

CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC CAPITAL,
STANDARDIZED TESTS AND THE PERPETUATION OF EDUCATIONAL INEQUITIES

By

Jessica Ayre

A GRADUATING PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

IN

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Educational Administration and Leadership)

Dr. Wendy Poole

Supervisor

Dr. Gerald Fallon

Second Reader

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

February, 2012

Abstract

Students who possess the socioeconomic, cultural and linguistic capital of the dominant class come to school with a “head start” and stand to benefit most from standardized tests. In my conceptual study examining the relationship between socioeconomic, cultural and linguistic capital, and educational attainment, I employ a critical review of the pertinent literature beginning with Bourdieu and Passeron’s seminal work. Although researchers have been operationalizing Bourdieu’s cultural capital theory for over thirty years, it is clear that there has been little agreement as to how cultural capital should be measured, or even if it can be measured. I argue that much of the empirical research critiquing the impact of Bourdieu’s notion of cultural and linguistic capital on educational attainment has been operationalized from a positivist perspective and based on narrow conceptions of Bourdieu’s theory, and consequently, has provided inconclusive and often contradictory results. Utilizing a definition of cultural capital more closely aligned with that intended by Bourdieu, I examine the connection between socioeconomic, cultural and linguistic capital, and standardized tests, and explore how educational inequities are perpetuated through the use of standardized forms of assessment, discussing the implications of my findings for educational practice throughout. I then suggest some first-and second-order changes that may at the very least make standardized tests accessible to all learners, and at best, make public education equitable for all members of the school community.

Introduction

I first became cognizant of some of the inequalities inherent in standardized tests while teaching Year 6 students in inner city London. The school at which I taught had a high population of ESL students and children with special needs. In addition, many children displayed challenging behaviour and came from socioeconomically deprived backgrounds. In the United Kingdom (UK), students write the Statutory Assessment Test (SAT) during their final year of primary school. The students are informed that their academic futures will be determined by their SATs results. This message is reinforced repeatedly during the numerous hours of class time dedicated to test preparation and practice. I observed my ten-year-old students struggle to complete a test on which their fate would rest, that asked them to write about a “typical” activity that most of them had never personally experienced: a day at the seaside. How can a child be expected to describe the sensory details of a place they have never been? I began to question the fairness of a test which excludes students with limited access to presumably “common” middle class cultural experiences such as a day at the seaside.

Since my return to Canada several years ago, I have been employed as a Grade 7 teacher at an inner city school in a large urban school district in British Columbia (BC). Tall Trees Elementary School (a pseudonym) is a designated inner city school comprised of students of diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, with a variety of academic and behavioural needs and abilities. In BC, students in Grades 4 and 7 are required to take the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) annually. The FSA is a provincial assessment tool that is comprised of a series of criterion-referenced standardized tests intended to measure students’ performance in reading, writing and numeracy. Although the FSA is not a norm-referenced test, it is indeed standardized, as every child in the province is required to write the same test. Over the years, I

have discovered numerous examples of both multiple choice and written standardized test items that seem to exclude socio-economically disadvantaged and culturally or linguistically diverse students from equally accessing the test. For example, one year the numeracy component was entirely comprised of word problems recounting a class ski trip. Not one of my students had ever been skiing. Because teachers are forbidden to help students with the test, I turned away countless confused faces; students who were stumped by the term “season’s pass” and unable to answer the question. Once again, I found myself confronted with a standardized test that restricted certain students from demonstrating their aptitude in reading, writing and numeracy, simply because they had not participated in a cultural experience common to the dominant social class.

Every year my students struggle to answer the multiple choice reading comprehension questions. Often the students understand the passage and would be capable of answering the questions in their own words, but they are confounded by the sophisticated vocabulary words that constitute the four possible answers. I began to wonder if the FSA was accurately assessing the students’ reading comprehension skills or rather, their vocabularies. As a classroom teacher, I make a concerted effort to provide my students with the knowledge and skills to expand their vocabularies, building on learning from the year prior. When confronted with the arbitrary vocabulary words used on the test, my students become frustrated and demoralized, and quite frankly, so do I. I began to contemplate how background factors may influence vocabulary acquisition and how linguistic capital may advantage some students, while simultaneously disadvantaging others, on standardized forms of assessment, such as the FSA.

According to the BC Ministry of Education, the main purpose of the FSA “is to help the province, school districts, schools and school planning councils evaluate how well students are

achieving basic skills, and make plans to improve student achievement” (Ministry of Education, 2011). Although parents are informed of their child’s FSA results, the test is not considered “high stakes” as it does not impact students’ admittance to secondary school. However, in both BC and the UK, schools’ test results are published in the newspaper and ranked accordingly. As I observed my most able students defeated by poor practice test results, I began to wonder how the publication of standardized test results impacts students with limited socioeconomic, cultural and linguistic capital who may perform poorly on such tests.

Problem

The dominant group in a particular society is the social group that is able to mobilize discursive power in order to promote, protect and preserve its own interests, thus controlling the value system and reaping the rewards. Membership has its privileges and as such, students who possess the socioeconomic, cultural and linguistic “capital” of the dominant class come to school with a “head start” and stand to benefit most from standardized tests. Although “[t]he term ‘capital’ is usually associated with a narrowly defined economic category of monetary exchange for profit” (Reay, 2004, p. 74), in the English translation of their seminal work (1977), Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) broaden this conception, defining cultural capital as either embodied capital (linguistic practices, knowledge and skills embodied by an individual), objectified capital (cultural goods, texts and material objects), or institutional capital (academic qualifications, awards and credentials) (Carrington & Luke, 1997). Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) maintain that the possession of capital, primarily “passed down” from parent to child in the home, enables more affluent students to “profit” from an education system that recognizes, legitimizes, and rewards the socioeconomic, cultural and linguistic capital of the dominant class. “Breaking with the received wisdom that attributes academic success or failure to natural aptitudes,” Bourdieu

and Passeron explain “school success by the amount and type of cultural capital inherited from the family milieu rather than by measures of individual talent or achievement” (Reay, 2004, p. 74). Unfortunately, for members of nondominant groups, possession of limited or the “wrong kind” of cultural capital may restrict access to opportunities and positions taken for granted by those who profit from the “right kind” of capital in ways that perpetuate inequalities (Blackledge, 2001).

As an inner city school teacher, I am interested in researching how standardized forms of assessment reproduce educational inequalities for students who may not have access to the aforementioned capital of the dominant group. How does the possession of cultural and linguistic capital impact educational achievement? Furthermore, how are educational inequities perpetuated through the use of standardized forms of assessment?

I have chosen to employ a comprehensive and critical review of the pertinent literature in my conceptual study examining the relationship between cultural and linguistic capital and educational attainment. In order to thoroughly explore my research questions, I must firstly examine how my own social location has impacted my experiences in the school system, both as a student and as a teacher. I will then explore the influential role of educators working within a very powerful social institution. The next section will consider the relationship between economic capital and cultural control followed by a comprehensive and critical review of cultural capital. From its inception in 1977 to present day, the evolution of cultural capital begins with Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) and encompasses over thirty years of research revealing inconsistent, and often inconclusive, results. This section will be followed by a concise overview of linguistic capital, after which the connection between socioeconomic, cultural, and linguistic capital and standardized tests will be examined. I will discuss the implications of my findings for

educational practice and suggest some first- and second-order changes that will at the very least make standardized tests, and the FSA in particular, accessible to all learners, and at best, make public education equitable for all members of the school community. Lastly, I will make some suggestions for further research.

My Social Location

The dominant class has influenced every facet of the school experience in Canada, from hierarchical leadership to school culture to behavioural expectations to language. In my experience teaching in ethnically diverse, socioeconomically disadvantaged schools, the division between those who possess the legitimized culture and language of the dominant group, (administrators and teaching staff), and those without, (parents and students), is tangible. Throughout my teaching career, I have been among the socioeconomic and racial minority in my classroom. Most of my students have come from working class families in which both parents are employed in shift work outside the home. Many of these parents work at more than one job in order to make ends meet. Consequently, children are often cared for by teenage siblings or grandparents, and are occasionally left to fend for themselves. The majority of my students are the children of immigrants and in some cases immigrants themselves. In the UK, most of my students were of African, Afro-Caribbean or Portuguese descent and in BC most of my students have come from South Asian or Fijian backgrounds. It wasn't until I read Ruby Payne's, *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* (1996) that I became cognizant of the fact that, in addition to my race, my economic class has thoroughly shaped my perceptions of society and enabled the relative ease with which I have navigated the world. My "identity" as a middle class, Caucasian woman of Western European descent has also directly influenced the manner in which I teach.

Pursuing my master's degree over the past year has enabled me to theorize and reflect on how my social location has shaped my academic career and continues to influence my teaching. School has always been relatively easy for me. In the past I have credited my parents with teaching me to read prior to kindergarten and continuing to support my academic progress throughout my school years. However, I now contemplate the possibility that the rich variety of extracurricular activities and cultural experiences that they provided may have been just as instrumental to my success. In school, I could easily comprehend stories and new concepts because I had the background knowledge to make connections and build on my understanding. The fact that I chose "human being" as my spelling word in kindergarten may not have been due to the fact that I was particularly advanced for my age, but simply because I came to school with a rather extensive vocabulary. School was familiar to me; an extension of my home. The teachers looked like me, spoke like me and celebrated the same holidays as me. I knew that it wasn't socially acceptable to call out the answers in class or talk during school assemblies. I understood the unwritten rules. I possessed the cultural capital of the dominant class that is reproduced in schools and benefitted from it thorough out my academic career. I just wasn't aware of it until I became a teacher myself.

The Influential Role of Educators

Today, I understand that as a middle class, Caucasian woman of Western European descent and a fourth generation Canadian, I am a minority in my school community, but I am also a member of the dominant class. As such, I understand that the inherently racist and classist education system that I navigated with ease continues to place obstacles in front of many of the students that I teach. In bureaucratic institutions such as schools, "social structures and processes

become taken-for-granted and their consequences in maintaining racial [and socioeconomic] inequality go largely undetected” (Aveling, p.70).

I believe, perhaps naively, that many teachers and administrators of the dominant class are unintentionally imposing their White, Eurocentric, middle class mores on their students. The power awarded to members of the dominant race and social class may be imperceptible to those who take it for granted. “Whiteness is something that you don’t have to think about [if you identify as white]. But, it is there, for in repositioning ourselves to see the world as constituted out of relations of power and privilege, whiteness as privilege plays a crucial role” (Apple, 1993, as cited in Gulson, 2006, p. 270). Unlike one’s socioeconomic status or accent, which may be masked or altered, one’s skin colour cannot be concealed. Historically, throughout much of the world, simply being “White” has enabled access to rights and freedoms long since taken for granted by members of the racially dominant group. When one traverses the world with ease, one does not question why the journey has been trouble-free. Consequently, “White people inhabit an invisible system which allows them to choose to recede into privilege and not worry about racism whenever they choose, while racialized people do not enjoy such a choice” (Wagner, 2005, p.269). As “leadership involves self-criticism and self-clarity,” (Foster, 1989, p.57) educators must acknowledge “the way in which whiteness is a privileging construct that perpetuates power and authority and which prevents access and opportunity for minority groups” (Fitzgerald, 2006, p. 204).

Similarly, educators must consider that socioeconomic, cultural and linguistic capital may enable certain students to succeed while simultaneously permitting others to fail. “Teachers, who are largely middle class and white, uphold Eurocentric canons and customs that distance, dislocate, under[-]represent, and misrepresent Others and are unaware of their complicity in

systems that stratify and oppress” (Brantlinger, 2003, p. 5). Although all children begin school with “the cultural knowledge, primary discourses and accumulated discourses that exist in households and neighbourhoods,” it seems that children of the middle class benefit from “the school’s routine mobilization and immediate integration of family- and community-based discourses and funds of knowledge” (Stanton-Salazar, 1997, p. 13). As influential agents in institutions that advantage some and disadvantage others, teachers must become aware of their role in perpetuating inequities for students with limited socioeconomic, cultural, and linguistic capital, both in and out of school. According to Stanton-Salazar (1997), “[t]he use of such cultural and linguistic knowledge in instruction, curriculum, and classroom comportment validates its importance in the lives of children from middle-class families and builds respect and appreciation for the dominant culture and for society’s institutions” while at the same time, fails to recognize or value the knowledge, skills and experiences of less affluent groups (p. 13).

Economic Capital and Cultural Control

There is ample evidence to suggest that students’ socioeconomic status is the strongest and most important of the home background variables (Riordan, 1997). In Western societies, there is a direct correlation between achievement and socioeconomic status and this “relationship has been found consistently in literally thousands of studies” (Riordan, 1997, p. 70). Even when other effects are controlled, student socioeconomic status is “related to grades, achievement test scores, curriculum placement, dropout rates, college plans, and educational attainment” (Riordan, 1997, p. 70). Some research suggests that there is a clear relationship between the number of years spent living in poverty and the level of educational achievement (Goodlad & Keating, 1990). Essentially, the longer a student is poor the more likely they are to be behind their expected grade level (Goodlad & Keating, 1990). According to Lee and Bowen (2006), in

examining families with the same high level of educational expectations, low socioeconomic status participants had lower levels of achievement. The researchers maintain that the “difference may reflect generally lower levels of human, cultural, and social capital in lower income homes” (Lee & Bowen, 2006, p. 212). In this case, the authors’ use of the term “lower level” suggests that the human, cultural, and social capital that belongs to members of socioeconomically disadvantaged groups is somehow inferior to that of the middle class. However, I argue that the capital that belongs to members of the nondominant groups is simply *different* from that of the dominant group, and only appears *lesser* to Lee and Bowen (2006) because it is not valued as highly as the capital that belongs to the dominant group.

Despite the well documented relationship between socioeconomic status and educational attainment, social class continues to be neglected as a mitigating factor for student success in the school system (Brantlinger, 2003). “Regardless of evidence to the contrary, because schools are thought to reward capacities rather than social standing, they are believed to be meritocracies in which students have equal chances to succeed” (Brantlinger, 2003, p. 1). However, schools reward student success differentially, whether it is academic, athletic, or artistic ability, and as such, do not seem to subscribe to an “egalitarian principle of success for all” (Brantlinger, 2003, p. 1).

Although it is true that British Columbian children have equal access to public education, their experiences are anything but equal (Ungerleider, 2003). In fact, “equality of education has little meaning if students gain equal access to an education and then are taught that they are inferior” (Strouse, 2001, p. 218). “In advanced and industrial societies, schools are particularly important as distributors of this cultural capital, and they play a very critical role in giving legitimacy to categories and forms of knowledge” (Apple, 2004, p. 43). In fact, “the overt and

covert knowledge found within school settings, and the principles of selection, organization, and evaluation of this knowledge, are value-governed selections from a much larger universe of possible knowledge and selection principles” (Apple, 2004, p. 43). As distributors of what is perceived to be “‘legitimate knowledge’ – the knowledge that ‘we all must have,’ schools confer cultural legitimacy on the knowledge of specific groups” (Apple, 2004, p. 61). Thus, a group’s macro-political and economic power influences their capacity to convert “their” knowledge into “knowledge for all” (Apple, 2004).

The Evolution of Cultural Capital

Bourdieu and Cultural Reproduction

In the English translation of their seminal work, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (1977), Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) define cultural capital as

cultural goods transmitted by the different family PAs [Pedagogic Action – education in the broadest sense], whose value varies with the distance between the cultural arbitrary imposed by the dominant PA and the cultural arbitrary inculcated by the family PA within the different groups or classes. (p. 30)

Essentially, all members of society possess cultural capital, however, group members whose cultural capital most closely aligns with that of the dominant culture stand to benefit most from it. In fact, Bourdieu argues that cultural capital (cultural resources) is an asset of equal value to that of economic capital (material goods and resources) and social capital (social connections, networks and practices) in that it too, can be utilized to acquire additional kinds of assets (Carrington & Luke, 1997; Jaeger, 2011; Wildhagen, 2009). Consequently, this currency is not earned in the traditional sense, but rather obtained via

positions occupied within the distributions of the resources which may become active, effective ... in the competition for the appropriation of scarce goods which this social universe is the site. According to...[Bourdieu's]...empirical investigations, these fundamental powers are economic capital (in its different forms), cultural capital, and symbolic capital, which is the form that the various species of capital assume when they are perceived and recognized as legitimate. (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 17)

Although all children may inherit capital in its various forms from their parents in a process that transpires in the home, capital can also be acquired in other ways. However, the relative “value” of such capital outside of the home is always determined by the dominant group in society. Capital that is “recognized as legitimate” by the dominant class can be used to gain advantage for those who possess it (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 17). Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) assert that economic capital can be converted into cultural capital and that the reverse is also true. It seems that objectified capital (defined as cultural goods, texts and material objects) and institutional capital (defined as academic qualifications, awards and credentials) in particular can be used to illustrate the correlation between economic and cultural capital (Carrington & Luke, 1997). For example, the purchase of cultural goods, such as texts and other material objects, and the pursuance of a college or university degree tend to require economic capital. In this way, cultural capital as objectified and institutional capital can be “bought” with economic capital. Conversely, students who borrow texts from the library and gain free access to cultural goods through public spaces, such as museums and art galleries, may employ the use of such forms of objectified capital to earn a college or university scholarship, thus acquiring institutional capital. Assuming that academic qualifications will result in a well paid position of employment, cultural capital is then converted into economic capital.

However, according to Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), the process which enables a working class student to acquire institutional capital is highly selective and thus rare. In Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) study examining how linguistic capital, as embodied cultural capital (or the linguistic practices, knowledge and skills embodied by an individual) impacts educational attainment at the post-secondary level, the authors posit that "the educational mortality rate can only increase as one moves towards the classes most distant from scholarly language" (p. 73). In comparison, students who come from affluent homes in which higher education is an expected post-secondary step already possess the cultural and linguistic capital necessary to pursue a university education. Thus, societal inequities are mass (re)produced as children of affluence pursue higher education and profitable employment, while the majority of working class children remain relegated to the bottom of society's socioeconomic hierarchy (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).

Bourdieu believes that these inequities begin in the schoolhouse:

[Education] is in fact one of the most effective means of perpetuating the existing social pattern, as it both provides an apparent justification for social inequalities and gives recognition to the cultural heritage, that is, to a *social* gift treated as a *natural* one.

(Bourdieu, 1974, as cited in Sullivan, 2001, p. 894)

In essence, the cultural capital that education presupposes of its students is largely inculcated in the home (Driessen, 2001; Sullivan, 2001). Children who are socialized by parents who belong to the dominant culture acquire the cultural capital that enables them to begin their schooling careers at ease, in an institution which is familiar to them (Aschaffenburg & Maas, 1997; Blackledge, 2001; Driessen, 2001; Katsillis & Robinson, 1990). They already know the tacit "rules of the game" (Aschaffenburg & Maas, 1997), however, they are likely unaware that they

are playing on an uneven field. In fact, the school presents itself as a neutral institution; providing the “appearance of objectivity and fairness” that members of both the dominant and “subordinate” social groups accept as natural (Feinberg & Soltis, 1985, p. 63). Consequently, while upper and middle class children may make connections and grasp new knowledge with ease, children of lower socioeconomic groups may struggle to comprehend new concepts (Driessen, 2001).

Bourdieu uses the terms “habitus” and “field” to explain the connection between cultural capital and academic success (Bourdieu, 1989). “Habitus is the disposition to act in a certain way; to grasp experience in a certain way, to think in a certain way,” (Grenfell & James, 1998, as cited in Lee & Bowen, 2006, p. 197) whereas a field is “structured system of social relations at the micro and macro level” (Lareau & Horvat, 1999, as cited in Lee & Bowen, 2006, p. 197). Students from the dominant group have been socialized to think, act, and understand concepts in a way that “fits” the education system (Lee & Bowen, 2006).

Consequently, habitus produces practices and representations which are available for classification, which are objectively differentiated; however, they are immediately perceived as such only by those agents who process the code, the classificatory schemes necessary to understand their social meaning. Habitus thus implies a ‘sense of one’s place’ but also a ‘sense of the place of others.’ (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 19)

Thus, for children of the dominant group, school is a familiar place in which the rules and routines are well understood (Lee & Bowen, 2006). The hidden curriculum embedded within the school system rewards the cultural skills and preferences of the dominant group (Driessen, 2001). Encouraged by early success, children of the dominant group progress through the school system setting high educational expectations for themselves and confidently accomplishing their

goals (Aschaffenburg & Maas, 1997). Consequently, “social inequities are perpetuated as initial differences in cultural capital become systematically encoded in educational credentials, which then funnel individuals (or rather reproduce individuals) into social class positions similar to those of their parents” (Aschaffenburg & Maas, 1997, p. 573).

In order to “test” his hypotheses, Bourdieu applies a positivist epistemology to his research, assuming that it is indeed possible to discover how cultural capital impacts educational attainment through the “categorization and scientific measurement of the behaviour or people and systems” (Hatch & Cunliffe, 1996, p. 13). “For positivists like Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), good knowledge is generated by developing hypotheses and propositions, gathering and analyzing data, and then testing the hypotheses and propositions against the external reality to see if they are correct” (Hatch & Cunliffe, 1996, p. 13). Positivists utilize their results to “develop general theories...and make predictions about the future” (Hatch & Cunliffe, 1996, p. 13).

Bourdieu operationalizes and measures cultural capital in a variety of ways over time. In their seminal work, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) measure the linguistic capital (a subset of cultural capital) of post-secondary students, quantifying the relationship between socioeconomic class, admission to the Faculty of Arts, and linguistic competence. In subsequent work, Bourdieu (1984) gathers data using surveys and interviews in order to measure the frequency of participation in cultural practices, such as reading books, theatre-going, listening to classical music, and visiting art galleries and museums among members of diverse socio-occupational groups. According to Bourdieu (1984),

...scientific observation shows that cultural needs are the product of upbringing and education: surveys establish that all cultural practices (museum visits, concert-going,

reading, etc.), and preferences in literature, painting or music, are closely linked to educational level (measured by qualifications or length of schooling) and secondarily to social origin. (p. 1)

Bourdieu (1984) calculates the social origin (or inherited cultural capital) of participants based on the father's occupation and educational qualification(s) and insists that even though "[t]he relative weight of home background and of formal education varies according to the extent to which the different cultural practices are recognized and taught by the educational system" his research reveals that "the influence of social origin is the strongest in 'extracurricular' and avante-garde culture," such as modern or ultra-modern theatre (p. 1). According to Bourdieu (1984), "those who have acquired the bulk of their cultural capital in and for school have more 'classical', safer cultural investments than those who have received a large cultural inheritance" (p. 65). However,

[e]ven in the classroom, the dominant definition of the legitimate way of appropriating culture and works of art favours those who have had early access to legitimate culture, in a cultured household, outside of scholastic disciplines, since even within the educational system it devalues scholarly knowledge and interpretation as 'scholastic' or even 'pedantic' in favour of direct experience and simple delight. (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 2)

Consequently, "based on statistical analysis of the data collected," the theoretical models developed by Bourdieu (1984) are believed by some to proffer accurate explanations of how cultural capital operates from a positivist perspective (Hatch & Cunliffe, 1996, p. 13). However, in subsequent work, Bourdieu himself (1989) acknowledges that "social reality" is an "object of perception" and that "social science must take as its object both this reality and the perception of this reality, the perspectives, the points of view which, by virtue of their position in objective

social space, agents have on this reality” thus indicating a move toward more qualitative research methods (p. 18). Despite its popularity with many scholars, it seems that Bourdieu’s conception of cultural capital, which has been measured a variety of ways throughout his work (Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) is rather imprecise, and as such, has been interpreted and operationalized in many different ways by subsequent researchers over the years (Sullivan, 2001). Lamont and Lareau (1988), maintain that an extensive review of Bourdieu’s work reveals that he believes that cultural capital functions as “an informal academic standard, a class attribute, a basis for social selection, and a resource for power which is salient as an indicator/basis of class position” (p. 156). However, the forms of cultural capital listed by Bourdieu,

which range from attitudes to preferences, behaviours and goods, cannot perform all five aforementioned theoretical functions: for instance, while ‘previous academic culture’ can be salient as an informal academic standard, it cannot constitute an indicator of class position, because it is not an essential class characteristic...Also, level of education cannot be a signal of dominant class culture, because it is a continuous variable that applies to members of all classes. (Lamont & Lareau, 1988, p. 156)

According to Sullivan (2001), Bourdieu himself arguably fails to support his own theoretical research empirically when he assumes that a high level of parental education is associated with a high level of parental cultural capital. Although Bourdieu provides data suggesting a strong relationship between participation in cultural activities such as reading and theatre, concert, and museum attendance, with social class and educational attainment, I echo the concerns of Katsillis and Robinson (1990) and Sullivan (2001) who assert that Bourdieu (1984) is unable to demonstrate that children inherit parental cultural capital, and that higher class

students attain higher credentials than lower class students through this mechanism. This has caused a great deal of confusion, prompting researchers to question the authenticity of research findings incompatible with their own narrow interpretations of Bourdieu's cultural capital theory (Lamont & Lareau, 1988).

Utilizing Lareau and Weininger's (2003) organizational framework, I have generated the following table in order to succinctly catalogue thirty years of research utilizing the concept of cultural capital. Although this table is quite comprehensive, it certainly does not represent all of the work exploring the relationship between cultural capital and educational achievement. I have, however, attempted to include the most cited works discovered through my research of the topic. The work included in my table primarily consists of empirical research, of which most is quantitative; only a couple of the studies employ a qualitative research design. Although some of the works examined in Lareau and Weininger's (2003) critical review of cultural capital can be found in my table, I did my own research and analysis of each work. I also provide a much more comprehensive review than Lareau and Weininger (2003), analyzing more recent works and expanding on the authors' original organizational framework. The work of several scholars is listed in chronological order, beginning with DiMaggio in 1982 and concluding with Jaeger's most recent study in 2011. Each work is categorized according to the author's definition and measurement of cultural capital, the form of assessment used to measure academic achievement, and both the findings and limitations of the author's work. Following the table is a more detailed discussion of the works.

CAPITAL AND STANDARDIZED TESTS

20

Year	Author	Title	Definition of Cultural Capital	Measurement of Cultural Capital	Measurement of Academic Achievement	Findings	Limitations
1982	DiMaggio	Cultural Capital and School Success	-“instruments for the appropriation of symbolic wealth socially designated as worthy of being sought and possessed” (Bourdieu, 1977) -interpreted by DiMaggio as prestigious art forms, such as art, music and literature (p. 190)	-high school students’ self-reports of involvement in art, music and literature; measuring attitude (interests), activities (participation in arts), and information (knowledge test) (p. 191)	High school grades (Controls for intellectual ability with a vocabulary test)	-“cultural capital is less tied to parental background traits than Bourdieu’s theory...would predict” -“cultural capital has an impact on high school grades that is highly significant and that, in nontechnical subjects, approaches the contribution of measured ability” (p. 199) -cultural mobility model	-use of national data not suited to author’s purposes -use of self-reporting -elimination of dropouts and minorities from data -“single measures of cultural capital are inadequate” (p. 199)
1985	Robinson and Garnier	Class Reproduction Among Men and Women in France	“...‘linguistic and cultural competence’ which manifests itself...as the purchase and borrowing of books; attendance at museums, theatre performances, and concerts; styles of speech and interpersonal skills” (p. 253)	-“educational capital” (credentials) -referred to as “certified cultural capital”) (p. 254)		-“role of educational capital in reproducing class is much overstated by reproduction theory” -“education...serves more as a vehicle of mobility than as a reproducer of class inequality” (p. 277)	-no measure of “cultural interests; art, music, literature; and linguistic and interaction style” (p. 258)
1988	Lamont and Lareau	Cultural Capital: Allusions, Gaps and Glissandos in Recent Theoretical Developments	“as institutionalized, i.e., widely shared, high status cultural signals (attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviours, goods and credentials) used for social and cultural exclusion” p. 156)	“in a large and highly differentiated society cultural practices are not all compared continuously and equally to one another...” thus measures are “empirically insufficient although analytically appealing” (p. 158)		-authors’ response to confusion surrounding concept of cultural capital is to offer a broader definition of cultural capital, more in line with Bourdieu and Passeron’s original work	-as it is a review of related empirical research, the authors’ fail to provide quantitative or qualitative research to support their conclusions

Year	Author	Title	Definition of Cultural Capital	Measurement of Cultural Capital	Measurement of Academic Achievement	Findings	Limitations
1990	Farkas, Grobe, Sheehan, and Shaun	Cultural Resources and School Success	“informal academic standards by which teachers reward more general skills, habits and styles” (p. 127)	“basic skills, absenteeism, work habits (homework, class participation, effort and organization), disruptiveness and appearance” (p. 127)	Course mastery (district prepared standardized unit test) and course grades	-“powerful effect of student work habits on grades...twice the magnitude of that for coursework mastery” -“teacher judgements of student noncognitive characteristics (work habits) are powerful determinants of course grades” -“teachers reward ‘citizenship’ over and above cognitive (test score) performance” (p. 140)	- homework (class assignments completed at home) defined as a noncognitive characteristic -assumption that homework and class participation marks are not a valid measure of student learning and are used to (covertly) calculate grades
1990	Katsillis and Rubinson	Cultural Capital, Student Achievement and Education Reproduction	“competence in a society’s high status culture, its behaviour, habits, and attitudes” (p. 270)	-“high culture activities...included attendance at the theatre and lectures, and visits to museums and galleries” (p. 272)	GPA in eleventh grade (p. 272)	- “cultural capital does not influence academic rewards in Greece and thus is not a mechanism that transforms family socioeconomic status into educational achievement” (p. 276) -educational attainment is attributed to ability and effort (p. 277)	-further study of the role of the achievement process as a reproductive mechanism “is necessary before the extent to which it serves social mobility and social reproduction can be fully assessed” (p. 278)
1996	Kalmijn and Kraaykamp	Race, Cultural Capital, and Schooling: An Analysis of Trends in the United States	“highbrow cultural activities; interest in art and classical music, attendance at theatres and museums, and reading literature (p. 23)	Parent attendance at art museums, plays, classical music performances, and encouraging child to read (p. 26)	Parent’s level of schooling	-“in all cohorts and for both races, more exposure to cultural capital is associated with higher levels of schooling after other background characteristics are taken into account” (p. 32) -“may serve as a route to upward mobility for disadvantaged groups (p. 33)	-“research design does not account for the effects of influential changes such as “school desegregation, bussing, scholarships for Blacks, and affirmative action” or overall increase in SES (p. 32)

Year	Author	Title	Definition of Cultural Capital	Measurement of Cultural Capital	Measurement of Academic Achievement	Findings	Limitations
1997	Aschaffenburg and Maas	Cultural and Educational Careers: The Dynamics of Social Reproduction	-“proficiency in and familiarity with the dominant cultural codes and practices (linguistic styles, aesthetic preferences, styles of interaction) ...institutionalized as legitimate and valuable at the societal level” (p. 573)	-For children, cultural capital is measured through participation in cultural classes; music, visual arts, performance, art and music appreciation and/or history -For parents, cultural capital initiatives; classical music, art museums and performances, encouraging child to read for enjoyment (p. 578)	Parents level of education and children’s educational transitions, such as high school to college	-early cultural participation is significant, but declines over time -“parental orientations toward culture...exert lasting influences on the likelihood of their children’s educational successes” however, effects are “smaller than the effects of children’s own cultural experiences” -“Cultural education that takes place out of school always has a greater effect than in-school cultural education” (p. 584)	-participation in cultural classes may not be an indicator of cultural capital, but rather reflect general investment in children’s educational futures (eg., sports may yield similar results) (p. 585)
1999	Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell	Race, Cultural Capital and Educational Resources: Persistent Inequalities and Achievement Returns	“societally valued knowledge of ‘highbrow’ culture and cultural cues” and “household educational resources, such as books, computers and newspapers” (p. 159)	-“highbrow cultural participation (cultural classes, cultural trips)” and “household educational resources (pictures, books and dictionaries) and family structure (for example, siblings)” (p. 159-160)	Students’ GPAs and standardized mathematics-reading achievement	-“strong main effects of cultural capital and educational resources that are consistent regardless of race or class” (p. 173) -however, “only moderately explain racial and social-class gaps in performance” (p. 171) -may be that “differential racial returns are a consequence of the inapplicability of the status attainment model to nonwhites” (p. 173)	-“test of micropolitical mediation is, at best, suggestive” due to authors’ “inability to disentangle racial-class bias from evaluation-relegation on the basis of actual performance” (p. 171)
2000	De Graaf, De Graaf, and Kraaykamp	Parental Cultural Capital and Educational Attainment in the Netherlands : A Refinement of the Cultural Capital Perspective	“as institutionalized ...consists of widely shared, high status cultural signals (such as behaviours, tastes, and attitudes) that are used for social and cultural exclusion” (p. 93)	“Parental cultural capital – participation in beaux arts (attendance at theatres, classical music concerts, and art exhibitions and galleries)” (p. 96)	Parental years of education	-“effect of parental reading behaviour is about four times as large as the effect of parental beaux arts participation, and the effect of parental beaux arts participation is not significant” (p. 104) -“In contrast to core implication of Bourdieu’s reproduction theory, parental cultural capital seems to be of additional help for children from low socioeconomic backgrounds” (p. 108)	-further research is required to disentangle two explanations (“educational skills” and “educational affinity”) for the effect of parental reading behaviour (p. 107)

Year	Author	Title	Definition of Cultural Capital	Measurement of Cultural Capital	Measurement of Academic Achievement	Findings	Limitations
2001	Kingston	The Unfulfilled Promise of Cultural Capital Theory	-“institutionalized, i.e., widely shared, high status cultural signals (attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviours , goods and credentials) used for social and cultural exclusion”(Lamont and Lareau, as cited in Kingston, p. 89) -“valued signals are arbitrary” (p. 90)	-measures must include variables such as economic resources, parenting style, encouragement of academic engagement, assistance with school assignments, parental education, income and occupational status and yet, these crucial variables have been omitted from work that supports Bourdieu’s reproduction theory (p. 94)		-“impact of home practices, such as verbally stimulating conversations, reading sessions, and educationally related resources... is substantial” -such home practices may be called culture, but “they do not represent exclusionary practices that are value to their connection to a social group” (p. 96) -“consequential because they directly stimulate intellectual development and engagement, not because socially biased gatekeepers accord them value” (p. 97)	-author attributes “the ability to communicate effectively to a general articulateness, relatively unlinked to status groupings” -this statement lacks evidentiary support (either from his own work or the work of others)
2001	Sullivan	Cultural Capital and Educational Attainment	“familiarity with the dominant culture in a society, and especially the ability to understand and use ‘educated’ language” (p. 893)	For children, activities such as type and amount of books read, type of television programs watched, type of music listened to, as well as art gallery, theatre, and concert attendance; cultural knowledge test and vocabulary test (p. 899) For parents, children’s reports on parents’ reading behaviour, taste in music and cultural activities (p. 900)	General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) exam	-cultural capital (linguistic ability and cultural knowledge) transmitted from parents to children is strongly supported (p. 909) -possession of cultural capital has a significant impact on GCSE attainment (p. 911) -“However, a large, direct effect of social class on attainment remains when cultural capital has been controlled for. Therefore, ‘cultural capital’ can provide only a partial explanation of social class differences in educational attainment.” (p. 893)	-small sample (only four schools sampled) (p. 909) -difficult to say which activities should be understood as ‘capital’ without an “analysis into which cultural activities are associated with educational success” (p. 911)

Year	Author	Title	Definition of Cultural Capital	Measurement of Cultural Capital	Measurement of Academic Achievement	Findings	Limitations
2001	Blackledge	The Wrong Sort of Capital? Bangladeshi Women and Their Children's Schooling in Birmingham, U.K.	"the cultural experiences of the home facilitate children's adjustment to school, thereby transforming cultural resources into cultural capital" (p. 346) "cultural and linguistic norms of the majority group" (p. 347)	-linguistic capital - speaking, reading and writing English (the "legitimate" language required in the dominant market) (p. 348) -ability to effectively communicate with teacher, and read to children		-"an adaptation of Bourdieu's model which incorporates relations of power between majority and minority groups in society has led to a clearer understanding of the ways in which institutional attitudes to different kinds of cultural and linguistic capital are key factors in these Bangladeshi women's attempts to support, and gain information about, their children's schooling" (p. 366).	-the study fails to provide empirical data on the literacy proficiency of the children
2001	Driessen	Ethnicity, Forms of Capital and Educational Achievement	"critical linguistic or socio-cultural competencies and affinities (e.g., interactional forms, language use, interests, taste for art and culture, social and cultural opinions, and preferences)" (p. 515) "transmitted... from generation to generation"	-linguistic resources (language choice, language attitude, Dutch language mastery) -reading behaviour (parents) -pedagogical family climate (help with homework, contact with school, talking about school, importance of school, importance of school appropriate behaviour) (p. 521)	Standardized language and math tests	-Bourdieu' reproduction thesis not supported by findings (p. 535) -may be that "differential racial returns are a consequence of the inapplicability of the status attainment model to nonwhites" (Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell, as cited in Driessen, 2001, p. 535)	"data not specifically collected for testing the cultural capital thesis for different ethnic groups

Year	Author	Title	Definition of Cultural Capital	Measurement of Cultural Capital	Measurement of Academic Achievement	Findings	Limitations
2003	Lareau and Weininger	Cultural Capital in Educational Research: A Critical Assessment	<p>-“allows culture to be used as a resource that provides access to scarce rewards, is subject to monopolization, and ... may be transmitted from one generation to the next” (p. 587)</p> <p>-“the educational norms of those social classes capable of imposing the ... criteria of evaluation which are the most favourable to their children” (Bourdieu & Passeron, as cited in Lareau & Weininger, 2003, p. 588)</p>	<p>-“studies must identify the particular expectations – both the formal and, especially, informal – by means of which school personal appraise students”</p> <p>-“studies must document variations among students and parents in their ability to meet standards held by educators</p> <p>-“technical skills, including academic skills, should not be excluded from any discussion of cultural capital” (p. 588)</p>		<p>-dominant interpretation of cultural capital refers to “knowledge of competence with ‘highbrow’ cultural activities, and that as such, it is distinct from ... ‘technical’ ability or skill” (p. 597)</p> <p>-authors’ interpretation more abstract and emphasizes “the direct or indirect ‘imposition’ of evaluative norms favouring the children or families of a particular social milieu” (p. 598)</p>	
2006	Barone	Cultural Capital, Ambition and the Explanation of Inequalities in Learning Outcomes: A Comparative Analysis	<p>“no consensus about the proper way to operationalize the notion of cultural capital” however, the most common indicators include measures of subjective involvement in high culture (self-declared interest in art); measures of cultural participation (visits to museums, courses); measures of cultural competence (knowledge of famous composers or painters) (p. 1042)</p>	<p>“official PISA indexes of cultural communication (frequency of conversations between parents and children on cultural issues) and cultural possession (availability of cultural objects at home)” (p. 1045)</p>	Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)	<p>-“both the occupational status and the level of schooling of parents have a positive influence on the performance of their children” (p. 1046)</p> <p>-“indicators of family cultural capital have a modest explanatory power” (p. 1051)</p>	-student grades are not available to compare to PISA achievement scores

Year	Author	Title	Definition of Cultural Capital	Measurement of Cultural Capital	Measurement of Academic Achievement	Findings	Limitations
2009	Wildhagen	Why Does Cultural Capital Matter for High School Academic Performance? An Empirical Assessment of Teacher-Selection and Self-Selection Mechanisms as Explanations of Cultural Capital Effect	“institutionalized, i.e., widely shared, high status cultural signals (attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviours , goods and credentials) used for social and cultural exclusion”(Lamont and Lareau, as cited in Wildhagen, 2009, p. 174)	“taking cultural classes outside of school and attending museums that are unrelated to school” (p. 181)	12 th Grade GPA and National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) data in reading and math	-“unequal distribution of cultural capital across students does contribute to SES gaps in academic performance” (p. 191) -“students from highly educated families were far more likely to be involved in high-status cultural activities” (p. 191) -“cultural capital affects academic outcomes partly because it improves students’ expectations for future educational attainment” (p. 193) -“lack of evidence that teachers’ perceptions of students mediate the positive effect of cultural capital on academic performance” (p. 192)	-lack of empirical evidence to support and/or explain how the cultural capital effect on educational attainment may be attributed to parents’ and children’s beliefs that involvement in high-culture activities will “pay off in school”
2011	Jaeger	Does Cultural Capital Really Affect Academic Achievement? New Evidence from Combined Sibling and Panel Data	“cultural capital enables individuals and families with knowledge of institutionalized high-status cultural signals (attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviours , goods and credentials) to exclude others from advantaged social positions or high-status groups”(Lamont and Lareau, as cited in Jaeger, 2011, p. 283)	“children’s participation in cultural activities, reading environment and reading habits, and participation in extracurricular activities”	Peabody Individual Achievement Tests (PIAT) (Standardized reading recognition, reading comprehension and math tests)	-“cultural capital...has (mostly) positive effects on children’s reading recognition, reading comprehension and math test scores” (p. 295) -although statistically significant, the impact of cultural capital “in terms of explaining educational inequalities is fairly modest” (p. 295) -“ participation in “culture and child’s reading habits have a stronger effect on academic achievement in high SES environments than low SES environments” (which supports cultural reproduction) -books, extracurricular activities and hobbies “more ‘practical’ aspects of cultural capital have stronger effects in low and medium SES environments (which supports cultural mobility)	-study does not identify the substantive mechanisms that generate the direct effect of cultural capital on academic achievement -does not account for change in cultural capital inputs over time -including qualitative research would better capture the dynamics of how parents invest cultural capital in their children, how children accrue cultural capital and how both generate academic success (p. 296)

DiMaggio: High Culture and Cultural Mobility

According to my research, DiMaggio (1982), an American sociologist, was one of the first to undertake the task of interpreting and operationalizing Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital. The purpose of DiMaggio's research was to determine how cultural capital, which he defined as highbrow culture participation, impacts students' high school grades (DiMaggio, 1982). Cultural capital was measured through students' self-reported interests, participation and knowledge of art, music and literature (DiMaggio, 1982). DiMaggio found a positive effect of cultural capital on high school grades, but discovered that "cultural capital is less tied to parental background traits [measured via father's educational attainment] than Bourdieu's theory...would predict" (p. 199). DiMaggio (1982) found that cultural capital may not sufficiently account for the positive relationship between social class and academic success, and developed his "cultural mobility model" accordingly. DiMaggio's (1982) cultural mobility model asserts that cultural capital will benefit all children equally, but the investment in cultural activities and resources will yield a greater return for students who are less advantaged (DiMaggio, 1982; Jaeger, 2011). Although both the cultural mobility model and Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) cultural reproduction model support that participation in high status cultural activities has a significantly positive effect on grades, the cultural reproduction model posits that the return will be higher for students from higher income homes, whereas the DiMaggio (1982) argues that "the impact of cultural capital will be greater on the grades of less advantaged youth, for whom the acquisition and display of prestigious cultural resources may be a vital part of upward mobility" (p. 195).

According to Kingston (2001), DiMaggio's (1982) findings that cultural capital has a positive impact on academic achievement, regardless of socioeconomic background, supports his cultural mobility theory while simultaneously undermining Bourdieu's theory of cultural

reproduction, arguing that “[t]he fact that nonelite students can benefit from this capital directly counters Bourdieu’s claim that its acquisition is deeply embedded in elite families’ socialization patterns” (Kingston, 2001, p. 92). In truth, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) believe that while members of the dominant class will continue to reap the benefits of their “inherited” cultural capital, first in the school system and then in society at large, a select number of students from working class and poor families will achieve upwardly mobility through the strategic employment of cultural capital acquired outside the home. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) acknowledge that this is in fact necessary, arguing that

[t]he mobility of individuals, far from being incompatible with reproduction of the structure of class relations, can help to conserve that structure, by guaranteeing social stability through the controlled selection of a limited number of individuals – modified in and for individual upgrading – and so giving credibility to the ideology of social mobility whose most accomplished expression is the school ideology of...the school as a liberating force. (p. 167)

Consequently, in order to ensure that the hierarchical social structure appears *natural*, and thus unquestioned, these “selected” students are “rewarded” with post-secondary educational opportunities and profitable employment creating some semblance of social mobility, while at the same time, enabling “the privileged classes to appear to be surrendering to a perfectly neutral authority the power of transmitting power from one generation to another” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 167). The economic capital required to invest in legitimized cultural capital unduly burdens low income parents vying for their child to become one of the selected few. Unlike DiMaggio (1982), Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) do not conceive of social mobility and cultural reproduction as mutually exclusive. Instead, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) envisage

social mobility and cultural reproduction as operating in tandem to ensure the survival of an education system that purports to be the great social equalizer. By enabling a chosen few to “rise above” their working class backgrounds, schools create the illusion of providing opportunities for *all* students to succeed, while systematically protecting and promoting the interests of the dominant class (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).

Ultimately, DiMaggio, in both his seminal (1982) and subsequent work (DiMaggio & Mohr, 1985) on the impact of cultural capital on educational attainment, found only partial support for his (mis)interpretation of Bourdieu’s theory (Aschaffenburg & Maas, 1997; De Graaf, De Graaf & Kraaykamp, 2000; Jaeger, 2011; Katsillis & Robinson, 1990; Kingston, 2001). However, DiMaggio’s (1982) cultural mobility model, (which DiMaggio perceives to be incongruous with Bourdieu and Passeron’s (1990) theory of cultural reproduction), has since been cited in several works that also inaccurately deem Bourdieu and Passeron’s (1990) theory to be incompatible with cultural mobility (De Graff et al., 2000; Jaeger, 2011; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 1996; Robinson & Garnier, 1985). In addition, DiMaggio’s (1982) interpretation and operationalization of cultural capital, (limited to knowledge and participation in highbrow culture), has been highly influential on succeeding researchers as evident in the volume of work examining the relationship between cultural capital and educational attainment subsequent to DiMaggio (Lamont & Lareau, 1988).

Robinson and Garnier (1985) followed DiMaggio’s (1982) work with a large scale study examining how education reproduces class advantage generationally through the gainful employment of men and women in France. The authors’ findings contradict (their perception of) Bourdieu’s theory of cultural reproduction, instead finding favour with DiMaggio’s cultural mobility model, discovering that “[e]ducation serves less as a producer of class advantage than

as a vehicle of mobility into managerial positions” (Robinson & Garnier, 1985, p. 250).

Although Robinson and Garnier (1985) defined cultural capital as “linguistic and cultural competence” that manifests itself through participation in highbrow arts attendance, patterns of speech, and interpersonal skills, they failed to measure any of these, instead using educational attainment to measure cultural capital (p. 258). Robinson and Garnier (1985) justified this ostensible negligence, citing Bourdieu’s perception of educational capital as “embodied cultural capital,” which makes the assumption that educational attainment is necessarily indicative of, or synonymous with, cultural capital. However, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), would classify educational capital as a form of institutional cultural capital, not embodied capital, and this misconception of Bourdieu and Passeron’s (1990) theory raises questions about the accuracy of Robinson and Garnier’s (1985) work. Nonetheless, positivist researchers, such as Sullivan (2001), would argue that both Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) and Robinson and Garnier (1985) must provide empirical evidence to support the relationship between academic achievement and cultural capital.

Lamont and Lareau: A Broader Definition of Cultural Capital

Confounded by the narrow interpretations of cultural capital utilized in studies following DiMaggio’s earliest work, Lamont and Lareau (1988) sought to provide clarification (through their perceptions) of Bourdieu and Passeron’s (1990) intended meaning of cultural capital. Lamont and Lareau’s (1988) review of preceding studies revealed that in a multicultural and diverse society such as the United States of America, “cultural practices are not all compared continuously and equally to one another” and as a result, measures tend to be “empirically insufficient although analytically appealing” (Lamont & Lareau, 1988, p. 158). The French version of Bourdieu and Passeron’s (1990) work was originally published in 1977. At that time,

France was presumably much more culturally homogeneous than the United States of America in 1988. I argue that Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) and later Bourdieu (1984), could conceivably isolate race from socioeconomic status in order to investigate the relationship between cultural capital (as an indicator of socioeconomic or socio-occupational class) and educational attainment. Moreover, knowledge of the inherent hierarchical order of cultural practices examined in Bourdieu's body of work would likely be embedded across a homogeneous society such as France in the 1970s. In a culturally diverse society such as the United States of America, it would be remiss to believe that cultural practices might be valued or "compared continuously and equally to one another" and thus empirically quantifiable (Lamont & Lareau, 1988, p. 158).

Consequently, the authors decided to generate a broader interpretation of cultural capital, more reflective of "a large and highly differentiated society" and in keeping with the definition of cultural capital as Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) intended (Lamont & Lareau, 1988, p. 158). In 1988, Lamont and Lareau characterized cultural capital "as institutionalized, i.e., widely shared, high status cultural signals (attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviors, goods and credentials) used for social and cultural exclusion" (p. 156). This aforementioned definition emphasizes the elitist, exclusionary nature of cultural capital; highlighting the fact that the "right kind" of cultural capital may not be widely available or valuable to everyone (Kingston, 2001; Lamont & Lareau, 1988). In fact, some would argue that the socially biased, evaluative quality of cultural capital, (i.e., some forms are "worth" more than others), that is cleverly disguised as the status quo, is at the crux of the Bourdieuan argument (Kingston, 2001).

Lamont and Lareau (1988) provide a broader definition of cultural capital that is applicable to more diverse societies than preceding authors such as DiMaggio (1982), because they are not simply measuring concert and museum attendance or other forms of highbrow

culture. In Lamont and Lareau's (1988) interpretation of cultural capital, "widely shared, high status...behaviours" could presumably include appropriate school behaviour, or participation in activities such as a day at the beach or skiing (p. 156). In many communities in British Columbia, these typical middle class activities are shared by members of the dominant class and may be used for "social and cultural exclusion" (Lamont & Lareau, 1988, p. 156) when students with limited experiential knowledge of such activities are prevented from fully accessing the school curriculum or accurately demonstrating their learning on standardized tests. Although the authors did not provide their own quantitative or qualitative study as a means to "test" their definition of cultural capital, it appears to have been rather well received by several ensuing researchers as evident in the use of Lamont and Lareau's definition in a number of works (De Graaf et al., 2000; Kingston, 2001; Wildhagen, 2009; Jaeger, 2011).

Cultural Capital and "Citizenship"

Adopting a broader conceptualization of cultural capital, Farkas, Grobe, Sheehan, and Shaun (1990), set out to examine how the cultural capital that is manifested in schools, such as the "informal academic standards by which teachers reward more general skills, habits and styles" impacts students' grades (p. 127). In this study, cultural capital was measured through "basic skills, absenteeism, work habits (homework, class participation, effort and organization), disruptiveness and appearance" (Farkas et al., 1990, p. 127). The authors found that work habits (deemed noncognitive) had a significant effect on course grades, "twice the magnitude of that for [cognitive] course mastery" (Farkas et al., 1990, p. 140). The authors referred to their measures of cultural capital as quite simply "citizenship" and claimed that the teachers in their study rewarded it "over and above cognitive (test score) performance" (Farkas et al., 1990, p. 140).

It seems a slight oversimplification to refer to work habits, (homework and class participation in particular), as citizenship. It is unclear how homework, (defined as class assignments that are completed at home), is any less cognitive than a test (that assesses students on concepts learned in class and practiced for homework), and whether the authors are measuring the content of the homework or simply the act of homework completion itself. In addition, participation in class discussions may enable teachers to assess what students are able to synthesize and articulate during class time. Both homework and class participation are valuable tools for assessment of student learning and thus often explicitly “count” towards course grades. However, it may be that students who do not possess the highly valued cultural capital of the dominant class that is recognized, legitimized, and reinforced by the school, may be silent or have less to say during class discussions. Teachers may interpret this as an indication that students have not learned the content. Consequently, teachers’ assumptions regarding cultural capital may be reinforced through the assessment of students during class discussions. Regrettably, none of this is considered in Farkas et al.’s (1990) work. I argue that if Farkas et al. (1990) insist on defining homework and class participation as noncognitive characteristics that “influence students’ grades indirectly” (Lareau & Weininger, 2003), then they need to provide a rationale for their choice, otherwise it serves to detract from the authors’ arguments. Although Farkas et al. (1990) may have effectively captured the evaluative nature of cultural capital in their work, perhaps they were a little too liberal in their interpretation.

Cultural Capital and Extracurricular Activities

Aschaffenburg and Maas (1997), noting that previous studies measured the cultural capital of either the parents or the child and never both, decided to study the impact of the participation of both parents and children in the beaux arts, (music, art, and literature), on

children's academic transitions (i.e. from high school to college). For children in particular, cultural capital was measured through their involvement in a variety of cultural classes, such as music, visual arts, performance (acting or ballet), art appreciation or art history, and music appreciation or music history (Aschaffenburg & Maas, 1997). In line with Bourdieu, Aschaffenburg and Maas (1997) discovered that "cultural education that takes place out of school always has a greater effect than in-school cultural education" (p. 584). For example, Aschaffenburg and Maas (1997) found that participation in an art appreciation or art history class that is taught outside of the school has a greater impact on educational attainment than taking an art class in school. However, in studying the effects of both parental and child cultural capital on a child's educational successes, the authors found that a child's own cultural experiences has a greater impact than that of their parents (Aschaffenburg & Maas, 1997).

The researchers also discovered that over the years, the impact of cultural capital declines (Aschaffenburg & Maas, 1997). Each academic transition "takes place in a new competitive arena, and as a consequence, early deficits decisive in previous 'competitions' become less important over time" (Aschaffenburg & Maas, 1997, p. 584). The authors note that this finding contradicts Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction, and instead seems to support a cultural mobility model (Aschaffenburg & Maas, 1997). However, Aschaffenburg and Maas (1997) seem to base this conclusion on DiMaggio's popular aforementioned (mis)interpretation of Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) theory of cultural reproduction.

Interestingly, the authors note that a child's involvement in cultural classes may not reflect cultural capital as such, but rather the positive impact of cultural classes may simply be indicative of a general investment in a child's academic future (Aschaffenburg & Maas, 1997). In other words, academic success may be attributed to a child's participation in a wide variety of

lessons or activities simply because it is reflective of a well-rounded investment in a child's academic future, not because the classes themselves are cultural in nature. Many colleges and universities, for example, expect students to engage in a variety of extracurricular activities during high school (Aschaffenburg & Maas, 1997). Student involvement in diverse extracurricular activities may be a determining factor in the admissions process, and therefore have a significant impact on educational attainment. The authors acknowledge that more research is necessary to determine if alternative classes, such as sports or volunteering, may have the same effect on academic achievement as the cultural classes undertaken in this study (Aschaffenburg & Maas, 1997).

In one of the most recent studies assessing the impact of cultural capital on educational attainment, Jaeger (2011), utilized Lamont and Lareau's (1988) interpretation of cultural capital in order to measure children's participation in cultural activities, reading habits, and participation in extracurricular activities. Jaeger's (2011) study "uses a fixed effect design to address the problem of omitted variable bias" which was the subject of criticism for yielding overly optimistic results in several preceding studies (p. 281). It also "controls for family and individual effects" by utilizing data that reports on siblings (Jaeger, 2011, p. 281). Jaeger (2011) found that cultural capital "has (mostly) positive effects on children's reading recognition, reading comprehension and math test scores" (p. 295). However, "the effect of cultural capital on academic achievement is generally weaker than previously suggested" and in terms of explaining educational inequities, the effect of cultural capital is fairly small (Jaeger, 2011, p. 295).

Of particular interest is Jaeger's (2011) discovery that a child's reading habits and cultural participation have a stronger effect on academic achievement for more advantaged students than it does for less advantaged students, which seems to support Bourdieu's cultural

reproduction model, whereas books, extracurricular activities and hobbies “all indicators of more ‘practical’ aspects of cultural capital, have stronger effects in low and medium SES environments” which, in turn, supports the cultural mobility model (p.295). Essentially, students from less affluent homes who are provided with cultural resources such as books, in addition to opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities and hobbies, will benefit from these experiences academically, and more so than their affluent peers. Although Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) posit that cultural capital predominantly benefits members of the upper class, they acknowledge that a selected few students from middle and working class socioeconomic groups will utilize acquired cultural capital to gain academic advantage. Jaeger’s (2011) findings that “practical” aspects of cultural capital will have a stronger effect on the academic achievement of low and middle socioeconomic students, than it will on those students from high socioeconomic environments, may seem incompatible with Bourdieu and Passeron’s (1990) theory. However, Jaeger’s (2011) study examines data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth- Children and Young Adults which is an American survey. I argue that it is possible that the “right type” of cultural capital, (i.e., used to gain academic advantage) may be different in the United States of America than it is in France. Jaeger (2011) also acknowledges that “educational success may not simply be a question of having more or less (one dimensional) cultural capital, but rather a question of having the type of cultural capital that yields the highest return in a given environment” (p. 295). Thus, “rather than being direct competitors, the cultural reproduction and cultural mobility models may pertain to qualitatively different aspects of cultural capital” (Jaeger, 2011, p. 295).

Cultural Capital and Reading Behaviour

De Graaf et al. (2000) sought to refine the perspective of cultural capital prior to the turn of the twenty-first century in their study examining how parental cultural capital impacts educational achievement in the Netherlands. De Graaf et al. (2000) utilize Lamont and Lareau's (1988) interpretation of cultural capital "as institutionalized ...consist[ing] of widely shared, high status cultural signals (such as behaviours, tastes, and attitudes) that are used for social and cultural exclusion" (Lamont & Lareau, 1988, as cited in De Graaf et al., 2000, p. 93). Similar to preceding studies, they measured parental participation in highbrow cultural activities, also referred to as the beaux arts. However, unlike previous research, De Graaf et al. (2000) pit parental participation in highbrow culture against parental reading behaviour. The respondents reported how often parents read regional or historical novels, thrillers, science fiction, or war novels, Dutch literature, translated literature, and literature in a foreign language (De Graaf et al., 2000). Evidently, the kind of texts that parents read is significant, as less legitimate types of reading material, (e.g., magazines and popular novels), were not included in the survey (De Graaf et al., 2000). Taking into account the hierarchical classification of cultural activities, this assumption seems reasonable, however, not all magazines and popular novels are created equal, and as such, excluding these genres from the survey may have prevented De Graaf et al. from capturing a complete picture of parental reading behaviour.

The authors point out that in the Netherlands, participation in the beaux arts is not valued the same way it is in France, and as such, they expect their results to differ from Bourdieu's findings. As anticipated, De Graaf et al. (2000) discovered that "the effect of parental reading behaviour is about four times as large as the effect of parental beaux arts participation, and the effect of parental beaux arts participation is not significant" (De Graaf et al., 2000, p. 104). The

authors purport that parents who read have the “linguistic and cognitive skills that...[are]...rewarded in school and can pass these educational skills on to their offspring” (De Graaf et al., 2000, p. 107). The cultural climate of these homes is likely to mimic the school environment, and as such, children from these families will begin school familiar with common school practices, such as reading (De Graaf et al., 2000). Although this is in keeping with Bourdieu’s theory of cultural reproduction, the researchers also found that children from less advantaged backgrounds stand to benefit more from parental capital, whether it is beaux arts or reading habits, than their more affluent peers. (De Graaf et al., 2000).

De Graaf et al. (2000) argue that the suggestion that parents with lower levels of education can improve their child’s academic standing by providing a “favourable reading climate” and that this same action would be ineffective for parents with higher levels of education is in stark contrast to Bourdieu’s central hypothesis (p. 108). That is to say, “children from high-status backgrounds do so well at school because their parents are at home in the cultural system” (De Graaf et al., 2000, p. 108). It is unclear as to how this hypothesis is so diametrically opposed to the fundamental tenets of Bourdieu’s thesis. It is evident that the interpretation and operationalization of the term cultural capital may considerably alter the results. In fact, cultural capital has been associated with literature and measured in terms of reading habits and access to books by several researchers (Aschaffenburg & Maas, 1997; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 1996; Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999). Perhaps it is possible that affluent families will continue to be effortlessly at ease in the school system while families from the lower socioeconomic strata are able to utilize their resources to gain advantage. In other words, socioeconomically disadvantaged families can consciously work to acquire the cultural capital that can be converted into institutional capital, (in the form of academic credentials), and

subsequently transformed into economic capital via profitable employment. However, the acquisition of cultural capital may be limited by a family's economic capital.

Like De Graff et al. (2000), Sullivan (2011) asked students to report both on their parents' and their own participation in cultural activities and reading behaviours in an attempt to determine if cultural capital had an impact on the academic performance of the surveyed students. While educational attainment was measured through the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examination in the United Kingdom, Sullivan (2001) also tested students' cultural knowledge and breadth of vocabulary.

Sullivan (2001), it seems, is one of a few researchers to highlight "the ability to understand and use 'educated' language" in her conceptualization of cultural capital (p. 893). Sullivan's (2001) findings revealed that although "cultural capital (linguistic ability and cultural knowledge) transmitted from parents to children is strongly supported" (p. 909), and the "possession of cultural capital has a significant impact on GCSE attainment" (p. 911), a "large, direct effect of social class on attainment remains when cultural capital has been controlled for" and thus the social class differences in educational GCSE scores can only be partially explained by cultural capital (p. 893). Ultimately, Sullivan (2001) determined that reading should be deemed capital because it has a substantial impact on cultural knowledge and vocabulary, and quite simply, positively impacts academic achievement (Lareau & Weininger, 2003). However, Sullivan (2001) is quick to point out that "[t]he data on reading includes the types of books as well as the amount read" and only "classic books and contemporary books of the sort that receive reviews in the quality press were categorised as having cultural capital content" (p. 899).

Also concerned with the relationship between language, reading behaviour and cultural capital, Blackledge (2001) adapted the Bourdieuan model to qualitatively measure the linguistic

capital of Bangladeshi mothers in Birmingham, United Kingdom. Blackledge (2001) posits that without access to the “‘legitimate’ language required in the dominant market,” specifically the speaking, reading and writing of English, the Bangladeshi mothers’ ability to communicate with their children’s teachers or read to their children at home was restricted (p. 348). Blackledge (2001) asserts that “the cultural experiences of the home facilitate children’s adjustment to school, thereby transforming cultural resources into cultural capital” (p. 346). Although the “possession of the appropriate linguistic skills with which to receive pedagogic communication is termed by Bourdieu and Passeron as ‘cultural capital’” it has rarely been measured, either quantitatively or qualitatively in past works (Broadfoot, 1978, p. 77). In the evolution of the conceptualization of cultural capital, Blackledge (2001) forges new ground by considering English language proficiency a form of cultural capital in dominantly English speaking nations (Lareau & Weininger, 2003). However, it is unlikely that this premise would hold in countries in which English is not the dominant language. Blackledge’s (2001) focus is on the standards with which the school evaluates students and parents, emphasizing that “Bourdieu [himself] argues that while the cultural capital that is valued in schools is not equally available to children and parents from different backgrounds, schools still operate as if all families had equal access to it” (p. 347).

Cultural Capital and Race

In an effort to understand the connection between race, cultural capital and schooling, Kalmijn and Kraaykamp (1996) investigated how parent attendance at art museums, plays, and classical music performances, as well as encouraging their child to read, impacted the level of education for both “Blacks” and “Whites” in America over a sixty year period. Once again, these authors seem to equate cultural capital with highbrow culture, a rather narrow interpretation of

Bourdieu's body of work. The authors contend that their results partially support Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) thesis, revealing that for both races, cultural capital was correlated to higher levels of education, while at the same time, found as DiMaggio did, that cultural capital may act as a vehicle for upward mobility for less advantaged groups in American society (Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 1996).

Of concern is the fact that the researchers failed to include variables such as family income or occupational status, or more importantly, any measure of academic ability in their work (Kingston, 2001). In an attempt to examine the relationship between cultural capital and race, the authors neglected to measure the socioeconomic or socio-occupational class of their subjects. This deviates rather significantly from Bourdieu's (1984) work in which cultural capital is purported to be a reflection of social origin (measured via the father's educational attainment and occupation). I question whether Bourdieu's (1984) theoretical framework can effectively apply to research that does not take into account socioeconomic status. In addition, I have reservations about the credibility of research that aims to investigate how cultural capital impacts education without ever actually assessing the academic achievement of the students.

Ultimately, the authors theorized that the gain in cultural capital for Black students could be attributed to increases in the socioeconomic status of Black families (Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 1996; Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999). However, the authors' research design (studying data from 1900-1960), neglected to account for the transformative institutional, legal, (and presumably statistically significant), changes that took place in American society over that time period (Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 1996). It is apparent that a variety of variables are at play when cultural capital and race are examined. Many of these variables must be addressed in the research

design. Attempting to extract or isolate their effect from the results is moot as the reliability of the results has already been compromised.

Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell (1999) also examined the relationship between race, cultural capital and educational attainment in an attempt to understand the racial and social-class gaps in academic performance in the United States. Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell (1999) measured student participation in highbrow arts as well as the number of educational resources (books, dictionaries, etc.,) found in the home, and the number of siblings in the family. The researchers considered educational resources a concrete example of Bourdieu's "objectified" cultural capital, and believed that the number of siblings in the home would dilute a child's access to said cultural capital, and was thus an important measure to be taken into account (Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999). For example, when completing homework, a child with one sibling may have greater access to the family dictionary (or time on the computer), than would a child with two or more siblings.

Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell (1999) found "strong main effects of cultural capital and educational resources that are consistent regardless of race or class" (p. 173). In fact, their research demonstrated that cultural and educational resources have strong and positive effects on both student grades and standardized achievement, however, this only "moderately explain[s] racial and social-class gaps in performance" (Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999, p. 171). The researchers were unable to account for racial and socioeconomic disparities in academic achievement, speculating that "differential racial returns [may be] a consequence of the inapplicability of the status attainment model to nonwhites" (Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999, p. 173). This may be indicative of the fact that Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) theory of cultural reproduction examined the relationship between socioeconomic class, the ensuing

cultural capital, and the collective impact on educational achievement. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) and later Bourdieu (1984) did not consider how an important factor such as race may impact or alter this relationship, and as such, Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) theoretical model was not designed to measure the effects of race on the acquisition of cultural capital and educational attainment.

Like Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell (1999), Driessen (2001) also attributes the differential racial returns found in his study of ethnicity, capital, and educational attainment in the Netherlands to "the inapplicability of the status attainment model to nonwhites" (Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999, as cited in Driessen, 2001, p.535). Driessen (2001) measured cultural capital as a combination of linguistic resources (language choice, language attitude, Dutch language mastery), and the pedagogical family climate (help with homework, relationship with school, conversations about school, the importance of school, and the importance of school appropriate behaviour), as well as the reading behaviour of the parents (p. 521). Noticeably absent in Driessen's (2001) work is the operationalization of cultural capital as participation in highbrow cultural activities that is characteristic of most of the preceding research. It is refreshing to discover research that has escaped the narrow confines of interpretation applied to much of the work quantifying cultural capital, and that is arguably more in keeping with Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) and Bourdieu's (1984) definition of cultural capital.

Driessen's (2001) study of cultural capital among various ethnic groups in the Netherlands revealed findings that do not support Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction and in fact, prompted Driessen to attribute the positive effect of cultural capital on achievement in previous research to interpretation errors (Driessen, 2001). Driessen (2001) discovered that "little or no variation for both indicators of cultural capital and achievement can be detected in some

groups” possibly due to the fact that cultural capital is “generally defined according to the standards of higher status groups” (p. 535). Essentially, cultural capital may manifest itself in a variety of ways among diverse ethnic groups, and as such, indicators of cultural capital that may be common to the dominant group may not be detectable in some nondominant ethnic groups. Driessen (2001) observed that the results differed among ethnic groups and therefore suggested that for future research “the significance of cultural capital within each of the ethnic groups should be considered along with the extent to which the concept can be compared across groups” (p. 535).

The implication that this definition should be altered to suit the various groups studied seems to counter Bourdieu’s (1984) argument that cultural capital is exclusionary to members of the nondominant group, and as such, by virtue of definition, will not apply evenly across all social or presumably ethnic groups. For example, Bourdieu (1984) contends that various cultural preferences and behaviours are reflective of socioeconomic class and can be classified hierarchically and thus compared. Members of the working class may not exhibit many of the indicators of cultural capital common to the upper class group. The possession of different cultural capital may not hinder members of the working class in their interactions with members of the same socioeconomic group however, possession of the “wrong kind” of cultural capital may disadvantage working class students in societal institutions such as schools which recognize and reward the cultural capital of the dominant group.

Similarly, when applying Bourdieu and Passeron’s (1990) concept of cultural capital to various ethnic groups, it is important to acknowledge that while different forms of cultural capital may be valued within a particular ethnic community, it is the cultural capital that is legitimized by the dominant group, and thus the school, that the various forms of capital must be

measured against. It is pertinent to consider how the use of diverse definitions, and hence, measurements of cultural capital across ethnic groups in the same study would impact the validity of the results. That being said, the challenges faced by researchers attempting to measure and evaluate the effective use of cultural capital across various ethnic groups seems to call for a reconceptualization of Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) original theory.

Research suggests that Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) theory may be inapplicable to many of the heterogeneous, multicultural societies that exist in the world today. In nations with longstanding histories of immigration, it may be difficult to isolate the effects of ethno-cultural capital from that of socio-cultural capital. Consequently, distorted research results may prompt those investigating cultural capital in ethnically diverse communities to conclude that Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) theory is unsubstantiated and thus inconsequential. However, cultural capital theory need not be made redundant. Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) original theory must be reconceptualised to allow for the operationalization of cultural capital among ethnically diverse members of the same social stratum.

Cultural Capital and Self-Selection

More recently, Barone (2006) utilized data from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) to assess the impact of cultural capital and ambition on learning outcomes across 25 nations. Barone (2006) interpreted cultural capital conventionally as interest, participation, and knowledge of the beaux arts, and measured these indicators using the "official PISA indexes of cultural communication (frequency of conversations between parents and children on cultural issues) and cultural possession (availability of cultural objects at home)" (p. 1045). Barone's (2006) data revealed that although "both the occupational status and the level of schooling of parents have a positive influence on the performance of their children," family

cultural capital has only a moderate explanatory power (p. 1046). Instead, similar to Katsillis and Rubinson (1990), Barone (2006) attributes academic success to ambition, and in the case of more affluent students, he credits financial resources (or economic capital) in that it can be “invested in foreign language lessons, computer courses, or cultural activities” and converted into human capital, (in the form of academic achievement at the high school level), which presumably leads to post-secondary education and later, employment of economic value (Lareau, 2002, as cited in Barone, 2006, p. 1050).

Again, this conclusion greatly depends on one’s definition of cultural capital. Preceding studies have demonstrated that cultural capital can be interpreted as “the educational norms of those social classes capable of imposing the...criteria of evaluation which are the most favourable to their children” (Bourdieu & Passeron, as cited in Lareau & Weininger, 2003, p. 588) as well as that which excludes others (Lamont & Lareau, 1988). In this case, educational resources, such as books or computers, may quite reasonably be considered objectified cultural capital (Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999; Sullivan, 2001). Barone (2006) acknowledges that parents require economic capital to purchase the objectified cultural capital necessary to help their children succeed academically, yet in spite of this, Barone attributes academic success to ambition, and not cultural capital. In doing so, Barone (2006) makes the assumption that parents who *want* their children to succeed will inevitably provide the aforementioned resources, not recognizing that some parents simply cannot afford it. These parents lack the economic capital, and not the desire, to provide the cultural capital necessary for their children to be successful in school.

Following Barone’s (2006) study, Wildhagen (2009) utilized Lamont and Lareau’s (1988) definition of cultural capital in order to measure how high school students’ participation in cultural classes outside of school impacts academic achievement, evaluating how teacher-

selection and student-selection mechanisms may contribute to the cultural capital effect. Similar to the preceding work of others, Wildhagen (2009) argues that her research may disprove the teacher-selection theory due to a “lack of evidence that teachers’ perceptions of students mediate the positive effect of cultural capital on academic performance” (p. 192). In fact, most of Wildhagen’s (2009) findings are rather predictable given the bevy of research operationalizing cultural capital in a similar way. However, of particular interest is Wildhagen’s conclusion that “cultural capital affects academic outcomes partly because it improves students’ expectations for future educational attainment” (p. 193). According to Wildhagen (2009), the self-selection effect enables students who participate in select cultural classes and activities to perceive themselves as privileged and thus entitled to academic success. Presumably, participation in cultural classes outside of school positively influences students’ ability to self-identify as successful, prospective candidates for post-secondary schooling. These students expect academic success and believe that they deserve it (Wildhagen, 2009). On the flip side, “evidence of this institutionalization [becomes apparent] when members of the working class view high-status cultural pursuits as more valuable than typical working-class cultural tastes, albeit ‘not for them’” (Wildhagen, 2009, p. 178). It seems that in this case, members of the working class have a negative self-perception, believing that high-status cultural pursuits are inaccessible and “above” them. Unfortunately, there is a lack of empirical evidence to explain *how* Wildhagen’s (2009) claim that the cultural capital effect on educational attainment may be attributed to parents’ and children’s beliefs that involvement in high-culture activities will yield academic gains.

Kingston: The Case against Cultural Capital

Upon reviewing a large body of preceding research to make a persuasive case against Bourdieu’s capital culture theory, Kingston (2001), argues that Bourdieu’s theory remains

relatively unsupported empirically. He insists that “measures must include variables such as economic resources, parenting style, encouragement of academic engagement, assistance with school assignments, parental education, income and occupational status,” however, much of the work that supports Bourdieuan theory omits these crucial variables (Kingston, 2001, p. 94). Kingston critiques the empirical viability of the work of Aschaffenburg and Mass (1997), Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell (1999), and Kalmijn and Kraaykamp (1996) in particular. Given that very few studies support or even partially support Bourdieu’s capital culture theory, it is evident that cultural capital has either been poorly measured or poorly supported empirically.

Kingston (2001) argues that “defined in terms of exclusionary class-related practices and dispositions, cultural capital does not substantially account for the relationship between social privilege and academic success” (p. 89). However, although Kingston (2001) admits that “home practices, such as verbally stimulating, reading sessions...and educationally related resources (books and magazines)” may be considered middle-class “culture,” he argues that these are not exclusionary practices “valued for their connection to a social group” (p. 96). He utilizes the example of going to a museum or playing an instrument to demonstrate that “many parts of culture matter for school success, but not as a form of capital” (Kingston, 2001, p. 97). According to Kingston (2001), “the seeming academic benefits of participation in ‘highbrow culture’ ...may well reflect the fact that this participation stimulates student’ curiosity, perseverance, sense of mastery, and imagination” which “make for a good student” but are not “arbitrary cultural resources” (p. 97). Similar to Barone (2006), Kingston (2001) conceives of activities such as going to a museum or playing an instrument as logical investments in a child’s academic growth; valued by and accessible to all social groups. However, not all families can afford to purchase cultural resources for their children, such as books, computers, musical

instruments or trips to the museum. Not all families value reading or playing an instrument. It would seem that these practices are valued differently by various groups, and they are most definitely exclusionary to some.

Kingston (2001) also denies that “a style of discourse (including nonverbal cues, accent, pacing of speech)” is a cultural practice, and instead refers to a general articulateness “that facilitates broad, productive engagement in intellectual and public discussions” that “should be prized by all” (p. 97). He argues that “some cultural practices tend to help everyone in school” and while that may be true, he does not believe the aforementioned practices to be examples of cultural capital (Kingston, 2001, p. 97). However, I argue that these practices are exactly the taken for granted, institutionalized, and exclusionary behaviours that define cultural capital.

Ironically, Kingston praises Lamont and Lareau’s (1988) interpretation of cultural capital “as institutionalized, i.e., widely shared, high status cultural signals (attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviours, goods and credentials) used for social and cultural exclusion” and highlights Lamont and Lareau’s articulation of the value of cultural capital as currency, as well as the exclusionary nature of cultural capital (Lamont & Lareau, as cited in Kingston, 2001, p. 89) while at the same time, arguing that “too many conceptually distinct variables have come to be placed under the big umbrella of cultural capital, creating a distorted sense of what counts for academic success” (Kingston, 2001, p. 89). Interestingly Lamont and Lareau (1988) and later Lareau and Weininger (2003) felt compelled to reconceptualise and rearticulate their understanding of cultural capital because they claimed that it had not been interpreted broadly enough.

Lareau and Weininger: A 21st Century Reconceptualization of Cultural Capital

Inspired by the qualitative work of Blackledge (2001), and concerned about the misinterpretation of Lareau and Lamont's (1988) definition of cultural capital, Lareau and Weininger (2003) set out to redefine cultural capital. This time the authors wrote an extensive critical assessment of the use of cultural capital in educational research, chronicling the operationalization of cultural capital in major works of research over a twenty year span (Lareau & Weininger, 2003). The authors attributed the predominant conceptualization of cultural capital as "highbrow" interests, pursuits and practices, and the insistence that it is distinctly different from the effects of "ability," to the influential power of DiMaggio's first two works (Lareau & Weininger, 2003). Lareau and Weininger were concerned that the "high status cultural signals" referred to in Lamont and Lareau's (1988) definition were overshadowing the evaluative nature of the concept. Consequently, in rearticulating their understanding of cultural capital and its application to education in particular, Lareau and Weininger (2003) cite Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) original work, stressing the evaluative nature of cultural capital: "the educational norms of those social classes capable of imposing the ... criteria of evaluation which are the most favourable to their children" (p. 588). In addition, Lareau and Weininger (2003) emphasize the fundamental nature of culture as capital is that it can be "used as a resource that provides access to scarce rewards, is subject to monopolization, and ... may be transmitted from one generation to the next" (p. 587).

Lareau and Weininger (2003) also presented the results of their qualitative study examining how institutionalized standards, such as the importance of parents being "active, involved, assertive, informed, and educated advocates for their children" is not a practice that is "evenly (or randomly) distributed across social classes" (p. 589). In fact, the authors argue that

social class affects the probability that parents will comply with these institutional “norms” (Lareau & Weininger, 2003). Although a rather abstract conceptualization of cultural capital, the emphasis on “the direct or indirect ‘imposition’ of evaluative norms favouring the children or families of a particular social milieu” is attractive because “it permits maximum empirical variation, while still retaining the core idea that culture can function as ‘capital’” (Lareau & Weininger, 2003, p. 598).

Beginning with Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), positivist researchers have presumed that cultural capital can be measured objectively. “Positivists also assume that language mirrors reality, that is, reality and its objects can be described using language without any loss of meaning or inherent bias” (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006, p. 13). Bourdieu and Passeron’s (1990) use of a positivist approach to research is somewhat confounding given their theoretical conception of culture and language as capital that is anything but neutral. Similar to other qualitative research examining the relationship between cultural capital and educational issues (Blackledge, 2001; Goddard & Foster, 2002; Reay, 2004), Lareau and Weininger (2003) embrace a post-positivist perspective that enables them to employ a broader range of methods to examine cultural capital and educational attainment (Henderson, 2011). “Post-positivism legitimizes the potential for using mixed methods” and “offers a practical approach to collecting data using more than one method” (Henderson, 2011, p. 343). It permits researchers to deviate from the narrow epistemology that has traditionally been applied to cultural capital. Post-positivism suggests that “the social sciences are often fragmented, that knowledge is not neutral (and really never has been), and that all knowledge is socially constructed” (Henderson, 2011, p. 342).

Cultural Capital Today

Since its inception over thirty years ago, the conceptualization of cultural capital has changed and evolved, and yet in many ways, stayed the same. However, it is evident that “Bourdieu’s arguments about the forms of capital have provided the foundations for an important series of analyses of social reproduction that rightly emphasize the prominence of educational systems in modern social dynamics” (Collins, 1998, p. 725). Collins (1998) contends that “[t]here is value in finding out how social-symbolic ‘capitals,’ variously defined, operate within and across different national systems of social stratification” and through migration and immigration patterns (p. 725).

It is apparent that the manner in which sociologists define and measure cultural capital can vary considerably, and yield different and often contradictory results. While some researchers find support for Bourdieu and Passeron’s (1990) cultural reproduction model, others find empirical evidence to support DiMaggio’s (1982) cultural mobility model, and occasionally researchers find data to support both models in the same study. Definitions of cultural capital seem to range from conventionally narrow to conceptually abstract. In quantitative empirical research there is much debate as to which variables should be operationalized, and perhaps of greater importance, how this should be accomplished. In their seminal work, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) measure the linguistic capital of post-secondary students, quantifying the relationship between socioeconomic class, admission to the Faculty of Arts, and linguistic competence. In subsequent work, Bourdieu (1984) gathers data using surveys and interviews in order to measure the frequency of participation in cultural practices, such as reading books, theatre-going, listening to classical music, and visiting art galleries and museums among members of diverse socio-occupational groups. Succeeding research reveals that cultural capital

may be measured as participation in highbrow cultural activities or classes (Aschaffenburg & Maas, 1997; Barone, 2006; De Graaf et al., 2000; DiMaggio, 1982; Jaeger, 2011; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 1996; Katsillis & Robinson, 1990; Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999; Sullivan, 2001; Wildhagen, 2009) extracurricular activities (Jaeger, 2011), reading books (Aschaffenburg & Maas, 1997; DiMaggio, 1982; Driessen, 2001; Jaeger, 2011; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp 1996; Sullivan, 2001) educational resources (Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999), educational credentials (Robinson & Garnier, 1985), cultural objects (Barone, 2006), work habits (Farkas et al., 1990), a pedagogical family climate (Driessen, 2001), linguistic resources (Driessen, 2001), language (Blackledge, 2001; Sullivan, 2001), linguistic capital (Blackledge, 2001; Robinson & Garnier, 1985), or all of the above. It is the concept of language as a form of capital, and thus power, that will be explored in greater detail in the following section.

Linguistic Capital

For Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), linguistic capital, a subset of cultural capital that is sometimes referred to as embodied cultural capital, is a form of capital of such consequence that its potential impact on educational attainment cannot be understated, thus it warrants special attention. According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), “language is not simply an instrument of communication: it also provides, together with a richer or poorer vocabulary, a more or less complex system of categories, so that the capacity to decipher and manipulate complex structures...depends partly on the complexity of the language transmitted by the family (p. 73). In comparison to their more affluent counterparts, children from low income families may be disadvantaged in their verbal and written language skills and are much more apt to have delayed vocabulary development (Riordan, 1997; Ungerleider, 2003).

Furthermore, the influence of linguistic capital, particularly manifest in the first years of schooling when the understanding and use of language are the major points of leverage for teachers' assessment, never ceases to be felt: style is always taken into account, implicitly or explicitly, at every level of the educational system. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 73)

Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) acknowledge that their work on linguistic capital was partially informed by the work of Bernstein (1975). In his seminal work, Bernstein (1975), believing that "social class differences in families give rise to different modes of communication" (Riordan, 1997, p. 94) coined the terms "public" and "formal" language to refer to language used by members of the working and middle class respectively (Bernstein, 1975, p. 28). The significant difference was that "public" language, characterized by "short, simple, often unfinished sentences, with poor syntax and rigid and limited use of adjectives and adverbs" was accessible to both classes, whereas "formal" language characterized by "grammatical and syntactic accuracy, sentence complexity, and a range of adjectives and adverbs" was reserved for the middle class (Bernstein, 1975, p. 34). According to Edwards (1989), Bernstein later translated "public" to "restricted," and "formal" to "elaborated," subsequently strengthening his association with the "deficit theory of speech of lower-class children" (p. 34). Bernstein maintains that children of higher socioeconomic status parents have likely been exposed to a richer and more diverse vocabulary than their less affluent peers (Riordan, 1997).

Consequently, Bernstein's work has been disputed by many who maintain that he is actually referring to differences in "verbal skills" and "verbal sophistication" between social classes, however, Bernstein "denies that lower-class populations lack verbal facility" (Hurn, 1993, p. 178). Rather, he posits that "differences in early socialization lead to different linguistic

codes that govern the ways in which language will be used in particular situations” (Hurn, 1993, p. 178). In subsequent work, Bernstein expresses regret at using the term “linguistic” instead of “sociolinguistic,” as he asserts there may have been less confusion and misunderstanding of his “codes” (Edwards, 1989, p. 38).

More recently, Mac Ruairc’s (2009) qualitative case study investigated how Irish children from contrasting socio-economic communities utilized strategies to write standardized tests. According to Mac Ruairc (2009), the relatively poor performance of working class students on standardized tests may be attributed to a variety of sociolinguistic and sociocultural factors and as such, may not provide an accurate reflection of working class students’ abilities. The purpose of his research was to explore the relationship between the use of strategies on standardized tests and achievement (Mac Ruairc, 2009). Mac Ruairc (2009) argued that failure to address these concerns would only serve to perpetuate the marginalization of children from disadvantaged groups.

Mac Ruairc (2009) discovered that children from both socio-economic groups utilized similar strategies, however, the frequency of use and the outcomes differed. Many of the working class students failed to use strategies such as “means the same as” or “checking the word in context” successfully because they were unable to make sense of the language in the sentence (Mac Ruairc, 2009). Mac Ruairc (2009) argued that this was because the linguistic register of the test failed to account for the limited linguistic repertoire of the working class children. Many of the working class children were unfamiliar with the words used on the test and resorted to “guessing” as their primary strategy, often incorrectly (Mac Ruairc, 2009). On the other hand, the middle class students tended to employ more sophisticated strategies with “a high

level of confidence and certainty” and a much greater degree of success (Mac Ruairc, 2009, p. 56).

As predicted, Mac Ruairc’s (2009) research confirmed that the disparity in the test results between middle and working class children may have been attributed to the difference in linguistic capital between the two socioeconomic groups. However, Mac Ruairc (2009) acknowledged that it was not possible to generalize the results of his study due to his small sample size and that further research would be required to address the number of issues that emerged from his study.

Cultural and Linguistic Capital and Standardized Tests

According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), cultural capital may manifest itself as linguistic capital. Generally, cultural capital, including linguistic capital, is transmitted in the home, and possession of the “right kind” of cultural capital may benefit some students in the school system while simultaneously disadvantaging others. As stated earlier, I became cognizant of the manner in which experiential knowledge and vocabulary are surreptitiously tested when I began administering national and provincial standardized tests to my students in the UK and BC respectively. These standardized tests purport to assess reading comprehension, writing and numeracy skills, however, it is apparent that they are measuring much more. In fact, students must possess the legitimized forms of cultural and linguistic capital in order to successfully access many of the test questions.

In researching the evolution of cultural capital, I have discovered, to my dismay, a number of social scientists who utilize standardized tests to measure students’ ability when examining the impact of cultural capital on educational attainment. I was most surprised to discover that over half of the authors included in my review employed various forms of

standardized tests to control for intellectual ability. The fact that scholars researching the impact of cultural and linguistic capital would utilize standardized tests to control for intellectual ability speaks volumes about the level of saturation of institutionalized norms. Even sociologists charged with researching the pervasive effects of cultural capital in the school system are not immune to the entrenched belief that standardized tests are an unbiased, objective measure of intellectual ability or achievement.

According to Nash and Lauder (2010), “[i]t seems to be acceptable to use tests of ‘ability’ and evidence generated by them [sociologists] whenever it is convenient to do so, including ‘environmentalist’ accounts of cognitive development in different social classes in so far as they refute genetic interpretations” (p. 108). For some sociologists examining the impact of cultural capital on educational attainment from a positivist epistemological perspective, it seems acceptable to regard the concepts of legitimate knowledge and ability as socially constructed and reproduced by the school system, while simultaneously utilizing standardized achievement and ability tests as controlled variables. The implication is that standardized tests are “objective” and thus free from cultural bias, whereas teacher created assessments are not. This is confounding for several reasons. The first of which is clearly articulated by Bourdieu and Passeron (1990):

nothing serves the established order better...than formally irreproachable tests which could claim to measure, at a given point in time, the subject’s aptitude...while forgetting that this aptitude, however early it is tested, is the product of a socially qualified teaching and learning, and that the most predictive measurements are precisely the least neutral ones socially. (p. 163)

It is unclear as to how an aptitude test, presumably designed by members of the dominant group, to assess knowledge deemed valuable by the dominant group, in order to predict future

performance within the dominant culture, will “control” for ability. Although some tests are “relatively independent of cultural or environmental influences” and may be considered fair to most members of society, they may measure behaviour less accurately than a test that is reflective of one’s own social or cultural group (Lyman, 1998, p. 29). In fact, according to Lyman (1998), “no test can be developed that is completely free from cultural influences” (p. 29).

Standardized Tests and (In)Equality of Opportunity

The hidden truth is that “standardized tests not only provide information, they also select the information to be provided and nowhere is this more discernable than in the case of the language used in standardized tests” (Mac Ruairc, 2009, p. 53).

In fact the examination is not only the clearest expression of academic values and of the educational system’s implicit choices: in imposing as worthy of...[educational institution]... sanction a social definition of knowledge and the way to show it, it provides one of the most efficacious tools for the enterprise of inculcating the dominant culture and the value of that culture. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 142)

For example, “when reading ability or facility with English as a second language distorts inferences from math achievement tests (as sometimes occurs in measures of math problem solving)...the construct validity¹ of the tests suffers” (Smith & Fey, 2000, p. 337). Consequently, students who lack the cultural or linguistic capital to access the test may earn scores that do not accurately reflect their academic abilities.

It seems that the cultural bias that is inherent in the school system is reflected in standardized forms of assessment. Standardized tests are saturated with sophisticated language and cultural references that are often invisible to members of the dominant group (Mac Ruairc,

2009). Students who have limited forms of capital are likely to struggle on tests that require knowledge that has not been taught explicitly in school (Sullivan, 2001). Poor test results have historically been attributed to student deficit when in fact cultural bias (Howe, 1997) or the linguistic register of the test itself may be a considerable factor (Abedi, 2002). According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) and others, schools reproduce the dominant culture and as a result, students who do not possess the cultural and linguistic capital of the dominant group are often perceived as deficient. Consequently, the school tries to inculcate the dominant culture and its skill set in children from nondominant groups.

Unfortunately, standardized test results may not actually measure the knowledge or skills that they are intended to assess. For poor students, ethnic minorities and English Language Learners (ELL) who are faced with inequalities from the beginning of their school careers (Lee & Burkam, 2002, as cited in Jordan, 2010), standardized tests may be a more accurate measure of their socioeconomic, cultural or linguistic capital and not their academic abilities (Jordan, 2010; Mac Ruairc, 2009). In fact, publicized test results have shown that socioeconomically disadvantaged and culturally diverse student populations do not fare as well on standardized tests as their White, middle class counterparts (Hursh, 2005; Smith & Fey, 2000).

According to Zumbo & Gelin (2003), “[s]tandardized assessments must be fair so that examinees with equal ability levels have an equal probability of correctly answering each task” (p. 5). However, it seems that standardized testing schemes fail to account for the inequalities experienced by children, both at home and at school, and hence “it can hardly be just to ignore these inequalities and evaluate all students in terms of the same assessments when many of them have had little or no opportunity to master the knowledge and skills upon which such assessments are based” (Howe, 1997, p. 101). This is not to say that students should not be

evaluated on the knowledge and skills prescribed by the curriculum *at the end* of a particular academic year. In British Columbia, for example, educators are required to teach a number of Prescribed Learning Outcomes (PLOs) in each subject over the course of a school year.

However, when test makers employ the use of assumed experiential knowledge, such as a day at the seaside, to assess writing skills, or a class ski trip, to evaluate the application of mathematical concepts, thereby restricting some students from demonstrating the knowledge and skills the test is meant to be assessing, it is indeed problematic. As is the knowledge of arbitrary vocabulary words in order to successfully answer multiple choice questions that are meant to be assessing reading comprehension, and not vocabulary skills. Grossman (1998) asserts that “such assessment procedures may evaluate students on what they are assumed to have experienced and been taught, not on what they actually experienced and were taught” (p. 161).

Consequently, extracurricular activities such as athletics, academics and fine arts programs that are a social norm in communities in which parents possess both economic and social capital, may also function to provide participants with additional “hidden” resources, or cultural capital, that may not be accessible to members of socioeconomically disadvantaged or culturally diverse groups (Apple, 2001). Affluent parents can provide their children with “the hidden cultural resources such as camps and after school programmes (dance, music, computer classes, etc.)” that operate as “an unseen but powerful storehouse of resources” (Apple, 2001, p. 415). Historically, schools have been structured to reflect the social, cultural and educational values of the White, dominant middle class and as such, members of the dominant group are equipped with the capital to be successful in the public school system (Solomon, 2002). Schools, therefore, function to perpetuate social inequities through the treatment of cultural capital as a natural endowment as opposed to a social privilege (Bourdieu, 1974, as cited in Sullivan, 2001).

It is evident that socioeconomically deprived students and culturally and linguistically diverse learners are disadvantaged by standardized tests like the FSA in BC. Students who do not have a network of social connections that garner exposure to a rich and varied vocabulary are prevented from demonstrating their knowledge on standardized tests. According to a study by Abedi, (2002) ‘the linguistic complexity of test items unrelated to the content being assessed may at least be partly responsible for the performance gap between ELL [English Language Learners] and non-ELL students’ (p. 255). BC educators are not required to teach a specific list of vocabulary words at each grade level. It is not mandated in the curriculum. As such, it is implied that students will have had exposure to the sophisticated vocabulary words used in the FSA either at home or at school. Students must be able to understand and apply those terms in order to access the test questions, which may be unrelated to the content being assessed. Parents who speak English as an additional language or have had little formal education themselves may have a very limited English vocabulary and are thus unable to provide their children with exposure to more complex vocabulary words. Although educators may explicitly teach students strategies to comprehend and apply complex language in the classroom, without a list of required words, it seems unreasonable to expect students with limited linguistic capital to be successful on a test that demands a sophisticated vocabulary. (Ayre, 2011, p. 9)

It is evident that students who speak English as a first language and are members of the dominant, middle class socio-cultural group often come to school with a “head start” and stand to benefit most from standardized tests (Mac Ruairc, 2009). Conversely, students with a limited linguistic repertoire may be unable to access the language on the test and are thus further

disadvantaged when their ability to demonstrate the basic skills is impeded by the linguistic complexity of the test (Mac Ruairc, 2009).

According to Jordan (2010), “selecting or creating test items is an attempt to validate what counts as knowledge and to place selective value on learning” (p. 150). Although standardized tests represent just one perspective of what counts in terms of assessment and the accepted ways to measure student achievement, it is of concern that the public, politicians and policy makers discount several other contributing factors that may influence student achievement on standardized tests (Jordan, 2010). In the current neoliberal, market-based approach to education standardized tests are perceived by many to provide objective, economical and quantifiable measures of student achievement (Jordan, 2010). Standardized test results can be scored, ranked and published in the newspaper for public consumption (Dodge, 2009).

Authentic learning, on the other hand, is a complicated process not easily measured or understood by members of the public anxious to see evidence of their tax dollars at work (Dodge, 2009). There is nothing cheaper than a multiple-choice test that is both facilitated and marked by a machine. However, Dodge (2009) argues that “results from a measurement derived from an artificial testing environment will only tell us about how the test taker will do in an artificial testing environment, not how he or she will fare in the world, presumably the criterion that really matters” (p. 12). It is evident that “such tests cannot measure a child’s full potential within a rich socio-cultural context” (Rothstein et al., 2008, as cited in Jordan, 2010, p. 158); or what students can do in learning ecologies that are saturated with cognitive tools and multiple forms of supports” (Jordan, 2010, p. 158). Authentic, qualitative assessments, albeit costly and labour intensive, enable students, who may not have the cultural or linguistic capital to

successfully access standardized tests, to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways (Jordan, 2010).

It is apparent that socioeconomically deprived students and culturally and linguistically diverse learners are disadvantaged by standardized tests. These students and the schools that serve them are then “named and shamed” when the scores are published and ranked accordingly (Smith & Fey, 2000). Degraded by the public humiliation that follows, these students may lose confidence in their ability to meet the expectations of school life (Mac Ruairc, 2009). Studies in the United Kingdom revealed that “a series of assumptions exist that present low ability and low attainment as almost a natural facet of the working-class cohort of students” (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000, as cited in Mac Ruairc, 2009, p. 52).

Kearns’ (2011) study of the impact of the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) on the students who failed it revealed that “the unintended impact of high-stakes testing is more problematic than policy makers and educators may realize” (p. 112). Consequently, “in contrast to [the] literacy policy’s aims to help promote the ‘well-being’ of all learners and ‘equity’ within the educational system, youth attest to feeling ‘shame’ and show further marginalization due to this testing mechanism” (Kearns, 2011, p. 112). Ontario youth must pass the exam in order to graduate high school, and many of the students who failed reported feeling “ashamed,” “degraded,” “humiliated,” and “stressed” (Kearns, 2011, p. 119). Some of the students attributed their failing grades to their level of English proficiency; the fact that English is not their first language (Kearns, 2011). Many of the students were worried about how their poor performances on the test might impact their future careers (Kearns, 2011). Kearns (2011) concludes that there are “cultural, social, political, and economic norms that exist within a standardized test that privilege some youth’s cultural capital and devalues that of others” (p.

125). It seems that failure to perform successfully on standardized tests can have considerable repercussions on the social-emotional well being of marginalized students.

In school districts in which standardized test results have serious implications for administrators, teachers and students, such as school closures, job security and academic advancement, the perpetuation of educational inequities is evident (Kohn, 2000). The pressure to perform well on high stakes standardized tests has resulted in many schools spending a considerable amount of time preparing students to write the exams (Apple, 2001; Kohn, 2000). The curriculum is narrowed as subjects that are not tested are no longer taught. Inclusive practices are neglected as students are forced to conform to a depersonalized, standardized curriculum that is threatened by diversity (Au, 2009). Engaging lessons are abandoned in favour of low level, “drill-and-skill” programs that teach to the test (Kohn, 2000; Nichols, 2007; Smith & Fey, 2000) and authentic learning, such as the ability to employ critical thinking skills, is compromised (Smith & Fey, 2000; Volante, 2006). Consequently, teaching becomes unproductive in the poorest schools in which students are the most disadvantaged and scores are in the greatest need of improvement (Nichols, 2007).

Schools that fail to meet standards on some high stakes standardized tests are further penalized through the reduction of funds, while schools that presumably need it the least, receive bonuses (Kohn, 2000). In the United States, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act mandates that failing schools must give students the option of transferring to another school while incurring the cost of bussing them there, in addition to paying for private tutoring for students and professional development for staff (Hursh, 2005). In order to raise test scores, schools with limited financial resources are pressured to purchase test preparation materials (Hursh, 2005). This prevents them

from allocating funds for enriched resources and serves to perpetuate existing material inequities between middle and working class schools (Smith & Fey, 2000).

According to Apple (2001), school choice in the market-based economy has resulted in schools competing for students, and at times, their survival. As such, schools interested in maintaining or improving their standing may wish to attract “certain kinds” of students, thus reproducing racial stereotypes (Apple, 2001). Parents who have the economic capital to take advantage of school choice may move their children to higher achieving schools simply because they can (Apple, 2001). Affluent families are likely to have at least one vehicle, as well as the financial means and flexibility to drive their children across town twice a day (Apple, 2001). Over time, schools may become socioeconomically and racially segregated and inequalities may be reproduced as schools whose students are culturally “rich” with greater access to resources outperform those who are not (Apple, 2001).

It seems that pressure to raise standardized test scores drives some teachers to perpetuate educational inequities through their exclusionary treatment of students who are most in need. Teachers, for whom job security is dependent on test results, may see a low performing student as a liability as opposed to an opportunity to make a difference (Wilgoren, 2000, as cited in Kohn, 2000). Subsequently, students who are likely to pass the test receive the greatest attention from teachers and as such, become valued commodities, whereas students who are unlikely to be successful are left to their own devices (Hursh, 2005). Those students, perhaps disillusioned with the school system after years of neglect, or fearful of failing the final high stakes test that will determine their future, may drop out before earning a diploma (Kearns, 2011; Kohn, 2000; Walden & Kritsonis, 2008). In some states and provinces, “kids are denied diplomas in high school for failing the exit level test even if they have done well throughout the year in their

classes” (Phillips, 2006, as cited in Walden & Kritsonis, 2008, p. 5). In at least one case, at-risk and minority students were pushed out by an administrator attempting to eliminate students who may lower school results (Capello, 2004, as cited in Hursh, 2005).

It is evident that the potential disadvantages of standardized tests for students with limited socioeconomic, cultural and linguistic capital are numerous. The educational inequities that many students confront at the starting gate are only exacerbated by the harmful influences of standardized tests. The tests effectively function to perpetuate educational inequities through the negative impact on students’ self-concepts, the narrowed curriculum and substandard teaching, the lack of rich resources, and the resultant “re-segregation” and exclusion of students most in need of support.

Suggestions for Change

According to Cuban (1988), school improvement strategies fall into two distinct categories: first- and second-order change. “First-order changes are reforms that assume that the existing organizational goals and structures are basically adequate and what needs to be done is to correct deficiencies in policies and practices” (Cuban, 1988, p. 228). First-order changes are concerned with quality control, attempting “to make what exists more efficient and effective without disrupting basic organizational arrangements or how people perform their roles” (Cuban, 1988, p. 229). On the other hand, second-order changes “aim at altering the fundamental ways of achieving organizational goals because of major dissatisfaction with current arrangements” (Cuban, 1988, p. 229). Second-order changes provide solutions to design problems by seeking to “reframe the original problems and restructure organizational conditions to conform with the redefined problems” (Cuban, 1988, p. 229). In this section I discuss several first- and second-order changes that are possible responses to the problems I have outlined in this paper. The

movement from minimalist responses to more complex responses is then illustrated in a graphic organizer (Figure 1) that depicts the progression from first-order to second-order change.

As a first-order change, accountability practices need to fairly assess diverse groups of students so that “examinees with equal ability levels have an equal probability of correctly answering each task” (Zumbo & Gelin, 2003, p. 5). If the purpose of standardized tests, and the FSA in particular, is to enable schools to utilize test results to “make plans to improve student achievement” and the test results are invalid, then it would seem that the tests are of little consequence to educators who teach students with “limited” socioeconomic, cultural and linguistic capital (Ayre, 2011). If the province is going to administer standardized tests, such as the FSA, then the “hidden curriculum” embedded in the tests must reflect the various groups that populate our pluralistic society in BC.

Goddard and Foster’s (2002) qualitative study of educational issues in two small rural community schools northern Alberta revealed that “in the publication and ranking of provincial examination results,” similar to the FSA in BC, “...both schools received very low rankings” (Alberta Education, 1999, as cited in Goddard and Foster, 2002, p. 10). The chair of one school board expressed her concern that

[the] kids in these communities, the small ones, they haven’t seen a city, they’ve never seen an escalator or an elevator, or how big a city block is, and some of these tests that come in have some of those things on them. Some of our kids have never seen these things and don’t know what they are. (Edwina, school board chair, as cited in Goddard and Foster, 2002, p. 10)

Schools, and therefore, standardized tests “ought to recognize and address aspects of the community environment within which the students live” (Goddard and Foster, 2002, p. 10).

British Columbia is a large and diverse province. A singular version of the FSA cannot fairly assess the learning of *all* students without simultaneously evaluating their cultural and linguistic capital. “To promote equity in educational assessment, different stakeholders, such as testers, teachers, administrators, parents, and students should be able to contribute to the test development process” (Peirce and Stein, 1995, as cited in Froese-Germain, 1999, p. 27). At the very least, diverse members of the school community must be invited to examine the tests for cultural and linguistic bias that may be invisible to test makers. Although developing alternative versions of the test that are more reflective of the pluralistic population in BC may be expensive and logistically exigent, in terms of providing an effective solution it actually offers a relatively quick fix that is arguably the least disruptive to the status quo.

In order to address differences in linguistic capital, educators must also be permitted to make the test accessible to all students by teaching them the complex vocabulary that is embedded in the FSA. Consequently, the sophisticated vocabulary words utilized on the test must be drawn from a list of prescribed vocabulary words mandated at each grade level. This would eliminate the selection of arbitrary vocabulary words currently employed by test makers and ensure that all students have been exposed to the chosen terms. Practices such as these may begin to level the playing field for students with limited cultural and linguistic capital.

Educational leaders must address this issue rationally, using research to critically examine the possible implications of standardized testing for marginalized students in particular. Accountability is not the enemy. However, the use of limited, quantitative methods to garner data about student achievement and to measure cultural and linguistic capital is a critical issue that can only be rectified when educators and researchers recognize that the test itself, and not individual students, may be the problem. A variety of authentic, qualitative assessments of

student learning, are necessary to gain understanding of *how* a student knows what they know within a cultural context. “The challenge is how to establish an accountability system that would support worthwhile learning, increase social capital and thereby help schools to be active players in developing our societies” (Sahlberg, 2010, p. 58).

It is clear that resolving the issue of educational inequity is not simply a matter of eliminating linguistic barriers and cultural bias from standardized tests. This is merely a ‘band-aid’ solution. “More intelligent accountability involves *all* stakeholders, including students and parents, in discussing and determining the extent that jointly set goals have been attained” (Sahlberg, 2010, p. 58). As a first order change,

it combines data from student assessments, external examinations, teacher-led classroom assessments, feedback from parents and school self-evaluations... It also focuses on broader learning, not just knowledge of mathematics [and] literacy, ...but also the skills, attitudes and values that are needed in a knowledge society. (Sahlberg, 2010, p. 58)

According to Jamieson and Wikeley (2000), as cited in Goddard and Foster (2002), it is not sufficient “for schools to have simple goals like academic achievement, they also have to attend to the social and sub-cultural” aspects of the community (p. 10).

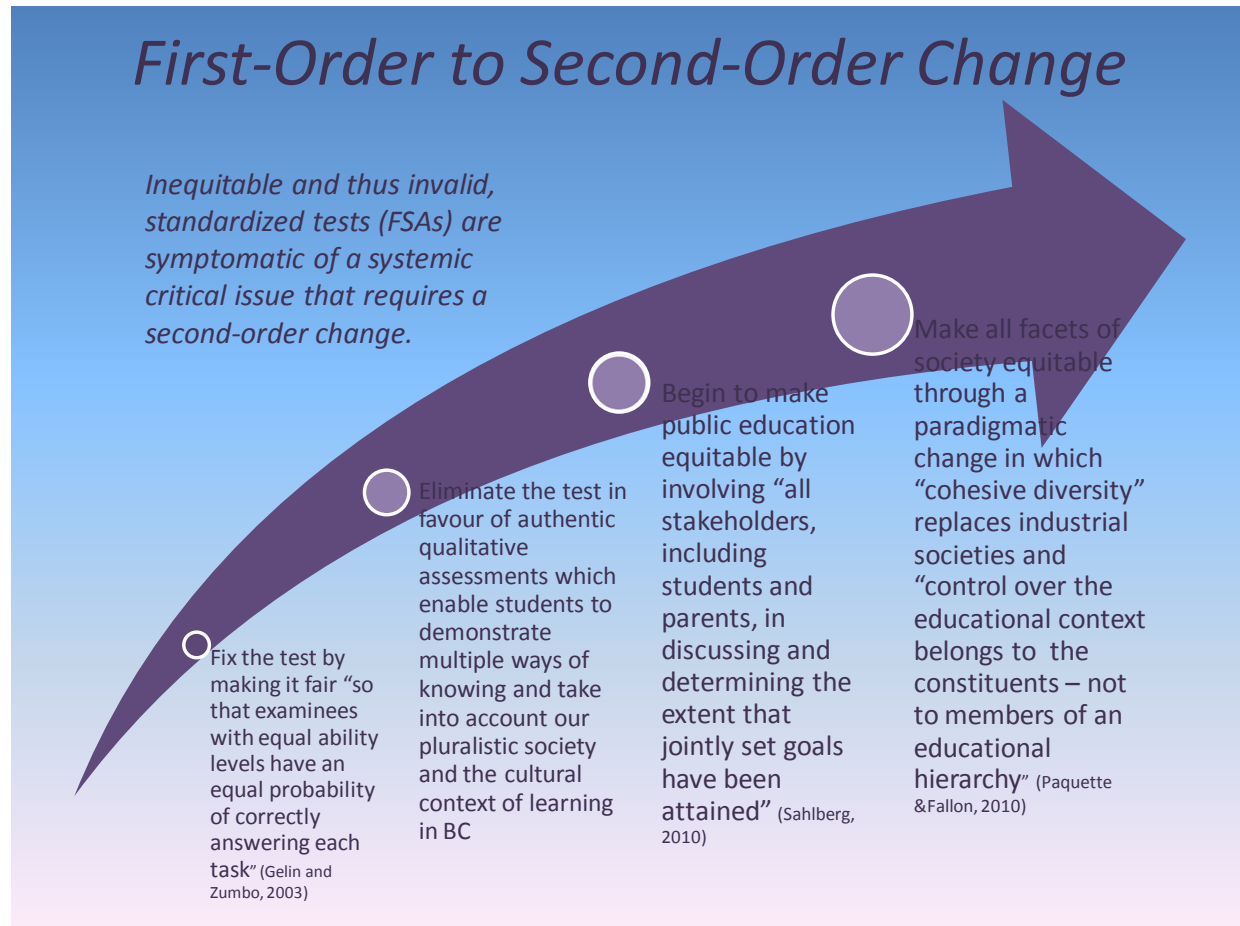
In order to establish a collaborative ethos in which the purposes, principles and aims of public education are reflective of all community members, collective participation is crucial. As such, administrators, teachers, parents and students must be afforded the opportunity to participate in open dialogue in which the needs and concerns of the nondominant groups are heard. Inclusive and authentic communication is a crucial component in developing equitable schools. For teachers and administrators who “recognize the education system as being similar to the one they experienced and [who] intuitively accept the rightness of that system” it may also be

the most challenging (Goddard & Foster, 2002, p. 2). Ryan (2006) suggests that “[o]n occasions where dominant and nondominant individuals and groups are engaged in dialogue... it helps to reflect on one’s privileges, suspend personal authority, be willing to experience vulnerability, and to admit one’s ignorance” (p. 12). Open and honest discussion requires participants in the dominant culture to be self aware, unguarded and exposed. Administrators and teachers must become learners. As power and knowledge are inextricably linked, it is not surprising that the dominant group struggles to admit ignorance. However, educational leaders must be prepared to share power.

Inequitable and thus invalid, standardized test results are symptomatic of a systemic critical issue that requires a second-order change. Anyon, 1997, as cited in Jordan (2010), argues that

the educational system cannot be ‘fixed’ from within... Inequities encountered by diverse students are experienced in many facets of social life, above and beyond education, so that closing the educational achievement gap cannot be adequately pursued without closing gaps in health, housing, employment, equal justice under the law, and so forth. (p. 157)

According to Reay (2004), “over 30 years ago Bernstein (1970) wrote that education cannot compensate for society and his words still ring true for the 21st century. There needs to be far reaching changes across society and not just within the education system” (p. 84).



Informed by my earlier work, Figure 1 depicts the progression from first to second order change (Ayre, 2011, p. 12).

A socio-cultural paradigmatic shift from the industrial to the ‘symbiosynergetic’ paradigm in which the focus is on the community as opposed to the individual is imperative (Paquette & Fallon, 2010, p. 9). In this new world order in which ‘persons and their society-community become one’ the focus is on collaboration, not competition (Paquette & Fallon, 2010, p. 9). Similarly, the inventive educational paradigm ‘promotes new ways of being and acting that in turn support a vision of society based on non-hierarchical decision-making and a complementarity of differences’ (Paquette & Fallon, 2010, p. 10). This focus on community and collaborative decision-making through ‘cohesive diversity’ means that the voices of all stakeholders will be heard (Paquette & Fallon, 2010, p. 10). (Ayre, 2011, p. 12)

It is evident that significant change and further research is necessary in order to rectify the imbalance of power in our society and ensure that all children have the opportunity to succeed.

Suggestions for Further Research

I have discovered that there is no shortage of literature espousing Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital. In fact, Bourdieu's work is oft cited, and frequently taken at face value. I have read numerous papers that make reference to Bourdieu's notions of cultural capital. Naively, I have never sought to question the legitimacy of Bourdieu's claims, nor those of his devotees. However, my extensive review has revealed that cultural capital has been defined and operationalized in a variety of ways over time, and consequently, empirical research evaluating the impact of Bourdieu's cultural capital theory on educational achievement provides inconclusive and often contradictory results. Most of the research has been undertaken from a positivist perspective. Like those who support standardized testing, researchers assume that the data collected are objective measures that have predictive capacity.

As such, there is a dearth of empirical evidence demonstrating consistent results in support of Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction. This lack of quantitative data suggests that Bourdieu's theory may be inconsequential, or invalid. However, perhaps it is too soon to make such an assumption. Although researchers have been operationalizing Bourdieu's cultural capital theory for over thirty years, it is clear that there has been little agreement as to how cultural capital should be measured, or even if it can be measured. Cultural capital theory is an abstract sociological concept and consequently, even Bourdieu's accounts are rather imprecise. It is clear that there is a myriad of complicated variables that must be accounted for when investigating the dynamic and complex relationships that exist between the various forms of capital and educational attainment (Kingston, 2001). The line between socioeconomic capital, social capital,

human capital, cultural capital and linguistic capital is easily blurred. Not surprisingly, researchers operationalize variables, such as educational resources and attainment, differently, and predictably, achieve dissimilar results.

As a teacher who is obliged to administer standardized tests annually to students who often do not possess the “right kind” of cultural capital I can say without reservation that Bourdieu’s theoretical concepts are of concrete consequence in the classroom. I hold the notion of cultural capital in high regard, but I believe that most of the empirical research investigating the impact of cultural capital on educational attainment has been poorly executed. Throughout my research, I have attempted to examine the operationalization of cultural capital with a critical eye, however, I have discovered that I am actually critical of the notion of a positivist approach to the measurement of cultural capital itself. I suppose it should come as no surprise that I question the validity of “objective” quantitative research, given that I do not believe that standardized tests provide an unbiased measure of student achievement. Therefore, I suggest a post-positivist perspective, which embraces a mixed methods approach to research and acknowledges that is not feasible to objectively measure cultural capital through the collection of quantitative data.

Through my research I have discovered that there is a dearth of studies examining the relationship between linguistic capital and educational attainment. Most research pertains to students who are identified as English as a Second Language Learners (ESL). In BC, students are eligible for ESL funding (and thus learning support) for a maximum of five years, however, the FSA only excludes students with very limited English proficiency, (i.e., students who have been speaking English for one or two years). Some students born in BC may have had limited exposure to English prior to their entry into the school system and yet may not qualify for ESL

funding. By Grades 4 or 7 these students may have a good grasp of conversational language that masks their true English aptitude. Similar to socioeconomically disadvantaged students who may have “inherited” limited vocabularies from their parents, poor performance on standardized tests is attributed to student deficit, not the linguistic register of the test itself. Linguistic capital effectively remains hidden and thus neglected by researchers. This is an area that would greatly benefit from extensive research.

Although Bourdieu’s “radical conception of the school as a conservative force” has been researched through the work of many, the reproductive function of the school has changed little since the 1970s (Nash & Lauder, 2010, p. 73). While critics have accurately characterized Bourdieu as more a theorist of reproduction than of transformation, the analyses of...capital...[covered in his body of work]...grounds his influential accounts of social and educational reproduction and provide evidence for lesser-known arguments about institutional crisis” (Collins, 1998, p. 725). Consequently, the findings presented in this paper should prompt us to consider how standardized testing impacts students with limited socioeconomic, cultural and linguistic capital. Unfortunately,

[o]ne of the most serious problems with Bourdieu’s theoretical framework is that it provides little reason and few tools for analyzing the perspectives of different cultural subgroups. Given this failing, he provides no reason to believe that the form of cultural domination he describes can be broken in any significant way. (Feinberg & Soltis, 1985, p. 64)

The challenge, it would seem, is for future researchers is to create new “tools for analyzing the perspectives of different cultural subgroups” (Feinberg & Soltis, 1985, p. 64). In culturally and ethnically diverse provinces such as BC, cultural capital encompasses much more than

socioeconomic status and this must be accounted for through the development of innovative research designs.

As a teacher dedicated to providing my culturally and linguistically diverse students with every opportunity to succeed, I realize that I am working within the limits of a system that continues to perpetuate societal inequities and disadvantage members of nondominant groups. Unfortunately, I am most likely among the minority of educators who are even cognizant of this fact. At this point in time, there is a shortage of empirical research investigating the relationship between linguistic capital and cultural capital, and standardized tests. The degree to which cultural capital impacts educational attainment is still very much up for debate, and research investigating the relationship linguistic capital and standardized tests has only just begun. Clearly, if researchers are still employing standardized tests as a means to control for intellectual ability when investigating the impact of cultural and linguistic capital on educational attainment, there is still much work to be done.

References

- Abedi, J. (2002). Standardized achievement tests and English language learners: Psychometrics issues. *Education Assessment*, 8, 231-257. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.
- Apple, M.W. (2001). Comparing neo-liberal projects and inequality in education. *Comparative Education*, 37, 409-423. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.
- Apple, M.W. (2004). *Ideology and curriculum* (3rd ed.). New York and London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Aschaffenburg, K., & Maas, I. (1997). Cultural and educational careers: the dynamics of social reproduction. *American Sociological Review*, 62, 573-587.
- Au, W.W. (2009). High-stakes testing and discursive control: The triple bind for non-standard student identities. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 11, 65-71. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.
- Aveling, N. (2007). Anti-racism in schools: A question of leadership? *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 28, 69-85. Retrieved from ERIC database.
- Ayre, J. (2011) *The Foundation Skills Assessment: Validity and accountability in a pluralistic society*. Unpublished manuscript, Department of Educational Studies, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.
- Barone, C. (2006). Cultural capital, ambition and the explanation of inequalities in learning outcomes: A comparative analysis. *Sociology*, 40, 1039-1058.
doi:10.1177/0038038506069843
- Bernstein, B. (1975). *Class, codes and control*. New York, NY: Schocken Books.
- Blackledge, A. (2001). The wrong sort of capital? Bangladeshi women and their children's schooling in Birmingham, U.K. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 5, 345-369.

- Brantlinger, E. (2003). *Dividing classes: How the middle class negotiates and rationalizes school advantage*. New York and London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Broadfoot, T. (1978) Reproduction in education, society and culture. [Review of the book *Reproduction in education, society and culture* by P. Bourdieu and J.C. Passeron]. *Comparative Education*, 14, 75-82. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3098926>
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1989). Social space and symbolic power. *Sociological Theory*, 7, 14-25.
- Bourdieu, P. & Passeron, J. (1990). *Reproduction in education, society and culture* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Carrington, V., & Luke, A. (1997). Literacy and Bourdieu's sociological theory: A reframing. *Language and Education*, 11, 96-112. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09500789708666721>
- Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94, S95-S120. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2780243>
- Collins, J. (1998). Subjectivity, and social dynamics in the writings of Pierre Bourdieu. *American Literary History*, 10, 725-732.
- Cuban, L. (1988). *The managerial imperative and the practice of leadership in schools*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- De Graaf, N., De Graaf, P. M., & Kraaykamp, G. (2000). Parental cultural capital and educational attainment in the Netherlands: A refinement of the cultural capital perspective. *Sociology of Education*, 73, 92-111.

- DiMaggio, P. (1982). Cultural capital and school success: The impact of status culture participation on the grades of U.S. high school students. *American Sociological Review*, 47, 189-201.
- Dodge, A. (2009). Heuristics and NCLB standardized tests: A convenient lie. *International Journal of Progressive Education*, 5, 1-17. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.
- Driessen, G. M. (2001). Ethnicity, forms of capital, and educational achievement. *International Review of Education*, 47, 513-538.
- Edwards, J. (1989). *Language and disadvantage*. London, UK: Cole and Whurr Ltd.
- Farkas, G., Grobe, R. P., Sheehan, D., & Shuan, Y. (1990). Cultural resources and school success: gender, ethnicity, and poverty groups within an urban school district. *American Sociological Review*, 55, 27-142.
- Feinburg, W. & Soltis, J. (1985). *School and society*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Fitzgerald, T. (2006). Walking between two worlds: indigenous women and educational leadership. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 34, 201-213.
- Foster, W. (1989). Toward a critical practice of leadership. In J. Smyth (Ed.), *Critical perspectives on educational leadership* (pp. 39-62). Philadelphia, PA: The Falmer Press.
- Frose-Germain, B. (1999). *Standardized testing: Undermining equity in education*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Teachers' Federation.
- Goddard, T. & Foster, R. (2002). Adapting to diversity: Where cultures collide – educational issues in northern Alberta. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 27, 1-20.
- Goodlad, J. I., & Keating, P. (1990). *Access to knowledge: The continuing agenda for our nation's schools*. New York, NY: College Entrance Examination Board.

- Grossman, H. (1998). *Achieving educational equality: Assuring all students an equal opportunity in school*. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas Publisher, Ltd.
- Gulson, K. (2006). A white veneer: Education policy, space and “race” in the inner city. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 27, 259-274.
- Hatch, M.J. & Cunliffe, A.L. (1996). *Organization theory: Modern, symbolic, and postmodern perspectives* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Henderson, K.A. (2011). Post-positivism and the pragmatics of leisure research. *Leisure Sciences*, 33, 341-346.
- Howe, K. R. (1997). *Understanding equal educational opportunity. "Social justice, democracy, and schooling."* *Advances in contemporary educational* (Vol. 20). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Hurn, C. (1993). *The limits and possibilities of schooling: An introduction to the sociology of education* (2nd ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Simon & Schuster, Inc.
- Hursh, D. (2005). The growth of high-stakes testing in the USA: Accountability, markets and the decline in educational equality. *British Educational Research Journal*, 31, 605-622.
Retrieved from EBSCOhost.
- Israel, G. D., Beaulieu, L. J., & Hartless, G. (2001). The influence of family and community social capital on educational achievement. *Rural Sociology*, 66, 43-68.
- Jæger, M. (2011). Does cultural capital really affect academic achievement? New evidence from combined sibling and panel data. *Sociology of Education*, 84, 281-298.
doi:10.1177/0038040711417010

- Jordan, W. J. (2010). Defining equity: Multiple perspectives to analyzing the performance of diverse learners. *Review of Research in Education*, 34, 142-178. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.
- Kalmijn, M., & Kraaykamp, G. (1996). Race, cultural capital, and schooling: an analysis of trends in the United States. *Sociology of Education*, 69, 22-34.
- Katsillis, J., & Robinson, R. (1990). Cultural capital, student achievement, and educational reproduction: The case of Greece. *American Sociological Review*, 55, 270-279.
- Kearns, L. (2011). High-stakes standardized testing and marginalized youth: An examination of the impact on those who fail. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 34, 112-130. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.
- Kingston, P. W. (2001). The unfulfilled promise of cultural capital theory. *Sociology of Education*, 74, 88-99.
- Kohn, A. (2000). Burnt at the high stakes. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 51, 315-327. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.
- Kohn, A. (2000). *The case against standardized testing: Raising the scores, ruining the schools*. Portsmouth, NH: Heineman.
- Lamont, M., & Lareau, A. (1988). Capital: allusions, gaps and glissandos in recent theoretical developments. *Sociological Theory*, 6, 153-168. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/202113>
- Lareau, A., & Weininger, E. (2003). Cultural capital in educational research: a critical assessment. *Theory and Society*, 32, 567-606.

- Lee, J.S., & Bowen, N.K. (2006). Parent involvement, cultural capital, and the achievement gap among elementary school children. *American Educational Research Journal*, 43, 193-218.
- Lyman, H. (1998). *Test scores and what they mean* (6th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Mac Ruairc, G. (2009). 'Dip, dip, sky blue, who's it? NOT YOU': Children's experiences of standardised testing: A socio-cultural analysis. *Irish Educational Studies*, 28, 47-66.
Retrieved from EBSCOhost.
- Ministry of Education. (2011). Foundation Skills Assessment: Information for parents. Retrieved from <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa/pdfs/fsabrochure.pdf>
- Nash, R. & Lauder, H. (2010). *Explaining inequalities in school achievement: a realist analysis*. Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.
- Nichols, S. L. (2007). High-stakes testing: Does it increase achievement? *Journal of Applied School Psychology*, 23, 47-64. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.
- Paquette, J. & Fallon, G. (2010). Framing First-Nations education within self-government/self-determination. *Aboriginal Education in Canada: Progress or Gridlock*. Toronto, ON: The University of Toronto Press.
- Payne, R. (1996). *A framework for understanding poverty*. Highlands, TX: aha! Process, Inc.
- Reay, D. (2004). Education and cultural capital: The implications of changing trends in education policies. *Cultural Trends*, 13, 73-86.
- Riordan, Cornelius. (1997). *Equality and achievement: An introduction to the sociology of education*. New York: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers Inc.

- Robinson, R.V., & Garnier, M.A. (1985). Class reproduction among men and women in France: Reproduction theory on its home ground. *American Journal of Sociology*, 91, 250-280.
- Roscigno, V. J., & Ainsworth-Darnell, J. W. (1999). Race, cultural capital and educational resources: Persistent inequalities and achievement returns. *Sociology of Education*, 72, 158-178. doi:10.2307/2673227
- Ryan, J. (2006). Inclusive leadership and social justice for schools. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 5, 3-17.
- Sahlberg, P. (2010). Rethinking accountability in a knowledge society. *Journal of Educational Change*, 11, 45-61. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.
- Smith, M., & Fey, P. (2000). Validity and accountability in high-stakes testing. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 51, 334-44. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.
- Solomon, R. (2002) School leaders and antiracism: Overcoming pedagogical and political obstacles. *Journal of School Leadership*, 12, 174-197.
- Stanton-Salazar, R.D. (1997). A social capital framework for understanding the socialization of racial minority children and youths. *Harvard Educational Review*, 67, 1-40.
- Strouse, J. (2001). *Exploring socio-cultural themes in education: readings in social foundations* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Sullivan, A. (2001). Cultural capital and educational attainment. *Sociology*, 35, 893-912. doi:10.1177/0038038501035004006
- Ungerleider, C. (2003). *Failing our kids: How we are ruining our public schools*. Toronto, ON: McClelland & Stewart Ltd.
- Volante, L. (2006). Standards-based reform: Can we do better? *Education Canada*, 47, 54-56. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

- Wagner, A. (2005). Unsettling the academy: Working through the challenges of anti-racist pedagogy. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8, 261-275. Retrieved from ERIC database.
- Walden, L. M., & Kritsonis, W. (2008). The impact of the correlation between the No Child Left Behind act's high stakes testing and the high drop-out rates of minority students. *Online Submission*. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.
- Wildhagen, T. (2009). Why does cultural capital matter for high school academic performance? An empirical assessment of teacher-selection and self-selection mechanisms as explanations of the cultural capital effect. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 50, 173-200.
doi:10.1111/j.1533-8525.2008.01137.x
- Zumbo, B. D., & Gelin, M. N. (2005). A matter of test bias in educational policy research: Bringing the context into picture by investigating sociological/community moderated (or mediated) test and item bias. *Journal of Educational Research & Policy Studies*, 5, 1-23.

¹Construct validity “refers to the generalizability of a score to other measures of the construct domain, ‘so that the score is a valid measure of the student’s knowledge of the broader construct, not just the particular sample of items on the test’” (Heubert & Hauser, 1999, as cited in Smith & Fey, 2000, p. 337)