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Handbook of the Sociology of Education in the 21st Century

Springer

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Foreword

To the question, "Does the sociology of education matter in the 21st century?", this book provides a resounding "Yes!" It accomplishes this feat by vigorously pursuing pressing problems in the field, by examining feasible responses to those problems in theory, policy, and practice, and by considering new ways to increase the chances that evidence produced by sociologists will make a difference in the real world.

Enhancing opportunity and reducing inequality are at the heart of sociology as a discipline, and this is especially the case for the sociology of education, because education both reflects and contributes to stratification and inequality in the wider society. At a time of rising inequality in the United States, it is especially important that sociologists turn their attention not just to assessing the extent and sources of inequality, but to identifying effective responses to inequality (Gamoran 2014). It was heartening, therefore, to discover that access and opportunity constitute a unifying theme throughout this volume.

In December 2013, President Barack Obama called out "growing inequality and lack of upward mobility," which threaten the U.S. economy, social cohesion, and the practice of democracy, as "the defining challenge of our time." In the remaining three years of his term in office, some gaps began to narrow, most obviously in healthcare coverage but in the income distribution as well (Casselman 2016). In education, too, there were already signs that growing inequality may have been on the way toward reversing course (Reardon and Portilla 2016). Yet since the election of his successor and especially with the massive, partisan tax bill passed in late 2017 favoring high-income and wealthy Americans, recent gains may soon be lost. As a result, contributions from sociologists on access and opportunity in education are needed now more than ever.

This volume answers the call with timely reconsiderations of the familiar domain of the sociology of education. It is timely, first, because it emphasizes population groups that have not received enough attention in the past but which are crucial for addressing contemporary inequalities: immigrants, including undocumented young people; students who are the first-generation in their family to attend college; and sexual minority youth. Moreover, the familiar sociodemographic groups defined by gender, race, ethnicity, and social class are explored with greater attention to their intersectionality—the way these categorizations intersect and the special consequences for inequality of such dual or triple status distinctions—than in much of the past literature

in sociology. The authors bring both theoretical and empirical aspects of intersectionality to bear on the challenge of understanding and addressing inequality.

Second, the work is both timely and needed because it recognizes the centrality of the opportunities young people have to experience rich, meaningful, and effective schooling. Whether the focus is on cognitive gains, social and emotional skills, or economic advances, productive opportunities for learning and interacting with others are at the core of the educational enterprise. Many of the chapters of this Handbook peer intently at how students' social and academic opportunities vary. To improve outcomes and reduce gaps, it is essential to consider, assess, and improve approaches to enrich young peoples' opportunities for learning and interaction.

Third, the chapters in this volume offer timely attention to the transition from schooling to the world of work. As technological developments have changed the nature of work and put a premium on skills as a determinant of economic rewards, schooling plays an increasing role, via both human and social capital development. Advancing equity in the twenty-first century requires that sociologists examine connections between access to schooling and workplace opportunities. Moreover, the last two decades have witnessed increasing attention to various forms of higher education within the sociology of education, and these developments are well represented in this Handbook.

Fourth, the volume is innovative in its attention to the challenges of getting evidence from research into the hands of policymakers and practitioners who will take the evidence into account when making decisions that affect young people. Typically, even the strongest contributions in the sociology of education have much more to say about the extent, sources, and consequences of inequality than about ways to *reduce* inequality. This volume, however, includes several chapters that focus on ways to reduce gaps. Even the most insightful research, moreover, will fail to contribute to equity if does not confront those making decisions. Research is more likely to influence policy and practice if it occurs within the context of ongoing relationships between producers and consumers of research, and the intermediary organizations that bring them together, as contrasted with the more typical approach of researchers acting on their own from within the metaphorical ivory tower (DuMont 2015). Consequently, this Handbook brings valuable attention to such relationships, in the form of teacher networks and research–practice partnerships, which may help turn research into action.

Why should sociologists of education focus on ways to *reduce* inequality (Gamoran 2014)? First, inequality in the United States is excessive, whether compared to other countries or our own past history. Second, excessive inequality is harmful, as it is socially divisive and a drag on economic productivity. Third, we are not paralyzed in the face of inequality; on the contrary, it is demonstrable that social programs can reduce inequality. The War on Poverty has not been won, for example, but there is less poverty today than there would be without the social programs enacted through this set of policies (Bailey and Danziger 2013). Fourth, we need research to identify which programs will be effective in reducing inequality, and that is the point of entry for sociologists of education.

Finally, the strength of this volume is that it examines specific strategies to improve access and opportunity in areas ranging from school–family relationships to charter schools to community colleges and alternative certification programs and other domains. Yet such interventions may be modest balms to heal major sores; that is, even the most effective programs may have little potency when larger social structural conditions preserve the deeply stratified foundations of society. Perhaps uniquely among the social science disciplines, sociologists have a role to play in exploring the structural foundations of inequality, demonstrating that reducing gaps is not merely a matter of providing equal access, but of dismantling and reconstructing the social structures that create unequal opportunities in the first place. Here, too, woven throughout many of its chapters, this Handbook provides the right place to start.

President, William T. Grant Foundation   Adam Gamoran

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Preface

One of the major intellectual leaders in the discipline of sociology, and sociology of education in particular, was Professor Maureen Hallinan. Over her exceptional career in sociology, she conducted some of the most theoretically and empirically path-breaking studies on ability grouping; friendship ties; and the intersection between educational opportunities and race, ethnicities, and socioeconomic resources among students in public and private high schools. Her volume on the *Handbook of Sociology of Education* demonstrates the breadth of her vision and how she viewed the field of sociology of education at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Central to her vision was the idea that sociology of education is principally about the study of schools in three intersecting domains: (1) the formal organizational structure of schools and the interrelationships they have with other social systems such as the families and communities; (2) the internal function of schools that shape student and teacher social behaviors, attitudes, and performance; and (3) the estimation of schooling's impact on educational and occupational attainment. A volume on *Sociology of Education* should be about the study of schooling, as Hallinan elegantly describes in the introduction of her handbook, but the study of schooling has changed quite dramatically since 2000. This volume encompasses a new range of topics, methodological developments, and contributions sociology of education is making to educational practice and public policy.

Schooling careers begin in the family, and this volume is designed to be holistic in its coverage of the role of the family in their children's education from preschool through postsecondary education. The actions parents take with their children to advance their learning and how they vary by race, ethnicity, and social and economic circumstances are a critical aspect of sociology of education. Recognizing the importance of how families view education and the actions they take regarding their children's education, several chapters explore preschool education opportunities, homeschooling, school choice, and parent direct involvement in supplemental out-of-school activities which are of intellectual and political interest. The intent of many of the authors is to underscore how education norms—actions, interests, and sanctions—are developed and reinforced in the home, community, and school, rather than exclusively focusing on connections between the family and the school.

The outcomes of education are no longer measured strictly by academic achievement. Today, we increasingly recognize the interrelationships between

academic performance and social and emotional learning that occurs through-out one's schooling career. Many of the chapters blend the relationship of these outcomes and their association with transitions into successful adult-hood. Just as some of the authors examine the early beginnings of informal and formal schooling, several of the chapters move beyond the K–12 system to postsecondary education and beyond. The widening interest in higher edu-cation today needs a deeper and more comprehensive focus on the changing landscape of the variety of postsecondary institutions and the respective pop-ulations they serve. Several authors take up how labor market opportunities are enhanced or impeded by different postsecondary education, trainings, and occupational pathways.

Instead of placing a special section on inequality of educational opportu-nity, social justice, and questions of meritocracy and privilege, the authors take up these issues in the context of their work on such topics as school choice, accountability systems, teacher performance assessments, and special services for various populations including immigrants, undocumented stu-dents, and those with special needs. Several chapters are devoted to examin-ing the continuing problems associated with race and social class, and more recently sexual orientation, all of which are discussed in relation to how larger educational social systems operate differentially and prejudicially for certain populations they serve.

There are a growing number of sociologists of education who are under-taking new methodological work for studying social systems, including net-work analyses, impact of household resources on educational mobility, and school and teacher effects on student performance. Some of these chapters are included in sections to demonstrate how context including communities, structure of the school year, and state policies mediate students' lives in and out of school. The work of these individuals is also included here in part to underscore how sociologists of education, who were among the first to model and estimate the nested structure of students within classrooms between schools, are now being followed by these authors and the contributions they are making for the study of education.

Moving away from standalone chapters on topics such as "the history of curricular tracking," all of the authors were asked to provide a historical theo-retical overview to situate their topic and empirical work in the area. What this means is instead of a single theoretical section, each chapter has its own theoretical framing, including a major emphasis on the seminal empirical work in this area and a critique of its relevance to today. Additionally, the volume has a unifying theme, in that each of the chapters touches on the issues of institutional access and opportunity in the K–16 system for different groups of students (e.g., including race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, abil-ity, and special needs), taking into account immigration status and regional differences.

This book is not your traditional sociology of education volume; it is not narrow in its scope. It is forward-thinking and captures the issues that are now facing education, threading back to their provenance, and weaving them into a matrix that has cross-disciplinary interest for those in sociology, education, and other social science fields. Edited specifically for undergraduate,

graduate, and policy audiences, the message is one that reinforces why we need to be vigilant in addressing how inequities in schooling are manifested in the educational system. The major emphasis of all the chapters is that it is the social context of education that forms and shapes inequality of educational opportunities.

Perhaps the most unusual aspect of this volume is the authors themselves. Invitations for the chapters were sent to key senior authors in each of the chapters that constitute the five sections of the book. The invitations asked each to select their most promising graduate student(s) and/or newly minted colleague(s) to be a coauthor. The idea was not only to make the ideas fresh but to encourage the next generation of sociologists of education to take the reins on our future. I am thrilled that so many of my colleagues took up the offer and have produced some of the best chapters on the state of sociology of education today and where it needs to be for tomorrow.

I am very appreciative to all the authors and their dedication and commitment to the process and how quickly the book has come to fruition.

There is one person who truly made this book happen, and that is Guan Saw, the associate editor. His help has been invaluable in the development of this volume, and he is mainly the one who kept it on track. Like many of the authors in this volume, at the beginning of last year, he took his first academic position as an assistant professor at the University of Texas San Antonio, and kept the press on me and everyone else to bring the volume to completion. His ability to conquer multiple theories and methodologies is indeed remarkable. It is because of his contributions that the volume consists of a range of authors whose knowledge spans a diversity of emerging topics at the nexus of sociology of education.

And finally, we also contacted two blind senior scholars and those with specialized expertise as reviewers for each chapter. Their names are listed in the appendix. Thank you all.

East Lansing, MI, USA   Barbara Schneider
September 2017

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Introduction

To achieve a more equitable, just, and functioning society, we need to pay attention to why some less-advantaged students receive a substantially lower quality of education than their more-advantaged peers. We need to understand why the educational needs of those with limited economic and social resources remain unheeded while the institutions that serve them remain woefully inadequate. This Handbook is not a well-rehearsed summary of the seminal work in the sociology of education—work that is often mired in debates of equity and barriers to social mobility. It is instead a compilation of 25 chapters that takes a contemporary sociological view of the issues facing education in the U.S. today, including the sources of many of these problems and what is needed to address them. Each chapter in this volume attends to the theoretical underpinnings of educational inequality while often turning them on their heads, questioning their relevance for today's varied educational landscape and the unforeseen—but now unfortunately real—social and economic consequences of inequality.

The sociology of education has long retained a central place in the field, as scholars recognize the importance of how families, communities, and schools shape individuals' actions and attitudes. It is not just the impact of social systems that continues to intrigue researchers but *how* these interdependent systems function as they interact both with the environments in which they exist and the smaller units within the systems themselves. A key objective of this volume is, therefore, to capture how social systems affect individuals and how social systems are shaped by their environments. To understand why some individuals succeed when the odds are clearly against them, or how some schools become sites of exemplary education in spite of limited resources, we need to investigate the interrelationships among individuals and their social systems. As a result, the chapters in this volume do not separate the individual or the institution from one another. Instead, the focus is on the actions and values embedded in each and how they relate to one another. The Handbook is organized into five major sections, each of which examines an interlocking theme that characterizes these interrelationships.

Part I. Families, Schools, and Educational Opportunity

Our volume begins with the family, which over the past 50 years has become a hallmark of the way values, resources, and subsequently social class are transferred from parents to children. The chapters in this section describe how this process is disrupted by social systems, such as schools and communities that interface with the family. Special attention is given to communities, which often receive limited consideration but can be powerful transmitters of the cultural values and attitudes that motivate actions by families, their children, and schools. Schools shoulder the primary responsibility for fostering successful academic performance—though they have the support of families and communities, schools cannot achieve this goal without society as a whole taking a major role in improving educational opportunities for all students.

Chapter 1, by George Farkas, bridges the relationship between parents' occupations and dispositions and their children's skills and habits, then examines how these characteristics influence teachers' judgments of student outcomes. Using the theoretical perspective of Pierre Bourdieu, Farkas describes how social class differences in parenting and parenting resources relate to school success and educational attainment. His comprehensive analysis of Bourdieu brings a clarity to how social class is reproduced, using an empirical analysis of middle school children through which he shows that the strongest determinants of grades are not cognitive skills but work habits demonstrated in school. Work habits include social learning behaviors such as "works well independently and with others," "is courteous," and "persists and completes tasks"; reviewing studies of these social behaviors, Farkas argues for their closer examination in relation to student performance, and cautions researchers against attributing differences in performance to broad distinctions of parents' social class activities (i.e., parent-organized activities and involvement in schools). This sociological emphasis on how students work in classrooms corresponds, in part, to many of the social behaviors that social psychologists have identified as fundamental to learning, such as a student's ability to persist at a task. The chapter concludes with policy prescriptions and suggested research studies showing how teachers' judgments of work habits can be used more effectively to lessen variation in academic performance.

Chapter 2, by Erin McNamara Horvat and Karen Pezzetti, extends traditional conceptions of family and provides an evidential voice to the importance of community for improving educational outcomes and reducing educational disparities. Reviewing work by James S. Coleman on social capital—the value of the relationships of an individual or a group—the authors argue that this perspective is critical for understanding school–home–community relations. They then highlight others who have stressed the significance of trustworthy connections for school success. This chapter describes how relationships are not composed of groups of "equal players" but commonly function through power and privilege across different racial, ethnic, and social classes, often forming unequal opportunities for parent participation and allocation of educational resources. These ideas have been

incorporated into several new interventions that foster "grassroot" involvement to stimulate demand for parent and community organizing—not only for school reform, but in the neighborhoods where the schools and the students they serve are situated. There is substantial evidence about these types of parent and community initiatives, but the authors are cautious in explaining why reform requires serious study of the relationships across school, home, and community.

The last chapter in this section, by Douglas B. Downey, Aimee Yoon, and Elizabeth Martin, shifts our focus to the school. The authors' primary argument is that although schools start the formal educational process late in a child's development, they can (and have) made a difference in improving academic performance and social development, including schools attended by disadvantaged children. Beginning with the traditional narrative about schools and inequality—which posits that schools can only do so much to alter the huge variations in academic performance primarily due to disparate family, social, and economic resources—this chapter presents the alternative explanation that not all schools function in the same way: Some are more successful than others in producing positive academic outcomes. Neither of these explanations, the authors maintain, explain how schools can influence inequality. What, they ask, would inequality look like if schools did not exist? To answer this question, the chapter reviews several seminal studies of seasonal comparisons of schools—that is, comparing changes in achievement gaps when school is in session over a 9-month period, in contrast to the 3-month summer break. The authors provide several rationales for why this "seasonal approach," including its limitations, is particularly useful for overcoming problems with isolating school effects. They show that older studies suggest that summer can be a time when achievement gaps increase more than in the school year, while newer studies with larger samples show the opposite—that is, the Black–White achievement gap grows faster during the school year. Yet, when examining achievement by socioeconomic status, results show that the variation in children's skills grows about 50% faster when they are out of school than when school is in session. With the recognition that schools can only do so much, the authors nonetheless conclude by identifying several policy options that they suspect would likely benefit low-SES students and reduce inequality in mathematics and reading skills.

Part II. The Changing Demographics of Social Inequality

The landscape of the U.S. educational system has changed dramatically over the past several decades as the number of racial and ethnic minorities has continued to grow, eclipsing the White public elementary and secondary school population in 2014 (NCES 2017). The U.S. school population also serves increasing numbers of immigrants, whose resident status can limit access and persistence within the educational system; many are the first in their families to attend college, and face multiple obstacles as they try to navigate the increasingly complex postsecondary system while retaining a sense of belonging. Females now outnumber males in high school completion and

higher education enrollment, but still fail to enter or advance in some occupations. Society's recognition of the multidimensionality of gender and sexuality—lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ)—has major implications for the educational system as it must now address the physical, social, and emotional needs of youths' gender and sexual identities. The six chapters in this section center around the ways in which the educational system has and has not assured equality of opportunity for these populations.

Samuel R. Lucas and Véronique Irwin begin Chap. 4 by presenting evidence of disparities in educational performance for students of different socioeconomic and racial backgrounds, and question why this is the case: What theories can explain why these patterns exist and have for multiple years? The authors describe their criteria for what constitutes a viable theory of inequality, separating theories into those that are *expansive* (generalizable, dynamic, and include processes or mechanisms) and those that are *narrow* (specific, static, and correlational). In either case, any claims made by these theories need to reference conceptual entities, be observable, map on to multiple patterns, be internally consistent rather than contradictory, and not be repetitive or redundant in their assertions. Focusing only on expansive theories of inequality, Lucas and Irwin identify ten such theories, highlighting their strengths and limitations for reducing inequality. The authors then engage in an in-depth assessment of combining theories, two of which they undertake empirically. Others—stereotype threat, the Wisconsin social-psychological model, and incorporation theory—have evidential claims and are presented as conceptually linked, though not empirically investigated by the authors. The chapter concludes with a message for why theories are important and need to be developed: If we are to remedy class- and racial/ethnic-linked educational inequality, there needs to be a justifiable explanation for its persistence that extends beyond singular theories that are fairly narrow in scope and difficult to reconcile.

In Chap. 5, Phoebe Ho and Grace Kao introduce their argument that contextual factors *beyond* family socioeconomic class distinctions account for significant differences in the education performance and attainment of racial/ethnic minority students by presenting evidence from the largest national educational survey of U.S. students: the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP). Using data from preschool enrollment through postsecondary completion that show differences in performance, the authors consistently highlight the process mechanisms (quality early childhood programs, coursework, college preparatory activities, and college access and affordability) that are often neglected in the allocation of education resources devoted to minority and immigrant children but that could be directed to them to promote educational success. An important contribution of this chapter is its examination of how students identify themselves, through a review of studies that debate the existence of a racial and ethnic hierarchical structure that reifies existing stereotypes, power structures, and intergenerational family conflict. The authors conclude with an in-depth discussion of the nonfamilial resources that are likely to matter, especially with respect to the educational success of minority and immigrant students; these include teacher expectations, straddling school and peer cultures, and neighborhood effects,

particularly in areas with substantial increases in immigrant populations. In light of recent racist and anti-immigrant sentiment, how and why these education mechanisms affect the academic performance and social well-being of different groups takes on unprecedented immediacy and importance, both nationally and globally.

The intersectionality of gender, race, ethnic identity, and performance are the thematic conceptions that link the arguments and evidence Catherine Riegle-Crumb et al. present in Chap. 6, to show disparities in educational performance and identify considerations for future studies of education. Selecting grades, test scores, and course-taking—three observable measures that strongly predict students' postsecondary school success—and including factors linked to labor market participation, the authors demonstrate how these indicators sustain educational inequality and their impact on the labor force. The first part of the chapter examines gender differences in education, showing a female advantage with respect to grades and course-taking but a disadvantage with respect to enrollment in highly selective universities and some STEM fields. Theories attempting to validate these differences, the authors argue, are (1) too concentrated on a specific disparity; (2) contradictory to explanations regarding socialization; and (3) tautological, especially with respect to field of study (these criticisms reflect criteria identified by Lucas and Irwin in Chap. 4). Next, the authors concentrate on patterns of racial and ethnic differences in educational outcomes, arguing for the development of theories that target resource allocation and opportunities within school, and economic and social factors outside school, to understand inequities (points also made by Downy et al. in Chap. 3). The chapter concludes with an explicit agenda for future research that questions the reliance on standardized testing as an outcome measure; emphasizes more attention to school context and how it shapes inequality; and stresses the need for a clearer representation of the intersectionality of gender, race, ethnicity, and performance and its import in the social context of young people's lives.

In Chap. 7, Roberto G. Gonzales and Edelina M. Burciaga discuss research—theirs and others'—that describes the challenges undocumented youth experience growing up in the U.S., and how the youths' responses to these challenges relate to aspects of their schooling careers (i.e., enrolling in college versus leaving high school before completion) and location (i.e., living in urban versus rural environments, or in specific states). Although they lack legal citizenship, undocumented students can attend schools, which the authors label legally protected spaces. But these protected spaces are typically located in segregated, high-poverty neighborhoods, where schools are under-resourced and unapproachable for undocumented parents seeking additional educational services, such as for children with special needs. Recognizing the lack of large-scale data collections on undocumented students, the authors draw on their own intensive qualitative longitudinal studies in urban areas; these studies examine the values, social relations, and agency of undocumented youth, and the sense they make of their racial and ethnic identities. The chapter highlights the authors' individual research, specifically on the conflict regarding what it means to be undocumented and to claim one's country of origin; and how students grapple with what being

undocumented means for their ability to, for instance, get a driver's license, apply to college, and access different sources of financial support. For these "exiters" (the authors' term), experiencing a lack of high-quality instruction, educational services, and meaningful connections in school often results in dead-end jobs and living in fear of deportation; these circumstances take their toll, with many exiters experiencing mental and physical problems. The college-goers are not without their own pressures and stresses that can derail persistence, whether over finances, the questionable future of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), feelings of exclusion, or other college-related decisions (usually state-specific). Scholarly interest in undocumented students is likely to escalate in light of pending court cases that will determine not only these students' citizenship status, but what that status will mean for their future lives, both in the U.S. and their country of origin.

Chapter 8, by Irenee R. Beattie, delves deeper into the first-generation college students (FGS)—students whose parents did not complete their college degrees. Beattie argues that though sociologists have been relatively slow to study FGS, this population now constitutes a significant proportion of those attending college, especially among those in 2-year colleges (although, as she points out, these estimates are often inconsistent). As Riegle-Crumb and coauthors argue in Chap. 6, it is the intersectionality of FGS with gender, identity, and immigration status that can help isolate and track how institutional variation has interfered with students' transition to college, persistence, and completion. FGS, Beattie argues, represent a key population for understanding how and why social mobility functions differentially for some populations and not others. She suggests we examine more closely the ways in which social (e.g., living on campus, interacting with faculty and other students, developing friendship networks) as well as academic (e.g., academic and career advising, academic support programs) experiences shape their educational success. Recognizing that there are multiple transition problems for all groups entering postsecondary school, Beattie explains that her focus is on what happens to young people *after* they enter college, where the more obvious markers of institutional inequality can be observed and linked with individual experiences. She shows how traditional and newer sociological theories are useful but lacking in some respects, especially regarding the "messy" distinctions of social class, as these are often fine-grained; difficult to discern; and vary significantly by gender, race, immigration status, and parental economic resources. This chapter, together with the others in this section, underscores why sociological insights are important for understanding educational inequality, and that such insights need to be realized in useful educational policies across all levels.

The last chapter in this section, written by Jennifer Pearson and Lindsey Wilkinson, examines the experiences of LGBTQ students in educational contexts. Unquestionably, how to protect the civil rights of LGBTQ students has become one of the most prominent issues of this decade, from housing in postsecondary institutions and use of bathrooms/locker rooms to participation in extracurricular activities or registering for the armed services. What it means to refer to oneself or others as LGBTQ, and its significance with respect to educational opportunities, comprise some of the topics in this

chapter, for which data and literature have thus far been sorely inadequate. Pearson and Wilkinson do not stop with identifying the problems often attached to labeling and insufficient data issues, but instead use their and others' work to highlight the types of abuse LGBTQ students are likely to encounter at school (such as bullying and harassment), how the abuse varies developmentally, and how it depends on school contexts (such as the demographics of the population the schools serve and if they are situated in urban, rural, or suburban areas). The ways in which these experiences affect students' academic engagement, academic success, and sense of self are also reviewed, including discussions of differences in social and emotional variation among racial and ethnic subgroups—although here again the research is limited. As schools and other social institutions struggle with legitimate and appropriate responses to the LGBTQ population, the authors offer recommendations for how schools can implement more supportive and effective practices, including curricular revisions, teacher training, and community responsiveness.

One has to ask the question, who is being left out? Most of the chapters in this section include references to *all* racial/ethnic minorities in the U.S. population. However, there is a dearth of research on Native American students, who comprise about 1% of the student body in public elementary and secondary schools (Fryberg 2013; NCES 2017) and whose population is diminishing, with limited access to high-quality schools. There are also growing numbers of certain religious populations, such as Muslims (Hossain 2017), who are not recent immigrants but also face severe discrimination in some schools. Hopefully, in future work, these populations will receive increased attention in both the research and policy arenas. The authors in this section are in agreement that reducing inequality remains a deep concern, both for the generations of racial and ethnic students who have repeatedly experienced a lack of educational opportunity, and for those who have recently found themselves in these situations.

Part III. The Social Organization of Schooling and Opportunities for Learning

In keeping with our intent for this volume to uphold a future perspective, the six chapters in this section take on several longstanding themes in the sociology of education—including public versus private schooling, curricular differentiation, teacher preparation, and the teaching profession—showing why they are in need of revision and how researchers are tackling these topics today. Incorporating a variety of data sources and methodologies, the authors frame their discussions by explaining how we need to conceptualize and measure the often-unpredictable boundaries that comprise the social context of schools and the diverse populations they serve. It is this uncertainty in the environment that places new demands and pressure on schools to create a more equitable educational system.

School choice, as Megan Austin and Mark Berends explain in Chap. 10, has become a primary organizing principle for the entire educational

enterprise, from pre-kindergarten through postsecondary institutions, across the public and private sectors. Varied in its governance, economic support, and client base, controversies over school choice's effectiveness for improving student achievement and attainment and parent/student satisfaction continue. Most recently, these controversies have ushered in a political firestorm of debate on one of its dramatically expanding entities: charter schools. The authors review several major studies on charters, voucher programs, and Catholic schools, identifying explanations for their present varied achievement and attainment effects (charters and vouchers) and potential for producing sustained performance effects (Catholic schools).The second part of the chapter introduces several economic (market and competition) and sociological (institutional) theories to provide an underlying rationale for why choice should have positive effects on enhancing improvement across the whole enterprise. Summarizing these results, the authors conclude that, with respect to theories, small effects on achievement and attainment do not seem especially compelling for either economic or sociological theories. With respect to innovation, results again appear mixed, especially when taking into account reforms over time. The chapter next takes on the question of whether school choice enhances access to high-quality schools of varying types, drawing heavily on sociological research and theories and focusing on issues of parental school selection/preferences, segregation, information channels, social networks, and school organization—all of which point to persuasive reasons for the heterogeneity of school choice effects. Austin and Berends conclude by suggesting that we should consider these inconsistent results the "first wave" of how school choice affects students and schools, not as definitive evidence for a fundamental policy change.

Whether or not a student attends a school of choice or the local comprehensive public school, how the student's learning opportunities are organized, and the processes by which they occur, is undoubtedly one of the major factors contributing to differences in educational performance and occupational outcomes. Chapter 11, by Jamie M. Carroll and Chandra Muller, provides a rich history of curricular differentiation—the systematic, formal, and informal school curricular process that determines which courses students take; who takes them; when in the schooling trajectory they are taken; and what instructional goals and strategies teachers use. One description of curricular differentiation places it on an axis, with the vertical delineating what is taught at different grade levels and the horizontal delineating the variation in instruction taught at the same grade level (Sørensen 1970). It is the wide variation between what should be taught and what is actually taught that has resulted in a highly differentiated system in which more economically and socially advantaged students receive advanced coursework and often higher-quality instruction than students who are less-advantaged, including those with special needs and English Language learners (ELLs). The ways curricular differentiation occurs in the U.S. today (within and between schools), and how researchers measure student learning outcomes across the entire system (including the value of collecting and analyzing student course portfolios/transcripts), are discussed in the next section. The advent of these improved methods has produced a more transparent view of how curricular stratification

occurs both within and across schools, especially for poor students, racial and ethnic minorities, and special needs students. Some of the more menacing problems with curricular differentiation, the authors explain, lie not just with content exposure but the fact that differentiation has been a major predictor of school attainment, postsecondary enrollment and completion, occupational status, and health. In other words, what is taught and learned in school has profound effects not only on the students but on the health and well-being of our society.

Chapter 12 by Sean Kelly et al. looks specifically at instruction, and begins with the following questions: Is there systematic variation in teaching quality across different populations of students that leads to gaps in student performance? If so, what efforts are needed to remediate this situation? The authors emphasize that to improve teacher quality it is critical to examine how teacher quality is identified and measured, what teaching practices are employed in classrooms, and what school social and organizational supports impact teacher effectiveness. This is not a trivial distinction: The literature (which the authors review) tends to measure teacher quality by attributes such as education level (e.g., baccalaureate versus master's degree), college selectivity, experience, test scores, and quality of degree-granting institution, and then relate these to student performance. The most consistent findings indicate that poor and low-performing students tend to have more inexperienced and less subject-matter qualified teachers than advantaged students. However, the authors argue, observed teacher characteristics seldom explain much of the variation in student achievement; if we are serious about improving teaching quality, we must examine what happens in different types of classrooms. The chapter turns to the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) project, one of the largest randomized studies of teacher effectiveness in the U.S. which showed that some teachers are more effective than others in raising student achievement, and that students who were assigned to highly effective teachers experienced higher levels of achievement growth. Many of these highly effective teachers also scored higher on observations of best practices. These effects are not without critics, however, who raise concerns about the generalizability of teacher effects to other outcomes, and the stability of effectiveness over time. Reporting on several additional studies, the authors reinforce the idea that though high-quality teaching may occur with different types of students and in different subjects, this variability is more likely to be detectable with teachers ranked in the mid-range than those at the top or the bottom. Nevertheless, this chapter concludes with the assertion that to reduce educational inequality, it is imperative to identify gaps in teaching quality within and between schools, and teachers' relationships to the diverse students they serve.

The nature of social relationships among individuals and social systems has been, and continues to be, at the core of the sociology of education. In Chap. 13, Kenneth Frank et al. review how social networks among school personnel coordinate actions and allocate resources that influence opportunities for education. Social network theory and analysis has exploded within the last several decades, and Frank is one of the foremost researchers in this area; he has studied how the flow of information and other resources within formal and informal social groups oftentimes reifies group perceptions and

behaviors that directly generate positive or negative learning opportunities. The role of these networks is dependent, in part, on the selectivity and perceived influence of the groups' position in the larger social system. This chapter briefly describes the basic structures and processes of these social networks based on existing studies, indicating how researchers using network methodology—particularly graphics—can extend these representations into formal models showing selection and influence effects on members' interactions. Formal selection and influence modeling specifications are presented, along with examples. With respect to questions of inequality of opportunity, Frank and coauthors underscore how some groups can either diffuse problems in a school or drive polarization; they then describe another scenario, where like-minded or high-quality teachers form tight networks that others cannot penetrate, furthering alienation and lack of access to valuable information by those most in need. We learn, however, that networks in schools can be shaped and redirected by formal leaders, such as administrators, especially when there is a need for local (and shared) knowledge on specific reforms. Networks also form outside the school, and the authors provide several examples of newer social networks organized across school districts that are drawing on dynamic relations to improve student outcomes. Another example of new social networks are those created through social media—such as Pinterest, which serves as an online discourse community for teachers. The potential for these social networks to change behaviors and/or to interact positively with their schools is just emerging, as are the challenges these social media networks pose for the schools (how well they meld with school, district, or state aims; their transparency regarding who is in the network; and confidentiality/privacy issues). This chapter argues that social networks (whether formed in-person or virtually) may be reorienting our understanding of how individuals select and are influenced by different groups; what impact that may ultimately have on access to information, and our ability to assess its veracity and usefulness for education reform, remains to be seen.

The concept of networks is also explored in Chap. 14, by Robert Crosnoe et al., but here the focus is on peer networks: how they are formed in school and their relationship to opportunities for learning. Paying tribute to sociologists who have been intellectual leaders in defining schools as social contexts, the authors extend these earlier conceptions by highlighting how the informal and formal social relationships in schools intersect with one another, influencing actions and values that shape individual and group behaviors. Covering school-wide peer cultures as well as smaller peer networks and cliques, Crosnoe et al. show how these relationships can positively or negatively affect engagement in school. The authors discuss three major books in the sociology of education, and explain that they were selected to illustrate how conceptualizations of schools as social contexts have developed over the last seventy years, drawing on different theories and methodologies. These books represent a progression of our understanding of peer groups: why and how they form both inside and outside of school; their connections with families, communities, and broad societal interventions (like social media); and methodologies used to analyze their influence on identity development, actions,

attitudes, and norms. The authors then distinguish between collectivities of students and peer networks, which they label as "recurring and meaningful patterns of relationships and interactions" that exist over time. These networks can be characterized by the members' density of relationships; norms and values; influence on behaviors and attitudes; and racial, ethnic, and social class composition. Another set of distinctions are made between peer crowds: large groups of students that link smaller cliques and friendships, and tend to share a group identity and become more similar over time. These, in their most negative configurations, can be a source of conformity, bullying, and/or marginalization and exclusion. Peer crowds influence how student groups are conceptualized publicly and are often entangled with ideas about school climates that, in some instances, are racialized and/or profiled as low or high academic environments. Amidst efforts to identify how students relate to one another, the distinctions among peer networks, groups, cliques, and friendship are important, each operating in the social contexts of schools—supporting or deterring academic and health-related behaviors, belonging, and norms. In conclusion, the authors caution those working on interventions to alter certain student behaviors, they need to take into account the diversity of peer configurations: their presence, membership, and influence.

One aspect of teenage life that has consistently been a topic of interest among sociologists of education is the amount and type of work students pursue outside of school. This was more significant when many teenagers worked part-time in places where they could get full-time jobs after graduation. As desirable jobs increasingly began requiring more education, however, the lure of part-time work took on a different meaning, ranging from portfolio-building for college, and obtaining extra funds to supplement purchasing power for electronics and tickets to music events. Today, most teenagers are less likely to hold a part-time job during the school year than in earlier decades. One of the main themes of Chap. 15, by Jeremy Staff et al., is why there may be a decrease in the average number of hours teenagers work. The slide in numbers of 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students working intensively over 20 hours a week has dropped from 43% in 1994 to only 23% in 2014 (the decline in numbers of students working 1–20 hours among 8th and 10th graders has also declined, but not as significantly). Research on work hours remains curvilinear: Students with the least and the most economic resources work the least number of hours, with most students falling in the middle, working low or moderate hours. Most young people who work today report that their jobs do not match their career goals, and only a third believed their jobs are interesting and allow them to use their skills and abilities. Who works is likely to be related to gender, race/ethnicity, and family socioeconomic characteristics and, as expected, these factors are related to the type of work teenagers engage in and its effect on school outcomes. Recent work on teenage employment is relatively limited, which the authors believe is especially problematic for understanding differences in educational inequality. The following questions therefore arise: Is the type of work teenagers engage in (such as unpaid internships as a substitute for paid work) a pathway for school success? What groups of young people have access to these jobs? How does this access vary by race, ethnicity, and family income?

Additionally, how does summer work differ by social class, and, again, what are the effects of different types of this work on future school and employment? What groups today are involved in long hours of paid work, and what impact does that have on their lives in school and their path to a high school diploma? Paid work is certainly one of the mediating conditions that is likely to affect later school outcomes. We are therefore at a phase of research where it is imperative to learn what type of experiences young people are having out-of-school that help them build networks of support for future opportunities, and what groups of young people are being excluded. The questions raised in this chapter have become more salient than they might have been 20 years ago, before college competitiveness increased and the choice of college destination and college completion became major stratifiers in the labor market.

Part IV. Educational Opportunities and the Transition into Adulthood

Public perceptions of the high school-to-college transition often fail to acknowledge differences in social class, and the process of this transition, for whom it occurs, and where students enroll, often masks important differences in educational opportunities for disadvantaged youth. Due in part to poor preparation and a lack of guidance and counseling, many young people find navigating the complex college pathway very challenging. What makes the college transition so equitably problematic is that role high schools and post-secondary institutions play in the process, and the subsequent consequences it has for degree completion. Recognizing differences among students' college choices, this section describes the major destinations of most high school students as well as differences in applicants, programs, costs, and degree completion among the diverse institutions accepting these graduates (including both non- and for-profit). These chapters rely on multiple large-scale and smaller in-depth studies as well as diverse methodologies to describe the interlocking web of student and institutional responses to programmatic offerings, social activities, and policies regarding racial discrimination and sexual harassment.

Chapter 16, by Michal Kurlaender and Jacob Hibel, digs deep into the constrained choices that affect young people's postsecondary aspirations, beginning with activities and perceptions of family and teachers from early childhood through high school. Using longitudinal data from multiple sources, they highlight how ambitions have increased over time yet failed to result in higher college enrollment and completion for specific populations. Describing several theories for these uneven college trajectories, including theories from economics and social psychology, the chapter then turns to structural sociological explanations for gaps in enrollment and completion. Complementary to Chaps. 6 and 11, the authors focus on the problem of curricular exposure and participation, underscoring the impact of institutional structural barriers on college enrollment and introducing a number of new empirical studies and in-depth work from California. Reviewing social and

cultural theories, they trace the unique informational barriers faced by nontraditional (i.e., older) students and those from low-income backgrounds, especially with respect to securing financial aid. Drawing attention to several new economic studies that address "under-matching" (i.e., students who attend institutions that are less competitive than their college preparation qualifications indicate), the authors create an important bridge between sociologists' understandings of structural constraints (particularly for low-income groups) and economists' interests in low-cost interventions that can be measured with results from randomized control trials. The inclusion of these studies underscores the importance of building intersections between multiple disciplines to address many of the pressing issues of educational inequality and their potential remediation.

The majority of high school seniors will enroll in 4-year colleges in the fall following their spring or summer graduation (McFarland et al. 2017). Richard Arum et al. construct Chap. 17 around two major themes: (1) the historical and institutional factors that have formed student life on college campuses; and (2) the variation in college experiences for students of different gender, socioeconomic, and racial/ethnic groups. Specific attention is also given to issues of sexuality and sexual violence, which is particularly relevant given the recent federal revisions of standards for sexual assault investigations (*New York Times* 2017; also see Department of Education's "Interim Guidance on Campus Sexual Misconduct" 2017). The first section of the chapter traces the history of higher education from the post-World War II period of rapid expansion coupled with increasing gaps in wealth inequality; the authors then explain how today's institutions are responding to rising student consumerism, and what that means for the accommodation of low-income and minority students' educational and financial needs. In the second section, the authors delve deeply into the experiences of college students, including their time studying, engagement with academics, and social participation in extracurricular activities, and how these vary both within and across institutions of differing selectivity. Rather than pointing out inequality variations in college enrollment by socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, and gender, they focus on how college cultures formally and informally limit opportunities for minorities to feel a sense of belonging and receive services that support their persistence to graduation. The authors conclude by emphasizing the importance of attending to the range of student academic and social experiences in different institutions, as opposed to limiting studies of inequality to questions of access, if progress in persistence and degree completion is to be achieved.

Whereas Arum et al. concentrate on 4-year institutions, Lauren Schudde and Eric Grodsky in Chap. 18 examine the history of community colleges and their role in enhancing educational opportunities and social mobility for less economically advantaged students. The chapter opens with a historical overview of the aims of 2-year colleges, their exponential growth, academic preparation, and institutional differences between urban community colleges and private for-profit institutions (some of which also offer 4-year degrees). Compared to public 2-year colleges, students at private for-profit institutions are disproportionately Black or Hispanic, female, and single parents, and they encounter a more limited scope of degree programs and electives,

accumulate more debt, and receive a lower cost return on employment possibilities. For an increasing number of students, beginning one's postsecondary education at community colleges with the expectation of transferring to a 4-year college or earning a postsecondary credential has become an inexpensive alternative. Public 2-year colleges, compared to 4-year institutions, enroll more minorities and more first-time college students, and proportionately fewer students ultimately receive their degrees. Addressing the incongruent issues of access and opportunity in community colleges, the authors point out the "democratic" value of community colleges and their increased access to students from diverse backgrounds, while highlighting their limited educational opportunities—as evidenced by low degree completion rates, relative costs for degree completion, and labor market opportunities. Schudde and Grodsky, drawing on other scholars, discuss why community colleges may have "diversionary" (i.e., a pathway that diverts students away from receiving a baccalaureate degree) rather than democratic outcomes. They then turn to new studies to assess the actual impact of diversionary effects, contrasting these studies with others that have examined democratic effects, to suggest that these distinctions vary considerably by subgroups. Complexity appears to be an overriding theme of the pathway to degree, and this chapter thoughtfully summarizes problems of high school preparation and their relationship to community college remediation, dual enrollment opportunities for high school students seeking more-advanced college work, transfer policies for students leaving 2-year institutions for 4-year ones, and the reversal process of students at 4-year institutions who transfer to 2-year institutions to receive a degree. This chapter provides an important, and timely, spotlight on issues of educational inequality that are not easily resolved—especially when trying to understand the mechanisms of social stratification at the institutional level.

In Chap. 19, James E. Rosenbaum—whose name is synonymous with the critique of the commonly used phrase "college-for-all"—and colleagues Caitlin Ahearn and Jennifer Lansing move beyond who attends what types of colleges and which students fail to reach degree completion, to identify the *strategies* disadvantaged youth undertake when confronting major institutional obstacles. Recognizing the many challenges that students face in college, the authors raise the question: How do these students survive and complete their degrees? Creating an alternative to traditional models that predict who attends college and the sequential challenges that lie along their path to degree completion, the authors focus instead on students' success, drawing on evidence from an in-depth study of low-income, nontraditional students. Three alternative strategies were observed among study participants (here and in other work on nontraditional students), which could be traced to the following: unconventional high school-to-college trajectories; the value and flexibility offered by open-access institutions; and the ability to build a portfolio of incremental degree attainment (beginning with a certificate or associate degree, moving on to a higher degree, and allowing for periods of "intermission"). One of the draws of open-access institutions for this population, as the authors explain, is that many of the programs are designed for specific occupations, which corresponded to respondent goals and financial

needs. Further, experiencing success at school served as a motivator for continued education experiences, especially as students discovered new abilities that were not disrupted by intermission and incremental degree attainment. Turning to the institutions, the authors argue that the success of nontraditional students is aided by colleges that provide procedural structures that help keep students on track, offer support (including peer groups), and form career direction with information and appreciative reflection of prior work-related experiences. The authors remind us that there are multiple deviations from the conventional model of degree attainment, and that studying these will likely provide a clearer path to helping students achieve their educational goals.

Richard A. Settersten, Jr. and Barbara Schneider, in Chap. 20, critique the conventional high school-to-college degree path by focusing on the changing characterization of who is a college student and how 4-year institutions are dealing with chronologically older students. The intent of this chapter is to broaden the sociology of education's focus from K–12 to include students we typically refer to as "midlife and beyond" (also see Pallas 2016 on this point). As Rosenbaum et al. argue in the preceding chapter, the conventional degree path from high school to college has changed, and the prototypical model of a college student has been substantially transformed. Reviewing the misconceptions of the conventional tripartite model of frontloaded education, which is followed by work and then retirement, the authors discuss the disconnection between today's diverse life course paths and the constraints institutions and policies face as they try to adapt to this change in clientele and meet their educational needs. The authors provide several examples of how businesses have attempted to remediate the pressing financial problems of some students by offering repayment of student loans as part of hiring practices or working collaboratively with colleges to develop specific job programs to accelerate the transition to subsequent employment. The second part of the chapter discusses some of the normative developmental expectations of higher education institutions that are inconsistent with the needs of young and older adults alike, such as independence, autonomy, and residential living. The authors conclude by identifying the goals—often referred to as noncognitive or soft skills—that universities might adopt to assist both young and older students in leading more successful lives.

Part V. Sociological Perspectives on Accountability and Evaluation

The last section of the volume takes a bold step, highlighting new methodological work being conducted by sociologists of education and identifying the policy topics sociologists must pay closer attention to if they are to understand how to measure and lessen inequities in education. Two statistically analytic chapters focus on measuring academic growth with young children and another focuses on measuring school effects, followed by a review and discussion of the authors' work using incentivized randomized control trials in higher education to improve education persistence and completion. This sec-

tion concludes with a chapter detailing an innovative researcher–practitioner model and how it negotiates the challenges of working collaboratively to solve pressing education problems in schools. The overarching theme of these chapters is a focus on the intensity of the education experiences young people encounter in schools and in society. The authors do not simply review the characteristics associated with inequality—instead, they explore *how* inequality is perpetuated through actions and values within specific environments (even those viewed as being in the service of the public good), and propose approaches for embarking on researchable solutions for reform.

Chapter 21, by Joel Mittleman and Jennifer L. Jennings, links the development of recent federal education policies and their impact on three domains: instruction, student outcomes, and refitted policies. The chapter begins by charting the history of formal accountability in education—from A Nation at Risk through No Child Left Behind and, most recently, the Every Student Succeeds Act—and how these were implemented at the federal and state level. The authors then link accountability policies using student test scores with their impact on teachers, students, school systems, and public opinion. For example, one instructional consequence of federal legislation is the larger proportion of time spent on mathematics and reading at the expense of other academic subjects, the arts, and physical education. The more schools face sanctions for poor performance, the more likely "teaching to the test" will occur, particularly in schools that serve lower-income and non-Asian minority students. Aided by technology and data systems, however, research indicates that students tend to have better test gains on low-stakes tests than ones directly tied to punitive sanctions. Testing accountability pressures have also created gaps between students, with some receiving more instruction and resources under the assumption that they will be the most likely to benefit from these allocations; other inequitable effects of this testing, outcome, and accountability push include a negative long-term impact on poorly performing students, who are sometimes funneled into special education classes unnecessarily. The last part of the chapter takes up the question of the relationship between school quality indicators and public support for public education, suggesting that negative ratings result in decreased support for school tax referenda, principal and teacher school employment instability, and an erosion of professional communities at the school and district levels. The authors conclude by identifying other types of accountability systems that show promise for public schooling. What is particularly novel about this work is the intensive examination of the impacts of accountability systems and their relationship not only to students, teachers, and administrators, but to the public, who ultimately decides the extent of actual dollar support for education. This chapter raises important questions about our commitment to endorsing policies seemingly for advancing education as a public good, even when this is not necessarily the case.

One of the newest sources of data comes from states that have allowed researchers to access the rich longitudinal databases that states collect for the federal government and their own purposes. These states' administrative databases provide unprecedented opportunities to analyze education data, not only within state but between participating states, federal sources, and smaller

scale studies. In Chap. 22, Douglas Lee Lauen et al. describe their study of a state's administrative longitudinal database of third graders (and, if promoted, their school performance in fourth and fifth grade). With a final sample of over two hundred thousand student observations, Lauen et al. examine the relationship between school poverty and achievement to determine the effects of the social context of schools on student test scores, over and above individual student characteristics. The chapter begins with several caveats that form the crux of sociological studies focused on untangling the effects of poverty at the individual and school level on changes in student achievement. The authors suggest researchers to use *longitudinal* data for when estimating causal inferences in order to disentangle time variant from time-invariant conditions on performance. The second is the *measurement of poverty* itself, and the authors emphasize the importance of acknowledging its limitations when employing different types of models. The main body of the chapter statistically demonstrates the problems that arise when using cross-national data sets and two- and three-level longitudinal models to measure contextual factors (mainly the poverty gap) between and within schools on changes in student test scores. The underlying purpose here is to show multiple ways to measure the pathway through which school poverty affects outcomes, in addition to highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of each of the models used in many of today's empirical studies. The primary takeaway from the authors' argument and analysis is that three-level models are the most robust when pursuing this question with these data. One of the most important contributions of this chapter is its assertion that it is easier to ascertain *school* correlates of change in test scores than *student* correlates of change in test scores. While the authors were unable to detect a relationship between school poverty and achievement with their models, they did find greater variation in test score growth across schools than across students. Their results suggest that we need to rethink what it is about today's schools that are creating this variation.

Chapter 23, by Stephen L. Morgan and Daniel T. Shackelford, makes the case that the relationship between effective teaching and school effects should be taken up more seriously by sociologists of education as a topic of study. This chapter (as with the preceding one) is somewhat unusual in the tradition of Handbooks, which tend to be substantive; what is refreshing about these chapters is how they situate the purpose of their work on issues of inequality in education, explain why social context plays a fundamental role in shaping and measuring student and teacher performance, and illustrate this conception with various statistical models. Most contemporary research on teacher effectiveness has been dominated by economists and policy analysts, many of whom pay little attention to the social context in which teachers work (i.e., their motivations, and pressures and strains from parents and administrators). To advance the work of sociologists, Morgan and Shackelford begin by summarizing some of the older sociological studies of education, including work by Willard Waller (1932) and Coleman et al. (1966), that emphasize the training and professional lives of teachers, their commitment and dedication, and the challenges they were likely to confront with their students. Pushing through the research on teacher effectiveness to today's educational landscape,

the goal of this review is to spotlight that which researchers tend to minimize or ignore: "…the characterizations of teachers as professionals embedded in communities, struggling to navigate institutional rules and social relations while working with heterogeneous populations of students" (p. 516). The sociological research is then followed by a capstone of economic work, which examines the distribution of teachers across and within schools—referred to as "teacher sorting"—to suggest that this literature, and that of earlier sociologists, points to more heterogeneity within the teaching force than assumed, and that the social context of schools may be more homogeneous than previously thought. To test this assumption, the authors employ the latest national longitudinal survey of high school students (the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, or HSLS:09) and the Common Core of Data, showing first that the relationships between resource expenditures and problems attributed to them are smaller than some might expect, and that when looking between schools the differences in teacher effects appear smaller, but trend in the same direction when using large state administrative data. Schools with the highest performing students appear to benefit from having the strongest teachers. The chapter concludes with a call for an increase in measures of student, teacher, and school activities that can capture more discrete information on the pedagogy and expertise of teachers, as well as the learning climates in which they work. Arguing that these smaller grain size measures are likely to result in a clearer understanding of teacher effects on student performance, the authors assert that these ideas are deeply rooted in the theoretical and empirical provenance of sociology of education.

Complementing an earlier section of this volume, where there are a number of reviews of studies on community colleges, Chap. 24—by David Monaghan et al.—presents some of the most rigorous work on this topic that employs interventions and measures their effectiveness with experimental randomized control trial designs (RCTs). While the Handbook does not specifically address the statistical considerations one must take into account when estimating causal effects, given the increasing import of interventions (both quasi- and RCT-experiments) and their potential for scale-up, we wanted to include a chapter by one of the strongest evidential sociological voices on the community college experience: that of Sara Goldrick-Rab, who has studied the effects of interventions designed to affect community college access, persistence, and completion. The chapter begins by highlighting the levers in the community college landscape that would benefit from intervention work, such as course counseling, financial resource constraints, and quality of instructors. Describing these interventions, the authors begin with those that are school-focused, such as providing assistance with counseling services (improving student–counselor ratios and assignment to counselors), course redesign, and structuring support services. They then move to system-level interventions and the financial structures that provide them with operating resources (including state allocations). Although not a meta-analysis, the authors review and critique the work of studies that used random assignment, where subjects were entering or enrolled at a community college, and whose purpose was to improve retention, credit accumulation, grades, and degree completion. Using these criteria, they identify: interventions that augmented

the resources and behaviors of the students; studies with eligibility and sup-
port for financial aid; financial aid information interventions; material
resources, such as free computers; college skill classes (some of which are
commonly assumed to be remedial but are often lower-stakes, with pass/fail
options); social and psychological interventions that motivate students to
believe they can succeed; and incentivizing academic credit accumulation. At
the school level were interventions that enhance student services (such as
counseling, mentoring, summer bridge programs, and testing and remedia-
tion), and learning communities similar to cohort approaches (where students
are assigned to an academic advisor and group). One of the largest and argu-
ably most successful system-level interventions, the City University of
New York's Center for Economic Opportunity, is the last of the interventions
discussed. What is truly critical, in terms of this chapter's importance, are
why we need interventions, what we are learning, and where gaps in our
knowledge remain.

The final chapter of the volume, by Paula Arce-Trigatti et al., focuses on
one of the newest forms of infrastructure, research–practice partnerships
(RPPs), which have multiple purposes but share one goal: improving the
effectiveness of school systems through collaborative research, dissemina-
tion, and professional learning community development. As the authors state,
these relatively new RPPs exemplify several tenets of organizational sociol-
ogy literature, and open a door to the execution of potentially more authentic
research that is designed not for practice but for direct involvement with the
practice community. The authors begin by examining the growth of RPPs,
identifying some of the most successful partnerships, such as the UChicago
Consortium on School Research, founded in 1990 and largely perceived as
ushering in this new model of collaboration. Acceptance of the RPP was slow
going initially because, the authors claim, the traditional bureaucratic organi-
zational structures of universities and schools—with their privilege of status,
isolationism, financial pressures, and normative and reward cultures—hin-
dered their development. While this model did not have much traction, with
the passage of No Child Left Behind and the efforts of the National Research
Council, the idea resurfaced as a constructive mechanism for helping schools
adopt research findings to avoid sanctions and other penalties for poor perfor-
mance. Soon, research partnerships sprang up all over the country, now
funded by government and philanthropic endeavors. Varying in organiza-
tional models and goals, the authors categorize these entities as research alli-
ances, design-based partnerships (typically narrower in scope than the
research alliances), or networked improvement communities that tend to
focus on a single problem. The reasons these types of RPPs have pursued
such distinct pathways form the second part of the chapter, underscoring dif-
ferences in social, political, and institutional conditions that account for their
heterogeneity. Bringing us full circle to the beginning of this volume, the
authors raise three institutional theories of sociology—imitative, normative,
and coercive—to explain the social construction of these variations. Still a
relatively new collaborative form of work between research and practice, the
authors conclude by hypothesizing about the sustainability of current models
and what types of newer organizations may yet arise. In sociology of

education, when we think about institutions, RPPs have not yet taken their place next to intermediary school district organizations and federal- and state-supported research education laboratories. Yet these organizations—how they function and their impact—need further study, alongside virtual networks and other configurations of socially purposeful organizations that, with the instigation of technological change, are likely to materialize in the near future.

Concluding Caveats

Two important topics are missing from this volume. The first is an in-depth examination of affirmative action policies and court cases that address debates regarding race/class considerations for postsecondary admission and the evidence for why such indicators should or should not be used. We refer readers to Sigal Alon's (2015) book, *Race, Class and Affirmative Action*. This is an issue that is unlikely to be resolved, even in light of the most recent Supreme Court decision (*Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin,* 2016). Second, this volume is nation-centric and does not cover how sociologists are studying global issues in education. This was a decision based on major projects underway that are designed to address the international scope of many of the themes presented here. There is a rich tradition of international sociological work in education, with such major figures as David Baker (2014), John Meyer (Krucken and Drori 2009), Francisco Ramirez (2016), and rising stars like Anna K. Chmielewski (2017). Their work and that of their colleagues is part of another Handbook series, soon to be released. Nonetheless, issues in the U.S. educational system are decidedly problematic and profoundly negative in their impact on the academic performance, social and emotional development, and social mobility of low-income and minority students living in the wealthiest country in the world. The reasons for these problems provided the motivation for this volume; its most important contribution is the strength of evidence each chapter provides for what we need to learn and change.

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