

EDU015 — Gender patterns in attainment and choices

Knowledge Organiser

Objective: Interpret gender patterns in achievement and subject choice without treating group averages as innate differences, and evaluate competing sociological explanations.

Core concepts

gender socialisation: define it, connect it to a mechanism and prepare one example for a 10-mark or 30-mark response.

attainment gap: define it, connect it to a mechanism and prepare one example for a 10-mark or 30-mark response.

subject choice: define it, connect it to a mechanism and prepare one example for a 10-mark or 30-mark response.

identity work: define it, connect it to a mechanism and prepare one example for a 10-mark or 30-mark response.

feminisation of education: define it, connect it to a mechanism and prepare one example for a 10-mark or 30-mark response.

ladette culture: define it, connect it to a mechanism and prepare one example for a 10-mark or 30-mark response.

gender domains: define it, connect it to a mechanism and prepare one example for a 10-mark or 30-mark response.

intersectionality: define it, connect it to a mechanism and prepare one example for a 10-mark or 30-mark response.

Theory and evidence map

Mitsos and Browne

Idea: Assessment format and teacher expectations may reward some learning habits, but this should not be treated as innate gender difference.

Evaluation: Evaluate whether assessment alone can explain patterns and whether it stereotypes learners.

Jackson

Idea: Ladette identities show that girls may negotiate popularity, femininity and school success in complex ways.

Evaluation: Evaluate by considering class, ethnicity, school context and change over time.

Francis

Idea: Subject choices can remain gendered because subjects carry meanings linked to masculinity and femininity.

Evaluation: Evaluate by considering institutional interventions, labour markets and changing peer cultures.

Archer

Idea: Gender interacts with class and ethnicity; identity, respectability and institutional recognition shape choices.

Evaluation: Use as high-grade intersectional evaluation, not as a simple add-on.

Common misconceptions

A social pattern is not automatically a causal explanation.

A named sociologist is not evidence unless the finding and mechanism are explained.

Evaluation must change the judgement, not merely add a “however” sentence.

Averages can hide differences within groups.

Assessment success criteria

AO1: knowledge	AO2: application	AO3: analysis/evaluation
Use accurate concepts, studies and theorists.	Apply directly to the item, question wording and educational context.	Explain mechanisms, compare explanations and evaluate evidence.
Do not name-drop: explain the idea and mechanism.	Do not write a generic essay that could fit any question.	Do not bolt on “however”; show why the criticism changes the judgement.
High grade: precise and selective knowledge.	High grade: item use integrated into the paragraph.	High grade: qualified judgement about strength and limits.