Material Deprivation Theory

This describes the impact of poverty on a home and refers to the fact that poor people lack money and resources to use to further their educational success. Smith and Noble (1995) identify a range of material factors that act as barriers to learning, these include:
- Lacking somewhere to study and do homework.
- A lack of computers and books.
- Not being able to participate effectively in school education, either through lack of classroom materials or not going on extra-curricular activities such as trips because of the cost.

In addition, material deprivation can result in children suffering from a shortage of attention from their parents, because their working hours are unsocial or because they are preoccupied with persistent housing and income problems. Poor housing conditions include:
- Accommodation being cold, damp and draughty.
- Overcrowding leading to lack of personal space for family members.

A low family income can also mean that children’s diet is poor nutritionally. This could also undermine a child’s health or limit their ability to concentrate in the classroom. These factors have found a correlation between areas of poverty and schools as they tend to have lower examination results in school league tables.

The outcomes is that children experiencing material deprivation are more likely to attend failing schools, as Tess Ridge (2007) points out that poorer children are aware that their experiences of school will not be of the same quality as those of richer people.

Furthermore, material deprivation can also put pressure on pupils to leave school at 16, dropout of post-16 education or not go to university. Forsyth and Furlong (2003) found that the most significant factor deterring the working class from going to university was the costs of tuition fees, and the prospect of student loans and bank overdrafts.

Material deprivation theory

- Marilyn Howard (2001) notes that young people from poorer homes have lower in takes of energy, vitamins and minerals, poor nutrition affects health, by weakening the immune systems, this results in more absences from class and trouble concentrating, all of which impact on achievement.
- Children from poorer homes are also more likely to have emotional or behaviour problems. Richard Wilkinson 1996 found that lower the social class the higher the rate of hyperactivity, anxiety and behavioural disorders all of which he argued are likely to have a negative effect on a child’s education.