Discussion Questions
for
April 11, 2006

Note: Due to the large number of questions I suggest that you team up with one or two students from the class and divide up the questions.

From Spring—Political Agendas for Education:

1) According to neoconservatives, what role do markets play in education? [p.28]

2) How do neoconservatives believe educational markets can be controlled. [p28]

3) What two things have hindered the implementation of this neoconservative view of education? [p.28]

4) Who first proposed this approach to education? [p.29]

5) This radical view of education blames whom for the failures of schools (and education)? [p.31]

6) What groups promoted neoconservative educational ideas to the general public? [p.31]

7) Who was William Simon? What did he do? [p. 32]

8) What was Simon’s plan for conservative intellectuals? [p.32]

9) According to Spring, what are the four tactics used by conservatives to shape education? [p33]

10) What is the Manhattan Institute? [p.34]

11) What does the Manhattan Institute promote about public schools? [p.34]

12) What is Edison Schools, Inc.? [p.35]

13) In the Manhattan Institute’s view of schooling, how would public schools whose students perform poorly on standardized tests would deal with that problem? [p. 35]

14) What is the Bush-Brogan A+ Plan for Education? What did it
15) How does the Manhattan Institute approach research about school vouchers? [p.36]

16) How does the Manhattan Institute influence the media? [p.37]

17) Who is Benno Schmidt, Jr.? [p.37]

18) What is *The Bell Curve*? [p.37]

19) What do the authors of *The Bell Curve* say about affirmative action? [pp.37-38]

20) How was *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) influenced by those conservative and neoconservative think tanks? [p.39]

21) What is the Educators Excellence Network? [p.41]

22) Who is Chester Finn? [p.43]

23) Who is Dianne Ravitch? [p. 43]

24) According to William Bennett, Dianne Ravitch, and Chester Finn, who controls education in the U.S.? [p.44]

25) What are the functions of the Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute? [p.45]

26) Who is Joseph Corrs? [p.46]

27) What does Matthew Spaulding say was the basis of American society? [p.47]

28) According to Dr. Spring, what is *Alien Nation* about? [p.48]

29) What does Peter Brimelow propose about multicultural education? [pp. 48-49]

30) What has been discovered about William Bennett in the past three years which might cast doubt about the value of many of his moral stances?  [from current events]

**From Spring– Conflict of Interests:**

1) Who is Joel Klein? What is his background? [p.32]

3) Who is Randi Weinbarten? [pp.32-33]

4) What is an educationist? [p. 33]

5) According to Spring, what role does conflict often play? [p.34]

6) What did David Berliner and Bruce Biddle write about the testing movement? [p.34]

7) Who is Susan Ohanian? [p.34]

8) What does Peter Sacks say about testing? [p. 35]

9) What was Linda M. Mc Neil’s book about? [p. 35]

10) What does McNeil say is the impact of excessive testing? [p36]

11) What reading techniques does *No Child Left Behind* promote? [pp. 36-37]

12) What is Sylvan Education Solutions? [p. 38]

13) What is an administrative politician?

14) Who was Terrel Bell? What was his complaint about education? [p.39]

15) Who is William Bennett? How did he gain his job within the Reagan administration? [pp.39-40]

16) What is democratic elitism? [p.42]

17) What are the “big three” of interest groups according to Spring? [p.43]

18) What are the contradictory desires of the corporate sector according to Spring? [p.45]

19) Who is John Sciafe? [p. 48]

20) What is “welfare capitalism”? [p.48]

21) What is the purpose of the National Board of Professional (Teaching) Standards? [p.49]
22) What is the People for the American Way? [p.50]

23) What seven criticism does the People for the American Way offer about the Christian Coalition? [p.50]

24) What does Alex Molnar’s book criticize? [p.54]

25) What have religious groups complained about in education according to Spring’s view of the history of the American public school? [pp.55-57]

26) According to Spring, the politics of education involve three areas of conflict. What are they? [pp. 56-57]

27) What three questions do Spring believe have to be answered? [p. 58]

28) How does Spring define culture?

29) What is “Ebonics”? [p. 62]

30) What does Carl Kaestle say was the reason for the creation of the common school system? [p. 63]

31) According to Spring, why did Protestant fundamentalist attack the public schools? [p.64]

From Heck:

1) What are the primary thrust of the perspectives offered in Chapter 6? [p.128]

2) What is utilitarianism? [p.128]

3) What assumptions does the “theory of organizations” entail? [p.128]

4) Why does education receive so much public attention? [p.129]

5) According to Heck, what does the economic perspective address? [p.129]

6) What has led to the increased focus on an economic perspective in education? [p.129]

7) What did Adam Smith say about poverty in Wealth of Nations? [p.129]
8) What has been the concern of the courts in education over the past few years? [p.130]

9) What is the aim of economic analysis of educational policy? [p.131]

10) What is central to the pursuit of efficiency goals in education? [p.131]

11) What level of school organization are analysis beginning to focus upon in education? [p.133]

12) What is production function analysis? [p.135]

13) What is the primary concern of researchers in production function analysis? [p.135]

14) According to Heck, what do educational policymakers have to focus upon in their decisions? [p. 136]

15) What is the basic technique in determining cost effectiveness? [p. 136]

16) What does Levin, who is quoted by Heck, what are the four considerations in making decisions on cost effectiveness? [p. 137]