Sociology GCSE

Unit 4:

Education

Name _____

2.2 Assessments

Paper 1: The sociology of families and education	Paper 2: The sociology of crime and deviance and social stratification
What's assessed • The sociology of families • The sociology of education • Relevant areas of social theory and methodology Students will be expected to draw on knowledge and understanding of the entire course of study to show a deeper understanding of these topics.	**What's assessed** • The sociology of crime and deviance • The sociology of social stratification • Relevant areas of social theory and methodology Students will be expected to draw on knowledge and understanding of the entire course of study to show a deeper understanding of these topics.
How it's assessed • Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes • 100 marks • 50% of GCSE	**How it's assessed** • Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes • 100 marks • 50% of GCSE
Questions • Section A has two multiple choice questions followed by a range of short and extended responses. • Section B has two multiple choice questions followed by a range of short and extended responses.	**Questions** • Section A has two multiple choice questions followed by a range of short and extended responses. • Section B has two multiple choice questions followed by a range of short and extended responses.

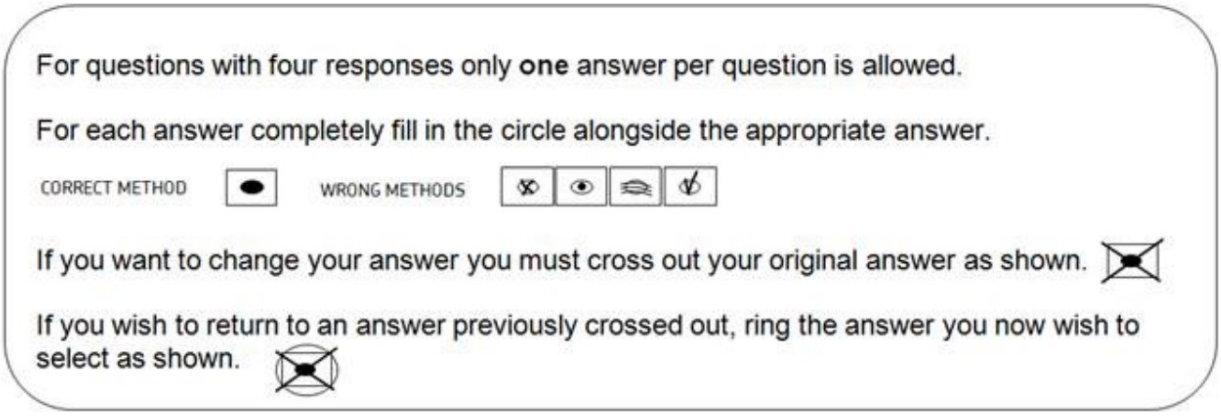
Assessment Objectives:

AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of sociological theories, concepts, evidence and
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of sociological theories, concepts, evidence and methods.
AO3	Analyse and evaluate sociological theories, concepts, evidence and methods in order to

Content	Students should be able to;	RAG
• Different views of the role and functions of education. • The functionalist perspective of Durkheim on education as the transmission of norms and values and Parsons on achieved status and the operation of schools on meritocratic principles.	• identify, describe and explain the functions of education including serving the needs of the economy, facilitating social mobility and fostering social cohesion • identify and describe a variety of different types of school including primary and secondary, state and private • describe alternative forms of educational provision including home schooling and de-schooling • describe, compare and contrast a variety of sociological perspectives on these issues (functionalist, feminist and Marxist) • describe the key ideas of Durkheim on education • describe the key ideas of Parsons on education.	
• Different views of the correspondence principle on the relationship between education and capitalism as developed from a Marxist perspective by Bowles and Gintis.	• describe the key ideas of Bowles and Gintis on education and capitalism • describe, compare and contrast a variety of alternative sociological perspectives on the correspondence principle.	
• Factors affecting educational achievement. • The work of Halsey on class-based inequalities and Ball on parental choice and competition between schools.	• identify, describe and explain various factors affecting educational achievement including class, gender and ethnicity • describe, compare and contrast a variety of sociological perspectives on these issues (functionalist, feminist and Marxist) • describe the key ideas of Halsey on class-based inequalities • describe the key ideas of Ball on parental choice and competition between schools.	
• Processes within schools affecting educational achievement. • The work of Ball on teacher expectations and Willis on the creation of counter school cultures.	• identify, describe and explain various processes within schools affecting educational achievement including, streaming, setting, mixed ability teaching, labelling and the self-fulfilling prophecy • describe, compare and contrast a variety of sociological perspectives on these issues (interactionist, functionalist, feminist and Marxist) • describe the key ideas of Ball on teacher expectations • describe the key ideas of Willis on the creation of counter school cultures.	

How to answer questions:

2 x 1 mark questions:



2 x 3 mark questions:

"Describe… or; Identify and describe **one**…"

Top answers will show: 'a coherent description with few inaccuracies, and will demonstrate good knowledge and understanding.

How to answer a 3 mark question:

- Identify and describe the answer in detail
- Give an example; try to use key words throughout your answer
- Make sure you have linked your answer to every part of the question, including any key words.

AO1 = 3 marks

Item

Be sure to study items carefully. Pay extra attention to things such as dates and who conducted the research, as this will be crucial to answering the next couple of questions, which will test how well you have read the item. You could be asked about the type of research methods that the researcher as used, strengths or weaknesses of the research or even to identify trends, patterns or make observations.

The three questions that follow an item in the exam will expect you to have the 'context' of this item in mind. This means the circumstances or background of the research. Try to refer to it whenever you can!

1 x 2 mark questions:

"From **Item A**, examine **one**…." (this question is testing how well you can read and analyse an Item)

How to answer a 2 mark research question:

- Analyse (study) the item and identify a strength or weakness of the research being used.
- Suggest evaluate (weigh up) why this should be seen as a possible strength or weakness.

AO3 = 2 marks

4 x 4 mark questions:

"Identify and explain **one**…as referred to in **Item A** or; Identify and describe… or; Identify **one**…" (this is a paragraph answer linked to the Item)

Top answers will show: 'a relevant factor/trend/research method identified and an appropriate, detailed and well-developed description offered with a clear application to the context'.

How to answer a 4 mark question:

- Identify and explain the answer
- Develop your answer further
- Give an example
- Make sure you have linked your answer to every part of the question, including any key words.

AO1 = 1 mark, AO2 = 3 marks

2 x 12 mark questions:

"Discuss how far sociologists agree that…" (mini essay answers)

Top answers will show: 'an appropriately developed critical analysis and evaluation of the relevant evidence and/or theory. Good application of relevant knowledge and understanding to the issues raised by the question with few if any inaccuracies or omissions. A wide range of specialist terms used with precision. A good knowledge and understanding demonstrated in a coherent and logically structured argument'.

You are being assessed on four things:

1. Sociological knowledge (AO1: 4 marks)
2. Your ability to apply knowledge of theories, research and methods (AO2: 4 marks)
3. Your ability to evaluate sociological theories and concepts, remember to evaluate "how far" (AO3: 4 marks)
4. Your ability to write clearly and coherently, spelling well and using specialist terms accurately (for over 9 marks)

How to answer a 4 mark question:

- Write an introduction; focus on the question and explain what it's asking. Explain any key terms
- Develop your 'for' answer; give at least two reasons, use a sociological perspective on the issue and any evidence.
- Develop your 'against' answer; give at least two reasons, use a sociological perspective on the issue and evidence.
- Give a conclusion, explicitly addressing the issue of "how far".

AO1 = 4, AO2 = 4 marks, AO3 = 4 marks

What is the role of education—what's the point of education?

Functionalists see education as performing a positive role in society.

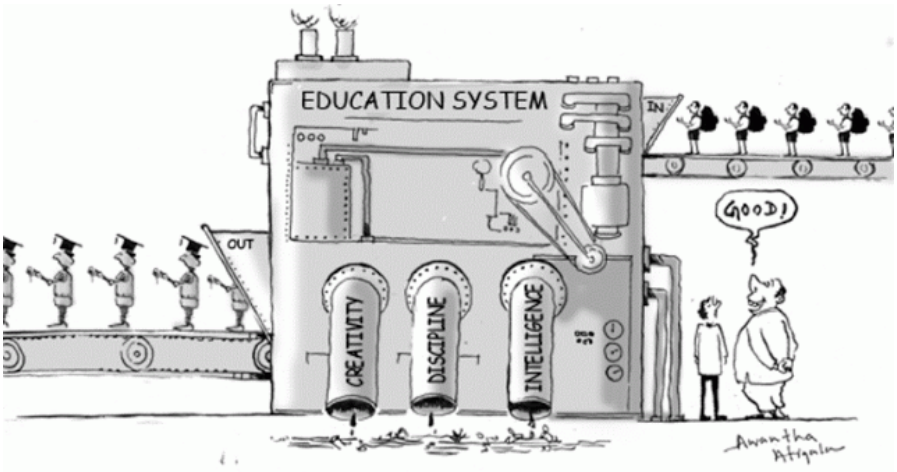
Marxists see education as part of the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

The ruling class use education to impose their own beliefs and values on the rest of society, so education is only beneficial for the bourgeoisie.

Economic role of education—teaching skills for work

Functionalists say school teaches literacy, numeracy, and vocational courses, which aim to train young people for the world of work. Education therefore prepares young people for their future occupational (job) roles and this benefits the economy.

Marxists say education reinforces the class system because children from the working classes learn the skills necessary for lower-status occupations, while children from middle and upper classes gain qualification needed for higher-status occupations.



Selective role—choosing the most able people for the most important jobs

Functionalists see the education system as a sieve, picking out the most talented people to do the most important roles. To them all individuals have equal opportunities and so if you work hard you will be rewarded with higher pay and status in society. This is known as a **meritocratic** system. One result of working hard is **social mobility**: by receiving qualifications students can progress to a higher class.

Marxists, on the other hand, do not believe that the education system gives equal opportunities to everyone. They claim both teachers and schools reject working-class children. So, to a Marxist, the education system is not seen as **meritocratic**, because it does not offer an equal opportunity to all groups in society.

KEY TERMS

Meritocratic: where people's achievements are based on their own talents and efforts, instead of their background

Social mobility: movement up or down between layers or strata in society (intra-generational = moving from one class to another)

Social Processes

Socialisation—teaching norms and values of society

Functionalists see education as teaching the norms and values of society to a new generation. School is seen as an agent of secondary socialisation, teaching children from different backgrounds a common culture, beliefs and expectations.

Marxists see education as socialising individuals into accepting the values of the bourgeoisie, e.g. valuing hard work in school is seen as preparing the future workforce of hard work.

Formal social control (rules and laws)	Informal social control (shaming, criticism, disapproval)
• Discipline from teachers e.g. during lessons • Punishments e.g. detentions • School rules	• Through general school life e.g. peer group pressure • Learning to live with others

Social control—teaching acceptance of rules and authority

Functionalists say school should act as an agent of social control by teaching rules such as obedience and punctuality. In this way people learn to conform to rules and authority in later life.

Marxists see social control at school as benefitting the bourgeoisie by reflecting social control in the wider society, e.g. obeying a teacher is seen as preparation for obeying a boss in the workplace.

Political role—teaching people to be effective citizens for social cohesion

The development of Citizenship education as a subject in schools has been linked to creating social cohesion in society—the idea that teaching the norms and values of British culture develops a sense of 'Britishness'. This may include teaching students about the voting system or what it means to be 'British'.

According to functionalists, people learn about society through education and in doing so they accept the political system, and are able to vote wisely at election time.

Marxists disagree, they say that only certain political opinions and ideas are tolerated in education—those accepted by the bourgeoisie. Radical ideas of are rejected.

KEY TERMS

Agent of social control: the groups in society that control people's behaviour

Secondary socialisation: learning social norms and values through agents such as education, peer groups, media

Social cohesion: idea that people should have a shared set of values to unite society and bring people together

What is learned through formal and informal education?

The education system provides students with **formal learning** through the **official curriculum**, which includes all those subjects studied in lessons. However, students also learn through the **hidden curriculum**, which refers to the learning that takes place outside of lessons, e.g. the rules, routines and regulations of the school. Students may learn these things without necessarily realising they are learning them. These things are known also as **informal learning**.

What is the hidden curriculum?

A hierarchy is a pyramid of layers, with the most powerful people are at the top. In school this could mean the governors or head teacher at the top, teachers and staff in-between, older students below them and younger students at the bottom. This can be seen to reflect the structure of society, such as in a workplace.

- Competition: schools encourage competition between students in sports and exams. This reflects how society is based on competition, for example jobs, material possessions or status. So school prepares students for their place in a competitive society.
- Social control: the hidden curriculum of rules, obedience and respect for authority reflects the social controls operating in society. Students learn to accept society's social controls while they are in school.
- Gender role allocation: this means allocating roles at school depending on whether someone is a boy or girl and this links to allocating roles in the work place depending on whether someone is male or female. For example, girls are not expected to be good at science in school so they won't enter science-based careers in the future. Or boys may dominate the playground with football games, and this may make them feel they can dominate these spaces in sport in the future.
- Lack of satisfaction: students complete boring and meaningless tasks at school, and have no say in the organisation of the day and this links to the boring and repetitive jobs some students will have to do later on as employees at work and the powerlessness that this makes people feel.

A level:

In contrast **Marxists** like Bowles and Ginitis argue that the hidden curriculum is just an instrument or tool to prepare children for the workplace. They see the hidden curriculum as:

1. school rules, detentions and rewards teach people to conform to society whether you like it or not!
2. school assemblies teach respect for dominant ideas
3. boys and girls to accept different roles in society with boys learning to be masculine and girls feminine
4. to follow teachers' instructions without question in the same way you have to follow a bosses orders
5. being punctual as your time belongs to your teacher/school and not you. This again replicates the way a future boss owns your time and so you're being prepared for the world of work!

KEY TERMS

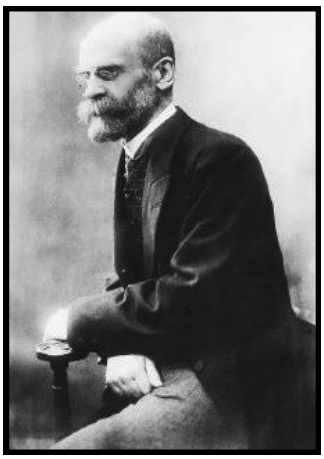
Formal learning: subjects studies in the school curriculum

Informal learning: other things learned in education such as the values and attitudes transmitted by the hidden curriculum

Official curriculum: the formal learning that takes place in schools such as subjects

Hidden curriculum: things learned in school that are not formally taught, e.g valuing punctuality or obedience

Functionalist perspective on education



Émile Durkheim (1858-1917)—Focus on key thinkers

Emile Durkheim is often seen as the founder of the functionalist perspective.

Society in miniature

Durkheim argued that schools were 'society in miniature'. Schools prepare us for the wider society where we have to co-operate with people who are neither family or friends. They provide us with a set of rules to guide our interactions with others and this in turn prepares us for following society's rules in dealing with people.

Durkheim's two functions of education:

1. Creating social solidarity:

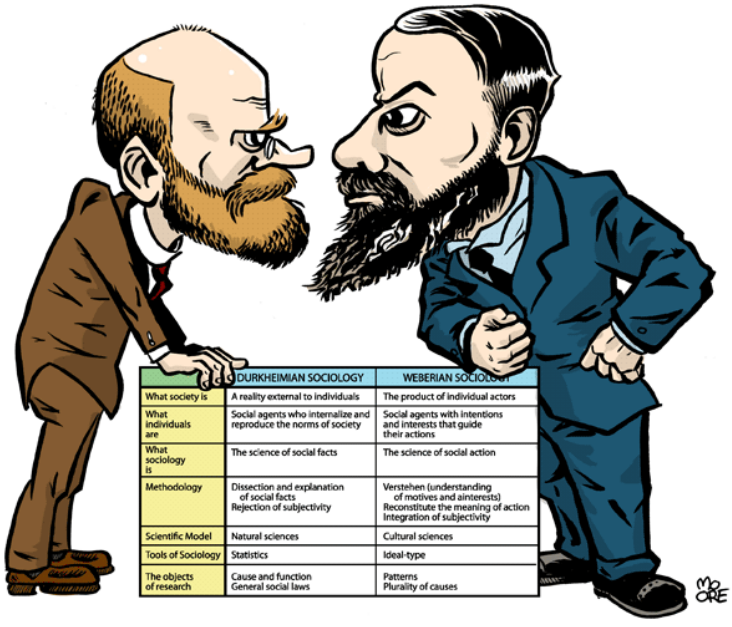
Durkheim saw the main 'function' of education as the transmitting the norms and values to individuals. In order for society to function all members should have a shared set of values. This creates social solidarity, which means the individual sees themselves as part of the wider community and no longer as an a separate person with selfish aims. Durkheim claimed this teaching of shared values come from the hidden curriculum but also from subjects like history as it instils a sense of a shared past.

2. Teaching skills for work:

Durkheim believed that in a modern industrial society where people produced good and services, there needed to be a complex division of labour, in other words some people had to do the very important jobs in society such as doctors and lawyers, and other people had to do the less important roles such as litter cleaners or hairdressers. School starts off with teaching everyone the same subjects but later on people specialise in different areas when they pick GCSE's.

Criticisms of Durkheim:

- Durkheim says education transmits a shared culture, but there may not be one single culture in a multi-cultural society. This links to the debate on what we mean by 'British values'.
- The education system actually teach the skills needed for the workplace?
- Marxists: the culture being transmitted is one that benefits the ruling class, not society as a whole
- Feminists: the culture being transmitted is one that benefits men and is patriarchal.
- Not all students come to accept the values of society that are being are being taught, some rebel.



KEY TERMS

Social solidarity: when a group has unity based on a shared set of values

Functionalist perspective on education

Talcott Parsons (1858-1917)—Focus on key thinkers

American functionalist Talcott Parsons developed Durkheim's ideas:

Universalistic values—they apply to everyone

In the family the child's status is an **ascribed status** because it is given to them e.g. daughter, eldest etc. Parents treat and judge their children according to the **particularistic standards** of their family, in other words the children are judged as 'good' or 'bad' depending on the values of their particular family.

However, Parsons argued that People's status in society is **achieved status**, for example as a result of their qualifications and hard work. The education system prepares people for this transition from family into society by treating everyone according to the same **universalistic standards** e.g. laws or school rules, which apply to everyone.

Value consensus

Students are encouraged to value high achievement and to believe that they are competing with each other on equal terms. As a result, the high achievers are seen as deserving their success and the lower achievers accept their lower status as fair.

Meritocracy

Parson's saw the education system as being **meritocratic**. Students' achievements are based on their abilities and efforts and not on social class, gender or ethnicity. The education system mirrors the wider society because society is based on achieved status of abilities and effort.

Role Allocation

Schools matches people to their correct jobs based on their ability. This is **role allocation**. Based on their qualifications, the most able should reach the top jobs in society and this is fair because the system is meritocratic.

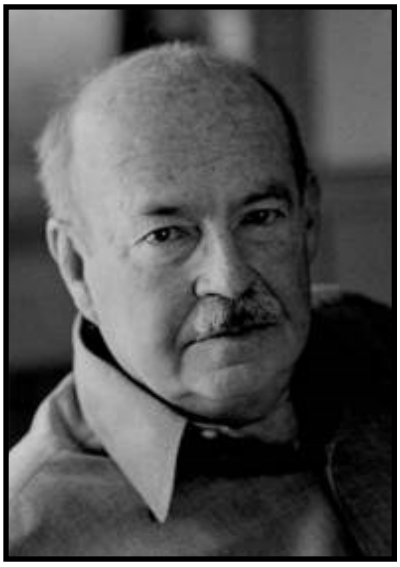
Criticism of Parsons

- Marxists: the values being transmitted are ones that benefit the ruling class, not society as a whole
- Feminists: the education system is not meritocratic; gender can have an influence on achievement and subject choice
- Role allocation has been criticised because some of the highest earners in society have left school with no qualifications

A level:

During primary socialisation within the family, each child is treated differently—as someone who is 'special'. Wider society cannot function in this way—everyone has to be treated in the same way (e.g. all are equal before the law). Education teaches these **universalistic standards** and acts as a 'BRIDGE' between family and wider society. In particular, it socialises individuals into the shared values of a meritocratic society.

Analysis: Education in this way performs both economic and social functions. It's useful to explain this to show your understanding.



KEY TERMS

Achieved status: social positions that are earned on the basis of personal talents or merit

Ascribed status: social positions that are fixed at birth and unchanging over time e.g. hereditary titles such as Duke

Meritocracy: a system where a person's achievements are based on their own talents and efforts rather than their background

Particularistic standards: children are judged against the standards and rules of their particular family and its values

Role allocation: Young people are sifted and sorted in terms of their talents and abilities into particular roles in the future e.g. academic people become doctors and lawyers

Universalistic standards: everyone is judged by the same standards in society. In school each student is judged against the same standards of rules and exam criteria

Marxist perspective on education

Marxism is a critical perspective of society so they view the role of education in society in a critical way, seeing it as a form of social control that creates obedient and passive workers for the capitalist economy. Marxists also argue that education reproduces the class inequalities by ensuring that working-class students are less likely to achieve good qualifications and therefore go into the lower paid jobs.

Bowles and Gintis: (1976)—Focus on key thinkers Schooling in capitalist America

American Marxists Bowles and Gintis see the key role of the education system as reproducing a workforce with the characteristics that help capitalism continue e.g. hard work, disciplined, obedient. In their study of 237 New York high school students they found that schools reward students who display these characteristics, while students who show greater independence and creative thinking are more likely to gain lower grades. So, schools produce an unimaginative and unquestioning workforce.

Correspondence principle

For Bowles and Gintis there is a link, or correspondence, between what is expected and valued in school and what is expected and valued in the workplace. This is the **correspondence principle**:

School	Work
Students learn to obey rules	Employees learn not to question the boss
Students learn to accept the hierarchy of headteachers/staff	Manager or bosses have authority over them.
Students learn to be competitive	Competing to get promotions and motivates the workforce.
Fragmentation of knowledge into unconnected subjects	Fragmentation of work into small, meaningless tasks

The myth of meritocracy

Bowles and Gintis say functionalists are wrong about schools being equal and meritocratic. There is a 'myth of meritocracy', people are led to believe the rich deserve to have the high paying jobs in society because they are intelligent and worked hard. However, Bowles and Gintis suggest social class determines whether someone does well; the higher classes succeed and the lower classes fail.

Criticisms of Bowles and Gintis' Marxist approach

- Businesses these days do not want passive and unthinking workers, they want creative and independent workers capable of taking on responsibility and developing new ideas as part of a team.
- Bowles and Gintis' view is too deterministic—it assumes all working class children will accept the values being taught by the hidden curriculum. But many students reject the values and rebel.

A level:

Neo-Marxist, Althusser (1971) claims there are two elements which help to keep the ruling-class in power:

- The repressive state apparatus (RSA's): controls proletariat by force e.g. police, courts & army
- The ideological state apparatus (ISA's): controls proletariat by ideas e.g. media, religion & 'EDUCATION'

ISA's **reproduce** inequality by failing each generation of children by giving them ideas and beliefs that **legitimates** or justifies class inequalities. Education tries to convince people that inequality is inevitable and that failure is the fault of the individual, not the capitalist system.

KEY TERMS

Correspondence principle: what is learned in school through the hidden curriculum mirrors what is required when in the workplace, e.g. hierarchy of headteacher in charge at school mirrors boss in workplace

Key historical changes in Britain's education system

1944 Butler Education Act

Before this policy was introduced many working class children didn't go to school or left early to work in factories and other places. This Act came after the 2nd World War, with the introduction of other policies such as the Welfare State, National Insurance and the National Health Service.

The aim was to introduce a meritocratic system where every child would receive an education based on their own academic ability, not what their parents could afford. The result was the **tripartite system**.

Children's ability was tested at the age of 11 by the **11-plus exam** and based on these results children went to one of three types of school:

Secondary Modern	Secondary Technical	Grammar
General education for less academic (approximately 75% of students)	Practical education e.g. crafts, skills (approximately 5% of all students)	Academic education for more academic (approximately 20% of all students)

1965 Comprehensive system

In 1965, the Labour government reorganised secondary education so that all students would attend the same school. This is known as the 'comprehensive' school.

Why are comprehensives thought to be a good idea?

- Social reasons: social barriers are broken down as children from all backgrounds mix together.
- Educational reasons: no child is labelled as a 'failure' by not passing the entry exam so it's fairer.
- Geographical reasons: all children from the catchment area (area of a city) go to their local school so children of all abilities have the same, equal opportunities.

What are the problems with the comprehensive system?

- Parents don't get a choice in picking a school because each child is expected to go to their local school, no matter how good or bad that school's reputation.
- More academically able students are held back by the less able, particularly in mixed-ability groups.
- Comprehensives can accept lower standards compared to grammar schools as grammar schools have more middle class children and so tend to expect more middle-class standards.

Do comprehensives break down class barriers?

- Comprehensives are not really mixed social class, as they are based on a local neighbourhood e.g inner-city comprehensives are usually working class and suburban ones are usually middle-class.
- Some argue that most comprehensives are not really comprehensive at all because, for instance, they stream or band students within the school according to ability. Critics claim that streams reflect social class differences.

KEY TERMS

11-plus exam: an exam given in the last year of primary school to determine entry to grammar schools

Comprehensive system: a system introduced in 1965 where all children attend the same type of secondary school regardless of ability

Mixed-ability groups: where children of different abilities are put together in one class or group

Tripartite system: created by the 1944 Education Act, this system used the 11-plus exam to determine which students should go to one of three types of school e.g. grammar, secondary modern or technical

Independent sector versus state sector

The independent sector:

The independent sector means the schools that charge fees. This sector is made up of:

- Private schools—all schools that charge fees
- Public schools— these are the older and more famous independent schools such as Eton, Harrow and Rugby

Around 7% of all schoolchildren attend independent schools. These do not have to follow the same rules as the state sectors schools—for example they do not have to teach the National Curriculum.

Because of the high tuition fees paid (for example £37,062 per year at Eton), critics have claimed that they allow the children of the rich to receive a separate and particular kind of education that gives them advantages over state-educated children. For example, ex-independent school pupils made up around 40% of accepted places at Oxford University in 2016, even though only around 7% of all children are educated at independent schools.

Why are independent schools favoured by some?

- Generally have a lower teacher-student ratio than state schools, which means classes are smaller
- Resources and facilities are better than some state schools
- An academic culture mean students are highly motivated and so examination results are higher
- Parents contribute high fees, support and expectations
- Boarding schools are said to benefit have a full immersion of staff & students in school life

Why are state schools favoured by others?

- State schools are free—is it not morally right to have a private system which on the rich can access?
- State schools are more socially mixed, whereas independent schools are elitists and divisive
- They provide social mobility for poor families, whereas these families are excluded from fee paying
- Travel is nearer for local state schools, whereas private schools are often long distances

A level:

The Telegraph

Glenda Cooper. Jan, 2016

'For the first time, fewer than half of the top 100 secondary schools are private, with state schools citing improved teaching and more frequent partnership with the independent sector as reasons for the good results.

The Department for Education revealed that 25,000 fewer pupils are at failing schools than a year ago. Meanwhile the London Academy of Excellence, an award-winning state sixth form college, also announced earlier this week it will be sending eight pupils to Oxbridge this year, compared to Prince Charles' alma mater Gordonstoun, which is sending a measly one.

Amongst the state schools that are succeeding, there is even more frenzied competition to get in. If you've noticed a flurry of estate agent boards around you and you live near a top school, that's because house prices spike in January in catchment areas, according to Hamptons.

Meanwhile the number of places withdrawn due to 'fraud' – i.e. those who rent second homes, lie about their religious faith or pretend to live at a relative's house - rose by more than 50 per cent in a single year, the Office for Schools Adjudicators reported earlier this month'.

KEY TERMS

Independent sector: schools that charge fees and do not have to follow the same rules as state sector schools

Private schools: schools that charge fees

Public schools: the top private, fee paying schools such as Eton. They tend to have boarding.

Vocational education and training

This refers to teaching people the knowledge and skills to prepare them for a particular career. Vocational Education can either be on the job training – such as with apprenticeships, or courses focused on a particular career in a college (typically 16-19).

This reflects the functionalist idea that the education system has to provide the skills and expertise needed by industry and the economy in the modern world far more effectively than it used to be.

New Right government 1979 introduced:

- National Vocational Qualifications (**NVQs**) - building a portfolio of evidence of your skills for the job
- Youth Training Scheme (**YTS**)—the government funded companies to give on the job training

New Labour government 1997 introduced:

- The **New Deal** for young people—employers were offered money from government to take on people under 25 who had been unemployed for more than 6 months.
- Modern **Apprenticeships** scheme—on the job training, small wage paid varying with age.
- Introduction of Vocational A levels –e.g. **BTEC** – designed as specialist work-related qualifications

Arguments for:

- They lead to a more skilled, better-qualified workforce that allows Britain to be more competitive.

Arguments against:

- NVQs were seen as an inferior qualification to the more academic 'A' level subjects, and much on the job training was of a low quality – trainees were 'glorified tea boys' (Marxist, Dan Finn: 1980)
- Some apprenticeships are criticised for being exploitative – some companies simply hired workers and then sacked them and rehired more trainees as a means of getting cheap labour.
- It mostly ended up w.class children went down the vocational route, while m.class did 'proper' qualifications of A levels. From a Marxist point of view this simply reinforces the class divide.
- Is it that young people lack skills for work, or is there no work for young people? Does vocational training just reduce the numbers of 16-18 NEET's (Not in Education, Employment or Training).
- They are similar to the tripartite system; students who are not seen to be academic are considered failures and are pushed into what some see as lower-status vocational training.

KEY TERMS

De-schooling: the idea that the education system as it is currently organised should be abolished

Vocational education: work-related education e.g. Apprenticeships

Co-educational: the education of students of both sexes at the same school.

Home education (or **home schooling**): teaching children at home by either parents or private tutors

Alternative forms of educational provision:

Home schooling means parents or tutors teaching at home. It is a legal alternative to schools but concerns have been raised about how good the standards of learning are and if it's affecting the social development of children.

Another form of alternative provision is Sands school—a democratic school where everyone has an equal say in weekly meetings. Children choose which lessons to attend, there is no uniform, no petty rules about detentions, and everyone is on first name terms.

De-schooling

Ilich (95) argues that schools repress children and promote passive conformity rather than developing creative individuals able to think for themselves. He argues that the school fails those who don't conform or who question the role of education. He argues for de-schooling, suggesting that education in its current form should be abolished, with people instead encouraged to pursue knowledge and skills in smaller networks with like-minded individuals rather than attending schools.

Marketisation policies into education

Marketisation means making the economy act like a market place—where consumers can shop around for the best deals. When Margaret Thatcher came into government in 1979 she had read Charles Murray's book about marketisation and she decided to implement these ideas into British policy.

She sold off the state funded (publicly owned) institutions such as British Gas and allowed private investors to buy these. This was to drive up standards and drive down the prices that people paid. Margaret Thatcher did this with every institution except the National Health Care and schools. Parents don't pay the state directly for their child's education, they pay taxes so she created competition between schools.

1988 Education Act

Margaret Thatcher created policies to allow parents (or consumers) to choose which school to send their child to, and she brought competition to schools by forming OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) and allowing exam results to be published in league tables. To do this there had to be the introduction of identical subjects and identical tests for all state schools.

National Curriculum and testing

The 1988 Education Act made all state school pupils aged 5-16 study core subjects English, Maths and Science. They were to be assessed formally (using testing) using national tests at the end of key stages, finishing with GCSE examinations that would be used in league table findings.

The aim of the National Curriculum was to measure students' performance against national targets so that parents and school can be informed as to whether a child is performing above or below the expected level for their age. Measures can then be taken to improve the performance of the children, or the performance of the school. One aim was to improve greater equality for all children as, science, for example, had traditionally been a boys subject but it is now compulsory for all pupils up to GCSE level.

Introducing choice

- Parents are like consumers & should choose their child's school.
- Schools now produce a prospectus and hold open days.
- **League tables** are published by the government & show a comparison of exam results of each school
- Businesses can sponsor schools by providing funds or offering expertise
- More schools to choose from, such as **academies** and **free schools**.
- Formula funding means schools are funded by the government based on how many students they attract. Popular schools get more funds and as a result they can attract better teachers and facilities.
- Open enrolment is where schools can recruit students from outside their catchment area. So schools with the highest league table positions can select the most 'ideal' students who seen as more able.
- The rise of **parentocracy** (rule by parents): as parents become consumers of education they have greater power e.g. in choosing a school, asking questions at open days & through parent feedback.

KEY TERMS

Core subjects: math, science, English. Non-core courses are: foreign languages, art, music etc.

Marketisation: the policy of bringing market forces (such as competition, privatisation) into education and other areas.

National curriculum: the government decides the content to be taught in state schools

Academy: schools that have left local authority control and whose funding comes directly from government

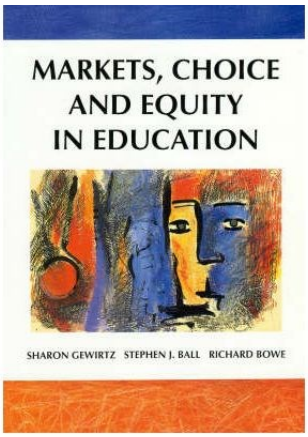
Free school: schools that are funded directly by the state but are set up and run by parents, teachers, businesses, faith group

League tables: tables of school results published yearly to allow parents to make comparisons of which schools are best

Parentocracy: a system in which a child's education must conform to the wishes of parents rather than the abilities and efforts of the pupil. This is opposite to a meritocracy, which distributes educational and financial rewards according to abilities and efforts.

Ball, Bowe and Gerwitz (Ball et al) —Focus on key thinkers

Market forces, parental choice and competition between schools (94)



They looked at 15 schools in 3 neighbouring local education authorities (LEAs) and focused on the effects that parent choice and competition between schools was having on the education system, in particular on whether it was leading to greater inequality.

Ball, Bowe and Gerwitz found that producing league tables led schools to focus on trying to recruit the top students that would make their school look better in the league tables.

Some schools reintroduced setting and streaming—meaning putting students of different levels together so they could just focus on the students more likely to do well in the examinations.

Students became 'commodities' or an object that would help the school, instead of the school trying to help the student. Less able and SEN students were neglected and ignored.

Ball et al. argued that marketisation policies had made education less equal and that schools were now more concerned with selecting the gifted and advantaged than helping the disadvantaged.

Extract from Ball et al.'s book: Markets, Choice and Equity in Education 1995:

The aim of the Thatcher government introducing market forces into education was justified in two ways:

1. to bring freedom to people in choosing, and also
2. to improve schools as they compete to attract parents—who are "customers" for education.

They identified parents as belonging to broad categories of choice-making:

Privileged/skilled choosers: these are generally middle class, these parents understand how to use the system. They will get their children into the right primary schools first, sometimes moving to better catchment areas because they have more money. And often also have insider knowledge of how the education system works as they know teachers and headteachers.

Semi-skilled choosers: these tended to be aspirational working class parents. They were highly motivated to get their children into the better schools but lacked the insider knowledge of the systems. They listened to what the media reports said and relied on the judgements and rumours of others, rather than open evening s and brochures.

Disconnected choosers: these were all working class parents but didn't understand the significance of parental choice. They viewed the schools as being "much the same". They tended to see the local school as the best and were more interested in the 'happiness' of their child, rather than in terms of job prospects.

A level: Gillborn & Youdell 2000

The marketisation of education has led to the development of the 'A-C economy', with schools' decisions based almost entirely on their drive to achieve as many A-C passes as possible. This was what the school league tables were based on in the year 2000. This often means schools ignore the needs of those students that aren't able to achieve A-C passes, but also those students that were obviously going to gain an A or B grade. The schools tended then to focus on the C/D borderline pupils and give their level the better teachers and more resources.

More recent governments realised this and changed what results go into the league tables. Schools are now judged on how many levels of progress a pupil makes—from when they started school to the end. For example, nowadays pupils have to make 4 levels progress from the beginning of school to their GCSEs to be able to enter their results in the league tables.

New Labour 1997

The Labour government after 1997 carried on with marketisation policies but key policies involved:

Raising standards

- Providing nursery places for all 3 and 4 year olds and reducing class sizes in primary schools
- National literacy and numeracy schemes and placing failing schools in 'special measures'
- 'Value-added' league tables; means looking at how well the child has progressed through school, rather than relying on their final results to measure performance of the school
- Identifying outstanding 'Beacon schools', which are able to pass on good practice to other schools

Reducing inequality

Aims: wider range staying in school post-16, and also combating social exclusion of disadvantaged groups.

- Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMAs) - payments for students from disadvantaged backgrounds to encourage them to carry on into post-16 education (*this has been cut since 2010).*
- Excellence in cities programme tackled disadvantage in city schools, introducing learning mentors & a focus on 'gifted and talented' pupils. In 2001 the percentage point difference between schools in the programme achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs was double that of schools not in the programme.
- Aim Higher programmes raised the aspiration of disadvantaged pupils to go on to higher education.
- Sure Start programmes supported families with preschool children (this has been cut since 2010).
- The Connexions service—introduced to offer personal support to young people, particularly those at risk of social exclusion. It brought together a range of services such as career and youth services.

Criticism: these policies were, in fact, used by students from middle class backgrounds too so didn't just help disadvantaged pupils. Also, Labour has been accused of double standards through the introduction of tuition fees for higher education, which may deter some students from disadvantaged backgrounds from applying to go to university.

Promoting diversity and choice

Other critics have argued that these policies have continued the policy of marketisation started in 1988. Examples of this include:

- The introduction of 'specialist schools' (e.g. ICT, music) let these schools build on their own strengths and so raise the standard of achievement. They were also allowed to pick students that had particular skills based on their specialism, e.g. good at ICT
- The promotion of faith schools is one example of how greater choice & diversity are provided in a competitive schools market.
- New Labour introduced the idea of city academies. These were originally comprehensives in cities that were failing, taken out of local authority control and funded by government and private sponsors in order to raise achievement levels. These schools were partly allowed to select students.
  The idea was to make the school's social profile change with the reduction in the numbers of students eligible for free school meals, as well as increased demand for places as a result of new facilities. However, the proportion of students receiving free school meals in academies was still higher than that for secondary schools.

KEY TERMS

Academy: schools that have left local authority control and whose funding comes directly from government

Faith school: a school that teaches a general curriculum but which has a particular religious character or formal links with a religious organisation.

Specialist school: centres of excellent in particular subject areas, such as languages or technology. They are intended to raise standards of teaching and learning in these areas

Special school (or special education): educating students with special educational needs (SEN)

Conservative governments since 2010

Since 2010, marketisation policies have continued but particularly on reducing the influence of the state.

New-style academies

New Labour introduced city academies to target disadvantaged areas, but since 2010 all schools have been encouraged to leave the control of their local authority, with their funding coming direct from government. They are also free from having to follow the national curriculum, can have more control over teachers' pay and the length of the school day.

- Sponsored academies: had been low performing schools before converting to academy status
- Converter academies: already high performing schools that have chosen academy status.

Academies are run through an academy trust or academy chains, which are private businesses that have taken over the running of large numbers of schools.

Free schools

Usually set up by parents, teachers, religious groups, or business, these are funded straight from the government. They have to submit a business plan, identify a school site, are free from the National curriculum, have control over teachers' pay and can set their own term times.

- Supporters argue that Free schools provide an option for people unhappy with local provisions.
- Critics argue they will appeal to middle class parents who prefer them to the local comprehensive and so they will produce further inequality in education.

Pupil premium

This policy gives schools extra money for each student a school takes from a poorer home. This should be spent on extra one-to-one support, more teaching assistants or helping to fund music lessons and school trips. It was intended to encourage higher-performing schools to admit more disadvantaged children.

Critics argue that the money may not be spent on students but to cover cuts to budgets in other areas.

Effects of changes

- Critics argue that marketisation & Free schools have created a chaotic system. Accountability for education is less clear and has been passed to the individual schools, academy chains and parents.
- Supporters of these changes argue that they have increased choice & diversity in education in order to meet the needs of individuals.

A level:

In 2017 Theresa May went to election with a manifesto which said she would bring back grammar schools. This was to allow higher ability children the chance to succeed in a better school where all the high ability were kept together.

This was typical of a Conservative government, as they saw it as a way of allowing the higher abilities to not be held back by those that did not want to work or those that were not as capable. She said this was to try and match private school education. This policy is very functionalist in its ideas about achievement as it is based on the idea of meritocracy.

Labour party spokespeople disagreed with bringing back grammar schools, as they said it will only highlight the differences between the middle class and the working class in more detail.

In the end May failed to win a majority government & so knew she didn't have enough support to get the legislation through. It has since been scrapped.

KEY TERMS

Academy: schools that have left local authority control and whose funding comes directly from government

Free school: schools that are funded directly by the state but are set up and run by parents, teachers, business, faith groups

Social class and achievement—external

Certain groups (working class pupils, boys and some ethnic minorities) appear to underachieve educationally. This is clear when looking at exam results and entry into higher education.

Nature: this theory suggests that educational success comes from natural abilities. It is something we are born with and is therefore genetic.

The nature—nurture debate: is it our genes or is it our social environment?

Nurture: this theory suggests that the explanation for educational success or failure lies instead with social factors such as class, gender, ethnicity, peer groups, family and how the school is organised.

Sociological explanations for different levels of attainment

Research into educational attainment has gone through various stages:

- During the 1960's and 1970's, social class was seen as an important influence on people's lives.
- In the 1980's and 1990's research focussed on how gender and ethnicity influences achievement. Many of the areas identified during research on social class, such as parental encouragement and teachers' attitudes, have been re-examined from the point of view of gender and ethnicity.
- More recently, researchers have noted the ways in which class, gender and ethnicity combine to influence a person's educational achievement.

What do the statistics tell us about social class and achievement?

The term 'social class' is one way of describing a person's position in society. An individuals' social class is usually determined by looking at their occupation or their parents' occupation. In addition, whether or not a child has access to free school meals can be seen as linked to lower income and thus to social class background. Statistics tend to show that the higher a student's social class background, the greater the chance of that student achieving high educational qualification.

Sociologists have put forward a number of explanations for the underachievement of working-class pupils. Such explanations can be divided into:

- The influence of home environment/background
- The influence of the school environment

Percentage of free school meal (FSM eligible pupils compared to all other pupils achiveming 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE, including English and Maths

	2014	2015
Free school meals	33.5	33.1
All other pupils	60.5	60.9
Gap between them	27.	27.8

KEY TERMS

Nature, nurture: the idea that intelligence is genetic (so education success is determined by abilities we are born with) versus the idea that educational success is linked to social factors such as class, gender, ethnicity etc.

Social class: where people are grouped into strata or layers based on their occupation e.g. higher class, middle class and lower classes

Material factors affecting achievement—external

Sociologists ask the question 'can the home environment affect educational achievement?'. One explanation relates to material deprivation, which is a lack of financial resources or poverty.

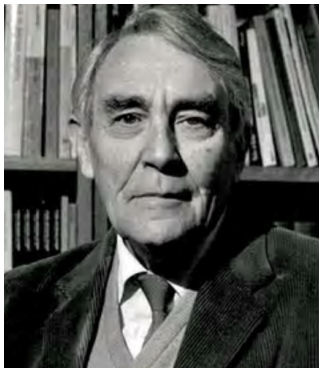
Material deprivation

Although schooling is essentially free, there is still a connection between poverty and achievement:

- The Child Poverty Action Group has stressed the cost of school uniforms, sports kits and special materials or equipment. Sometimes children are kept at home or sent home if they haven't got these. And there becomes a stigma attached to children who can't afford the basics.
- Living conditions: poor housing, overcrowding, lack of privacy or quite places to do homework affect performance at school (Douglas, 1967). These conditions are more likely to apply to working class children. In addition, research has revealed that absenteeism (absence from school) is higher among these children, possibly because of poor health conditions.
- Many working class areas, especially in inner cities, may lack pre-school facilities, such as nursery schools and playgrounds. The introduction of the Sure Start programme was meant to try and help some of these families but many have been closed since the 2010 government cuts.

Halsey, Heath and Ridge (1980) - focus on key thinkers

Social class inequality

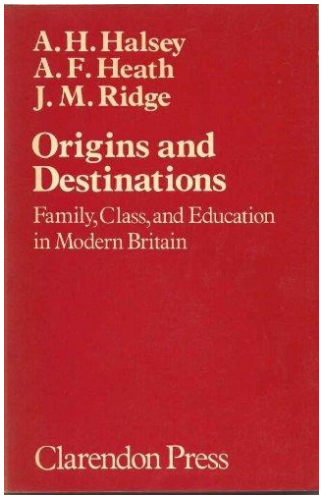


AH Halsey. Adviser (1965-68) to Labour education secretary Anthony Crosland.

Halsey et al.'s research was based on a sample of 8529 males born between 1913 and 1952 and educated in England and Wales. The social class of participants was based on father's occupation and was divided into three groups:

1. Service class—working as professional, administrators and managers
2. Intermediate class—clerical or sales workers, and lower-grade technicians
3. Working class—including manual workers in industry and agriculture

Their key finding showed that a boy from the service class, compared to a boy from the working class, had four times as great a chance of being at school at 16, eight times the chance at 17 and ten times the chance at 18. His chance of going to university was eleven times greater than a boy from the working class.



Halsey et al showed that a higher percentage of working class children than middle class children left school at the first possible opportunity. Many of the policies introduced by New Labour to combat social inclusion, such as the EMA and Aim Higher, were designed to change this situation.

On the other hand, middle class children may have a head start, as their higher social class position and income may lead to better quality housing and a greater availability of books and study facilities at home, such as their own room, access to the internet or the ability of their parents to afford private tuition.

KEY TERMS

Material deprivation: where people are so poor they are deprived of affording materials such as decent housing or education

Parental attitudes affecting achievement—cultural factors—external

While material factors seem to be of great importance in working class areas, there has also been many studies into parental attitude, especially in more prosperous areas. The government Plowden Report (1967) and sociological research by Douglas in the same year both stressed the importance of this.

Middle class values	Working class values
Wants to be in control of their own lives	A more passive attitude about other people being in control (fatalistic attitude—what ever will be will be)
Interested in future planning	Interested in the present
'Deferred gratification' - being prepared to make sacrifices now for the future. Sacrificing money and time now to ensure a better future, e.g. working towards university	'Present gratification' - living for the moment with little attempt to plan for the future or get a job
Individual achievement—by their own efforts, individuals will improve their position.	Collective action —working people will achieve improvements by sticking together e.g. trade unions

Children learn values from parents through socialisation. It is thought that **middle class values** tend to promote hard work and ambition. These values are highly thought of by teachers because they themselves are middle class. **Working class values** are less likely to lead to such success, as there is an emphasis upon present gratification and a tendency to accept one's position fatalistically.

Middle-class parents' knowledge of how to 'work the system' may also be an important factor in their children's success. Middle-class parents are more aware of how to hold their own in disagreements with teachers about the teaching of their children, they know what books to buy and have the money to buy them. It is argued they are more interested in their child's progress, making more visits to school than working class parents.

The role of cultural deprivation

Working class children and those from some ethnic minority groups may suffer as a result of cultural deprivation. If schools are base on white middle class values then white middle class culture dominates. Children from middle class homes tend to do better as their upbringing is based on academic success, for example they will visit libraries and museums, and have better general knowledge than working class. They also are brought up with electronic media, books and other educational toys.

A level—Social capital:

Pierre Bourdieu (77) describes how middle class families tend to have more **capital** (wealth) than working class families. This does not just mean more money (called **economic capital**) but other types of wealth. For example, Bourdieu talks about **social capital**—meaning that middle class people have more connections with people in higher statuses in society such as doctors, politicians, teachers etc.

Bourdieu also talks about **cultural capital**, which refers to the knowledge, attitudes, values and language of the middle classes. This gives an advantage to middle class children in school because these abilities and interests are highly valued and rewarded with qualifications. Whereas schools devalue working class culture 'rough' and 'inferior'. Working class children get the idea that school isn't for them and they respond by truanting or losing interest.

KEY TERMS

Cultural deprivation: when people lack the 'correct' values and attitudes from socialisation to succeed in education

Middle-class values: some see these values as hard work, self-discipline and ambition, so people in lower classes are seen as not possessing these values and consequently fail in education

Working-class values: some see these values as being lazy, undisciplined and unambitious, so they are blamed for why working class students fail in education

Social capital: the social networks and relationships that form in society that can be used to gain advantages in life e.g. the middle class normally have more social capital than the lower classes as they know people in higher positions and roles in society

School affecting achievement—internal

Interactionist perspective on education

Interactionists study small-scale interactions between individuals, such as those between teachers and students in the classroom. They are interested in understanding these interactions rather than creating a theory about the role of education in society (like functionalists and Marxists).

The 'halo effect' and labelling

Without meaning to teachers often make judgements about students.

Teachers might judge well behaved children as 'bright' but judge less well-behaved children as less able. This is called the '**halo effect'**. It means teachers stereotype children on what they are wearing, their manners, speech and home life. Teachers are **labelling** students. Howard Becker (61) shows how teachers label the middle class children as the 'ideal' children with, with ideal clothes, manners, speech and home life.

Effects on students

Many sociologists suggest that teachers are basing their marking of assessments on what they expect a working class or middle class child to be capable of, rather than their actual performance.

Gillborn and Youdell (2000) take this further. They propose that teachers label middle class children as 'most able' and put them in the top class sets and they label the lower classes as 'less able' and place these in the lower class sets. This means working class children are often only entered for lower-tier exams, and so don't have the opportunity to either gain the top qualifications. In this way, pressure from the education system as a whole may lead some teachers to not just label children but act on these labels too.

Self fulfilling prophecy

If teachers have low expectations of working-class children, they may see the student as only being capable of reaching a certain level of academic achievement and may see no point in trying to develop the students' performance any further. This is known as a **self fulfilling prophecy**.

In Rosenthal and Jacobson's (1968) Oak Primary School study they told the school that they had a new test specially designed to identify those pupils who would 'spurt' ahead. This wasn't true, it was in fact just a general IQ test.

Rosenthal & Jacobson picked a random 20% of names of students and told the school that these children had been identified as 'spurters'. On returning to the school a year later nearly half of all the children they had labelled as 'spurters' had indeed made significant progress—far more than they would have without.

The teachers' beliefs about the pupils had been influenced by the supposed test results and they had made the pupils believe they were capable. They had also given the pupils more attention and encouragement.

The self-fulfilling prophecy can also produce under-achievement too. If teachers have low expectations of certain children and communicate these to them, the children will take on these negative labels. They will see themselves as failures, and give up trying.

However, it has been shown that not all pupils listen to the labels. If they have other positive influences the children can 'refute' the label and not let it effect them. This then is called the '**self-refuting prophecy'**.

KEY TERMS

Interactionists: a perspective that focusses on how people interact on a daily basis. Interactionists describe social reality by interpreting the feelings and actions of the people involved

Labelling: the process of attaching a label or tag to a particular individual or group, it is normally associated with stereotyping

Self-fulfilling prophecy: when a person who has been labelled becomes the image people have of them—the prediction comes true

Streaming affecting achievement—internal

Effects of streaming

Schools often put students into streams, which means creating bands or classes of top ability, middle ability and lower ability. The school places students into these bands based on how well they do in assessments. This is seen as an ideal way in which to meet the educational needs of individual students. For example, students will receive a level of work that is appropriate to their needs and abilities, and will be working alongside students of similar ability. Equally teachers will be able to produce materials and lessons that meet the needs of the students more effectively, as they know what ability range they are to teach.

However, streaming may have undesirable effects, similar to self fulfilling prophecy. For example,

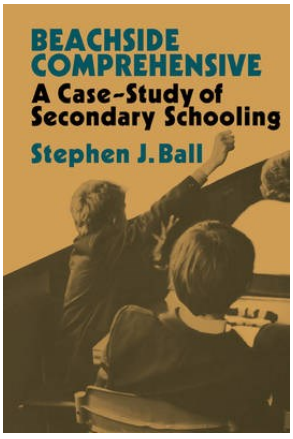
- Students in the lower streams tend to have their confidence damaged and this may result in them not trying to improve their position.
- Even when students are not disheartened, teachers may devote less attention to the students in the lower stream than to those in the higher stream.
- Streaming is often linked to social class, with a disproportionatly higher number of lower-stream students being drawn from the working class.
- Transfers between streams are rare.

Stephen Ball (1981)—focus on key thinkers

Banding and teacher expectations

Ball carried out a participant observation of Beachside Comprehensive school in 1981 over three years and looked at the process of moving from banding (streaming) to mixed-ability classes.

In the streaming system, students were placed in a higher, middle, or lower band. This was meant to be based on test scores but Ball found that children from higher social classes were more likely to be placed in the top band.



During his observations, Ball noticed that students' behaviour changed as a result of the bands they were placed in. Ball linked this to the expectations that the teachers had of each band. For example, Band One was expected to be well-behaved and hard working, while Band Two students were expected to be difficult, and uncooperative. This led Band Two students to mirror the teachers' expectations and to reflect differences in how they were taught and the exams they were entered for.

With the introduction of mixed-ability classes, pupils were less obviously polarised within the school; however, teachers continued to label middle-class students as the most able and cooperative. Ball noted that this labelling was reflected in their exam results.

Some schools have sought to overcome the known problems of streaming by having mixed-ability groups, or else they have sought a compromise by having subject setting, whereby students are placed into ability groups for each individual subject they study.

KEY TERMS

Mixed-ability groups: where children of different abilities are put together in one class or group

Streaming: where students are separated into different ability groups and then taught in these separate groups for all of their subjects

Subject setting: where students are separated into different ability groups for just one or two classes

Subcultures affecting achievement—internal

A study by Colin Lacey (1970) of Hightown Boys' Grammar school suggests that one of the effects of streaming is to lead to the development of a **counter-school subculture** that is opposed to the learning objectives of the school.

The lower-stream students tended to reject the values and standards of behaviour expected by the school, which had labelled them as 'failures'. Instead, they evolved a counter-school subculture that stressed defiance of teachers and other uncooperative acts, which provided an alternative form of status for the students, for example having their peers look up to them for their actions.

Lacey also coined the terms **'pro-school' subculture** for the higher streamed students that gained status in the school with middle-class values, and **'anti-school' subculture** for those lower streamed students that suffered the loss of self-esteem and had an inferior status in the school.

A level—Louise Archer 'symbolic capital'

Drawing on Bourdieu's concept of social and cultural capital, Archer discusses middle class culture as having a higher status in schools and working class culture as being inferior. She says the middle class pupils who have been socialised at home into middle class tastes and preferences gain 'symbolic capital' or status and recognition from the school are deemed to have worth or value.

By contrast, the school devalues the working class values so that working class tastes (for example clothing, appearance and accent) are deemed to be tasteless and worthless. The working class then see the world of education as alien or unnatural.

Archer found that working class pupils felt that to be educationally successful, they would have to change how they talked and presented themselves. So, for working class students, educational success is often experience as a process of 'losing yourself'. They felt unable to access 'posh'., middle class spaces such as university and profession careers, which were seen as 'not for the likes of us'.

Louise Archer 'Niki Identities'

Because working class children didn't feel they could gain status in a middle class school environment, they found their own ways to gain status in school. They constructed their own identities for themselves by investing heavily in 'styles', especially through consuming branded clothing such as Nike. Wearing brands was a way of gaining status from other peers in the school.

These pupil subcultures were also strongly gendered; for example, girls adopted a hyper-sexual feminine style, wearing lots of make-up, being loud and having a boyfriend. Style was heavily policed by peer groups and not conforming was 'social suicide'. The right appearance earned symbolic capital (status) and approval from peer groups and brought safety from bullying.

However, this led to conflict with the school's dress code. Reflecting the school's middle class values, teachers opposed 'street' styles as showing 'bad taste' or even as a threat, and the students were labelled as rebels and sent home.

According to Archer, the Nike identities mean that not only are the working class students excluded from joining in with education, they also get the message that education is 'not for the likes of them'. Instead they see education as only for 'posh people'. They then actively reject it because it does not fit into their identity or way of life.

KEY TERMS

Anti-school subculture: the values shared by a group of pupils that run counter to the values shared by a group of pupils that run counter to the values of the school as a whole

Counter-school subculture: a group within a school that rejects the values and norms of the school and replaces hem with anti-school values and norms

Paul Willis—focus on key thinkers

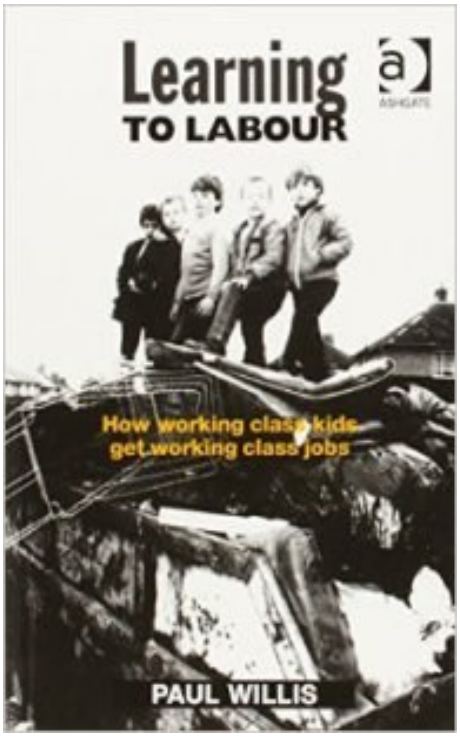
Learning to Labour (1977)

Combining two theories

Willis' research combines both Marxist and an Interactionist approach to the study of the counter-school subculture (although known as **anti-school subculture**). Willis agrees with the Marxist view that education serves capitalism, but he also shows that working-class students are not simply indoctrinated into ruling-class values without question, but rather are able to resist these values through a counter-school subculture. Willis takes an interactionist approach to attempt to understand the students' experiences of school from their own point of view.

Willis' research approach

Willis studies a school in the Midlands situated in a working –class housing estate. He took an interactionist approach to his research by using observations and participant observation in class and around the school; he recorded regular group discussion; carried out unstructured interviews; and he used diaries. The main focus of his study was a group of 12 working-class boys whom he followed over their last 18 months at school and then over their first few months at work. The group were friends &formed their own distinctive attitude to school—their own counter-school subculture. Willis called them 'the lads'.



The counter-school subculture:

- The lads felt superior to the teachers and to the conformist students, who they called 'the ear 'oles'. They saw no values in the academic or other work of the school and aimed instead to 'have a laff', avoiding lessons, doing as little work as possible and generally rejecting the values of the school.
- Willis argued that the lads were able to see through the myth of meritocracy—knowing that not everyone has an equal chance of succeeding. They sought to go through the process of schooling on their own terms. They were focussed instead on entering the world of work as soon as possible and this meant the shop-floor culture of male manual workers.

Willis' conclusions

Willis tried to show that by rejecting school and not accepting the values taught, the lads actually prepared *themselves* for their future roles as manual workers in the capitalist economy. The lads chose to do this through *their creation of a counter-school subculture*, rather than the *education system socialising them into their role*.

In this way, Willis shows that the Marxist's Bowles and Gintis were wrong; the education system does lead working-class pupils into working-class jobs, but that this is partly a result of the students' own actions and not simply due to the effectiveness of schools as agents of socialisation. For Willis then, the correspondence principle is wrong.

KEY TERMS

Anti-school subculture: the values shared by a group of pupils that run counter to the values shared by a group of pupils that run counter to the values of the school as a whole

Counter-school subculture: a group within a school that rejects the values and norms of the school and replaces hem with anti-school values and norms

Improving female achievement—internal

Official statistics reveal some differences in educational achievement based on gender.

	Girls	Boys	Gap
2014	58.9	48.2	10.7
2015	58.9	49.0	9.9

(Dfe, 2014/15)

	Males	Females
Chemistry	76.9	77.1
Physics	70.6	74.2
Maths	79.8	80.8
History	81.2	85.1
Sociology	68.8	76.3
Art and design	77.6	85.4
English	77.6	81.9

(JCQ, 2016)

At university level: women in the UK are 35% more likely than men to go to university.

In 1990, 34,000 women graduated from universities compared to 43,000 men. By 2000 133,000 women graduating compared to 100,000 *(Hillman & Robinson—Higher Education Policy Institute).*

The feminist movement

Feminism has led to changes in attitudes towards women's roles. In the past men were expected to go to work to support a family, while girls were expected to get married and work in the home.

Sue Sharpe's (1994) research showed that in the 1970's when girls were asked what they valued most they said marriage, lover and husbands. When they were asked in the 1990's Sharpe said the girls now valued careers and independence above marriage.

Liberal feminists say the only way change is going to continue is by making policies that improve equality, as well as challenging stereotypes.

Radical feminists, however, see the system as still patriarchal, despite the improvements for girls. They say girls still experience sexism in schools; subject areas still under-represent women's achievement; and male teachers are still more likely to become heads of secondary schools.

Changing job opportunities

In the future it is predicted there will be more women working than men. It is also predicted that there will be further decreases in traditionally 'male' jobs in manufacturing and engineers, but a continued increase in 'female' jobs in service industries (serving customers).

Legal changes and equal opportunities policies

The Sex Discrimination Act (1975) makes sex discrimination in education illegal. It has highlighted equal opportunities for all pupils in schools. Kelly's research (1981) demonstrated that science was seen as a 'male' subject because of textbook images, male role models and male teachers. As a result, national projects such as GIST (Girls into Science and Technology) to try to encourage girls' participation in sciences.

The introduction of the National Curriculum

The National Curriculum has meant that girls and boys in both primary and secondary schools have equal access to the same subjects, and some subjects are compulsory for all students, such as science.

KEY TERMS

Feminism: a movement that fights for gender equality in society. There can be many different types of feminist

Patriarchy: male dominating

Differences in subject choice between males and females—internal

Murphy and Elwood (1999) argue that children learn their gender roles within the home. This relates to how parents treat their children and led to children associating themselves with subject areas later on. For example, boys may have more experience of science-related equipment outside of school and this helps them to see science as a 'male' subject.

For other researchers, such as Mitsos and Browne (1998), factors within the school are also important::

- Gender stereotyping in textbooks e.g. nurses always being women
- The continued absence of female role models in science and maths textbooks
- Continued stereotyping by teachers
- Male domination of equipment in the science classroom

Patterns in subject choices at A level: entries by subject at A level, 2016:

	Males	Females
Chemistry	25,937	25,874
Physics	27,699	7,645
Maths	56,535	35,628
History	25,252	29,497
Sociology	7,848	26,132
Art and design	10,315	32,927
English	22,980	61,73

Single-sex or mixed schools?

Some researchers have seen single-sex schools as benefiting female students' achievement levels. In particular, they are thought to improve girls' performance in traditionally 'male' subjects such as maths.

Another theory that has been tried out in a small number of mixed-sex schools is that of single-sex classrooms. By being taught separately for it can remove the disruptive influence of the opposite sex.

Performance of female students improving faster than male students

Statistics suggest that the achievement levels of males, although improving, are not doing so at the same rate as females. Reasons for this trend include:

Harris's (Harris et al, 1993) research into the attitudes of 16 year olds from mainly working class backgrounds has shown that:

- Boys are thought to be suffering increasingly from low self-esteem and poor motivation
- Boys seem to be less willing to struggle to overcome difficulties in understanding their work
- Boys don't work consistently as hard as girls & are more easily distracted. In area such as coursework, boys found it more difficult to organise their time.
- Girls are more willing to do homework and also to spend more time on it.
- Girls give more thought to their futures & the importance of qualifications.

KEY TERMS

Single-sex schools: when a school has just boys or girls in the school

Although things may have changed since Harris's study was carried out, more recent research has identified some further explanations:

- Moir and Moir (1998) suggest that schools have become too 'girl friendly' and boys are now forced to learn in ways that don't suit them, e.g. an emphasis on verbal skills and a non-competitive environment.
- Katz (2000) argues that peer pressure & the need to fit in all seem like boys don't 'try'.
- Katz also argues that low self-esteem in boys may be linked to images of incompetent men found in advertising, sitcoms, soaps and so on. Low self-esteem may also be liked to the decline in traditional male jobs, leaving boys uncertain about their futures and lacking motivation.
- James (2000) says women have realised how a career and therefore education is part of their role. But boys are going through a process of asking what is 'masculine'. At present being a 'geek' is not masculine and so this may be a barrier for some boys wanting to work hard in education.

Patterns of educational attainment for ethnicity and achievement

What do the statistics tell us?

Statistics show that educational achievement is, to some extent, related to ethnicity. Students from some ethnic background tend to underachieve educationally (that is, they do not achieve their full potential and tend to perform relatively poorly in exams), while others over achieve.

Educational attainment among ethnic groups

Percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C GCSE grades including English and Maths, England, state-funded schools 2015:

Chinese	76.6
Asian	61.1
Mixed	58.1
National	57.1
White	56.8
Black	52.0

Percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C GCSE grades including English and Maths, England 2014

Chinese	74.4
Indian	72.9
White and Asian parents	67.2
Irish	65.9
Bangladeshi	61.3
Any other mixed background	60.6
White and Black African parents	56.8
Black African	56.8
National	56.6
White Britsh	56.4
Pakistani	51.4
White and Black Caribbean parents	49.0
Black Caribbean	47.0
Gypsy/Roma	8.2

Problems with using these statistics?

- Note that many studies use categories to classify ethnic groups that are too general. For example, studies that use the term 'Asian' would not allow us to see differences in achievement levels between Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi students.
- Most of the statistics produced do not allow us to examine the possible influence of social class background in relation to ethnicity.

Explaining the relationship between ethnicity and educational achievement

As with social class and gender, it is clear that factors other than nature or genetically inherited abilities may be more important in explaining the relative success or failure of different ethnic groups. Indeed, the Swann Committee, which was appointed by the government in 1985 to examine the position of ethnic minorities in the education system, ruled out IQ as a cause of differences in attainment.

The home and social class background of ethnic groups

Reid (1996) pointed out that differences in achievement may be due to class factors or class in combination with ethnicity. Ethnic minorities may be offered the lower jobs with lower pay when they come to Britain. And those that arriving in Britain might also not have much money or resources to start off with.

Palmer (2012) shows that half of all ethnic minorities live in low income families, with poor quality housing, compared with a quarter of all white children.

In this way, many of the factors affecting working-class children may also affect some ethnic minority students. In other words, there is a kind of 'doubling up' of factors— so the differences in achievement between ethnic groups may simply reflect the differences in social class.

Cultural differences

This view suggests that the cultural norms and values of some ethnic minority groups may be different to those of white, British families. This may affect students' achievement because schools are seen as institutions where typically 'white' norms and values dominate. For example 'British values' are discussed by teachers and Ofsted but these might be based on colonial ideas of white supremacy.

The language spoken at home may also be an important factor affecting achievement. Some children who have only recently arrived in the UK may speak English as a second language and, as a result, they may be disadvantaged at school. Clarke (1997) nots that students from various parts of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh may speak up to eight different languages, which may lead to confusion. Alternatively it may help students absorb new languages, for example perhaps Indian high achiever students don't see language as an important factor.

Other sociologists have discussed the language of black children as being ungrammatical and inadequate for educational success. Bereiter and Englemann (1966) first showed this in an American study but other sociologists have discussed how black culture use slang words and other differences in talking. This may impact on examinations if student write in the same way.

Parental expectations

Another explanation is drawn from the encouragement that children receive from their parents or guardians. Some have argued that parents from some ethnic minority groups are less interested in their children's education than parents from other groups. However, there is plenty of evidence to suggest this isn't true.

A study by the Inner London Education Authority in 1987 reported that Indian families put pressure on their children to succeed and that this affected their performance in a positive way and Ken Pryce's study of Africa-Caribbean community in Bristol in 1979 showed that parents had a very high academic aspirations for their children.

Bhatti (1999) found that for some Asian parents, who were often poorly educated themselves, there was a strong desire to help their children's education more. However, the parents in her sample felt frustration at their lack of knowledge about how the school worked and they felt the school didn't understand or what to understand the children's daily lives.

Role of the school in ethnicity and achievement

The following explanations stress the importance of the school environment to educational success for ethnic minorities.

The type of school attended

Some research suggests that the main factors in explaining differences in educational attainment is not a student's ethnic background or culture but the school they attend.

Smith and Tomlinson (1989), in a study of 18 comprehensive schools, identified differences between the types of schools the ethnic minorities attended. They found the better schools had

- Better quality of teaching and the resources available
- Better attitudes towards policies relating to providing equal opportunities with the school

They concluded that ethnic minority students who went to the better schools would do just as well as white students in these types of schools.

Labelling and teacher expectation

Some sociologists argue that some teachers have **stereotyped** views and expectations of students, which are influenced by the children's ethnicity. These stereotypes may also reflect social class and gender. For example, some teachers may have higher expectations of Asian students—they are considered to be capable of hard working—with Asian girls seen as quite and passive.

Research also shows that some teachers believe that children from an African-Caribbean background are less academic than those from other ethnic backgrounds, with African-Caribbean boys being seen as more disruptive. Teachers expect less, so these students do not receive as much encouragement as other students. However, as Mirza (1997) notes, there is evidence that young Africa-Caribbean girls have a strong desire and motivation to succeed, which may allow them to reject the negative labels given to them. In this way, the teachers' labels may lead to a self-refuting prophecy through which the students' educational achievement is affected, but this may depend on a variety of factors such as gender.

The hidden curriculum

Some sociologists explain the underachievement of some ethnic groups in terms of the hidden curriculum. For example, it is argued that subjects that students study (for instance, history) are **biased** towards a white European culture. Some books may present stereotypical images of some minority groups, or they may ignore ethnic minorities altogether. This may lead, for example, to a sense of not being valued for some students, which may, in turn, lead to underachieving. This is known as the **ethnocentric curriculum.**

A level

A good example of pupils refuting the self fulfilling prophecy is Mary Fuller's (1984) study of black girls in Y11 at a London comprehensive school. They were untypical because they were high achievers in a school where most black girls were placed in low streams. Instead of accepting the negative stereotypes, the girls channelled their anger about being labelled into educational success. They showed a deliberate lack of concern about school rules and routines, and continued to be friends with girls in lower streams. They did have a positive attitude towards academic success, but they didn't seek the approval of teachers, they preferred to rely on their own efforts to pass exams. This is called a self-refuting prophecy.

KEY TERMS

Biased: having a one-sided opinion

Ethnocentric curriculum: the curriculum is seen as judging things in a biased way from the point of view of one culture, e.g. the National Curriculum may value white, Western literature, art, history etc.

Stereotype: a fixed image or set of characteristics of particular groups such as women or ethnic minorities. Stereotypes are often based on prejudice

Basic texts for education unit:

Ball S J, Beachside Comprehensive. A Case Study of Secondary Schooling, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981

Ball gives an account of the experience of schooling based on three years fieldwork as a participant observer in a south coast comprehensive school; this is a participant observation study in the tradition of Colin Lacey's Hightown Grammar and David Hargreaves Social Relations in a Secondary School. The study, based on Ball's doctoral thesis, describes a school in the process of change and raises questions about the selection and socialisation experienced by two cohorts moving through the school, one banded by ability and the other taught in mixed ability classes.

Ball S J, Bowe R & Gerwitz S, 'Market forces and parental choice' in Tomlinson S (ed.), Educational Reform and its Consequences, London, IPPR/Rivers Oram Press, 1994

A study of fifteen schools in neighbouring LEAs with different population profiles (eg class and ethnicity). The study evaluates the impact of parental choice and the publication of league tables, eg the pressure to reintroduce streaming and setting and the tendency for some schools to focus on the more able.

Bowles S and Gintis H, Schooling in Capitalist America, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976

Writing from a Marxist perspective Bowles and Gintis argue that the major role of education in capitalist societies is the reproduction of labour power. They argue that there is a close correspondence between the social relationships which govern interactions in the work place and social relationships in the education system e.g. the creation of a hardworking, docile, obedient, and highly motivated workforce, which is too divided to challenge the authority of management. They reject the view that capitalist societies are meritocratic and believe that class background is the most important factor influencing levels of attainment.

Durkheim E, Moral Education, Glencoe, Free Press, 1925 (republished 1973)

Durkheim saw the major function of education as the transmission of society's norms and values. He believed that it is a vital task for all societies to weld a mass of individuals into a united whole. Education, and in particular the teaching of history, provides the link between the individual and society – children will come to see that they are part of something larger than themselves and will develop a sense of commitment to the social group. He believed that the school provides a context in which children learn to cooperate with those who are neither their kin nor their friends, in his view rules should be strictly enforced in order for children to learn self-discipline and to see that misbehaviour damages society as a whole.

Halsey A H, Heath A and Ridge J M, Origins and Destinations, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1980

Based on a sample of over 8,000 males born between 1913 and 1952 the authors found evidence of clear class inequalities in education. The sample was divided into three main groups (based on the father's occupation): 1 the service class (professionals, administrators and managers) 2 the intermediate class (clerical or sales workers, the self-employed and lower grade technicians and foremen) 3 the working class including manual workers in industry and agriculture. The authors found that an individual from the service class, as compared to one from the working class, had four times as great a chance of being at school at 16, eight times the chance at 17 and ten times the chance at 18. Whilst the chance of an individual from the service class attending university was eleven times greater than one from the working class. It should be noted that the research excluded females and this might have made a significant difference to the findings.

Parsons T, 'The school class as a social system' in Halsey et al., Education, Economy and Society, New York, The Free Press, 1961

Writing from a functionalist perspective Parsons believed that the school acts as a bridge between the family and society, taking over as the main agency of socialisation and preparing children for adult life. Parsons argued that the schools operate on meritocratic principles: status is achieved on the basis of merit. In this way the school represents the wider society where, Parsons believed an individual is judged on universalistic standards, which are applied to all members regardless of kinship ties (within the family particularistic standards apply – the child is not judged on standards that can be applied to every individual in society). He believed that schools socialise children into the basic values of the wider society, maintaining a value consensus that emphasised achievement and equality of opportunity. Moreover, Parsons believed that schools functioned as an important mechanism for the selection of individuals for their future role in society. His functionalist perspective has been criticised by those who argue that the values of the education system may simply be those of the ruling elite, or that equality of opportunity is an illusion in an unequal society where wealth and privilege are more important than individual merit.

Willis P, Learning to Labour, Farnborough, Saxon House, 1977

Writing from a Marxist perspective, Paul Willis focused on the existence of conflict within the education system. He rejects the view that there is a direct relationship between the economy and the way that the education system operates. Unlike Bowles and Gintis he believes that education is not a particularly successful agency of socialisation, he also holds the view that education can have unintended consequences that may not be beneficial to capitalism. His book is based on a study of a school in the Midlands situated in a working class housing estate; he used observation and participant observation, recording group discussions, informal interviews and diaries. Willis attempts to understand the experience of schooling from the students' point of view. He described the existence of a counter culture, which was opposed to the values of the school. The members of this counter culture felt superior both to the teachers and to conformist students. Their main objective was to avoid attending lessons and they resented the school's attempts to control their time. They neither deferred to authority nor were they obedient and docile. However, Willis concluded that their rejection of the school made them suitable candidates for male dominated, unskilled or semi-skilled manual work (relatively easily obtained in the 1970s).

EDUCATION KEY TERMS	RAG
Academy	
Achievement (in education)	
Anti-school sub-culture	
Attitude survey	
Bias	
Case study	
Census	
Citizenship	
Closed question	
Competition (in a variety of contexts)	
Comprehensive school	
Compulsory state education	
Confidentiality	
Conformity	
Consensus	
Content analysis	
Continuity	
Correspondence principle	
Counter school subculture	
Covert observation	
Cultural capital	
Cultural deprivation	
Cultural values	
Culture	
Curriculum	
Dark figure of crime	
Data	
Data analysis	
Data protection	
De-schooling	
Discrimination	
Economy	
Education	
Education reform	
Egalitarian	
Eleven plus	
Employment	
Ethical considerations	
Ethnic diversity	
Ethnic group	
Ethnic minority	
Ethnicity	
Ethnocentric curriculum	

Ethnography	
Ethos (of the school)	
Exclusion (from school)	
Expectations	
Fee paying, public, independent or private school	
Feminism	
Feminists	
Focus group	
Formal curriculum	
Formal education	
Free school	
Functionalism	
Functionalists	
Functionally important roles	
Further education	
Gender	
Gender roles	
Gendered curriculum	
Glass ceiling (in relation to women in employment)	
Hidden curriculum	
Higher education	
Home tuition	
Hypothesis	
Image	
Immigrant	
Immigration	
Inclusion (in education)	
Income	
Informal education	
Informed consent	
Institutional racism	
Intelligence quotient	
Interactionism	
Interest groups	
Interview	
Labelling	
League tables in education	
Life chances	
Lifestyle	
Lone parent family	
Longitudinal study	
Marketization of education	
Marxism	
Marxist	

Mass media	
Master status	
Middle class	
Mixed ability	
Mixed methods research	
News value	
Non-participant observation	
Norms	
Observation	
Ofsted	
Open question	
Organised religion	
Participant observation	
Particularistic standards	
Pluralism	
Popular press	
Primary data	
Privatisation (economy)	
Propaganda	
Public examinations	
Qualitative data	
Quality press	
Quantitative data	
Questionnaire	
Quota sample	
Racial discrimination	
Racism	
Random sample	
Reliability	
Representative data/sample	
Research	
Respondent	
Role conflict	
Roles	
Rural	
Sample	
Sampling frame	
Sanctions	
SATs	
Secondary data	
Secondary socialisation	
Selective schools	
Selective use of data	
Self-fulfilling prophecy	

Setting in education	
Sex (gender) discrimination	
Sex (gender) equality	
Sexism	
Snowball sample	
Social change/changing social attitudes	
Social class/socio-economic class	
Social cohesion	
Social construct	
Social control (formal and informal)	
Social convention	
Social exclusion	
Social inequality	
Social mobility	
Social network	
Social stratification	
Socialisation	
Socially defined behaviour	
Society	
Special school	
Specialist school	
Status	
Stereotype	
Subculture	
Survey	
Systematic sample	
Teacher expectations	
Technological change	
Theoretical perspective	
Trend (in relation to data)	
Triangulation (in relation to social research)	
Tripartite system	
Unrepresentative data/sample	
Unstructured interview	
Universal standards	
Urban	
Validity	
Value consensus	
Values	
Vocationalism in education (work related curriculum)	
Welfare state	
Working class	
World view	
Youth culture	