Your notes

GCSE Sociology: revision notes

Processes within schools

Contents

1. Labelling and the self-fulfilling prophecy
2. Streaming and setting
3. Pupil subcultures
4. Hargreaves: labelling and streaming (Eduqas)
5. Key terms
6. Quick questions
7. What to do next

Labelling and the self-fulfilling prophecy

- **Labelling**: teachers may judge pupils (for example, as bright or troublesome) based on class, gender or ethnicity rather than ability.
- The **self-fulfilling prophecy**: pupils live up (or down) to the label, so the prediction comes true.
- Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) told teachers some randomly chosen pupils were about to "spurt" academically. These pupils made greater gains, suggesting teachers' expectations affected them.

Streaming and setting

- **Streaming** puts pupils in ability groups for all subjects; **setting** groups them by ability in individual subjects.
- Ball's study of "Beachside Comprehensive" found that pupils in lower bands were often working class, and that teachers expected less of them, leading to anti-school attitudes.

Pupil subcultures

- Pro-school subcultures value education and follow school rules.
- **Anti-school subcultures** reject school values. Willis's study "Learning to Labour" (1977) followed a group of working-class boys ("the lads") who rejected school, which prepared them for manual work.
- Subcultures can form as a reaction to **labelling** and low-set placement.

Hargreaves: labelling and streaming (Eduqas)

- David Hargreaves studied a secondary boys' school in the 1960s. Teachers labelled boys in the lower streams as failures and troublemakers.

- The labelled boys formed an **anti-school subculture** that rewarded breaking rules: a **self-fulfilling prophecy**.

Your notes

Key terms

Labelling	Attaching a name or description to someone that affects how they are treated.
Self-fulfilling prophecy	When a prediction comes true because people act on it.
Streaming	Grouping pupils by ability for all subjects.
Setting	Grouping pupils by ability in individual subjects.
Pupil subculture	A group of pupils with its own norms and values.
Anti-school subculture	A group that rejects school values.

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. What is the self-fulfilling prophecy?
2. What did Rosenthal and Jacobson's study suggest?
3. What is setting?
4. What is streaming?
5. Who studied "the lads"?
6. What did Ball find at Beachside Comprehensive?
7. What is an anti-school subculture?
8. How did the lads' anti-school attitudes prepare them for work?

Answers

1. When a prediction comes true because people act on it
2. Teachers' expectations affected pupils' progress
3. Grouping pupils by ability in individual subjects
4. Grouping pupils by ability for all subjects
5. Willis
6. Lower bands were often working class and teachers expected less of them
7. A group of pupils who reject school values
8. They prepared them for manual work

What to do next

Practise 11 questions on this topic

Try 5 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

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