Essay 2: Education Essay

rough draft due (three copies): Sat. 9/24
final draft due: Sat. 10/1

Malcolm X wrote in "Learning to Read" "I have often reflected upon the new vistas that reading opened up to me. I knew right there in prison that reading had changed forever the course of my life." Horace Mann suggested that education is "the most effective...of all the forces of civilization" (142). And he argued that a great society could not function without an educated populace. Indeed, education has long been considered the pathway to achieving our dreams and goals in life, and a way to rise up out of poverty.

You have now had a chance to read several different views on education in our society, views which extol the benefits of education but also those which point out the way that education undermines its very goals. All of which acknowledge in one way or another that problems exist. Steele presents ways in which race affects the educational experience of students. Anyon argues that schools perpetuate a class system in society. And Kozol offers evidence to suggest that de facto segregation still exists in education. Education has long been considered the "great equalizer," providing opportunity for anyone to rise up from poverty and ignorance and become successful. Is this a myth or a reality? Drawing on the readings to support your position, make an argument about what cultural beliefs you think high schools challenge and which they reinforce. Also consider whether or not you agree that education is the great equalizer, and provides an equal opportunity for success (Yes, use quotes and/or paraphrase from the readings!). And, since you have been students for most of your lives, you may use some of your own experiences as well. 6 pages

Things to think about:
What is the myth of education?
Think about which author(s) do you agree with and why
Think about what ways you think education suffers
What are the biggest problems in education today?
What was your experience like, compared to the students in the readings?
Does education empower or not? In what ways?
Things I will be looking for:

- A solid thesis that *directly* answers the prompt
- An introduction that *introduces* your topic, gets your reader familiar with the discussion
- A brief summary of the ideas of the author(s) you agree with
- A thoughtful organization of ideas—don’t just toss it all together!
- Topic Sentences!
- A conclusion that *concludes* something about your topic as well as wraps up your main ideas.
- Quotes and/or paraphrase info from author(s)

Keep in mind that there are several writing labs where you can get help with your essay—at every step of the writing process, and of course, I am available during my office hours to help you as well.