

Compensatory Education

& Positive Discrimination

Idea behind the practise

- Cultural deprivation
 - Lack of cultural capital
- Those who are culturally deprived need extra help to achieve
 - Creating equality
 - of opportunity & access to education

Positive Discrimination

- Discrimination in favour of those who are seen as disadvantaged
 - E.g. employing someone because of their ethnicity rather than their skills
- Illegal in the UK under equal opps. legislation, but popular in the US
- Instead – positive action – non-discriminatory action

Compensatory Education

- Tries to compensate for cultural disadvantage
 - Schools in underprivileged areas are given more generous treatment
 - Teachers
 - Buildings
 - Resources
- 1950s USA – Operation Headstart
 - pre-school education

- 1970s UK – Educational Priority Areas
 - Abandoned 1980s
- 1997 UK – Education Action Zones
 - Similar to EPAs
- 1997 UK – Sure Start programme for pre-schoolers

How Effective?

- Evidence suggests compensatory education is not effective
 - Headstart children did not achieve significantly better
- Can education compensate for the inequalities produced by society as a whole?

Further Reading

- Introducing Sociology for AS Level, pp.221-2
- Sociology Themes and Perspectives (5th ed), pp.834-836
- A-Z Sociology Handbook