Sociology of Education Bibliography in Preparation for M.A. Comprehensive Exam

This list of literature on “Education” is by no means comprehensive and exhaustive, but gives a taste of the breadth of subjects with which a sociology of education scholar should be familiar. There are classic works omitted from this list and empirical works which are not represented—not to slight those important contributions, but to hone in on the range of theoretical works and controversial ones that have shaped important debates in the discipline over the past twenty years. General topics, themes and tensions that a graduate student should be comfortable discussing include, but are not limited to, the below areas of education studies. Here are two sample education comprehensive exam questions. Please use these a guide to the kind of questions we will ask on the exam:

1. Discussions about the “failure” of the education system in the United States have seeped into the public discourse. Find a recent article in a major newspaper (New York Times; Washington Post; Christian Science Monitor; Wall Street Journal) which addresses the “failure of schools.” Using at least three ethnographic works and some seminal works in Sociology of Education, critique this example of public discourse and discuss the implications for public policy.

2. There is a growing consensus among educators that the “banking method” of teaching is a pedagogy based on an old paradigm. Discuss the critique of the “banking method” and provide a critical analysis of at least two alternative approaches to pedagogy. Be sure to cite at least five seminal works in your response.

Theories and Method in the Sociology of Education

Desegregation, Tracking, and Teacher Expectations

Student-Teacher-Parent Relationships and Curriculum

Critical Pedagogy and Constructing Knowledge in the Classroom

Raced and Gendered Schooling Experiences

Higher Education Access and College Choice

Educational Movements and Reform