4.6 Streaming, Setting and Pupil Subcultures: 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 pupil subcultures, rather than a pupil's own ability, are the main reason for the underachievement of some working-class pupils. In your answer you should refer to sociologists' views and consider more than one explanation.

(Total for Question 1 is 12 marks)

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2 Willis described how 'the lads' ended up in similar manual jobs to their fathers.

(a) Explain what sociologists mean by 'social reproduction' in relation to Willis's study. **(2)**

(b) Explain one way schools might try to counter social reproduction and support pupil aspirations regardless of stream or set. **(2)**

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

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3 Schools sometimes organise pupils into groups based on judged ability. Define streaming and distinguish it from setting.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

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4 Explain how streaming or setting might create a self-fulfilling prophecy for a pupil placed in a low set.

(Total for Question 4 is 6 marks)

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Mark scheme · 4.6 Streaming, Setting and Pupil Subcultures: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

Level 4 A detailed, well-balanced evaluation that accurately explains BOTH subculture explanations AND at least one alternative explanation (e.g. streaming/setting itself, or material/cultural factors), supported by accurate reference to named sociologists. Strengths and weaknesses of each view 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 a subculture explanation and an alternative explanation, 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 subculture and/or alternative factors, with limited development or accuracy. Little clear evaluation or comparison between explanations. **4-6**

Level 1 One or two isolated, undeveloped points about pupil subcultures or underachievement, with little or no sociological terminology or accurate detail. **1-3**

Level 0 No relevant content. **0**

Indicative content:

- Subculture case: Willis's study of 'the lads' found a working-class anti-school counter-culture that rejected academic effort and reproduced their fathers' manual-job class position; Lacey's differentiation-polarisation model explains how such subcultures form in response to streaming.
- Subculture case continued: Woods's wider typology (e.g. ritualism, retreatism) shows pupil responses to school are more varied than a simple pro-school/anti-school split, but still centres pupils' own responses as a key factor.
- Alternative case (streaming/setting itself): Ball's Beachside Comprehensive study found top-band pupils, disproportionately middle-class, received a faster pace and higher expectations, suggesting the school's own organisation, not just pupil culture, drives differences in achievement.
- Alternative case (material/cultural factors): factors such as material deprivation, cultural capital and language codes (covered elsewhere in this strand) offer explanations rooted in resources and home background rather than in-school pupil subcultures.
- Evaluation of the subculture case: critics note Willis's small, unrepresentative sample of twelve boys at one school, and that subculture theory can be too deterministic, understating pupils who resist categorisation into a single subculture.
- Evaluation of the alternative case: critics note that streaming/setting and material/cultural explanations do not fully explain why some pupils in the same set or same material circumstances still achieve very differently from one another.
- A balanced conclusion should note that subcultures, school organisation (streaming/setting, teacher expectations) and material/cultural background are likely to interact and reinforce each other rather than acting as entirely separate, rival causes.

Question 2

(a) identifies social reproduction as the process by which the class position of one generation is reproduced in the next generation (oe) **B1**

(a) development linking this to Willis's finding that 'the lads' ended up in similar manual jobs to their fathers, despite (or partly because of) their anti-school culture **B1**

(a) Answer: Social reproduction is the process by which one generation's class position is passed on to the next; Willis found 'the lads' ended up in similar manual jobs to their fathers, despite, and partly because of, their anti-school culture.

(b) identifies a genuine measure, e.g. offering careers guidance and raising-aspirations programmes to pupils in all sets and streams, not just the top ones **B1**

(b) brief development of how it helps **B1**

(b) Answer: Offering careers guidance and raising-aspirations programmes to pupils in every set and stream, not just the top ones, can help counter the kind of social reproduction Willis described.

Question 3

streaming: grouping pupils into separate classes or teaching groups based on judged general ability, across most or all subjects (oe) **B1**

development distinguishing this from 'setting', where pupils are grouped by ability separately in each individual subject **B1**

Answer: Streaming groups pupils into separate classes based on judged general ability across most or all subjects; setting, by contrast, groups pupils by ability separately in each individual subject.

Question 4

identifies that set placement is often based on early or partial judgement of ability, which may not fully reflect the pupil's true potential **B1**

identifies this can lower teacher expectations for pupils in that set **B1**

explains this may lead to a less demanding curriculum or slower pace being used for that set, in contrast to the faster pace Ball found in top bands **B1**

explains the pupil may lower their own effort or aspirations in response to being placed in a low set **B1**

development, e.g. this combination of lower expectations, a less demanding curriculum and lower pupil effort can then produce the very outcome (lower achievement) that was originally predicted **B1**

clear, accurate use of terminology throughout (e.g. self-fulfilling prophecy, teacher expectations, differentiation) **B1**

Answer: Set placement based on an early, partial judgement can lower teacher expectations, leading to a less demanding curriculum and pace than Ball found in top bands; a pupil may then lower their own effort, so lower expectations, teaching and effort combine to produce the very underachievement originally predicted.

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