Worksheet 4.1   The Role of the Education System (pages 160–170)

Consolidate (work individually)

1   Define 'social solidarity'.

2   According to Parsons, what are two major values of modern society transmitted by schools?

3   Give two functions of the educational system.

4   What do Marxists mean by 'social reproduction'?

5   Define 'counter-school culture'.

6   Identify two examples of discrimination against girls in education noted by feminists.

7   Give two of the main arguments made by the social democratic perspective on education?

8   Give one reason why Halsey et al. (1980) argue that schools are not providing equality of opportunity for all young people.

9   Identify two problems that Neoliberal/New Right perspectives see as responsible for the decline of advanced industrial societies?

10 Give two solutions that Neoliberal/New Right perspectives offer to prevent the decline of advanced industrial societies?

Apply (work in small groups)

1   Briefly evaluate functionalist views of education.

2   Althusser argues that the main role of education is to transmit capitalist ideology. Identify some examples of the ideological views Marxists see as transmitted through schools.

3   Outline some of the correspondences Marxists identify between school and work.

4   Briefly outline the social democratic perspective on education.

5   Make a case *either* for *or* against the marketisation of schools.

Evaluate (work as a class)

1   'The UK education system is based on an ideology of equal opportunity. The reality is somewhat different'. Discuss the arguments for and against this view.

2   Feminists have argued that certain subjects have been seen as 'boys' subjects' and others as 'girls' subjects'. Is this still the case? If so, what might be the consequences of this 'gendered curriculum'?

Worksheet 4.2   Social class and educational attainment (pages 171–180)

Consolidate (work individually)

1 What is the most significant social factor – class, ethnicity or gender – accounting for differences in educational attainment?

2 Suggest one reason why class differences in educational attainment are not due to class differences in intelligence.

3 According to Feinstein (2003), what is the most important factor accounting for class differences in educational attainment?

4 Identify three features of working-class subculture.

5 Briefly explain the difference between material and cultural deprivation.

6 Define 'cultural capital'.

7 Why, according to Ball (2003), do government policies of choice and competition give the middle class an educational advantage?

8 Suggest two strategies used by middle-class parents to give their children maximum advantage in the education system.

9 Identify two ways that cultural capital can be used to explain the influence of social class on university choice.

10 Briefly explain the difference between 'setting' and 'streaming'.

Apply (work in small groups)

1 Cultural deprivation theory argues that children at the base of the class system underachieve because they are deprived of things that are essential for educational success. According to cultural deprivation theory:

   a. what are they lacking?

   b. how does this hinder their progress?

2 If the elaborated code is the language of education, suggest ways that this advantages/ disadvantages pupils from different classes.

3 Identify examples of cultural capital and briefly explain how each example contributes to academic achievement.

4 How might the way you have been labelled throughout your educational career have affected your educational achievement?

5 Outline one argument for and one against:

   a. setting

   b. mixed-ability teaching.

Evaluate (work as a class)

1 'Class differences in cultural and social capital explain class differences in educational attainment.' Discuss this view.

2 How can what happens in schools contribute to class differences in educational attainment?

Worksheet 4.3   Gender and educational attainment (pages 181–185)

Consolidate (work individually)

1 Explain what is meant by the 'gender gap' in education.

2 Suggest three ways that 'changing attitudes' may have contributed to improvements in female educational attainment.

3 How might changes in the labour market have contributed to improved female educational attainment?

4 Identify two ways that changes in schools may have affected girls' educational attainment.

5 How does Beck (1992) use the ideas of 'risk' and 'individualisation' to explain the increase in female educational attainment?

6 Suggest two ways that changes in the job market may contribute to the educational failure of some boys.

7 Explain the idea of a 'crisis' in working-class masculinity.

8 State two ways that boys deal with this crisis of masculinity at school.

9 Identify one feature of 'laddish behaviour' among 13–14 year-old boys and girls.

10 Give two reasons to explain why laddish behaviour has developed in schools in recent years.

Apply (work in small groups)

1 Summarise what the statistics tell us about the relationship between gender and educational attainment.

2 How important is the effect of gender on educational attainment compared to class and ethnicity?

3 What reasons can you suggest for the increase in female participation in higher education over the past 25 years (Activity 12, Item B)?

4 Examine the argument that boys 'make a considerable contribution to their own educational failure'.

5 Construct a short questionnaire to identify and explain the reasons students in your class have for studying at A-level.

Evaluate (work as a class)

1 What do you think are the most important reasons for the rapid rise in female educational attainment?

2 Assess the argument that 'failure' in the education system is more a case of girls overachieving and less a case of boys underachieving.

Worksheet 4.4   Ethnicity and educational attainment (pages 186–192)

Consolidate (work individually)

1 Which ethnic group has made the most and which the least improvement at GCSE since 2000 (Activity 15, p.186)?

2 Which ethnic group has the highest and which the lowest rates for starting higher education courses in 2001/02 (Table 1, page 188)?

3 Suggest two reasons why explaining ethnic differences in attainment is difficult.

4 Suggest two cultural factors that may explain differences in achievement between ethnic groups.

5 What evidence, put forward by Smith and Tomlinson (1989), suggests that the school a child attends makes more difference than their ethnic background?

6 Define 'racism'.

7 Give two ways that ethnic minority pupils may suffer from racial discrimination in schools.

8 How, according to Wright (1992), are African-Caribbean children perceived by teachers in primary schools?

9 According to Gillborn (1990), why was there 'considerable tension and conflict between White teachers and African-Caribbean students'?

10 State one reason why it is difficult to generalise the findings of ethnographic studies of racism in schools.

Apply (work in small groups)

1 What cultural factors have been suggested to account for the low attainment of African-Caribbean boys?

2 What factors in schools might account for the low attainment of African-Caribbean boys?

3 Discuss the reasons for the high attainment of Chinese students.

4 Gillborn (1990) argues that the majority of teachers in secondary schools perceived minority ethnic students differently 'and on this basis treated them differently'. How does this argument relate to labelling theories of educational attainment?

5 Briefly evaluate the reliability and validity of any two studies of racism in schools.

Evaluate (work as a class)

1 Examine the evidence that some pupils suffer a 'triple educational disadvantage' – they are male, working class and from a minority ethnic group.

2 The educational attainment of minority ethnic groups changes over time. Why is it important to emphasise this point?

Worksheet 4.5   Relationships and processes (pages 193–204)

Consolidate (work individually)

1   What is the 'hidden curriculum'?

2   What is the difference between the 'subculture of success' and the 'subculture of failure'.

3   Suggest one methodological criticism of Willis's (1977) study of working-class boys.

4   Name the three working-class peer groups identified by Mac an Ghaill (1994).

5   Explain the term 'exaggerated femininity'.

6   Name the four groups of African-Caribbean male students identified by Sewell (1997).

7   What is a 'self-fulfilling prophecy'?

8   How is 'setting' different from 'streaming'?

9   State three ways that supporters of ability groups in schools have justified their belief that children of different abilities should be taught in different ways.

10 State three ways that supporters of mixed-ability groups have justified their view that children of different abilities should be taught together.

Apply (work in small groups)

1   Apply the questions (page 194) listed under 'school organisation' and 'the behaviour of those in authority' to your school/college. What do your answers suggest about the hidden curriculum in your institution?

2   Compare functionalist and Marxist views on the hidden curriculum.

3   Examine some of the differences between male and female African-Caribbean subcultures in schools.

4   Think about the idea of a 'typical boy' and a 'typical girl' and briefly note the characteristics you would give to each. How might the labels you've attached to these two groups affect their educational development?

5   Identify some of the ways the following might affect the chances of educational success for different pupils.

   a. setting

   b. mixed-ability teaching.

Evaluate (work as a class)

1   Where do pupil subcultures come from?

2   How might the way teachers view pupils affect their educational attainment?

Worksheet 4.6   Social Policy and Education (pages 204–216)

Consolidate (work individually)

1   What is the tripartite system of secondary education?

2   Give two criticisms of the tripartite system.

3   What is the comprehensive system of secondary education?

4   Give two criticisms of the comprehensive system.

5   Define 'the new vocationalism'.

6   Give two criticisms of the new vocationalism.

7   Give three criticisms that have been made of Conservative education policy (1979–1997).

8   Suggest two reasons why standards have risen in specialist schools.

9   What are the aims of the Sure Start programme?

10 What are the aims of the Excellence in Cities (EiC) programme?

11 Suggest two reasons for academies achieving better GCSE results than the schools they replaced.

12 What has happened to the proportion of working-class and middle-class students in further education and higher education since 1991?

Apply (work in small groups)

1   The tripartite system failed to provide equal educational opportunity. Do you agree with this statement? Give your reasons.

2   Outline the limitations of the comprehensive system.

3   Imagine that you are part of an advertising team that's been given the task of 'selling' vocational qualifications to secondary school students. How would you promote these qualifications to make them more attractive?

4   'The New Deal got off to a good start. Two years into the scheme, Tony Blair claimed that it had helped more than 250,000 young people find jobs'. Identify and explain two methodological problems researchers might face when trying to evaluate this claim.

5   'School league tables based on GCSE results are not a valid guide to school effectiveness.' Discuss this view.

Evaluate (work as a class)

1   Thinking about educational reforms since 1997, do you think these have been broadly successful, broadly unsuccessful or made little change? Give reasons for your answer.

2   Suggest ways of increasing the proportion of working-class students going on to higher education.