*Patterns of Attainment in Education*

**Social Class Description**

**& Attainment**

**Gender &**

**Description**

**Ethnicity &**

**Attainment**

**Description**

**Attainment**

Social Class

Those who are born into the lower and

Gender

Gender is a social construction. When

sociologists first studying gender and

attainment boys were more successful than

girls, identified sexist practices that

depressed girls attainment, now studies

concerned with male under-attainment and

gendered subject choice.

Ethnicity

Britain is a multicultural society with a long

history of immigration of minority ethnic

groups. Some ethnic groups over-attain

against the average but other ethnic

heritage groups do rather badly against the

average.

poorer sections of society have limited

chances of escaping from lives of relative

hardship and those who are born into

wealthy privileged families will tend to

succeed in life.

Parents &

Attitude

It can be argued that if priority or emphasis

is not placed on education then a child may Genetic

Genetic

theories

There is little or no evidence to support the

idea that some ethnic backgrounds are

more or less intelligent than others.

Educationists believe that boys and girls

learn differently however if attainment is

based on biological factors there would not

be changing patterns.

towards

not value or succeed within education.

theories of

gender

education

Poverty and

class

It suggested that children from

difference

Material

Refers to the lack of money to buy

disadvantaged backgrounds don’t make the

same progress as other children. It is also

suggest that ethnic minorities tend to attend

low-performing schools and have low

expectations placed on them.

Deprivation

possessions and there has been a lot of

research into the links between poverty and Socialisation

low attainment.

Gender

Gender differences reflect the creation of

gender identity which begins in the home

and is reinforced through secondary

socialisation in education.

Cultural

Refers to having insufficient knowledge of

Deprivation

the culture, norms, values and customs that School

Argued that government policy and

English as an

additional

language

EAL students will use a different language in

the home and this can impact their

understanding of content in school.

help children to do well in education.

Organisation

examinations favour girls and the teaching

profession has becoming increasingly

dominated by women. Success in education

has become associated with femininity.

Cultural

Capital

Claims that middle class people possess

knowledge to benefit their own children

within the education system. Working class

people may not have access to the same

skills.

Cultural

There can be cultural differences in regards

to the emphasis and priority placed on edu-

cation which can impact attainment.

differences

Hegemonic

Masculinity

There is evidence to suggest that boys are

likely to reject the values of education and

form anti-school subcultures to reinforce

their masculinity.

Racism

The Swan Report (1985) recommended that

schools should promote the idea of multicul-

tural Britain because many schools were

institutionally racist. This could be as a

result of ethnic labelling and profiling of

students.

Cultural

Schools are middle class institutions that

Reproduction train working class children for subordinate,

Feminism

New Right

The rise in feminism increased opportunities

at work and the accompanying economic

independence meant that girls are striving

for more than the housewife and mother

role.

theory

unpleasant boring work.

Labelling &

self-fulfilling

prophecy

The claim is that children gain identity from

schools and that teachers label working

class children as failures and the children

accept these labels.

Ethnocentric

Curriculum

It has been suggested that the national cur-

riculum is ethnocentric and it overlooks the

contribution of non-white groups to British

history .

Claim that changes in the family (single

parent/female headed families) mean boys

do not have good role models in the home

and therefore make little effort in school and

as result have poor achievement.

Subcultures & Children who find it hard to succeed in edu-

Peer Groups

cation form social groups that reject the

norms of the school and the gain status by

being ‘bad’.

Singlehood

and

There are high levels of lone parents in the

Afro-Caribbean communities which can

mean financial challenge which is a known

factor in low attainment.

parenthood

*Patterns of Attainment in Education*

Under attainment & Gender

Under attainment & Class

Functionalist

Functionalist

See gender as being linked to male and

female social roles. Education is a

reflection of society.

Working class students fail because schools are meritocratic

and they must not be the best pupils.

Marxist

Concerned with class inequality so

Marxist

The education system exists to legitimise ruling class power

the education system is biased against the working class,

existing only to oppress poor pupils.

Interactionist

Studies show teachers and pupils share

ideas about gender roles so

traditional gender patterns tend to

reproduced through the hidden &

formal curriculum.

Interactionist

View schools are middle-class institutions and that teacher

label working class children as failures and children live up

to their labels.

Feminist

Patriarchy extended into schools from

Area in Education

**Key studies & Research**

New Right

Concerned with the recent perceived

failure of boys and seek policies to

overturn this.

Education & Social Class

Noble (2009), Feinstein (2003), Basil Bernstein,

Postmodernists.

See gender as a choice and suggest

that they way that children are forced

into identifying with a gender in schools

Deprivation & Education (2009) , Bourdieu (1970), Bowles & Gintis

(1976), Paul Willis (1977), Ball (1981), Becker (1952), Goodacre

(1986), Jackson (2002) Gillies (2005)

is an unpleasant and aggressive form of Education & Gender

social control.

Wilkinso0n (1994), Sharpe (1976), Willis (1977), Francis (2000)

Under attainment & Ethnicity

Functionalist

See ethnic minorities as pre-disposed to fail

in school and look for cultural and genetic

explanations.

Education & Ethnicity

Strand (1999) , The Swan Report (1985), Wright (1992)

Marxist

Concerned with class so ethnicity is over-

looked.

Interactionist

Look at labelling, teacher racism and

institutional racism as being the cause of

under-attainment

Feminist

Girls from ethnic minorities experience a

double disadvantage (sexism &

racism)

New Right

West-Indian boys lack suitable role models

because single parent hood is more

common in that community.