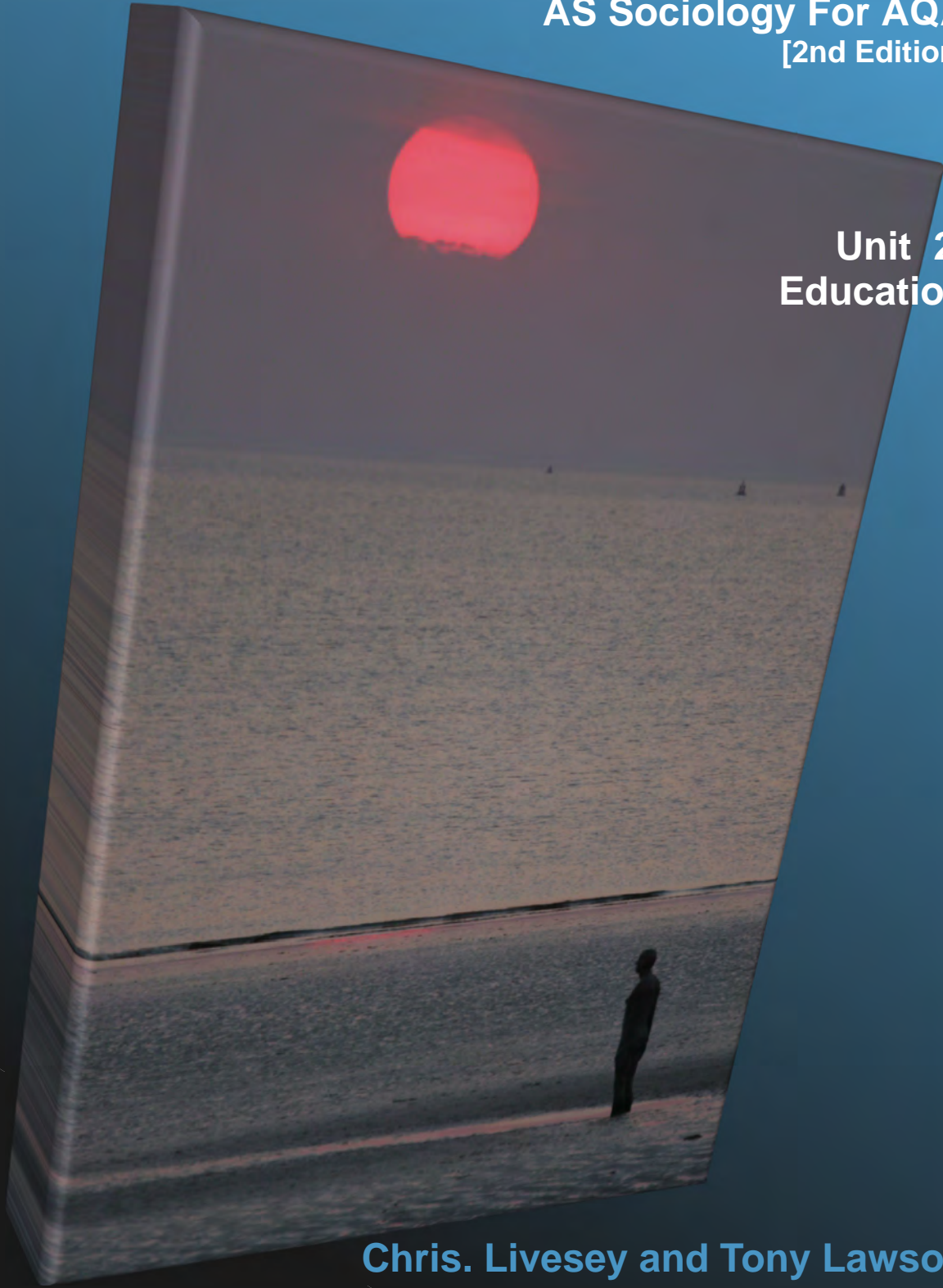


AS Sociology For AQA
[2nd Edition]

Unit 2:
Education



Chris. Livesey and Tony Lawson



Unit 2: Education

Contents

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. The role and purpose of education, including vocational education and training, in contemporary society. | 2 |
| 2. Differential educational achievement of social groups by social class, gender and ethnicity in contemporary society. | 21 |
| 3. The significance of educational policies, including selection, comprehensivisation and marketisation, for an understanding of the structure, role, impact and experience of education. | 42 |
| 4. Relationships and processes within schools, with particular reference to teacher / pupil relationships, pupil subcultures, the hidden curriculum, and the organisation of teaching and learning. | 61 |

1. The role and purpose of education, including vocational education and training, in contemporary society.

The Role of Education: Introduction

There's little doubt that education, as a social institution, has an important role to play in our society. Whether you view that role positively or negatively, we need to examine a range of perspectives (Structuralist, Interactionist, Postmodern and New Right) that explore the role and purpose of the formal education system in contemporary UK society.

Structuralist Perspectives: Observations

Under this general heading we can outline and examine three main Structuralist perspectives - Functionalism, Marxism and Feminism - and we can begin by identifying the major ideas that characterise each perspective.

Functionalism

Although Functionalist theory has generally declined in sociological importance in the UK over the past 20 or so years, its influence in shaping educational policy – and hence the role played by the education system - shouldn't be underestimated. This is partly because the basic ideas that sit at the heart of this perspective - ideas about *consensus*, *competition* and *achievement* through *merit*, for example - sit relatively comfortably with modern Conservative, Liberal and Labour political ideas.

As a Structuralist perspective (one that focuses on broad groups of people and their behaviour) Functionalist arguments about the role of education focus on:

Institutional relationships and *functional linkages* with wider society. In this respect, therefore, the emphasis here is on how education links to other social institutions, such as the family and the workplace. The complexity of modern social systems means the education system becomes, in effect, a *bridge* between these institutions in a couple of ways.

Firstly, on an *institutional level*, social systems with a variety of different types of employment must develop ways of managing their human resources. Thus, while a society such as our own may need doctors, accountants, police officers and manual labourers (amongst many other types of work) there's little point in producing so many trained doctors they can't find

employment because there's no demand for their services.

Secondly, on an *individual level* (in the sense of how people actually experience the impact of institutional arrangements and relationships) the education system functions as an agency of:

Secondary Socialisation: In this respect, education is an institution that "broadens the individual's experience" of the social world and, in so doing, prepares children for adult role relationships in the workplace and wider society.

For the education system to function properly on both levels it must, according to Functionalists, be:

Meritocratic - a concept that reflects the idea rewards (such as high pay, high status, jobs) are *earned* on the basis of our abilities and efforts (working hard in school to gain qualifications, for example) rather than simply *allocated* on the basis of who you know, your family background and so forth. Merit-based systems are also, by their very nature, competitive systems in the sense that different levels of reward are given for different levels of achievement – and children, in this respect, have to continually prove themselves willing to "work to achieve" whatever rewards are on offer. In the contemporary UK educational system, for example, these rewards relate to things like educational qualifications (such as GCSEs and A-levels) that in turn qualify students for certain types of work or entrance to different Universities.

Module Link Stratification and Differentiation

Educational qualifications are, as you might expect, a significant source of **social mobility** in our society. They are also, as you perhaps might not expect, a significant source of **elite self-recruitment** (the process by which the professional middle classes ensure their sons and daughters do not experience downward social mobility). By their domination of private schools and elite state schools this class effectively ensures their children achieve well-paid, high status, employment.

For a merit-based system to function there must be *equality of opportunity* between the participants since if some are disadvantaged (discriminated against or denied the opportunity to show their worth) society cannot be sure "the best people" occupy the most important, prestigious and well-rewarded adult roles. As

Parsons (1959), for example, expressed it: "...it is fair to give differential rewards for different levels of achievement, so long as there has been fair access to opportunity and fair that these rewards lead on to higher-order opportunities for the successful".

Marxism

This general perspective hasn't been particularly influential in terms of UK government policies (hardly surprising since its highly critical of Capitalist societies). However, ideas about the role of education have, arguably, filtered down into the teaching and learning process and some key ideas for Marxists include:

Cultural reproduction: This concept involves the idea of *secondary socialisation*, but with a twist. **Althusser** (1971), for example, argues the economic system (Capitalism) has to be *reproduced* from one generation to the next. In other words, each new generation has to be taught the skills, knowledge and ideas required for them to take up positions in the workplace. The twist, however, is that schools don't just *select*, *allocate* and *differentiate* children (through testing and public examinations) in the interests of "society as a whole" - education is *not meritocratic*. Rather, the role of education is to ensure the sons - and increasingly daughters - of the powerful achieve the levels of education required for them to follow in their fathers' (and mothers') footsteps into professional employment. The trick, in other words, is to educate most people "just enough" for them to be useful employees and a small number "more than enough" to take up high-powered work roles.

For as long as he could remember Thompson had been groomed to be "something Big in the City"



One aspect of cultural reproduction is the:

Hidden Curriculum, a concept that reflects the way ideas about the social world - and the individual's place in that world - are transmitted through the education system. Schools, as part of the daily teaching process, don't just teach formal subjects (such as English or History) they also teach "hidden" values such as competition, individual learning and achievement, qualifications as a way of measuring people's worth and so forth.

Education and Society: The link between these ideas is that the education system responds to the demands of employers - there is a *correspondence* (to use a concept advanced by **Bowles and Gintis**, 1976 and 2002) between what employers generally want (socialised workers differentiated through qualifications, for example) and what schools provide.

Feminism

Although the main focus of feminist educational research (gender inequalities) has remained largely unchanged over the past 25 years, the emphasis of this research has shifted somewhat - from explanations about why girls achieve less than boys in the education system (because, in the main, they don't anymore) to explaining how girls learn to cope with a range of school and workplace disadvantages.

This subtle shift of emphasis doesn't necessarily mean we should dismiss historical feminist research out-of-hand, as being both outdated and irrelevant to our (present-day) understanding of the role of education. Although such studies originally focused on explanations for female *underachievement* they are, arguably, still relevant as explanations for differences in career choice and progress. In addition, these explanations assume a new relevance as political concerns about *boys' underachievement* have led to an educational focus on ways to help them "overcome the gender gap" (usually involving a resurrection of ideas and practices criticised in feminist research over the past 25 years...).

Broadly speaking therefore, current Feminist explanations of *female disadvantage*, centre around the following ideas:

Socialisation research. **Eichler** (1980) highlighted how differential socialisation experiences - and different social expectations - of males and females help to construct different gender identities and adult role expectations. In the past, for example, the education system contributed to the way women saw their primary adult role in terms of the *private sphere* of the family (as mother and housewife, for example) and, although female horizons have widened somewhat over the past 25 years, Feminists have argued traditional assumptions about masculinity and femininity continue to influence both family and work relationships.

An interesting example to illustrate this idea is that *subject choice* at the higher (non-



compulsory) levels of our education system is broadly **gendered**, in the sense we can identify different patterns of subject choice between males and females (more boys, for example, study science subjects like

Chemistry, while more girls opt for social science subjects). These educational choices are further reflected in adult career choices (engineering, for example, is male-dominated while something like nursing or secretarial work is female-dominated) and these patterns point us towards the idea of underlying social and educational processes that effectively push males and females into different career paths.

Module Link Stratification and Differentiation

Although large numbers of men and women are in full (and part) time work in our society the workplace is **stratified** in two ways. **Horizontally** - men and women generally work in different occupations (women in areas like nursing, secretarial, teaching and shop work, for example) - and **vertically**; men and women are differently-placed in the same occupation. Although primary teaching, for example, is female dominated, men proportionately occupy more of the higher status positions (such as Headteacher).



Men's work?



Women's work?

ideas like the gendering of the school curriculum, in terms of how pupils saw different subjects as “masculine” or “feminine”. Such gendered perception, it was argued by writers such as **Woods** (1976), helped to explain things like lower levels of female participation and general achievement in science subjects. Similarly, social policy initiatives, such as **Girls Into Science and Technology** (GIST), explored the general question of why girls were underrepresented in science subjects and the answers this initiative produced were informative on two levels; firstly, science was seen as both difficult and demanding and, secondly, the image of “scientists” was seen by girls to be both unflattering and, more significantly perhaps, unfeminine – and idea that keys into perceptions of both male and female identity in our society.

Norman et al (1988), for example, argued *teacher expectations*, especially in early-years schooling, emphasised female roles related to the mother / carer axis and while this may no-longer *automatically* translate into women seeing their primary role in terms of caring for their family, work roles in our society continue to be framed around the basic idea of different male and female (mental and physical) capabilities.

Thus, although over 25 years ago, **Stanworth** (1981) found both male and female A-level pupils underestimated girl's academic performance and teachers saw female futures in terms of marriage, child-rearing and domestic work (while future careers were stereotyped into “caring” work such as secretarial, nursing and so forth) the question we have to consider is the extent to which, for all the evident changes in male and female educational performance, the general picture is still *broadly similar* in terms of the adult roles performed by men and women in our society.

Identity: Following from the above, Feminist research in the recent past focused, as we've suggested, on

Module Link

Culture and Identity

This perception links into ideas about the way **personal identities** (what we individually feel about being male or female, for example) are filtered through **social identities** (how society in general suggests males and females should look and behave, for example). An individual choice – in this instance what educational subjects to study and, ultimately perhaps, what kind of work one does in adult society – is heavily influenced by the way others see the implications of such a choice.

Despite the introduction, in 1988, of a **National Curriculum** that ensured all pupils studied subjects such as science and maths (traditionally perceived as masculine subjects) up to GCSE, the evidence from *post-16 education* suggests the type of *gendered curriculum* identified by **Woods** still exists, as the following table demonstrates:

UK A-level or equivalent entries for young people: by selected subject.Source: **Summerfield and Babb** (2004)

Subject	% Males	% Females
Physics	78	12
Computer Studies	76	14
Economics	74	16
Mathematics	60	40
Biology	38	62
English Literature	25	75
Social Science	24	76
Home Economics	03	97

The the **Department for Children, Schools and Families** (formerly the **Department for Education and Skills**) (2007) has suggested that “Gender differences in subject choice become more accentuated post-16: Girls’ most popular subject is English, while boys’ is Maths. Psychology, Art and Design, Sociology and Media/Film/Television Studies are amongst the 10 most popular choices for girls (but not boys), while Physics, Business Studies, Geography and Physical Education are in the top 10 for boys (but not girls)”.

As we might expect, this difference in subject choice at A-level translates into differences in subject choice at undergraduate level. **Self and Zealey** (2007), for example, note that “...a higher proportion of women than men studied subjects allied to medicine [such as nursing], while a greater proportion of men than women studied business and administrative services...Higher proportions of men than women studied engineering and technology subjects and computer sciences”.

Thus, although the focus of feminist research in this particular area may have changed, over the years - from concerns about female underachievement to concerns about gendered participation - the post-16 evidence (where students are given a free choice of subjects to study) suggests participation levels are related to concepts of male and female identity. If this is the case, it seems unlikely the causes of this gendered participation only begin *after* the official school-leaving age. Thus, past feminist research into the:

School Curriculum still has both currency and usefulness. **Spender** (1982), for example, argued the curriculum was geared towards the needs and interests of boys, so as to render girls “invisible” within the classroom. Similarly, **Deem** (1980) argued the school curriculum and subject choices were highly gendered (which, as we’ve just seen, remains the case) and **Mahony** (1985) demonstrated how girls were frequently *marginalized* in the classroom by both boys and teachers. In addition, she pointed-out how staffing structures reflected male importance in the workplace (the highest status teaching jobs were - and remain - occupied by men). In the twenty or so years since **Mahony’s** observation this discrepancy remains

apparent. **Mirza et al** (2005), for example, note that “Women make up over half (53%) of the secondary teaching population, but are still under-represented in secondary school senior management positions, particularly headships” (around 30% of secondary heads are women). In the nursery / primary sector **Department for Children, Schools and Families** (2007) figures show that while 16% of teachers are male “34% of head teachers are male”.

Structuralist Perspectives: Explanations

We can develop our understanding of the perspectives we’re just outlined by looking at the concepts used by each to explain the role of education systems in society.

Functionalism

From this perspective we can note two key aspects of the role of education in society:

1. Secondary Socialisation, a process **Parsons** (1959) termed the “emancipation of the child from primary attachment to the family” – in other words, a significant aspect of the role of the education system in modern society is its functional significance between the spheres of the family (childhood) and the workplace (adulthood). Schools, in this respect, involve a range of ideas related to secondary socialisation:

Instrumental relationships - or relationships based on what people can do for us in return for the things that we can do for them. Most of our adult relationships take this form (as opposed to the *affective* relationships experienced between people who share a close, personal, friendship). In school, instrumental relationships with teachers are different to affective relationships with friends and they mirror the general way we’re expected to relate to people in wider society (outside the family).



Social Control: Two types are significant here: Firstly, learning things like acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and, secondly, learning *self control* - the child learns to deal with things in an even-handed way. One aspect of self control, for example, involves:

Deferred gratification – the idea that we can't always have what we want when we want it (**immediate gratification**). In educational terms, successful students put-up with things they may dislike (boring lessons, the lack of money...) in the expectation of passing exams and gaining access to high-pay, high-status occupations. This relates to a further function of education, the:

Transmission of cultural values

or, as **Parsons** (1959) puts it, the "*internalisation of a level of society's values and norms that is a step higher than those learnt within the family group*". Through interacting with others, children learn and internalise (adopt as part of their personality) wider cultural values. For example, they start to understand something of their history and geography as well as general cultural values (such as equality of opportunity, individual competition and so forth). This, in turn, is related to:

Social solidarity - the idea that, as unique individuals, we have to establish things "in common" with others if we are to live and work together; we have, in short, to feel we *belong* to larger social groups (such as a school or a society). The promotion of social solidarity involves *social integration* - any institution, such as a school, has to develop *mechanisms* for helping people feel they belong to that group – and there are a number of ways the education system tries to integrate people; these include things like uniforms (to encourage identification with a particular school), inter-school competitions and the like.

Module Link

Culture and Identity

Social integration and solidarity can be related to concept of identity in a couple of ways. Firstly, something like the wearing of a common uniform means everyone within the school is identified as belonging to same group. Secondly the idea of competition (and "friendly rivalry") between different schools creates a form of group solidarity in that it fosters concepts of both The Self (what "people like Us" have in common) and The Other (how We are different to Them).

2. The co-ordination of human resources relates to links with wider society and it involves things like:

Role Allocation - preparing children for their future adult roles (especially those relating to work), which is achieved by:

Social differentiation: Since work roles are clearly different (some require higher levels of skill and

knowledge, others do not), pupils have to be "made different". One way the school does this, of course, is through *testing* and *examinations* – which, for Functionalists, have to be *objective* demonstrations of ability (everyone should have an *equal opportunity* to take and pass such tests). In modern societies adult roles have to be *achieved* (on merit) rather than *ascribed* (given on the basis of something like family background) to ensure that the most able and best qualified take-up the most important roles. This idea lead, in turn, to the idea that:

Social stratification (groups occupying different levels in society) is the inevitable outcome of the differentiation process.

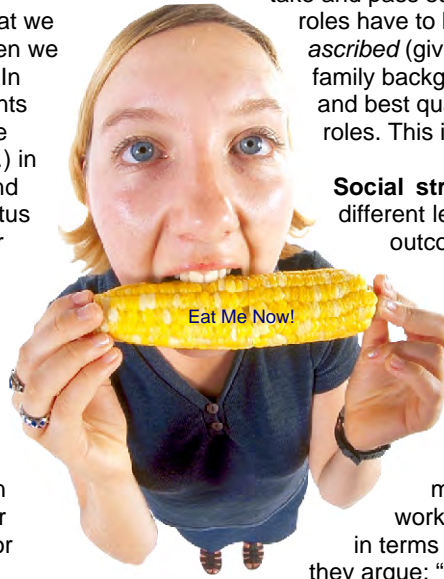
The classic Functionalist statement of the necessity for - and inevitability of - stratification in modern societies is probably **Davis and Moore's** (1945) argument that stratification represents a mechanism through which those who are intellectually most able and talented are allocated work roles that offer the highest rewards in terms of *income*, *power* and *status*. As they argue: "**Education is the proving ground for ability and hence the selective agency for placing people in different statuses according to their abilities**".

Education and Training

In terms of these general ideas, therefore, the primary role of the education system from a Functionalist perspective is that of preparing children for adult (work) roles and responsibilities – something that encompasses orientating children in two main ways:

Firstly, the education system provides a (secondary) socialising mechanism that prepares children for the sociological and psychological transition from childhood to adulthood.

Secondly, the structure and practice of the education system must reflect the nature of adult life and work. For example, in a society where work is *highly differentiated* (there are many and varied types of work) the education system exists, as we've seen, to differentiate children (through testing and exams). If we think, for example, about two basic forms of work in our society – *professional careers* that require higher levels of abstract knowledge and lower levels of practical expertise and *non-professional work* that requires the opposite (lower levels of abstract knowledge and higher levels of practical skills) it follows that the education system must function to "sift and sort" people of different aptitudes and abilities into these different spheres – hence the necessity of different forms of education; vocational training, for example, where students are prepared for a particular form of skilled employment (mechanic, electrician, plumber and so forth) that requires strong practical skills and "professional training" which requires a more-abstract skill-set (such as the ability to construct coherent written arguments and analyses).



Marxism

In developing this general perspective further, Marxist explanations for the role of education systems in Capitalist societies focus on a range of ideas.

Cultural Reproduction

For **Althusser** (1971) cultural reproduction didn't simply relate to the general problem faced by any society of how to "reproduce itself over time" (how to transmit cultural norms and values from one generation to the next); rather, as with most Marxists, he was concerned with understanding how a *dominant social class* (the **ruling class** in Capitalist society) managed to reproduce its political and economic domination of the lower classes from one generation to the next – and one way this was achieved, he argued, was through the education system. For **Althusser** education was an *instrument* of class oppression and domination (although, to be fair, he did include institutions like the mass media and religion as, in their different ways, additional forms of cultural reproduction). For Althusser education performed its cultural reproduction purpose in a range of ways:

Formal education: Children have to learn the skills and knowledge (literacy and numeracy, for example) they will need in the workplace.

Access to knowledge, for example, is restricted through control of subjects appearing on the curriculum. The higher you go in the education system, the greater your access to knowledge. Restricting access is also useful as a way of limiting children's ambitions and expectations by:



Structuring knowledge: Preparing people for the differing levels of knowledge required in the workplace involves creating different levels of knowledge in the school. For example, academic (theoretical) knowledge (such as AS-levels) is valued more than practical (*vocational*) knowledge because the former is the type most useful for professional workers (those who, for Marxists, control both what is taught in the education system and how it is taught). Similarly, some forms of knowledge are more *valid* than others (the ability to do algebra, for example, is considered more-valid than the ability to remember who played in goal for Chelsea in the 1970 Cup Final - Peter "The Cat" Bonetti, in case you're wondering).

Social control: Children have to learn to accept and respect "authority", since this will be important in the workplace. As you'll know from your own education, the higher you go, the *looser* are the controls on your behaviour (by the time you reach A-level you can be largely trusted to "do the right things").

Commodification of knowledge: testing and exams are part of a process where knowledge is given

Education

an *economic value*; in other words, it can be bought and sold. This is important because knowledge, unlike skills (such as the ability to mend a car – something whose usefulness can be easily measured; before the mechanic looks at it the car won't move and after it's been mended it will...), can't be easily valued unless you *certify* it. Your knowledge of Sociology, for example, will be economically worthless unless you pass your AS level.

Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA's): The content of education is controlled by the State and, for Marxists, this is the means by which how people think about the world is conditioned by what they learn in school (both in the formal and **hidden curriculum**). This, in turn, is related to:

Social learning, which refers to the role played by teachers in "transforming pupil consciousness"; that is, ensuring they accept "the realities of life" and, by extension, their likely future social positions.

Althusser's characterisation of the general role of education systems as being concerned with cultural reproduction has been widely shared with other Marxist theorists – albeit in slightly different ways. **Gramsci** (1971) and his followers, for example, developed a different way of viewing the role of education – not as an instrument of class oppression but rather as an institution in Capitalist society concerned with:

Hegemony: **Gramsci** (1971) used this concept to describe the idea of *legitimate leadership*. In other words, people obey authority because they believe it right to do so. For example, most people would accept that the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, has a right to exercise political leadership because he was democratically elected. As **Strinati** (1995) puts it: "Dominant groups in society...maintain their dominance by securing the spontaneous consent' of subordinate groups". This idea is important, when thinking about the role of education because if people believe education is *meritocratic* they will believe failure is their fault, not that of a system designed to ensure their failure.

Correspondence Theory: **Bowles and Gintis** (1976 and 2002) argued education is a *proving ground* in which the organisation of the workplace is reflected in the organisation of



The commodification of knowledge through qualifications

schools. Education, therefore, becomes a test of control and conformity - those who conform are allowed into the higher areas of education (and, by extension, work) whereas those who do not are excluded.

The *unstated role* of education, therefore, is *cultural reproduction*: workplace inequality is reflected and reproduced in the organisation of schooling.

In this respect the distinction between academic forms of education and vocational training merely reflects the education – workplace correspondence; academic education is the preserve of those (largely upper and middle class) students destined for professional employment while working class students (in the main) are encouraged to pursue various forms of vocational training that will prepare and qualify them for (lower-paid and lower status) employment.

Module Link Stratification and Differentiation

The theory of cultural reproduction has been used by writers such as **Bowles and Gintis** (1973) and **Willis** (1977) to explain the relative lack of **social mobility** at the lower levels of modern British society. It can also, of course, be applied to the idea of **elite self-recruitment** to explain how those at the top of the social scale “close off” mobility for those lower down the class structure.

Social Reproduction

Bourdieu (1986) attacks the (Functionalist) idea that education systems are *meritocratic*; like **Bowles and Gintis** he sees their real role as being that of helping to reproduce the power and domination of powerful social classes through a combination of what he termed **habitus** and **cultural capital**:

Habitus: An easy way to grasp this idea is to think about the idea of a *habitat* - the environment in which a group lives and flourishes. The natural habitat of fish, for example (the environment it needs) would not be suitable for humans (and vice versa). For **Bourdieu**, schools are the “natural habitat” of the middle and upper classes - they reflect their interests, values and beliefs. The working class child is like “a fish out of water” - their values and beliefs are different because of:

Cultural capital - the idea, in basic terms, that our social backgrounds give us certain advantages and disadvantages in life. Thus, working class and middle class children enter the education system with skills and abilities (such as how we speak and express ourselves) that advantage the middle class child (because their cultural background is similar to that of the school). Thus, working class children have to “learn how to learn” before they can actually learn the things on the school curriculum - which gives them a decided *disadvantage* in the educational game. **Beron and Farkas** (2001), for example, found significant linguistic and vocabulary differences between different social classes

of white and black children in America which, they argued, disadvantaged working class children in both preschool and school environments.

Meritocracy: **Bourdieu** is critical of this idea because differences in *cultural capital* influence the relative starting-points of students (middle and upper class children have a hidden advantage). However, as he notes, the objective of schooling is *cultural reproduction* by progressively eliminating lower class children from the school system in ways that make their failure appear their own fault - by examination failure and self-elimination (they give up and leave school at the earliest opportunity).

Feminism

As we've suggested, the focus of feminist research has changed somewhat in recent years in the light of increasing female educational achievement - something that's reflected in two main ways:

Work: Despite their educational achievements, women consistently lose out in the workplace. As **Treneman** (1998) notes: ‘The statistical under-achievement of boys in schools is nothing compared with the statistical over-achievement of men in life’ – an idea reflected in a couple of ways:

1. Earnings: For the past 38 years it has been illegal to pay men and women different rates of pay if they are doing the same – or roughly comparable – types of work (the **Equal Pay Act**, 1970) and yet the government's **Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings** (2007) showed that, in 2007, “...women's average hourly pay was 17.2% less than men's pay” (although the good news is the gap has narrowed, from 17.5% in 2006).

This pay-gap seems to occur right across the board – from the part-time workers (who earn around 35% less than men) through university graduates (“**Women graduates are paid less from the very beginning of their careers, with men earning £1,000 more than their college classmates within three years of leaving university**”: **Benfield**, 2007) to the boardroom (“**Female directors earn up to 26% less than men**”: **Ward**, 2007).



Does the cultural capital of middle class children give them a head start in the race for educational qualifications?

2. Gender Stereotypes:

Warrington and Younger (2000) noted male and female career aspirations still reflected traditional gender stereotypes (childcare, nursing, hairdressing and secretarial for girls, computing, accountancy and plumbing for boys) and **Gordon** (1996) found that although teachers frequently praised girls' efforts they reported finding boys more interesting to teach and gave more time and effort to motivate and retain their attention - once again suggesting the different levels of importance teachers give to male and female work. In this respect the **Equal Opportunities Commission** (2007) has argued: "Girls' educational achievements are not necessarily helping them into well-paid jobs [and] Eliminating gender stereotyping in school education, in vocational training, and in careers choices is a vital step towards tackling the gender pay gap in employment".

Roger and Duffield (2000) suggest a number of reasons why girls tend to avoid science subjects that are equally applicable to a range of gendered curriculum choices:

Jodie: Girls are crap, all the girls in this class act all stupid and girlie.

Diane: So does that include you?

Jodie: No, cos I'm not a girl, I'm a tomboy".

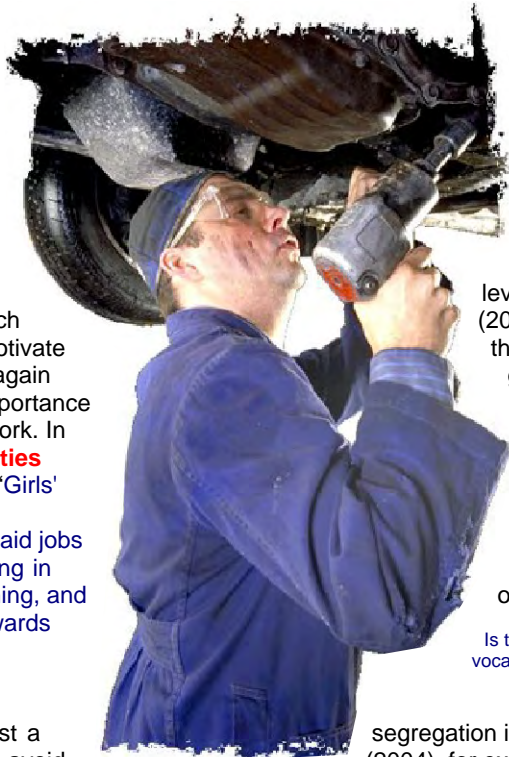
Primary socialisation entrenches concepts of gender identity in males and females, conditioning the choices they make in school. **Reay** (2001), for example, found a variety of female identities developing in the primary classroom, including, most interestingly, as the following exchange suggests, girls who wanted to be like boys:

Role Models: In primary teaching, for example, nearly 90% of classroom teachers are female, leading to an early connection between gender and work.

Careers advice tends to reinforce traditional male - female work roles and divisions.

Work experience places boys and girls into traditionally stereotyped jobs. **Mackenzie's** (1997) study of "school-based work experience" placements found, for example: "45% of girls [in the study] were allocated to caring placements but these did not always reflect their choices. Boys who did not get their preferred placement tended to be allocated to occupations which were regarded by them as either neutral or as traditionally male while girls who were unsuccessful were allocated to traditionally female occupations".

One conclusion we can draw from this type of research is the relationship between vocational forms of education and training and gender stereotypes in the



Education

sense that "vocational training" is much more likely to result in both males and females being channelled into "traditional" forms of gendered employment. This observation will, of course, have significant ramifications for the "vocational GCSE and A-level" qualifications currently (2008) being introduced - will they, in short, reinforce the gendered relationship between education and the workplace?

Be that as it may, the argument here is not that "academic education" somehow guarantees a lack of gender stereotyping and

Is there a strong correlation between vocational education and training and a gendered workplace?

segregation in the workplace - **Kampmeier** (2004), for example, found that across the European Community "Gender segregation in the labour market has not been considerably reduced during the last decades, as far as "typical" male and female occupations - like electricians and nursery nurses - are concerned" - but rather that there are greater opportunities for stereotyping and segregation in vocational training.

The implication, therefore, is that - probably unintentionally - one role of vocational forms of education is to reinforce gender (and indeed class for that matter) stereotypes and divisions in ways that that not quite so apparent with academic forms of education (because they don't necessarily channel young people into particular forms of work at a relatively early age).

Identity: The emphasis here is on understanding different levels of achievement amongst females by examining different forms of identity (how class and ethnicity, for example, impact on gender). **Warrington and Younger** (2000) for example, found very little difference between the percentage of boys and girls who leave school with no qualifications.

Tried and Tested

- (a) Explain what is meant by the term "hidden curriculum" (2 marks).
- (b) Suggest **three** functions that education may perform for individuals and/or society. (6 marks).
- (c) Outline some of the ways education contributes to cultural reproduction (12 marks).
- (d) Compare Functionalist perspectives on the role of education with *either* Marxist *or* Feminist perspectives (20 marks).

Interactionist Perspectives: Observations

Interactionist perspectives focus on the role of education as a *process* rather than a *system*. In other words, they're interested in examining the idea education is a *social construction* whose role isn't fixed and unchanging but, on the contrary, fluid and open to a wide range of interpretations. A classic example of this is the question of whether the role of the education system is one of two things:

1. Education: **Dewey** (1916), an influential education theorist in the 20th century, argued education should be "*transformative*"; focusing on individuals and their social, psychological and moral development as people. Education, in this respect, involves providing the means for individuals to achieve their "full potential" (whatever that may, in reality, turn out to be).

2. Training: The role of education is to give people the knowledge and skills they need to perform specific work-related roles (doctor, mechanic, etc.).

This general debate over the role and purpose of schooling is played out in a number of areas, two of the most significant being:

Outside the school: The role of education is never clear-cut and *uncontested*; various *interest groups* (parents, teachers, governments, businesses) have an input into the system, trying to shape it to reflect their interests, prejudices and concerns. Some groups, of course, are more successful in getting their views heard (government and business organisations over the past 20 years, for example, have been powerful shaping forces in education). The dominance of these groups has resulted in the role of education being "officially" defined in terms of its *training role* - the objective (through policies such as the **National Curriculum**, and **Key Stage testing**) is to produce "a highly skilled and trained workforce".

Inside the school: While official declarations and definitions of the role of education are important influences on behaviour within schools, the relationship between the various *actors* involved in "doing education" (teachers and their students, for example) is important and worthy of study. This is because Interactionists want to consider how these social actors *interpret their roles* within the context of the education system itself.

To illustrate this with a simple example, the Sociology course you're following (for whatever reason - you like the subject, your friends took it so you did too, you ticked the wrong box when deciding your options and now you're stuck with it...) has, in terms of its *structure and content*, been decided by the exam board (or Awarding Body as it's

now known). Thus, if you want the qualification you have to study what's laid-down in the Specification (don't ask). However, teachers don't all teach Sociology in the same way - for some the objective may be to get you through the exam, while for others it may be to provide an "interesting learning experience" on a wet Friday afternoon - and in the same style (interactive, didactic, a combination of the two or whatever). The main point here, therefore, is that whatever the specific structure of education (in this particular example the one laid-down in the A-level Sociology Specification) different students and different teachers will interpret



Politicians (and political parties / ideologies) have a significant input into the role of education in our society.

their role differently and produce different ways of achieving the same basic goals. What happens "inside schools", therefore, is a process that can be shaped - but not determined - by official definitions of the role of education and is, therefore, something worthy of study.

Interactionist Perspectives: Explanations

Interactionists, as we've suggested, are particularly interested in what goes on "inside schools" and it is from this general perspective that they tend to focus their explanations of the role of education and training mainly, as we've argued, in terms of:

School Processes: These involve ideas about how educational roles are interpreted and negotiated "at the chalk face". In this respect, Interactionists employ a range of ideas to understand the ways teachers and pupils *construct* "education", many of which are anchored around the idea of *labelling*.



Labelling theory has traditionally been used to describe how teachers, as powerful actors in the education game, classify (or *stereotype*) students and, by so doing, influence the way they understand their role and status within the school - **Padfield** (1997), for example, has explored the way “informal reputations” gained within the school influenced official definitions of pupils. Labelling theory has been used to show how school processes are inherently *divisive* (they encourage students to think of themselves - and each other - in terms of fixed educational abilities). This, for example, includes common school practices and processes like:

- **Streaming** (grouping by ability on a yearly basis),
- **Banding** (students taught at different levels - Intermediate and Higher Maths, for example) and
- **Setting** (grouping by ability on a subject-by-subject basis)

Module Link**Crime and Deviance**

Labelling theory has been applied to good effect in the study of crime and deviance; it has, for example, been used to show how the police and judicial system label and stereotype potential offenders by class, gender, age and ethnicity.

Lupton (2004) notes the decision made by the head teacher of one school to abandon banding: “...principally to counter problems of low self-esteem among pupils in the lower band. Within the context of the selective system and the school’s poor performance and reputation, mixed ability teaching was seen as an important way to give all pupils the message they were equally valued”. Additionally, **Hattersley and Francis** (2004) argue that we increasingly have an educational system that labels whole schools as either “good” (academically successful) or “bad” (academically failing) - and the consequences of the latter label frequently means closure. This example serves to illustrate a significant aspect of labelling theory, namely the impact of labels on:

Self-concepts: Labelling relates specifically to this idea in terms of questions like:

- How do you know if you are a good or bad student?
- How does your teacher know if they’re good or bad at their job?
- How good is the reputation of your school?

These questions relate to how we see ourselves and, for Interactionists, *self perception* is fluid and intangible, mainly because we look to others to tell us how we’re doing. You may, for example, look to your teacher to tell you how “good” or “bad” a student you are. Equally, your teacher may look to you to tell them something about their teaching abilities and the school itself may gain a certain reputation – for good or ill – based



For Interactionists, where much of the focus is on what happens in and around classrooms, teachers are seen as powerful educational players when it comes to things like determining educational achievement.

around how successful or otherwise it is in terms of GCSE / A-level examination results.

Labelling is an important aspect of this process of *self-construction* (if your teacher continually gives you poor grades or students continually misbehave in a class we soon start to get the picture), based on the idea of:

Reference groups - the people we use to check “how we’re doing” in whatever role we’re playing. Not everyone in our reference group is equally important:

Significant others are people whose opinion we value while

Insignificant others are people we don’t really care about (if your teacher *isn’t* a significant other, you won’t particularly care how they label you, although the labels that *stick* will always have consequences for students throughout – and possibly even after – their school career).

Module Link**Culture and Identity**

The significance of labelling in relation to personal and social identities is explored in more detail in this Chapter. The concept of a “**looking glass self**” (the theory that we come to see ourselves as others define us) is particularly relevant in the context of education.

This idea can, as we’ve just indicated, be applied to whole schools as well as groups and individuals within them. One outcome of all the processes just described may be a:

Self-fulfilling prophecy - a prediction we make that, by making, we bring about. On an individual level, if we’re labelled by teachers as “dim” because, despite our best efforts, we get poor grades then perhaps we start to see our self in terms of this label and stop trying to get decent grades (what’s the point - we’re dim) and, in effect, confirm the teacher’s label.

Nash (1972) demonstrated how the values held by teachers about “good” and “bad” pupils were rapidly transmitted to pupils through attitudes and behaviours. **Nash** concluded: “Certainly children of low social origin do poorly at school because they lack encouragement at home, because they use language in a different way from their teachers, because they have their own attitudes to learning and so on. But also because of the expectations their teachers have of them”. **Nash’s** study has two significant dimensions that impact on how Interactionists theorise the role of education:

Firstly, as **Brimi** (2005) suggests, it involves a concept of **cultural capital** – that what students bring into the school from their home / family background has a significant impact on both their experience of education and, of course, how successfully or otherwise they are able to negotiate the various “barriers to success” (such as exams) placed in their path during their time in school.

Secondly, however, **Nash** suggests that “success” or “failure” (in terms of examination passes) is not simply a matter of “where you come from” or “the size of your parents’ wallet” – there are more subtle processes at play in the classroom relating to how teachers and students manage their impressions of each other. If a student is able to employ sufficient cultural capital within the classroom to be able to conform to the teacher’s perception of a “good pupil” it’s possible for them to overcome particular disadvantages in their home background – something that provides an interesting explanation for the ability of pupils from disadvantaged social backgrounds to succeed in the education system.

The concept of a self-fulfilling prophecy also applies to whole classes of students who may find themselves negatively labelled. Studies abound (**Willis**, 1977, **Ball**, 1981, **Wright**, 1992, **Troyna and Hatcher**, 1992) to demonstrate how this occurs through practices such as streaming, setting and banding, ethnic stereotyping and so forth.

Finally, whole schools may be enveloped by a *self-fulfilling prophecy*. If schools do badly in League Tables of GCSE results, middle class parents stop sending their children to the “bad school”, whose results may continue to fall.



The repeated appearance of Public Schools such as Winchester at the top of school league tables does, of course, come at a price (£26,000 per year at a school such as Harrow)

Whatever cultural capital Wayne may once have possessed it was increasingly clear his account was now in debit...



Postmodern Perspectives: Observations

Post-modernist views on the “role of education” are difficult to categorise for the deceptively simple reason that, as **Collins** (1993) suggests: “The term describes cultural changes happening to people throughout the post-industrial world, willy-nilly”. The “willy-nilly” tag is important because it suggests postmodernism is concerned with describing cultural tendencies and processes, in all their (glorious) confusion, for both our amusement and, probably, bemusement. In other words, postmodernists don’t have a specific view, as such, on the role of education since this would suggest there is some essential “right” or “wrong” position on the subject. What they do have is ideas about the relationship - and tension - between two competing, increasingly opposed, processes, namely:

1. Modern institutions, such as schools, were born out of the Industrial Revolution and the development of modern society. As such, they exist to serve a number of purposes all of which, according to writers such as **Foucault** (1977), are to do with *power* (“**Everything reduces to power**”, as he helpfully puts it – a maxim that will serve you well on you’re a-level course...). The *power principle*, in this context, relates to how the modern State tries to exert social control through institutions such as education.

2. Postmodern people: The other side of this spectacle is the increasing *resistance* and *decentralising attitudes* of students (and indeed teachers) to the *centralising tendencies* of modernist education systems.

In other words, we have a situation where, on the one hand, the education system has, over the past few years, been subjected to increasingly *centralised control* by government. This idea of “control from the centre” has been evidenced by things like the introduction of a:

National Curriculum (introduced in 1988) that sets-out the subjects to be taught in all State schools.

AS Sociology For AQA

Key Stage testing, at ages 7, 11 and 14, that sets attainment targets in English, Science and Maths for all pupils. Key Stage testing, also introduced in 1988, was originally intended to involve all subjects studied within the **National Curriculum** (Technology, Music, Art, History, Modern Foreign Language, Geography and Physical Education).

Literacy and numeracy hours introduced into primary schools in 1998. Commenting on the introduction of the Literacy hour, the **National Literacy Trust** (2004) noted:

"The National Literacy Strategy is an unprecedented intervention in classroom teaching methods.[It] describes term by term how reading and writing should be taught....The policy requires primary teachers to teach a daily English lesson in which pupils are taught for the first half of the lesson as a whole class, reading together, extending their vocabulary...and being taught grammar, punctuation and spelling".

On the other hand, however, we have a situation that **Elkind** (1998), characterises in terms of the idea that: "Whereas *modern* childhood was defined in terms of differences *between* age groups, post-modern childhood is identified with differences *within* age groups". In other words, there is a sense of what **Willis** (2003) describes as "Decentralising education from government and reducing the number of tests and targets" in order to "...free schools up to deal with the needs of individual children".

Postmodern Perspectives: Explanations

We can develop the distinction between modern institutions and postmodern people in the following way:

Modern Institutions...

The idea of control, for postmodernists, works on two levels:

1. Intellectual control involves how people think and act in a number of ways:

The **Curriculum**, for example, specifies the things (subjects) considered worthy of being known and its content is controlled down to the finest detail (think about the Sociology Specification or government initiatives involving the aforementioned *literacy hours* and detailed lesson plans for primary school teachers).

Knowledge is also controlled in terms of what you learn. English literature, for example, involves learning "classic texts" (Shakespeare, Dickens and so forth - sometimes called "*high culture*" - what governments and educationalists view as the best possible examples of our culture) and largely excludes *popular culture* (the

Education

Key Stage testing in state schools has spawned a vast - and lucrative - private support industry...



books and magazines most people actually read, the computer games they play, the films they watch...) that is considered, within the National Curriculum for example, as being largely unworthy of serious, detailed, study.

Sites of control: In an overall sense, schools are sites which attempt (through their captive audiences) to distribute (and legitimise) certain forms of what **Provenzo** (2002) identifies as:

language, practices, values, ways of talking and acting, moving, dressing and socializing (to name but a few). Schools, from this viewpoint, are not simply organised for "education", but also for institutionalising the culture of powerful groups.

2. Physical: This involves control over both:

Body: Think about what you can and can't do in school. You must attend (or your parents may be prosecuted) and you must be in certain lessons (and places) at certain times. Once in those lessons there may be restrictions on when you can speak, who you can speak to, how you speak to them, as well as movement restrictions (such as asking permission to go to the toilet and not being in corridors when you should be in a lesson).

Space: Schools are increasingly introducing *closed-circuit television* (both inside and outside the classroom) for the purpose of patrolling and controlling space - who's allowed to be in certain spaces (classrooms, corridors, staffrooms) and when they're allowed to be there.

Postmodern People...

For postmodernists, what we are seeing are changes in people's behaviour (under the influence of *globalisation* and cross-cultural contacts and exchanges) which include:

Active Consumption: **Taylor** (2004) argues students are changing: "They are the most academically disengaged, or even compliant college students with all time low measures for time spent studying and all time high measures for boredom and tardiness... bringing educational and social characteristics to campus that are challenging educators".

Taylor characterises these students in a number of ways (not all of them particularly flattering): Consumer oriented, wanting instant gratification, adaptable to new situations, skeptical and cynical to name but a few.

However, the crucial point here is the tension that exists between, on the one hand, an increasingly tightly-controlled, patrolled and policed education system (in both the intellectual and physical senses)

that seeks to specify exactly what should be learnt, how it should be learnt and when it should be learnt and, on the other, increasingly independent and individualistic educational consumers (or students as they're sometimes called). In this respect, while education systems in modern society become, to all intents and purposes, *homogenised* (one size fits all, as it were) the consumers of education are increasingly:

Differentiated: **Elkind** (1998) suggests a key characteristic here is the idea of difference and, in a sense, the *fragmentation of identities*. In other words, students want to be recognised and treated as unique individuals rather than as groups (genders, classes, ethnicities and so forth). To use **Giroux's** (1994) phrase, students are increasingly "**border youths**" whose identities cut-across class, ethnicity and gender categories. This general idea is encapsulated by the idea of:

Sousveillance (the opposite of **surveillance** - to watch from above) means "*to watch from below*" and expresses the idea students (and teachers) are increasingly critical and dissatisfied with their treatment in the education system. As **Hanafin and Lynch** (2002) argue: "Mainstream education is constructed on a flawed notion of intelligence and consequently disables many learners, perhaps even the majority... Through over reliance on a narrow range of teaching methods, students are denied access to curriculum content. Narrow assessment approaches further compound disablement. At its most extreme, mainstream education supports and structures unnecessary failure and exclusion".

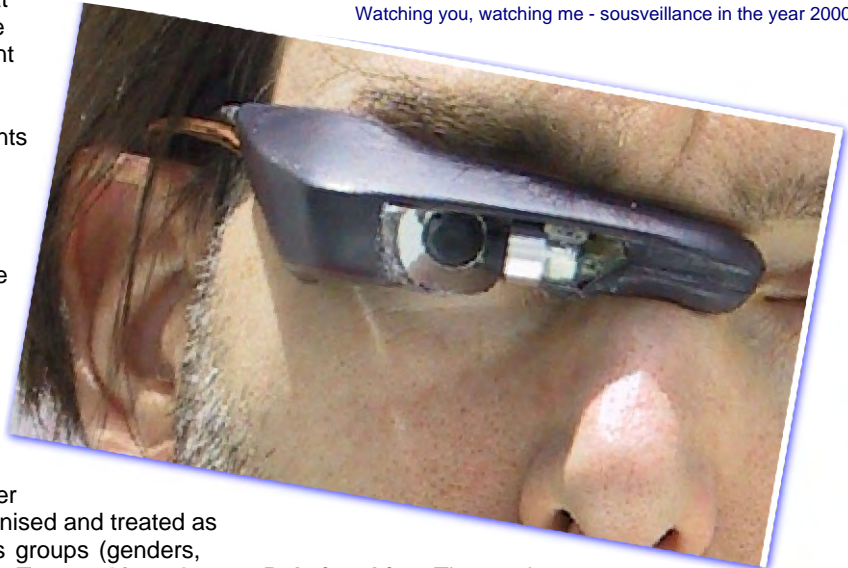
In addition, we could also note here the development of new:

Subjects, such as media, film and cultural studies.

Ideas about learning (**Gardner's** (1993) theory of *multiple intelligences*, for example, expresses the notion that "...it was generally believed intelligence was a single entity that was inherited; and that human beings - initially a blank slate - could be trained to learn anything, provided it was presented in an appropriate way. Nowadays an increasing number of researchers believe precisely the opposite; that there exists a multitude of intelligences, quite independent of each other".



Watching you, watching me - sousveillance in the year 2000



Relationships: The teacher as "facilitator", for example, helping students to learn in an independent way that takes advantages for their individual strengths and aptitudes.

Finally, postmodernists note that some contributing processes to the above involve:

Globalisation – as our culture is exposed to the influence of other cultures (through immigration, mass media, technology such as the Internet and so forth)

new ways of thinking and doing open up. Conversely, as **Yang** (2002) notes, globalisation also promotes a new interest in *local cultures* (your immediate and personal environment, for example).

Uncertainty (both for students and teachers) about the teaching and learning process - what, for example, is expected of people? Have they made the right choices about what to study? and so forth. One upshot of uncertainty is a contradictory outcome to that noted by **Taylor** (2004). **Howe and Strauss** (2000), for example, characterise the "post modern generation" as being well focused on grades and performance, interested in extracurricular and community activities, demanding of secure environments and more interested in maths and science than in humanities.

On the other hand, as we will see when we look at New Right perspectives, governments have responded to uncertainty by increased efforts at centralisation and control. The National Curriculum, key stage tests and so forth. are all attempts, it could be argued, to maintain an outdated perception of the role and purpose of education.

Globalisation is one of the key concepts of postmodernist sociology.

New Right Perspectives: Observations

New Right perspectives are difficult to classify because they tend to straddle an uneasy divide between, on the one hand, Functionalist theories (involving, for example, structural concepts like role allocation and social differentiation) and, on the other, individualistic views about people as consumers who exercise choices about the education their sons and daughters receive. Problems of classification notwithstanding, we can note how New Right perspectives generally focus on two basic areas:

1. Society: Although Margaret **Thatcher's** (in)famous observation "There is no such thing as society, only individuals and families" suggests these perspectives take a rather dim view of sociological arguments about society and culture (they also take a dim view of sociologists, come to that), this is not to say they don't have strong views about the State which, in basic terms, involves the idea that the role of government is to guarantee the freedom of:

2. Individuals: From this perspective, people are seen as *consumers*, able and willing to make informed choices about their lives and families (which, **pace Thatcher**, is seen as the basic social unit in any society). However, they argue consumer choice is limited, in societies such as our own, by the way governments have allowed teachers to set the education agenda - an idea we will develop in more detail in a moment.



Individuals as informed consumers.

Rather than concern ourselves with trying to specify, from this perspective, the exact relationship between the individual and society, it's perhaps easier to think in terms of the relationship between individuals and the State (which includes things like political government, the Civil Service and social control agencies such as the police and armed forces). In this respect, New Right perspectives argue for a:

Minimal State: In other words, the ideal role of government in any society is that of creating the conditions under which private enterprise can flourish and in which individuals can go about their daily lives

with the minimum of political interference. The role of the State, therefore, is largely reduced to one that guarantees the safety of its citizens - both internally, through agencies such as the police, and externally through agencies such as the armed forces.

Although this characterisation oversimplifies New Right arguments somewhat, it does give a general flavour for the perspective and its emphasis on the rights and responsibilities of individuals (to provide, for example, for both themselves and their families) and the general belief that Capitalism (and private enterprise) is the best possible way of ensuring the largest number of people have the highest possible standard of living.

These ideas, as I'm sure you appreciate, mean that when we consider the role of education from this perspective the general argument is that government should not be involved in its provision.

New Right Perspectives: Explanations

New Right perspectives on the role of education have been influential in both Britain and America in recent years and we can develop the ideas we've just noted in the following way:

1. Society: From this perspective:

Business organisations are seen as *wealth creators* and, as such, should be allowed to get on with the thing they do best (creating wealth if you have to ask), free from State "interference". Schools should, ideally, be privately owned for a couple of reasons:

Governments are seen as *bureaucratic organisations*, unable and unwilling to adjust quickly and easily to change (unlike private companies whose ability to respond quickly to changes in the marketplace is essential if they are to survive and prosper). Government should be involved in areas (such as industry and commerce) where businesses can, it is argued, do a far better, more cost effective job. The role of government, therefore, is not to "do things" (like manage schools or... err... railways) but rather to create the conditions under which businesses can successfully operate. One reason for this is:



Why are bureaucrats always "faceless"?

Competition: Businesses, unlike governments, are competitive organisations, forced to innovate (find new and better ways of doing things) if they are to attract and retain customers. They are, in other words, “*consumer captured*” organisations – private businesses in a competitive environment must respond to the demands of consumers or the customer will go elsewhere (to a competitor). Private businesses, therefore, have an incentive to be efficient, cost-effective and responsive to their customers in a way that governments do not – where the government is effectively a monopoly supplier of education parents have little or no choice about their off-spring’s education; not only do schools effectively choose which children they will take (as opposed to parents choosing schools) they have little or no incentive to improve the education they offer (since they were – until very recently - unlikely to be closed down...).



The decentralisation of education: Are school governors necessarily more in-tune with the needs of schools than elected local politicians?

2. Individuals: **Pateman** (1991) notes that the New Right sees *consumer choice* as being limited by *producer capture*: “Teachers (the ‘producers’) have set their own agendas for schools when it should be parents (the ‘consumers’) who set agendas for teachers. The New Right then argues for breaking up schooling monopolies and for enfranchising the consumer”. The role of government, in this respect, is to guarantee:

Choice: This is achieved in a variety of ways: by encouraging different types of school; allowing businesses a say in the building, ownership and running of state schools; encouraging fee-paying, private, schools (thereby contributing to the diversity of educational provision and the enhancing of parental choice).

Standards, in the sense of ensuring teachers teach the same (National) curriculum, testing (at various Key Stages) to ensure schools are performing their role properly and to identify schools “failing their customers”. League Tables (based around raw exam passes or value-added calculations) which show the “best” and “worst” performing schools are also designed to give consumers choice over where they send their children (because they provide an “objective” measure of school performance).

Finally we can sum-up New Right approaches by noting what **Boyd** (1991) has characterised as the “5 Ds” and “3Cs” of their perception of the role of education and training in contemporary Western societies:

Disestablishment: The school system should be decoupled from State control; private businesses should be encouraged to own and run schools, just as

private companies run supermarkets or accountancy firms. The government doesn’t, for example, tell Tesco how to organise and run its shops so the New Right see little reason for governments playing such a role in education.

Deregulation: Within certain broad limits private owners should be free to offer the kind of educational facilities and choices they believe parents want; schools should be “freed” from Local Authority / government control.



Decentralisation: Control over the day-to-day decision-making within a school should fall on the shoulders of those best-placed to make decisions in the interests of their clients - something that involves giving power to those closest to individual schools (governors and headteachers) rather than decision-making being in the hands of those who are remote from the specific needs of such schools (governments, politicians and the like). Power, in this respect, is seen to be most efficiently exercised by those furthest away (school leaders) from the centre of government power (because they know and understand particular local conditions and circumstances and can respond quickly to change in a way government bureaucracies cannot).



Over the past 10 years a wide range of vocational education qualifications have been introduced (such as NVQs, GNVQs, Modern Apprenticeships and, most recently, vocational GCSEs and A-levels).

Diminution: Once each of the above ideas are operating the State has a much-reduced role to play in education and hence national education spending should fall (to be replaced by a variety of localised initiatives – including private, fee-paying, education, local forms of taxation and so forth). This idea dovetails with the idea of consumer choice (see below) and general New Right thinking about the size and role of the State; if education takes a smaller part of the national tax budget people pay less tax and are free to spend that money on the education of their choice.

education for a relatively small elite (around 20%) of children and *Secondary Modern / Technical schools* that provided a vocational type of education. Currently the vogue is to provide different types of academic / vocational qualifications (such as “ordinary” GCSEs and “vocational” GCSEs) within the same school.

De-emphasis: With each of the above in place the power of government is diminished (or de-emphasised) with the power to make educational decisions focused at the local level of individual schools.

For the majority of students the curriculum emphasis should be on some variety of training with the objective being to ensure schools produce students with the skills businesses need (“Key Skills”, for example, such as Maths, English and ICT). The New Right is keen on “traditional subjects” (English, Maths and History) and antagonistic to subjects like Media and Film Studies - and, of course, Sociology.

Module Link

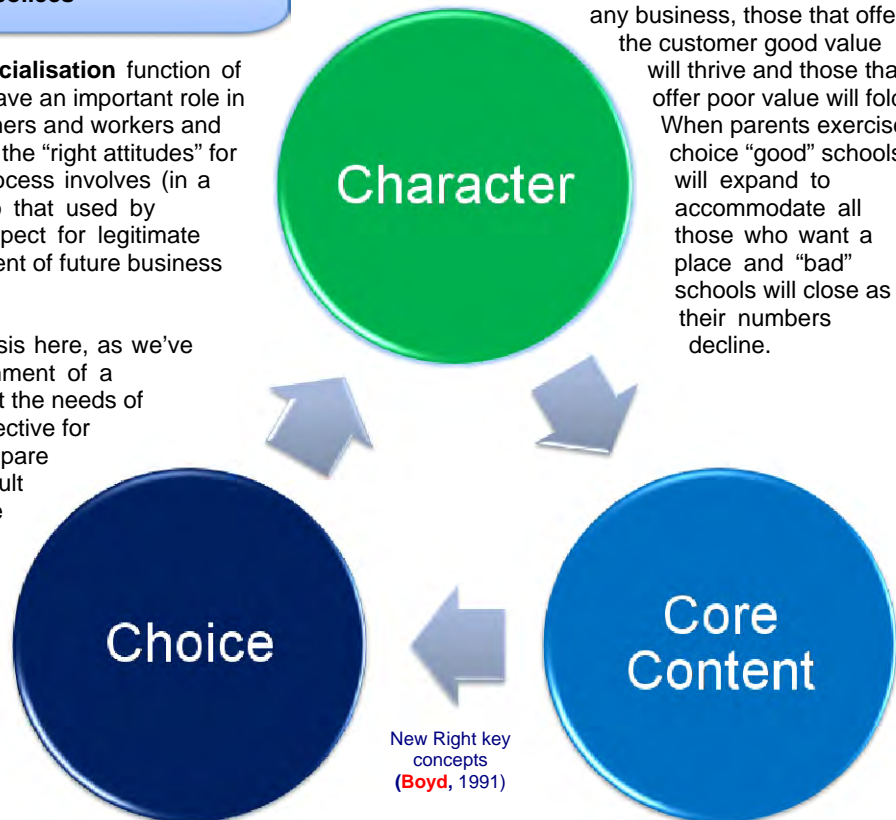
Education

These ideas are examined and evaluated in more detail in Section 3: **State policies**

Character (moral): The **socialisation** function of education means schools have an important role in both producing new consumers and workers and also ensuring children have the “right attitudes” for these roles. Part of this process involves (in a similar sort of argument to that used by Functionalists) instilling respect for legitimate authority and the development of future business leaders.

Choice of school: Parents should be free to choose the school they want their children to attend – whether this be State maintained or private. The basic model here is a business one – just like with any business, those that offer the customer good value will thrive and those that offer poor value will fold. When parents exercise choice “good” schools will expand to accommodate all those who want a place and “bad” schools will close as their numbers decline.

Core Content: The emphasis here, as we’ve suggested, is the establishment of a curriculum designed to meet the needs of the *economy* - the main objective for schools is to adequately prepare children for their working adult lives in ways that benefit the overall economy. This generally involves the idea that there should be a mix of academic and vocational courses and qualifications open to students; in the past this has meant the New Right championing *Grammar schools* that provided an academic type of





Marlowe Academy

Emmanuel College



“New academy schools fuel education row”

Source: **Taylor and Smithers** (2005)

Ten new academy schools, including one backed by the former boss of Saga holidays and another by an evangelical Christian group linked to the teaching of creationism, will open this week as the government presses ahead with its most radical reform of the state school system. The expansion - the largest since the first academy opened in 2002 - means there are 27 schools open with 30 more in the pipeline. The programme is one of the government's most divisive proposals for reforming the school system. Private sponsors give a maximum of £2m in return for a large degree of control over the school's curriculum, ethos and staffing.

The Emmanuel Schools Foundation, an evangelical Christian group which has been linked to the teaching creationism at Emmanuel College in Gateshead, is sponsoring the Trinity Academy in Doncaster. Four out of the 10 new schools opening this week are backed by Christian organisations and almost half of those under development are due to be sponsored by religious groups of some sort.

Yesterday campaigners warned that academies were being used as "trojan horses" by some Christians. Keith Porteous Wood, director of the National Secular Society, said: "Given that only 7% of the population are in church on any given Sunday this is a disproportionately high number of academies. Religious organisations are seeing the captive audience that academies provide as being their best, and sometimes only, chance of survival."

Tried and Tested

- Explain what is meant by the term “self-fulfilling prophecy” (2 marks).
- Suggest **three** factors that occur inside schools that affect the role of education (6 marks).
- Outline the contribution of labelling theory to our understanding of the role of education (12 marks).
- Compare New Right perspectives on the role of education with either Interactionist or Postmodernist perspectives.(20 marks).

Tried and Tested: Research Methods

Using material from this Chapter and elsewhere, assess the strengths and limitations of **one** of the following methods for our understanding of the role of education in society:

- Postal questionnaires.
- Participant observation (20 marks).

*This question requires you to **apply** your knowledge and understanding of sociological research methods to the study of this **particular** issue in education.*

References

- Althusser, Louis (1971: first published 1970) "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" in Louis Althusser "Lenin and Philosophy *and Other Essays*": Monthly Review.
- Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (2007) "Gender Pay Gap Narrowest since records began": Office for National Statistics
- Ball, Stephen (1981) "Beachside Comprehensive": Cambridge University Press.
- Benfield, Caroline (2007) "Women graduates paid less": Higher Education Statistics Agency
- Beron, Kurt and Farkas, George (2001) "Family Linguistic Culture and Social Reproduction: Verbal skill from parent to child in the preschool and school": Population Association of America conference paper.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1986) "The Forms of Capital" in Richardson, John (ed) "Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education", Greenwood Press.
- Bowles, Herbert and Gintis, Samuel (1976) "Schooling in Capitalist America": Routledge and Kegan Paul;
- Bowles, Herbert and Gintis, Samuel (2002) '*Schooling In Capitalist America Revisited*' in *Sociology of Education*, Volume 75, No. 2: American Sociological Association
- Boyd, William (1991) "Some parallels between British and US Education reforms": Centre for Educational Studies.
- Brimi, Hunter (2005) "The Influence of Cultural Capital on Twenty-First Century Secondary School Literature Curricula": *Electronic Journal of Sociology* >www.sociology.org/content/2005/tier1/brimi_cultural_capital.pdf<
- Collins, Clinton (1993) "Truth as a communicative virtue in a postmodern age: From Dewey to Rorty": *Philosophy of Education Society*.
- Davis, Kingsley and Moore, Wilbert (1945) "Some Principles of Stratification": *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 10 No. 2
- Deem, Rosemary (1980) "Schooling for Women's Work": Routledge and Kegan Paul
- Department for Education and Skills (2007) "Gender and education: the evidence on pupils in England" >www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RTP01-07.pdf<
- Dewey, John (1916) "Democracy and Education": The Macmillan Company.
- Eichler, Margrit (1980) "The Double Standard": Croom Helm.
- Elkind, David (1998) "Schooling the Post-Modern Child": Waldorf Education Research Institute.
- Foucault, Michel (1977) "Discipline and Punish": Penguin.
- Gardner, Howard (2003) "Multiple Intelligences after 20 Years.": American Educational Research Association.
- Giroux, Henry (1994) "Slacking Off: Border Youth and Postmodern Education": Routledge.
- Gordon, Tuula (1996) "Citizenship, difference and marginality in schools - spatial and embodied aspects of gender construction", in: Murphy, Patricia and Gipps, Caroline (eds) "Equity in the Classroom: towards effective pedagogy for girls and boys": Falmer Press.
- Gramsci, Antonio (1971: first published 1930 - 1934) "Selections from the Prison Notebooks" edited and translated by Hoare, Quintin and Nowell Smith, Geoffrey: Lawrence and Wishart
- Hattersley, Roy and Francis, Paul "Wrong Division": *The Guardian*, February 3, 2004
- Howe, Neil and Strauss, William (2000) "Millennials Rising": Vintage.
- Kampmeier, Anke (2004) "Gender and Qualifications": *New Perspectives for Learning - Briefing Paper 45*, The European Commission ><http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/BP%2045%20-%20Final%20GENDERQUAL.pdf><
- Lupton, Ruth (2004) "Do poor neighbourhoods mean poor schools?": London School of Economics

Mahony, Pat (1985) "Schools for the Boys: Co-education reassessed": Hutchinson.

Mackenzie, Jeannie (1997) "It's a Man's Job...Class and Gender in School Work-Experience Programmes": Scottish Council for Research in Education.

Mirza, Heidi Safia; Davidson, Julia; Powney, Janet; Wilson, Valerie; Hall, Stuart (2005) "Race and sex: teachers' views on who gets ahead in schools": European Journal of Teacher Education Vol. 28, No. 3: Routledge
><http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/2846/01/Hall22educcontent%255B1%255D.pdf><

Nash, Robin (1972) "Keeping In With Teacher".

National Literacy Trust (2004) "The structure of the literacy hour":
><http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Database/Primary/lithour.html#structure><

Norman, Fiona; Turner, Sue; Granados-Johnson, Jackie; Schwarcz, Helen; Green, Helen and Harris, Jill (1988) "Look, Jane, Look" in Woodhead, Martin and McGrath, Andrea (eds) "Family, School and Society": OUP.

Padfield, Pauline (1997) "'Skivers', 'saddos' and 'swots': pupils' perceptions of the process of labelling those 'in trouble' at school": Scottish Educational Research Association Annual Conference paper.

Parsons, Talcott (1959) "The School Class as a Social System": Harvard Educational Review

Pateman, Trevor (1991) "Education and Social Theory" in Outhwaite, William and Bottomore, Tom (eds) "The Blackwell Dictionary of Twentieth-Century Social Thought": Blackwell

Provenzo, Eugene (2002) "Teaching, Learning, and Schooling: A 21st Century Perspective": Allyn and Bacon.

Reay, Diane (2001) "Spice Girls', 'Nice Girls', 'Girlies', and 'Tomboys': discourses, girls' cultures and femininities in the primary classroom": Gender and Education, Vol. 13, No. 2.

Roger, Angela and Duffield, Jill (2000) "Factors Underlying Persistent Gendered Option Choices in School Science and Technology in Scotland": Gender and Education Vol. 12, No. 3.

Spender, Dale (1982) "Invisible Women": Writers and Readers.

Stanworth, Michelle (1981) "Gender and Schooling": Hutchinson.

Strinati, Dominic (1995) "An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture": Routledge

Summerfield, Carol and Babb, Penny (eds) (2004): Social Trends 34, Office for National Statistics.

Taylor, Mark (2004) "Generation NeXt Comes to College: Meeting the Postmodern Student": Arkansas State University.>www.lib.wayne.edu/org/accreditation/examples/documents/generationnext.pdf<

Taylor, Matthew and Smithers, Rebecca (2005) "New academy schools fuel education row": The Guardian: 5th September >http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,,1562665,00.html<

Treneman, Anne (1998) "Will the boys who can't read still end up as the men on top?": The Independent, 5th January.

Troyna, Barry and Hatcher, Richard (1992) "Racism in children's lives: a study of mainly-white primary schools": Routledge

Ward, Lucy (2007) "Women bosses lose out as gender pay gap widens in the boardroom": The Guardian, 8th November.

Warrington, Molly and Younger, Michael (2000) "The Other Side of the Gender Gap": Gender and Education, Vol. 12, No. 4.

Willis, Paul (1977) "Learning To Labour: How Working class kids get working class jobs": Saxon House.

Willis, Phil (2003) "Social class 'defines school achievement'": The Guardian, 23rd April

Wright, Cecile (1992) "Race Relations in the Primary School": David Fulton Publishers.

Woods, Peter (1976) "The myth of subject choice": British Journal of Sociology, 27.

Yang, Shen-Keng (2002) "Educational research for the dialectic process of globalization and localization": European Conference on Educational Research paper. >www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00002276.htm<