4.4 Ethnicity and Educational Achievement: 30-minute Pack

AQA 8192 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Use sociological vocabulary and name sociologists where you can.

1 Evaluate the view that institutional factors within schools, rather than cultural or family background, are the main explanation for differences in achievement between ethnic groups. In your answer you should refer to sociologists' views and consider more than one explanation.

(Total for Question 1 is 12 marks)

2 Explain one similarity between how sociologists explain achievement gaps linked to social class, gender and ethnicity.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

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3 The sociologist Cecile Wright carried out classroom observation research on teacher-pupil interaction and ethnicity. Explain what Wright's research found about teacher-pupil interaction and ethnicity.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

4 The sociologist Tony Sewell researched the experiences of Black Caribbean boys in British schools. Explain Tony Sewell's findings about the experiences of Black Caribbean boys in British schools.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

5 State one criticism that is often made of institutional racism explanations of ethnic differences in achievement.

(Total for Question 5 is 2 marks)

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Mark scheme · 4.4 Ethnicity and Educational Achievement: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

Level 4 A detailed, well-balanced evaluation that accurately explains BOTH institutional explanations AND cultural/language explanations, supported by accurate reference to named sociologists. Strengths and weaknesses of each explanation are analysed, and a reasoned, supported judgement is reached. Sociological terminology is used accurately and consistently throughout.	**10-12**
Level 3 A clear evaluation that explains both institutional and cultural/language explanations, with some accurate reference to sociologists. Some analysis of strengths/weaknesses. An attempt at a conclusion, which may be only partly supported.	**7-9**
Level 2 Some relevant explanation of institutional and/or cultural factors, with limited development or accuracy. Little clear evaluation or comparison between explanations.	**4-6**
Level 1 One or two isolated, undeveloped points about ethnicity and achievement, with little or no sociological terminology or accurate detail.	**1-3**
Level 0 No relevant content.	**0**

Indicative content:

- Institutional case: Gillborn argued school policies and practices, even where not intentionally racist, can produce unequal outcomes, linking this to disproportionately high exclusion rates among some groups of Black pupils.
- Institutional case continued: Cecile Wright's classroom observation research found some teachers held lower expectations of some Black pupils, leading to quicker discipline or placement in lower sets than ability warranted.
- Cultural/community case: attitudes towards education, and community or family support networks, have been suggested as factors affecting achievement for some groups; language barriers can also affect pupils still developing fluency in English (EAL).
- Peer-group/identity case: Sewell's research found some Black Caribbean boys faced peer pressure towards an anti-school masculine identity, partly as a response to negative stereotyping, though other boys from the same background remained highly engaged.
- Evaluation of institutional explanations: critics argue it can be difficult to prove unequal outcomes are really caused by institutional racism rather than other factors such as class, and that this focus can overlook variation between minority ethnic groups.
- Evaluation of cultural/peer-group explanations: critics argue not all pupils from a given background take part in any single subculture, and cultural explanations must not be generalised across an 'ethnic minority' group treated as uniform.
- A balanced conclusion should note that achievement patterns vary considerably both between and within ethnic groups, and that institutional and cultural/language factors are likely to interact rather than act as rival single causes.

Question 2

identifies a genuine similarity, e.g. in each case sociologists point to both factors inside the home/community AND factors inside the school itself	**B1**
brief development linking this across at least two of class, gender and ethnicity	**B1**

Answer: In each case, sociologists point to both home/community factors (e.g. material deprivation, family attitudes, cultural capital) and school-based factors (e.g. teacher expectations, the hidden curriculum), rather than a single cause.

Question 3

identifies that Wright's research involved observing interactions between teachers and pupils of different ethnic backgrounds in the classroom	**B1**
finding, e.g. she found some teachers held lower expectations of some Black pupils, and were more likely to assume they would cause disruption	**B1**
development, e.g. this could lead some Black pupils to be disciplined more quickly, or placed in lower sets, than their ability warranted	**B1**
further development, e.g. Wright also found some able Black pupils could be overlooked, because teacher attention focused on managing perceived behaviour rather than recognising achievement	**B1**

Answer: Cecile Wright's classroom observation research found some teachers held lower expectations of some Black pupils, disciplining them more quickly or placing them in lower sets than their ability warranted, sometimes overlooking able pupils in the process.

Question 4

identifies that Sewell's research examined how some Black Caribbean boys' responses to school were shaped partly by peer-group identity	**B1**
finding, e.g. he found some boys faced peer pressure to conform to an anti-school, exaggeratedly masculine identity that could clash with school's behavioural expectations	**B1**
development, e.g. Sewell argued this identity partly developed as a response to negative stereotyping and low expectations from teachers and wider society	**B1**
further development, e.g. he also identified other Black Caribbean boys who resisted this pressure and remained highly engaged and successful at school, showing responses varied within the same ethnic group	**B1**

Answer: Tony Sewell's research found some Black Caribbean boys faced peer pressure towards an anti-school masculine identity, partly a response to negative stereotyping, while other boys from the same background resisted this and remained highly engaged, showing responses varied within the group.

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Question 5

identifies a recognised criticism, e.g. it can be difficult to prove that unequal outcomes are really caused by institutional racism rather than other factors, such as social class **B1**

brief development, e.g. or that focusing only on institutional factors can risk overlooking genuine variation in outcomes between different minority ethnic groups **B1**

Answer: Critics argue it can be difficult to prove that unequal outcomes are really caused by institutional racism rather than other factors such as class, and that this focus can overlook genuine variation between different ethnic groups.

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