Project 4: Processes in Establishing Slum Educational Centers (Simplified Version)

Over the past 50 years, ethnographic research has helped us understand how schools operate in culture and society. It has created a basis for critiquing purely behavioristic (psychological) explanations of teaching and learning by widening the framework of data collection and analysis to include family, community, and organizational (sociocultural) factors. Our limited ethnography (Project 3) will be the product of a questioning process, informed by experience in the field (practicum) and knowledge of issues (course-related reading and video-viewing). Through the practicum, you will have learned to observe and ask questions as a means of serving with certain contextual understandings. Now, during the ethnographic research phase, you will use a more explicit set of questions as an idea base from which to comprehend various educational processes in two different types of schools.

Procedure

1. Identify two (2) schools serving slum-resident children or adolescents—one **private** and the other **public**. The following will be based on your ethnography in your practicum school. But in the process you might seek comparisons form people with the other school.

2. Conduct a series of broad, "big picture" observations on 8 dimensions of organizational life (below). Take detailed notes. Convert these notes into a rich **description** (approx. 3 pages for each school).

> § *Space:* the physical plant

> § *Actors:* the people involved as learners, teachers, administrators, parents, volunteers, etc.

> § *Activities:* the typical set of related acts that school actors do

> § *Objects:* the physical things which are present in the setting for educational purposes

> § *Acts:* single acts that people do that have special meaning

> § *Events:* a set of related activities that people carry out (e.g. a "lesson")

> § *Goals:* the main things people are trying to accomplish

> § *Feeling:* the emotions that are felt and expressed by actors

3. Conduct semi-formal interviews with **school leaders** and either **teachers or parents**.

School leaders

§ Collect information related to the following questions: (1) When and how was the school founded? [Probe for the steps taken to develop an educational center—from original vision to actual student enrollment. What were the political, financial, and human resource (finding competent leaders and teachers) obstacles?] (2) How did they overcome the many forces that discourage schooling among slum children (see readings)? (3) Is their *primary* goal to improve school attendance (increase # of learners) or to improve school quality? What strategies do they have in place to make progress in either area? In particular, what indicators do they use to track improvements in school quality?

Teachers or parents

§ Arrange interviews with at least 2 teachers or parents from each school. (1) Ask teachers/parents at the private school: *Why are parents willing to make a considerable financial sacrifice (i.e. pay fees) when "free" public schools are available?* (2) Ask teachers/parents at the public school: *What are the main reasons children enroll in public schools rather than private schools?*

4. **Analyze** the observational and interview data for the key factors—individual, family, cultural, community, and school—that explain (a) school participation and (b) learning productivity (academic quality) in both the private and public school. (The table below can help you mentally organize the data.) Include references to the articles (see "Preparation") that explain why many slum parents and kids make a rational choice *not* to attend school.

5. Write a 7-8 page, single spaced report of your observational and interview data. Organize the report into three sections: (a) **Introduction**: overview of slum community and research methods used to collect data. (b) **Description** of the 8 dimensions of organizational life for each school. (c) **Analysis** of the factors that facilitate and/or impede the access of urban poor kids to a quality education, and what could be done in order for a high-quality education to be broadly available to them. Give the report a title. Include sub-heads and page #s. Spell- and grammar-check prior to submission.

6. [Required step] Present a copy of the report to the lead administrator. Ask them to correct any inaccurate data and suggest any revisions (additions, deletions) that would strengthen the report. Schedule a meeting to review the recommendations and to discuss related issues. Revise the report based on this feedback.

Factors affecting the relative efficiency of public and private schools

Factors	School 1	School 2

Individual Factors - Gender of student - Caste background of student/ family - Student's motivation		
Family Factors - Family size - Household income - Parents' educational level - Parents' educational aspirations		
Cultural Factors - Parental fear of harassment and abuse (female learners)		
Community Factors - Environmental conditions - Job opportunity structure - Transport access to schools - Peer effects		
School Factors - School admission procedures - Cost of tuition and uniforms - Medium of instruction - Overcrowding (pupil-teacher ratios) - Infrastructure: lack of piped water; lack of toilets for girls; - Teachers: lack of female teachers; high rates of teacher lateness and absenteeism; teacher behavior - Availability of instructional aids and materials - Incentives: e.g. mid-day meals, - Classroom pedagogy		

Forum Discussion: As a class seek to improve on this form (this week) and the process (next three weeks).

Alternative approach: Use the free Gantt Project software off the web, and develop a Gannt flow chart process of setting up a slum school. Involve several people in your discussion either those with expertise, or local parents who might want to implement this idea in setting up a new school, plus the teachers you are working alongside. Make sure you get the major issues in there, like logistics, administration, resourcing, cash flow, teacher recruitment and training, student recruitment etc.   Plus, items that answer the issues above. Essentially follow the process above but focus it on initiation of a new school.

Instructions:

1. **Review** the instructions above and in the syllabus.

2. **Save** your work using the following naming convention:

   o   "LastNameFirstInitial_AssignmentName.docx"

3. **Submit** your assignment as an attachment below.