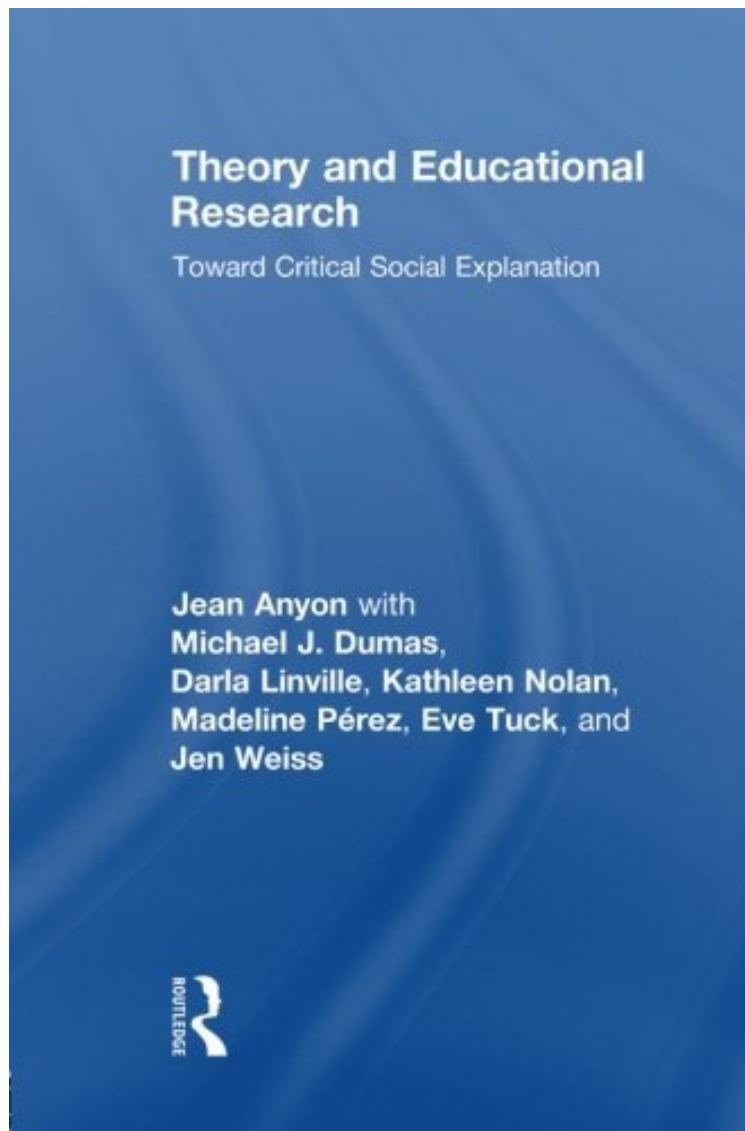


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## **Theory and Educational Research: Toward Critical Social Explanation (Critical Youth Studies)**

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**Jean Anyon : Theory and Educational Research: Toward Critical Social Explanation (Critical Youth Studies)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Theory and Educational Research: Toward Critical Social Explanation (Critical Youth Studies):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Excellent book for new social researchers  
By EstreJean Anyon's book is an excellent read for anyone having difficulty integrating theory and empirical data.  
4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Using critical theory in educational research  
By Joseph A. Maxwell  
This is an excellent discussion of how to effectively use critical social theory in a dissertation or other research. Most of the book consists of thoughtful descriptions by 6 of Anyon's former doctoral students of how they used theory in their dissertation research; Anyon provides a valuable introductory chapter, and Michelle Fine's epilogue gives a useful commentary on the the 6 dissertation chapters. Two comments: 1) the book focuses almost exclusively on what's called critical social theory (Marxist, feminist, postmodern, critical race theory, and other "progressive" theories), although many of the points made are applicable to using theory in general. A book that provides a good discussion of using a broader range of theories is Mark Dressman, *Using social theory in educational research: A practical guide*. 2) I would have liked to see more critique of the theories used; this is something that Dressman's book devotes more attention to. For a longer discussion of the book, see my review on Gene Glass's website *Education Review*; the URL is [...] ( apparently won't let me insert a link to this).

Most empirical researchers avoid the use of theory in their studies, providing data but little or no social explanation. Theoreticians, on the other hand, rarely test their ideas with empirical projects. As this groundbreaking volume makes clear, however, neither data nor theory alone is adequate to the task of social explanation rather they form and inform each other as the inquiry process unfolds. *Theory and Educational Research* bridges the age-old theory/research divide by demonstrating how researchers can use critical social theory to determine appropriate empirical research strategies, and extend the analytical, critical and sometimes emancipatory power of data gathering and interpretation. Each chapter models a theoretically informed empiricism that places the data research yields in constant conversation with theoretical arsenals of powerful concepts. Personal reflections following each chapter chronicle the contributors trajectories of struggle and triumph utilizing theory and its powers in research. In the end this rich collection teaches education scholars how to deliberately engage with critical social theory in research to produce work that is simultaneously theoretically inspired, politically engaged, and empirically evocative.

"This volume scrubs the mystique off social theories, making them accessible and even agreeable to a much wider audience, thus opening up immeasurable opportunities for future creative application. As instructor and students, we could not recommend this book more highly."--*International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 2009  
"This has been a valuable book for me, and I recommend it to anyone considering using social theory in their research, particularly doctoral students."--Joseph A. Maxwell, *Education*, January 2010  
About the Author  
Jean Anyon is Professor of Social and Educational Policy in the Urban Education Doctoral Program at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York.