Social Stratification: Exercise 2

Hidden costs in the preparation of students for higher education 10 points

Although you will get detailed comments on your midterm and papers, the purpose of this assignment is to help you to apply sociological concepts to daily life. Hence, you will simply receive a “check,” “check minus,” or “check plus” on each assignment.

The exercise has two parts. First, you will reflect on the assorted expenses that are involved in preparing for higher education. Presume that children attend public schools. What additional expenses might their parents incur as they prepare their children to have the skills and talents which might be helpful in college? Think as broadly about this as you can as you reflect on the kinds of experiences which parents might seek to “expose” their children to have in their pre-college years. Make a rough estimate of the costs of each item. Add up the costs. (It can be approximate!)

Second, write a paragraph or two where you analyze your “data” to show how social class makes a difference in the preparation for higher education. Argue that parents’ ideal preparation of children does not only involve (free) public education; instead economic resources can be important. Or, you may argue that economic resources can matter, but they are of limited importance in preparing children for higher education. It does not matter what position you argue! You might also consider the kinds of experiences the youth had in the relevant course readings.