

Durkheim and social solidarity

Explain Durkheim's view of shared values and specialist skills without assuming universal agreement.

Core learning

- Durkheim argued that education helps create social solidarity by transmitting shared values.
- Schools are also claimed to teach specialist skills needed for a complex division of labour.
- A sociological evaluation asks whose values are transmitted and whether integration works equally for all groups.

Concepts, studies and perspectives

- Social solidarity: Shared rituals, rules and expectations may help learners feel part of a wider society.
- Division of labour: Modern societies need specialist knowledge and cooperation between different roles.
- Consensus problem: A society may not agree on values; schools may reproduce dominant values rather than neutral shared values.
- Durkheim / consensus: Education binds people together and prepares them for social roles.
- Marxist challenge: So-called shared values may reflect ruling-class interests.
- Feminist challenge: Shared values may include gendered assumptions about roles and behaviour.
- Interactionist challenge: Pupils interpret and resist school messages; transmission is not automatic.

Suggested teaching sequence

- Connect and diagnose prior knowledge
- Explicitly teach distinction between concept and mechanism
- Model one evidence-to-explanation paragraph
- Use routes for supported, core and stretch application
- Finish with exam judgement and retrieval

Misconceptions to tackle

- Assuming schooling and education are identical
- Listing theory without application
- Treating social solidarity as a proven fact
- Evaluating by simply saying “not everyone agrees”

Source / accuracy note

Source note: This lesson teaches Durkheim's consensus view through original explanatory material and fictional classroom examples.