

A-C Economy

Where schools focus a disproportionate amount of their resources on making sure 'middling' students get 5 A*-Cs, rather than helping to boost more able students or getting less able students passes below the 5- A*C threshold.

Achieved status

Where individuals gain their social position in society through their own efforts, rather than that position being based on their ascribed characteristics such as their 'race' or their class background.

Ascribed status

Where an individual's position in society is pre-determined by their birth or social characteristics. An example of this is the royal inheritance in the United Kingdom: only a son of Queen Lizzie II can become King when she dies.

Banding/ Streaming

Grouping students by ability. Students are put into the same group across all subjects (unlike setting, which is where students might be placed in different ability groups in different subject).

Canalisation

Where choices of subjects become gradually more limited as children progress through school.

Compensatory Education

Educational policies which provide additional money or resources for students facing cultural or material deprivation. The idea is that the extra money/resources helps overcome disadvantage and boost results.

Comprehensive School

One type of school for all students. Non-selective schools where all students have an equal opportunity within the same school.

Comprehensivisation

The establishment of comprehensive schools in the 1960s which replaced the selective tripartite system.

Correspondence principle

The Marxist idea that the norms and values pupils learn in school prepare them for their future exploitation at work.

For example, schools teach pupils to be 'motivated by external rewards' – they learn to put up with boring lessons in order to achieve higher grades, thus focussing on the end result of learning rather than the 'joy of learning' itself. This corresponds (relates) to

putting up with the dull routine of working life in a factory day to day, while focussing on the pay packet at the end of the month.

Related concepts: ideological state apparatus, Marxism, socialisation, hidden curriculum.

Counter school culture

A group within a school which has norms and values in direct opposition to the mainstream culture of the school. E.G. a group of students who see value in messing around and 'having a laugh' or disrupting lessons rather than working hard and studying. Status will be rewarded within the counter school culture on the basis of how deviant they are, how far they go against school rules.

Cultural capital

The skills, knowledge and attitudes associated with the dominant culture, possessed by the middle classes, which give middle class parents and children an advantage in life.

Cultural capital is a Marxist concept used to explain why middle-class pupils achieve more than working class pupils do. As part of the dominant culture, middle class pupils have an automatic advantage over working class pupils because they share the culture of the school. Their language is like that of teachers (also middle-class) and their values correspond more closely to those of the school. This 'cultural capital' enables middle class families to pass on their superior position to their children and in so doing, reproduce class inequalities.

Related concepts: skilled and disconnected choosers, habitus, social capital.

Cultural deprivation

Where some groups, such as the lower social classes have inferior norms, values, skills and knowledge which hold them back in life.

Cultural deprivation can have a negative effect on the education of working class children: poor language skills can mean the students struggle to understand what they are taught, and the fact that working class parents do not value education means that their children are less likely to stay on at school post-16.

Related concepts: material deprivation, immediate and deferred gratification, restricted and elaborated speech codes.

Cycle of Deprivation

Where one aspect of material disadvantage has a knock on effect and leads to other types of disadvantage, such that poverty is reinforced and carries on, often across generations. For example, being poor, means a poor diet, means more sickness, means more time of work, means more poverty.

Deferred Gratification

Where one delays immediate reward and instead works hard now in order to receive a greater reward in the future.

Deterministic

Self-fulfilling prophecy theory is often criticised as being deterministic, because it assumes that a particular input (labelling) always has the same affect (the subject accepts their label), without taking into account the fact that individuals respond in different ways based on their different subjective views of the situation in which the labelling takes place.

Disconnected Choosers

Working class parents who simply send their children to local schools rather than researching different schools and then making their choice. The opposite of 'skilled choosers'

Division of Labour

Where production is broken down into a number of small, specialized tasks to improve efficiency. For example, instead of one person constructing a whole car, each individual specializes in adding different bits.

Education Action Zones

A New Labour Education policy which promoted links between clusters of schools (typically around 20) in deprived areas and local businesses and parents, with the intention of getting business to provide extra funds to those schools. This policy was introduced in the late 1990s, but after running for five years it had largely failed to generate any additional funds and so was axed.

Educational triage

Where schools sort students into three groups: those who will pass without help, those could pass with help, and those who probably won't pass even if they do get help. Schools then focus most of their resources on helping the middle of these groups, while leaving the former alone and effectively 'writing off' the later.

Elaborated Speech Code

Language consisting of a wide vocabulary, complex sentences and which is context-free, so able to express abstract ideas. Used by the middle class and the opposite of restricted speech code.

Equality of opportunity (within education)

Where everyone has an equal chance to get into the best schools and universities and achieve good qualifications, and everyone competes for the best results on a level playing field, without being discriminated against on the basis of race, gender, disability or social class.

Ethnocentric Curriculum

Ethnocentric means seeing or judging things in a biased way. An ethnocentric curriculum is one which treats middle class European white culture as superior – having Christian assemblies or teaching history from a European rather than an Indian or African perspective are examples of this.

Ethos

The culture of a school – including its expected norms of behaviour, core values and especially the aspirations for its students.

Exclusions

Where pupils are either suspended for a set period or permanently expelled from school, typically for breaking school rules.

Exogenous Privatisation (of education)

Where schools, or school services, are taken over by private businesses such as academy chains, rather than being run directly by the state.

A related concept here is 'endogenous privatisation', where schools are made compete like businesses while still being run by the state. This was the idea behind marketization.

Related concepts: neoliberalism, the new right, marketization.

Faith school

A school with formal ties to a particular faith. Many have different admissions (selection) criteria to regular state schools and select a proportion of their students on the basis of their faith.

Fatalism

According to Bernstein this is an attitude held by working class children and parents. It is the belief that they will inevitably end up in working class jobs, and so prevents them from aspiring to do any better.

Free Schools

Schools set up and run by groups of parents, charities or businesses and run directly by them. They are funded directly by the government and not by Local Education Authorities.

Gender domains

The activities that boys and girls see as typically the territory of their gender. E.g. playing football for boys and playing with dolls for girls.

Globalisation

The increasing interconnectedness of people and societies across the world.

Grammar School

A selective school catering to students who pass their 11+. Offers an academic education catered to high achieving students. Part of the ethos of grammar schools is that students should aspire to go to university.

Hidden Curriculum

The Hidden Curriculum refers to the norms and values not taught directly as part of the official curriculum, but passed on informally in schools.

Whereas the official curriculum is made up of subjects, subject content, formal lessons etc. the hidden curriculum is composed of teacher attitudes and expectations, and the general ethos of school which includes such things as attitudes to punctuality, attendance, dress codes and future career aspirations.

Related concepts: Feminists argue that the hidden curriculum works against girls. Marxists believe it works against working-class pupils.

Ideal Pupil

The idea of the perfect pupil which teachers have in their heads. Such pupils are smart, have good manners, obey school rules and work hard. According to Howard Becker they are typically middle class.

Ideological state apparatus

This is main function of education in a capitalist society according to Marxists. Education works to transmit an ideological justification of capitalism, presenting the unequal capitalist system as normal and inevitable.

Schools do this directly by 'agenda setting' – not teaching subjects which criticise capitalism such as sociology (at least until much later on in life), and they do it indirectly by mirroring the inequality found in wider society (teacher-pupil relations, banding and streaming), thus getting students used to the idea that inequality is normal.

Related concepts: passive subservience, Marxism, socialisation, hidden curriculum, power, inequality.

Immediate Gratification

Wanting instant reward, right now. The opposite of deferred gratification

Independent (Private) Schools

Schools which are not state-funded and are paid for by parents. They do not have to follow the national curriculum, but most choose to do so.

Institutional Racism

Discrimination which is built into the everyday workings of institutions such as schools.

Labelling*

'Labelling' is where someone judges a person based on the superficial 'surface' characteristics such as their apparent social class, sex, and ethnicity.

In the case of education, the main 'labeller' is the teacher, the main 'labelled' the pupil. Howard Becker has shown that teachers have an 'ideal type' of a pupil. The 'ideal' pupil is courteous, hard working and academically able. Middle-class pupils are far more likely to fit this model than are working class students, and thus middle class students get a positive label working class students a negative label.

Related concepts: Interactionism, self-fulfilling prophecy, ideal pupil.

*American misspelling: 'labeling'

League Tables

Published documents which show the GCSE and A level results of all schools in England and Wales. Schools are effectively ranked against each other and thus are easy to compare.

Legitimation of class inequality

A Marxist term – where schools justify inequality through teaching the myth of meritocracy. Schools teach working class pupils that it is their fault if they fail their

exams and end up in working class jobs, rather than the fault of the unequal and unfair system which is biased towards the middle class.

Marketization

Making schools compete for pupils, like businesses compete for clients or consumers.

This was the basic principle behind the 1988 education act: the government introduced open enrollment (parental choice), formula funding and league tables to introduce endogenous privatisation.

Related concepts: New Right, neoliberalism, privatisation, league tables, 1988 education act.

Material deprivation

Where someone cannot afford or lacks access to basic, material resources such as food and heating.

Material deprivation can have a negative effect on educational achievement because students may not have access to computers and the Internet at home and poor diet and housing conditions may lead to health problems which can result in time off school.

Related concepts: social class, cultural deprivation, differential educational achievement.

Meritocracy

The idea that what an individual achieves is based on a combination of their ability and effort.

In education this is where the qualifications one achieves is based on a combination of their intelligence and the amount of effort they put in during their time in school.

Marxists argue that meritocracy is a myth because in reality an individual's educational achievement is more a reflection of their class background, a result of their material and cultural capital, rather than their ability or effort. However, the working classes believe the myth of meritocracy and thus blame their own failure on themselves rather than the unequal opportunities in the system.

Related concepts: achieved status, ascribed status, Marxism, Functionalism, equality of opportunity.

Motivation by external rewards

Being motivated by the end result, not the act itself. In education this means being motivated by exam results rather than the 'joy of learning'.

Multicultural education

Any education that raises awareness of the different cultures, traditions and religions in a society, typically aimed at promoting acceptance of (or at least tolerance of diversity).

Myth of meritocracy

Part of Marxist Theory – the idea that schools are not meritocratic but teach students that they are so as to legitimate inequality (see the legitimization of class inequality).

National Curriculum

Set subjects (and the content within those subjects) laid down by the government that all state funded schools must teach.

OFSTED

The government body which inspects schools and publishes reports, grading schools from 'outstanding' to 'in need of improvement'. Has the power to put schools into special measures and change the management and staffing of failing schools.

Parentocracy

Literally 'the rule of the parents'. It is where parents have a choice over which school to send their children to.

Parity of Esteem

Where schools teach different subjects and have a different ethos but have equal status.

Particularistic values

The specific standards by which parents judge their children.

Passive subservience

Accepting authority and doing what you are told without questioning it.

Patriarchal Ideology

Norms and values which make patriarchy seem natural. E.g. the idea that women should be the primary child carers because they give birth to children.

Patriarchy

A system of male domination, or one in which men have advantage over women.

Polarization

Moving further apart. In education, marketisation is said to have caused this: the best schools improved and the worst schools got worse.

Postmodernisation

The changes associated with the move to a postmodern society, including globalization, more consumerism, more individual choice and diversity.

Privatisation (exogenous)

Where schools, or school services, are taken over by private businesses such as academy chains, rather than being run directly by the state.

Privatisation (endogenous)

Where schools are made to compete like businesses while still being run by the state. This was the idea behind marketization.

Reproduction of inequality

Where inequality is carried on from one generation to the next.

Restricted Speech Code

Language consisting of limited vocabulary, simple sentences, and which is context specific. According to Bernstein, this is what the working class speak. It is the opposite of the elaborated speech code.

Role allocation

Where pupils are sifted and sorted into appropriate jobs based on their abilities, reflected in the qualifications they achieve.

Society requires the most able to be in the most important and demanding jobs. Education makes sure this happens- only the most able and hardest working can rise to top and get the three A grades in science required to go on to do a medical degree and become a doctor for example.

Related Concepts: achieved status, Functionalism, division of labour, meritocracy.

Self-fulfilling prophecy

This is where someone acts according to their label and the label becomes true in reality.

In education a pupil who is repeatedly told that they are unlikely to achieve may consequently give up their efforts which in turn will reduce the likelihood of gaining a qualification. The teachers' label has thus become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Related concepts: interactionism, labelling, deterministic.

Subculture and Counter School Culture