Sociology 1306-14638

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November 5th, 2024

Assignment 4: Social Problems and Institutions

US secondary school children perform poorly in math and reading in comparison to international students is a combination of the makeup of the school system in the US and the educational attainment of US students. The makeup of the school system that were taken by Finland show the faults as they committed to several changes in the way schools and schooling is treated in their country. The salaries for their teachers are higher than in the US, resulting in higher qualifications for teachers as well as an increase in their number and quality. They changed their curriculum to revolve more around critical thinking skills and less about test scores. More schools were built to reduce the number of children per school and therefore classes to increase focus between teacher and student. Funding was increased for individual schools whereas many in the US are decrepit. Finally, they provide free medical and dental services to the children and their families as well as other social services to improve the critical components of health and home environment.

The four main functions of education according to the functionalist theory are; Socialization as it is an important factor in a child’s ability to learn the normal procedures, values, and skills required to function properly in society as well as education, social integration to assist in immigrant children’s ability to be integrated into American life, social placement to help identify particularly bright or challenged students and teach them at the level that they are best suited, and finally social and cultural innovation to educate students in the many subjects they need to know for their chosen path.

Education reinforces inequality by demonstrating the differences between the quality of education between groups of people in the US. Some schools will have disparaging amounts of funding, resulting in noticeable differences in the people attaining this education. These differences reinforce stereotypes and cause further issues of the same caliber as they continue their education, thus continuing this downward trend.

The first issue with the US healthcare system is the high cost, both the care itself and the health insurance as well. Over the past thirty years the average for US healthcare expenditure has increased more than ten times and is continuing to rise. This combined with the heavily inflated cost of procedures where their average is about quadruple to that of other nations such as Canada. The second issue is the US healthcare system’s quality of care being in decline. This is further separated into several issues such as the sleep deprivation of the healthcare professionals, the shortage of appropriate staff, and the increase in mistakes usually caused by the previous two issues.

The concept of the “sick role” where the individual needs to meet the expectations of someone who is legitimately sick. A patient is considered legitimately sick when they meet three criteria as they; should not be the cause of their own sickness as with someone who overeats causing their obesity or drinking heavily to cause a vehicle accident, they must want to get well and not malinger or fake their ill state, and finally they should have their sickness confirmed by a professional and to furthermore follow the professionals instructions in order to become well again.