

1. Outline and explain two ways that in-school processes impact on social class differences in achievement [4]

One way in which in-school processes impact on social-class differences in educational achievement is through teacher expectations. Becker found that teachers are more likely to have higher expectations of middle-class pupils as they were more likely to possess attributes that teachers thought were those of the 'ideal pupil' and so would push them harder to achieve higher grades.

A second way in which in-school processes impact on social-class differences in educational achievement is through the design of the curriculum. As the curriculum is designed by the middle-class, it reflects their interests of what is important information, and as such, middle-class pupils with similar interests are placed at an advantage over the interests of working-class students, enabling them to achieve higher.

2. Outline and explain three ways social class identity can be shaped by in-school process in education [6]

One way in which social-class identity can be shaped by in-school processes is through setting and streaming. This process leads to working-class boys becoming polarised as they are placed in lower sets and streams and developing anti-school subcultures, which in turn lead them to reject educational success as part of their social-class identity.

A second way in which social class identity can be shaped by in-school processes is through the curriculum. As the curriculum is based upon the habitus of the middle-class, these pupils will perceive education as being part of their identity and look to progress further in education.

A final way in which social class identity can be shaped by in-school processes is through the rejection of working-class tastes. Archer found that working-class pupils felt rejected by education because of the clothing they wore by teachers and middle-class pupils.

Item A

Some sociologists claim that a pupil's home background will influence their educational achievement. Parental attitudes, leisure activities and exposure to cultural knowledge all play a part in pupil's achievement, as does family income.

3. Applying material from item A, analyse two ways in home factors may provide middle-class pupils with an advantage in educational settings [10]

One way home factors may provide middle-class pupils with an advantage in educational settings is through their 'leisure activities' (Item A). Middle-class pupils will be more likely to attend events that are seen as 'high culture', such as theatre trips and visits to museums. Furthermore, reading and television habits will have a positive influence on their education. Sullivan found that pupils who watch documentaries and read serious fiction are more likely to have higher educational achievement than those who do not. This places middle-class pupils at an advantage in educational settings, as it will provide them with cultural knowledge of content that is introduced in classrooms and a familiarity with the material. In contrast, their working-class peers may not have had access to these experiences and have less familiarity with material presented.

A second way in which home factors may provide middle-class pupils at an advantage in educational settings is through 'family income'. Middle-class pupils will be able to access a greater range of resources than their working-class peers due to their parent's financial capital. This could mean that their parents are able to move into the catchment areas of high performing schools or even pay for their children to attend an independent or private school that statistically achieve higher results. Furthermore, middle-class pupils will benefit from being able to access additional educational resources, such as books, laptops and even private tuition that will put them at an advantage over their working-class peers in educational settings, who may not be able to access these resources.