

Chapter 2 Education

Topic 2 Class differences in achievement (2) internal factors

Answers to QuickCheck Questions on page 35

1. Labelling is attaching a meaning or definition to someone. A self-fulfilling prophecy is a prediction that comes true simply by virtue of it having been made.
2. Differentiation is the process of teachers categorising pupils according to how they perceive their ability, attitude and/or behaviour. Polarisation is the process of pupils responding to differentiation by moving towards one of two opposite 'poles' or extremes (pro- and anti-school subcultures).
3. Any two of the following: pro-school cultures tend to form in high streams; they are largely middle-class; they share the values of the school; they gain their status through academic success.
4. Either of the following: pupils placed in low streams suffer a loss of self-esteem; the label of failure pushes pupils to search for alternative ways of gaining status by forming an anti-school subculture.
5. Firstly, determinism: it assumes that pupils who are labelled have no choice but to fulfil the prophecy and will inevitably fail. Secondly, it ignores the wider structures of power within which labelling takes place.
6. Habitus refers to the dispositions or learned and taken-for-granted ways of thinking, being and acting that are shared by a particular social class.
7. Symbolic capital refers to status and recognition. A person with symbolic capital is deemed by others (usually, their peers) to have worth or value.