading and writing schools and grammar schools? According to Merle Curti, why was this distinction important? Is there a parallel with schools today?

Curti argues that “the educational system in New England was designed to protect existing authority by providing a class system of education.” Explain.

What are some of the significant educational differences between schools in New England, Virginia, New York, and Pennsylvania?

Regarding Native Americans, early New England colonists linked religious conversion with cultural conversion. Explain.

Among the early enslaved Africans, how was deculturalization accomplished?

Compare and contrast the educational ideas of the following individuals. How are they manifested in education today?:

Desiderius Erasmus

Robert Molesworth, Commonwealth men

Benjamin Franklin and the Academy movement in North America

Jacques Rosseau

John Locke

What were the functions of the colonial family? What was the relationship of the children to their parents? The wife to the husband? How were these relationships reflected in education?

Chapter 3, pp. 44-72

What were the educational beliefs of Noah Webster? How did he use his books to further these beliefs?

What were Jefferson's ideas on the education of future leaders? The masses? How was morality to be developed?

How was morality defined in late 18th and early 20th century America? How do you explain the importance placed on the teaching of morality, patriotism, and nationalism? What is the situation today?

What was the concept of faculty psychology? Why was it important, and what kind of instruction did it support?

What was the significance of the charity school movement? What was the purpose of charity schools? How is the philosophy behind charity school reflected in schools today?

What was the major advantage of the Lancasterian system? What were its intended outcomes, and how were these to be achieved?

What is the importance of the *Yale Report of 1828*? How was the issue of parental control addressed? What use was made of the concept of faculty psychology?

What factors account for the rapid expansion of colleges? What problems were created?

What is the importance of the *Dartmouth College* case?

How do the historical interpretations of Carl Kaestle and Merle Curti differ? Agree?

Chapter 4, pp. 73-101

Spring states, “three distinctive aspects of the common school movement made it different from past educational developments.” What were these? How are they manifested in public education today?

What was the ideology of the common school movement? What competing ideas make up the ideology?

Who was Horace Mann? What was the problem he was attempting to address?

What was the importance of the Twelfth Annual Report? According to Mann, what were the four “destructive alternatives” to this form of nonsectarian moral education? How do they relate today?

According to Mann, what were the two alternatives for eliminating the problems between labor and capital? Are his arguments relevant today?

Spring states that Mann's "utopian vision of the good society created by a system of common schooling has, and had then, certain inherent problems." What are they?

What were Workingmen Parties? Although they supported the common school movement, they had different objectives. What are these?

What is the position of the Whigs and Democrats regarding the common school? Can similar positions be found among today's political parties? Explain.

Why do you think that the high school was slow to be accepted and supported by the general public? What was its purpose?

There are different historical interpretations of the common school era. What are the interpretations of Cubberly, Curti, Katz, and Kaestle? Who is correct?

Spring suggests, "The protection of a particular set of cultural and religious values was made possible by the way in which control of the school system was organized." Explain.

Chapter 5, pp. 102-133

Spring states, "The common school movement of the 1830s and 1840s was, in part an attempt to halt the drift towards a multicultural society." Do you agree or disagree with his statement?

Why?

How were Irish Catholics characterized? Who were the "dangerous classes", and why were they considered dangerous?

What were Seward's arguments for educating Catholic immigrants, and what did he propose to do?

Why did Catholics consider it important to start their own schools? What was the basis of their claim of double taxation? How did they propose to deal with this issue? What was the political outcome?

Spring observes that “for freed slaves in the North freedom did not mean equality before the law or equality of treatment”. Explain.

Why did a group of black parents ask the Boston School Committee in 1798 for a separate system of schools? Why did they change their position later?

What was the role of the School Committee? What is the importance of the issue of control?

How was the issue of segregation in Massachusetts finally resolved?

What was Jefferson’s approach to the “Indian problem?” Why did it fail? What was the approach used to convince the southern tribes to sell their land?

How was white domination justified? How was the taking of Indian lands justified?

What was the purpose of the Civilization Act of 1819? What did the early missionary schools attempt to accomplish?

What is the dispute between “progressives” and “traditionalists”?

What was the role of “mixed bloods”?

Why did the missionaries tend to reject the work of Sequoyah?

What is the significance of the legal status of Native Americans? Does it make a difference if they are considered occupied foreign nations or “domestic dependent” nations rather than legal citizens?

What was the Indian Removal Act of 1830? How was it implemented and what was the result?

In your view, what accounts for the success of the Choctaw and Cherokee schools?

Explain how the concept of manifest destiny was used to justify the domination of Native Americans. What was the link with religion?

Chapter 6, pp. 134–167

What was the concept of “republican motherhood”?

What is meant by “moral character”? Why do you think it was so strongly emphasized?

Why did school officials seek out women to be teachers? Do these same reasons apply today?

How did school teaching help to open opportunities for women? How did the roles of men and women differ? Why was there a lack of stability in the teaching force?

Following the Civil War, how were elementary teachers prepared? Secondary teachers? What was the outcome of differences in preparation?

What moral, economic and political behavior was expected from teachers? How about today?

What was the role of the teacher institute? What were normal schools?

According to Pestalozzi, how does learning take place?

What is the importance of “social learning”? Activity? Motivation? Nurturing? What should be the relationship between “concrete” and “abstract” learning?

What educational methods did Pestalozzi propose and why were they important in his day? What elements of his theory are practiced in the school today?

The historian, David Tyack observes that “the employment of women appears to correlate highly with the pace of bureaucratization.” What does he mean?

What two interrelated nineteenth century social beliefs were involved in the feminization of teaching and the development of bureaucratic organization? Do these beliefs still exist today?

What was the motivation behind graded course of study? Do we use it for the same reasons today? What are other alternatives?

Why were McGuffey readers so popular? What did the McGuffey readers teach?

According to McGuffey, what was the antidote for “radicalism”? How is the topic of wealth treated? What was the major responsibility of government?

What motivated women to go west to teach? What good did they accomplish?

Chapter 7, pp. 168-205

On what basis was citizenship and attendance in white schools denied Mexican-Americans?

Spring identifies two stages of discriminatory practices toward Mexican-Americans. What motivating factors are associated with each stage?

What has been the educational policy toward Mexican-Americans? How is bilingual education used?

What are the common elements behind segregation practices in California and the South? The North? What are the differences?

What were the images portrayed of "Asian" Americans? How were they used in denying citizenship to the immigrants from the various countries in Asia? What were the effects on educational policy?

How can the provisions of the Burlingame Treaty be explained? Why was the treaty overturned by the Chinese Exclusion Law in 1882?

What is the basis of resistance to enrolling Asian children in “white” schools? What was the outcome of the exclusion of Japanese children?

How does Spring define educational racism?

What is deculturalization? What is the motive?

Explain how deculturalization is accomplished through education.

Why were boarding schools established for Native Americans? What were the objectives? How were they similar to history of education African Americans in the South?

What was the allotment program? What was the practical result?

Why was early childhood education considered important? What were the objectives of grammar school? High school?

What was the outcome of the Dred Scott decision? What was its social impact?

The 14th Amendment ratified in 1868 provided equal protection under the law. How could segregation and discrimination become widespread given the 14th Amendment?

What was the great literacy crusade?

Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois represent two positions on how to pursue the struggle for education. What are they? Who is right? Who has been most influential?

What were the educational beliefs of Armstrong? Who did he appeal to? What were his educational practices designed to accomplish?

Why was segregated industrial education attractive?

What is the political relationship of Puerto Rico to the U.S.? What is the citizenship status of Puerto Rico?

What was the educational policy in Puerto Rico based on? What did it emphasize? Why?

What were the methods of Americanization applied in Puerto Rican schools?

There has been recent political action in a number of states to pass legislation making English the official language. In light of this chapter, how do you interpret this policy action?

Chapter 8, pp.206-242

According to Spring, for John Dewey “the new role of the school was to serve as an agency providing social services and a community center...” What caused the school to take on this new function? What kinds of services were provided? What influences do you see in today’s schools?

What was the role of the kindergarten? What is the relationship between urban reform and the kindergarten?

What was the purpose of home economics in the school? How did home economics affect consumerism and trends in food preparation for schools and society in general?

What was the importance of the playground movement?

Spring states “kindergartens, playgrounds, showers, lunches and nurses were recognized as giving broader social meaning and uses to the public school.” What does he mean?

What was the motivation behind the concept of the school as the social center? Is this concept relevant today?

What was the immigrant “problem,” and what approaches were taken to deal with it?

What is the basis of DuBois’ claim that Booker T. Washington’s compromise was a disaster for black people in the South?

What was the second crusade for black education and why was it necessary?

In what ways was the “Americanization” of Mexicans different from that of European immigrants?

What kind of bilingualism does the LULAC favor? How does this differ from the view of opponents of multiculturalism? (p. 232)

In what ways did LULAC help end legal segregation?

What was the Meriam Report and why was it important?

Why were Japanese language schools supported? Opposed?

What accounts for the failure of deculturalization and Americanization policies in Puerto Rico?

Chapter 9, pp. 243-285

What does Spring mean when he states that it was “the emphasis on education to serve the economic and social functions that shaped the development of the modern high school?”

What was the Kalamazoo decision and why was it important?

What was the Committee of Ten? How did the Committee attempt to avoid “class-based education? What was the result? How about today?

What was the doctrine of social efficiency? What were the key concepts? What is the implication for education?

What was the “battle” between “older academic concepts of the high school and the new doctrine of social efficiency? What was the argument that William Mearns made? How does this conflict relate to the educational reforms advocated today?

What is the importance of the work of G. Stanley Hall? What influence does it have today?

The Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education (*Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education*) suggested that schools provide for “specialized and unification.” In the eyes of the Commission, why were both important? How were they to be achieved?

What problem were both the Committee of Ten and the Commission attempting to deal with? How did their “solutions” differ? Which was more influential?

Why were vocational education and vocational guidance important to the comprehensive school? How did they help to implement human capital development?

What was the Smith-Hughes Act and what did it try to provide for?

What was the argument to vocational education? Is it still valid today?

What problems were educators trying to solve through vocational guidance?

Outline the positions of the following theorists regarding changes during this period:

Cubberly

Cremin

Curti

Karier

Wrigley

Reese

What was Herbartian method? Why did it become so popular? Is it used today?

What is the importance of the educational ideas of Dewey, Kilpatrick, James and Thorndike? How did each view learning? What social goals did each want to accomplish?

What influence do the ideas of Dewey and Thorndike have on education today? Please provide examples.

How did Bagley want to organize the classroom? Why?

How did the concept of equality of opportunity change? How do we conceive of educational equality today?

Chapter 10, pp. 286-316

What is the concept of “meritocracy?” How is it applied to the schools? Does it function today?

Spring states that the concept of meritocracy “was both as social goal and a method of internal organization.” What does he mean?

Spring identifies three sets of ideas used to justify political and administrative changes in schools. What were they?

How did school reform differ in Cincinnati and Atlanta?

What is “Taylorism” and how was it applied to the school? What was the result?

What was the relationship between school administrators and smaller school boards? The business community?

What was the eugenics movement? Explain the nature or nurture argument.

During the early development of “scientific measurement” definite views of intelligence prevailed. Some, such as Karier, argue that intelligence testing was nothing more than a means of “justifying social-class differences and racial discrimination.” Explain.

How did intelligence testing support the concept of meritocracy? How were the masses to be made more confident?

Why was Carl Brigham afraid the “American intelligence is declining?” What was his (along with his wife, Terman, Thorndike, and Goddard) solution?

Why did Terman argue that major emphasis in school should be placed on non-academic goals? Do you agree? How was intelligence testing used to justify segregation?

What is Tropea’s basic argument regarding special classes? Do you think it is true today?

What were the different contributions of the German and English universities to the formation of American universities?

The American university is unique in that it incorporates the concept of social service. Explain. How is the service concept reflected in the university today?

What was the objective of the Morrill Act of 1862? How was higher education to be financed?
What is the case today?

From the American perspective, what is the concept of academic freedom?

Why was Edward Ross dismissed? What was an important outcome?

What factors contributed to changing the pattern of teacher preparation?

Who made up the “educational trust” and what did they accomplish?

Chapter 11, pp. 317-345

How did school administrators consolidate their power?

Why did teachers organize? Why did early 20th century professional teacher organizations tend to be conservative? Why were alliances with organized labor resisted? What changed this?

Why was merit pay supported in Atlanta? What is the basis of determining teacher salaries today?

Why was Ella Flagg Young appointed superintendent of schools by the Chicago School Board? Why was she sacked?

What are the differences between the AFT and NEA? Who represents you today?

How did administrators gain control of the NEA? What was the result? Who controls the NEA today?

According to the author, there were “major political shifts in the educational world” during the 1930s. What were they and what caused them?

According to Mirel, what did the school board in Detroit want to cut? What did the business community want to cut? Why? What was the result of differences in policy?

The SCEE and Phi Delta Kappa analyzed public criticisms of schools. What were the top five criticisms? How do they relate to public criticism of schools today?

Who was George Counts? During the 1930s, what role did the idea of social reconstruction play? What was the consequence?

What were the kinds of “youth problems” that the public was concerned with in the 1920s and 1930s? Could the school deal with these issues? How about today?

What was the CCC? What was the role of professional educators? What was the result?

What were the objectives of the “100% Americanism” campaigns? What kind of pressure did the American Legion put on the schools?

What was the objective of the “American Way” campaign? What were the techniques used by the NAM to control public opinion?

What is the significance of Harold Rugg’s books? What was the reaction of the business and advertising? Why did they react this way?

Chapter 12, pp. 346-374

What was the censorship debate? What was the position of Will Hays? Advocates of government censorship? Religious groups?

Who sponsored the Payne Studies? What did they find? What was their influence? What was the link with the movie industry?

What was the expected outcome of movie appreciation courses and study guides? Why do you think they appealed to teachers? Who benefited?

What was the purpose of the production code? Why was it more desirable than censorship? What did it stress?

What were the arguments of Joy Morgan and William Paley? What was the result?

What was the “blood and gore” problem in the broadcasting and publishing industry? How did the industry react? In the end, who won the censorship battles? Why? How about today?

What are the connections between consumerism and children and youth? How is it exploited? What are the results today?

Chapter 13, pp. 375-404

What was the link between the Cold War, national education policy and educational reform? What was the role of the radical right? Religious groups? Business community? Defense industry? Federal government?

There are similar groups today? What does today's radical right, religious right, and business community want from education? How are their demands similar or different from the 1950s?

What was the universal military training debate? Why was the scientific establishment and the academic community opposed to universal military training? What compromise was reached?

How would you characterize James Conant's educational ideas? What individuals or groups would support his views today? Oppose?

What did Bestor, Zoll, Lynd and Rickover want to achieve? Who supported them? Who did they oppose?

What was the life adjustment movement? What problem were its supporters trying to solve? Why was it attacked? Are there elements of life adjustment programs in today's schools?

What was the NDEA? Who supported it? What influence did it have on schools?

What is the importance of Myrdal's *American Dilemma*? What role did Harrington and Heller assign to education in the war on poverty?

What were the major provisions of Head Start and the ESEA? What was the underlying rationale?

What was the concept of a cycle of poverty? What role was education to play in the War on Poverty?

How did the Carnegie Commission want to use television? What were the views of Gerald Lesser? What were the objectives behind *The Electric Company* and *3-2-1 Contact*?

Chapter 14, pp. 405-440

Spring states “school desegregation and civil rights legislation were not the product of benign government, but were the results of tremendous struggle and public demonstrations.” Explain.

In *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* case, what was the strategy of the NAACP? What was the influence of the work of Clark and Myrdal?

What was so important about Martin Luther King’s policy of nonviolence? Why was it successful?

What do you think was the reason behind the Indian termination policy of the 1940s and 1950s? What was the Native American Languages Act of 1990? What was its purpose?

In reference to Asian Americans, what is meant by the “model minority” image? What is wrong with the image?

What is the importance of the *Lau v. Nichols* case?

What was the importance of the *Mendez et al v. Westminster School District of Orange County* case? The *Delgado v. Bastrop Independent School District* case?

What was the importance of the *Rodriguez v. San Antonio Independent School District* case? Why was the outcome of this case so important to school issues today?

Who supports bilingual education? Who is opposed? What are the underlying arguments? Why is the question of English use so volatile?

What are the views of Banks, Asante and Schlesinger regarding multicultural education? Which one do you agree with? Why?

What is the educational claim for afrocentric schools? Is it valid?

There have been dramatic increases in female college enrollment? What do you think is the cause of this?

What are IEP's and why are they considered a "brilliant political strategy?"

In the 1960's, what kinds of problems did textbook publishers confront with the question of multiethnic series? What was their response?

Spring states "in the new textbook town, multiracial images resided in a world of social harmony...but an integrated textbook town still seemed out of touch with the reality of racial violence and discrimination". Explain.

Chapter 15, 441-476

Why are the religious right major critics of public schools? How does their position relate to what Horace Mann had to say about values in the school? Why are their views influential?

What is the importance of environmental education? Why is it considered a radical paradigm? How has it influenced education today?

What was President Nixon's policy toward education? What was career education and what did it attempt to accomplish?

What was the accountability movement? Who supported it and why? How has it influenced education today?

What were the elements of President Reagan's education policy? What was his motivation? Who was he appealing to, and why was he successful in appealing to groups outside of the educational establishment?

What was the educational strategy of the first President Bush's Administration? How was it similar, and yet different from President Reagan's policies?

What was the role that President Bush (the first) wanted to give the private sector? Why?

What was President Clinton's educational policy? How are his policies similar or different to those of Presidents Reagan and the Bush I administrations?

Spring states "choice, privatization, charter schools, and multicultural education put the final nail in the coffin of the common school." Do you think this is true? Will the common school system survive, and if so, in what form, and for whom?

What are the different arguments for choice, privatization, and charter schools? What will be the impact of these developments on public schools? What will be the impact of these developments on public education? Do you agree or disagree with those who support change? Why?

What are education vouchers? What is the potential impact on public schools?

What is the position of President George W. Bush regarding choice?

As described by Spring, what are the elements of the NCLB Act? What is it attempting to do and how? What do you think its impact will be on schools?

Spring states “equality of opportunity now meant equality of opportunity to consume?” Why do you think he says this? What is it based on?

What are the Implications of the new national standards for Family and Consumer Science courses?

How are fast-food chains influencing education? In your opinion, is this a good thing? Is it necessary?

Using the example of environmentalism, Spring cites the power of Texas, its size, and relationship to the oil industry on textbooks? What do you think of this? Can you think of other examples?