

TABLE 5

<u># correct</u>	<u>Estimated IQ</u>
5	130 or more
4	110
3	90
2	75
0 or 1	60

many other clothes and shoes. She saves on busfare and child care. And then, as the women in the *The Woman's Film*, she is fat and dresses poorly . . . because she has no money! She is uninteresting . . . because she cannot afford even to get to the library, let alone hold a job or read a magazine. She runs out on the rent, once in a while . . . because whether on welfare or a job, she is receiving perhaps 74% of a minimum budget.¹³

And what is the answer? Job training? Help the launderer get a better job, what of the next? Is it not clear that *the university* (or the hospital) *makes her poor*? It is the occupational structure, the pay and status accorded the launderer, that makes the poverty. This leads, then, into an explication of occupations, perhaps of the guaranteed annual income idea, and to many other things you probably treat under stratification. Hopefully, it will promote students to take those topics seriously. It does mine.¹⁴

EXERCISE 4: THE COLLEGIATE IQ TEST

The fourth exercise (Figure 1) relates to social mobility, sociology of education, or perhaps race relations. It takes 4 minutes to administer and perhaps 20 more to discuss. Its general purpose, as those of the other exercises, is to invite students to penetrate the ideological smokescreen put forth by our society

and see the operation of meritocracy, the some sorting of individual character.

Instruct students for 5 minutes; suggest they put their names on a list. When finished, supply the names. Then instruct students to estimate their IQ.

Explain the hit on one corner of intelligence to around 60. Five. The rest of the careful standard.

Now ask students with empathy a moment of this type. Administer the test. Discuss the results.

Each question of an item first and second invention, the students circle verbal. But is it "hut" and is not test.

Question the item I abjectly many graduates what is "sake" pronoun and losing alternative course, and

Estimated IQ

130 or more

110

90

75

60

saves on busfare and child
The Woman's Film, she is fat
as no money! She is uninter-
even to get to the library, let
e. She runs out on the rent,
on welfare or a job, she is
n budget.¹³
ng? Help the launderer get a
clear that *the university* (or
occupational structure, the
er, that makes the poverty.
of occupations, perhaps of
nd to many other things you
Hopefully, it will promote
ly. It does mine.¹⁴

GIATE IQ TEST

relates to social mobility,
race relations. It takes 4
more to discuss. Its general
ses, is to invite students to
n put forth by our society

and see the contradiction between this superstructure and the operation of the social structure. Specifically, the notion of meritocracy, the assertion that positions are filled in America by some sorting procedure based equitably upon an assessment of individual characteristics, is challenged here.

Instruct students to answer individually; they will have four minutes; suggest that they answer all questions. Make sure they put their name on the paper before they begin. When they have finished, supply the correct answers; 1,A; 2,B; 3,C; 4,D; and 5,A. Then instruct students to enter the number correct. They should estimate their IQ according to Table 5 and enter it as well.

Explain the scale: obviously random answering would tend to hit on one correct answer in five, so 0 or 1 merely show enough intelligence to use the pencil; this is generally accorded to be around 60. Five correct is 130 or more; we cannot be sure exactly. The rest of the scores have been validated as a result of decades of careful standardized testing.

Now ask students with IQ's of 130 or more to raise their hands, students with 110, and so on down the line. Invite students to empathize a moment with the notion of abject failure on a test of this type. Admit that you will not be collecting the results. Then discuss the correct answers.

Each question has a particular purpose. The first is a modification of an item on a nationally used "nonverbal aptitude test" for first and second graders. Although the second sentence is my own invention, the first is not. The paragraph is to be read aloud; the students circle a picture; therefore the process is said to be nonverbal. But is it? It is a vocabulary item, keyed on "thatched" and "hut" and is no more nonverbal than was any other part of the test.

Question three should be discussed next. It is modified from an item I abjectly missed on the Miller Analogies Test, required by many graduate and law schools for admission. "Sake," I thought, what is "sake"? For Pete's sake means for Pete! Sake is really a pronoun and cannot be put into an analogy. Finally I chose a losing alternative. But the reference is to Japanese rice wine, of course, and the reasoning, allegedly under examination, is

mitre joint

spline

Figure 2.

simplistic: A vaguely Japanese activity is to Japanese wine as a vaguely Italian activity is to Italian wine. Again, it is a vocabulary, not a reasoning test. And the student from the Midwest, the rural American, blacks, nonelite whites—they don't know what sake is, or even Chianti.

The second question is a working-class-biased reasoning item. A mitre joint (Figure 2) is a picture-frame joint; although good looking, it is weak and tends to slide apart when force is applied to it. It is strengthened by a spline, in this case a long narrow piece of wood added to fill a notch created by kerfs in each face. In short, a spline is inserted into a mitre to make it strong. Straw makes mud strong; we call the result "bricks." Note that my item, unlike theirs, does not become trivial once the vocabulary is known. One still must reason, for example, that a key can make a lock strong, locked, but can also unlock it, so is an inferior choice. Again, love might make a marriage strong, but we have no good social science evidence that this is so, cross-culturally or individually.

Why did the Miller Analogies Test include "sake" and not "spline"? Students suggest two answers: in order to keep out nonelite students, and because the question-makers themselves had no knowledge of working-class culture but did know about wine. I favor the latter, but we probably cannot know for sure. If it is the latter, ironically the question-maker is unaware of his or her bias and surely believes himself to be performing the useful function of testing achieved characteristics. It is worth noting that

of the two superior, or more "active" make fine

Item 4 is intelligence Test Williams, particularly from whites on is showing

The final the merely Eames chair to be not be use Another p modern de ing chairs chair the E that the co know too example w ago: "Emp string qua course, but or" String Fifth Pian which alter

The pur such filters Analogies and the G the culture tests can be be passed gressive La

of the two areas of culture represented, neither is intrinsically superior, or if either is, surely the working-class knowledge is the more "active," relates to the ability not only to appreciate but to make fine objects. Yet it counts for naught.

Item 4 is modified from the B.I.T.C.H. Test, the Black Intelligence Test for Cultural Homogeneity, Developed by Robert L. Williams, the B.I.T.C.H. test is based on black vocabulary, particularly from the large city, and most blacks outperform most whites on it routinely. An "LD" is a Cadillac Eldorado, and Ajax is showing it to his lady friend.

The final item is upper-class biased, separates the upper from the merely upper-middle. These are chairs, of course, and "the Eames chair" is an elegant rosewood-and-leather tilting easy chair to be found in executive offices and living rooms. It could not be used as a dining chair because of its size and tiltability. Another principle is also illustrated by this item: those who know modern design well know that Eames pioneered the plastic stacking chairs often found in college dining halls. So why is not *that* chair the Eames referred to in alternative "a"? The reply must be that the computer as it grades you cares not if you happen to know *too much* to answer the question effectively. A famous example was struck from the Scholastic Aptitude Test a few years ago: "Emperor" is the name of a symphony, concerto, sonata, string quartet, or suite?" The "correct" reply was concerto, of course, but the music student knew that Haydn wrote an "Emperor" String Quartet, while Beethoven himself never called his Fifth Piano Concerto "Emperor," so the student had no idea which alternative to select.

The purpose of the exercise is to call into question the utility of such filters as IQ tests, the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the Miller Analogies Test, the Federal Civil Service Entrance Examination, and the Graduate Record Examination. The exercise points to the culture-boundedness of test items, thus implies that these tests can be viewed as barriers set up by the upper-middle class to be passed by their own offspring (Kamin, 1974: 176-177; Progressive Labor Party, undated: 14-26).

ity is to Japanese wine as a wine. Again, it is a vocabulary item from the Midwest, the whites—they don't know what

class-biased reasoning item. frame joint; although good apart when force is applied in this case a long narrow slotted by kerfs in each face. In order to make it strong. Straw bricks." Note that my item, at once the vocabulary is simple, that a key can make a weak it, so is an inferior choice. Strong, but we have no good one, cross-culturally or indi-

st include "sake" and not others: in order to keep out question-makers themselves culture but did know about they cannot know for sure. If question-maker is unaware of his or her performance the useful facts. It is worth noting that

CONCLUSION

Each of these exercises has been designed to challenge assumptions too easily accepted by introductory sociology students, especially by children of the elite. The first, on Vietnam, demonstrates that education can lead to allegiance rather than wisdom. The marriage machine challenges the view that America is a land of individual decision making. The third, launderer's budget, suggests that the way to solve the problem of poverty is *not* by working with the poor, but by altering institutions. Finally, the IQ test implies that our meritocratic barriers are not meritocratic at all.

More generally, the purpose of all the exercises is to make clear the contradiction between the ideological justification for a given practice with its operation. Hopefully, the exercises thus challenge students to penetrate beneath the surface of American institutions and to question their own society.

Introductory sociology, like the rest of college, does not necessarily enlighten or even affect the way students view the world. It depends upon whether that education is iconoclastic, subversive (as Postman and Weingartner would put it), and connects to students' privately held ideologies. It is hoped that you will find these exercises gracefully subversive and that your students will find them both entertaining and deeply provocative.

NOTES

1. Vermont students came from homes with a median income of \$27,000; out-of-state students had a median of \$49,000. Data from the University of Illinois and even from City University of New York suggest that more than half of the 900,000 introductory sociology students in America are, to put it bluntly, well-off.

2. The reader is encouraged to reproduce or modify them at will. I would appreciate reactions after use.

3. This hypothesis flows from the cognitive dissonance ideas of Festinger (1962). Persons with deferments (war-industry workers in World War II, students during Vietnam) were more likely to oppose the war. No survey data support the converse (that less-educated adults, being more likely to be drafted, were more antiwar during Vietnam).

4. Students may also point out that "college students" are not "adults." This is a plausible reason for the fact that more than 7% of American adults work in the service sector.

5. Myrdal (1969: 14-26) cites several educational examples of it. Berg (1971) discusses it negatively or not at all with respect to the Agency, and other occupational examples.

6. Although I developed the exercise, Fred Schmidt tells me he has used it here.

7. We could find the exact number of students (.995) and calculate:

$$(13,600,000) \times (.86) \times (.995)$$

But note that doing it the same way for the

(13

The difference is trivial. Indeed, though typically I retain the figure, it is easier.

8. All proportions are from the 1976 United States, or 1976 census.

9. Writing about sororities is often considered vulgarly; his article will offend some. This exercise will help increase awareness.

10. Lest this analysis seem too simple (1977: 59-94); see also Loewen (1977).

11. Believing that gender-fading, I use "launderer" to refer to the exercise.

12. If no public transportation is available, add a used car at \$.17/mile/week, whichever is greater. (\$1.70/week).

13. Current Vermont welfare payments are \$100/week. The proportion and the exercise are the same.

14. As an anthropology major, I have no idea what that exercise did. If it was their fault, it was their fault.

BERG, I. (1971) "Rich man's world." *Human Intelligence*. New York: Basic Books.
COLES, R. (1977) *Privilege*. New York: Basic Books.