

Education and poverty

A critical review of theory, policy and practice

Carlo Raffo, Alan Dyson, Helen Gunter, Dave Hall, Lisa Jones and Afroditi Kalambouka

This report provides a framework to aid examination of the links between poverty and educational attainment in the UK.

Although there is widespread agreement that poverty and poor educational outcomes are related, there are competing explanations as to why that should be the case. This report provides a framework, which organises the research literature around studies that focus on:

- the individual (the micro level)
- the immediate social context, which might be located in families, communities, schools and peer groups (the meso level), and
- social structures (the macro level).

These levels are underpinned by two broad perspectives that provide quite different views about the purpose of education. The framework is then used to examine current policy in the area of education and poverty and suggest possible future directions.

The report will be of interest to researchers and policymakers in the educational policy field.



**JOSEPH ROWNTREE
FOUNDATION**



**Available in
other formats**

This publication can be provided in other formats, such as large print, Braille and audio. Please contact:
Communications, Joseph Rowntree Foundation,
The Homestead, 40 Water End, York YO30 6WP.
Tel: 01904 615905. Email: info@jrf.org.uk

Education and poverty

A critical review of theory, policy and practice

**Carlo Raffo, Alan Dyson, Helen Gunter, Dave Hall,
Lisa Jones and Afroditi Kalambouka**



**JOSEPH ROWNTREE
FOUNDATION**

The **Joseph Rowntree Foundation** has supported this project as part of its programme of research and innovative development projects, which it hopes will be of value to policymakers, practitioners and service users. The facts presented and views expressed in this report are, however, those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Foundation.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation, The Homestead, 40 Water End, York YO30 6WP
Website: www.jrf.org.uk

About the authors

The authors are based in the School of Education, University of Manchester and are members of both The Centre for Equity in Education (www.education.manchester.ac.uk/research/centres/cee/) and The Education in Urban Contexts Group (www.education.manchester.ac.uk/research/centres/euc/).



The University of Manchester

© University of Manchester, 2007

First published 2007 by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation

All rights reserved. Reproduction of this report by photocopying or electronic means for non-commercial purposes is permitted. Otherwise, no part of this report may be reproduced, adapted, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, or otherwise without the prior written permission of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

ISBN: 978 1 85935 570 1

A CIP catalogue record for this report is available from the British Library.

Prepared by:

York Publishing Services Ltd

64 Hallfield Road

Layerthorpe

York YO31 7ZQ

Tel: 01904 430033; Fax: 01904 430868; Website: www.yps-publishing.co.uk

Further copies of this report, or any other JRF publication, can be obtained from the JRF website (www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/).

Contents

Acknowledgements	vi
Executive summary	vii
1 Introduction: background and aims to the study	1
2 Project, methodology and mapping framework	3
Research design, methods and analysis	3
Structuring the framework	3
3 The mapping framework, research literature and policy implications within a functionalist perspective	8
The functionalist perspective and the macro focus	8
The functionalist perspective and the meso focus	10
The functionalist perspective and the micro focus	21
The functionalist perspective and integrating explanations	24
Synthesising the literature from a functionalist perspective – implications for policy and practice	32
4 The mapping framework, research literature and policy implications within a socially critical perspective	35
The socially critical perspective and the macro focus	36
The socially critical perspective and a focus on the meso	41
Synthesising the literature from a socially critical perspective – implications for policy and practice	46
5 Policy possibilities: a review of current interventions and possible futures from a functionalist and socially critical perspective	49
Excellence in Cities	49
Connexions	51
Educational Maintenance Allowance	53
Sure Start	53
Full service extended schools	54
Policy interventions and explanations	56
Three issues for policy	60
Notes	65
Bibliography	67
Appendix 1: Definitions of education and poverty	80
Appendix 2: Research design, methods and analysis	83

Acknowledgements

The research team would like to thank colleagues from the University of Manchester including Mike Bradford, Fiona Devine, Peter Farrell, Marianna Fotaki, David Hulme, Daniel Muijjs and Bernard Walters for their considered thoughts on our conceptual journey and for papers and contributions to our international seminar. In addition the team would also like to thank all those from beyond the University of Manchester who supported the international seminar through conversations, presentations, seminar contributions or written comments on our papers. These included Jean Anyon, City University of New York; Helen Barnard, Joseph Rowntree Foundation; John Bynner, Institute of Education, University of London; Leon Feinstein, Institute of Education, University of London; William Franklin, Pacific Oaks College; Howard Glennerster, London School of Economics; Pauline Lipman, DePaul University, Chicago; Ruth Lupton, University of London; Meg Maguire, Kings College London; Mahmudul Alam, Dhaka, Bangladesh; Luis Mirón, University of California; Chris Power, Educational Consultant; Pat Thomson, University of Nottingham; and Geoff Whitty, Institute of Education, University of London. In particular, we would like to thank our project manager at the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Helen Barnard, and members of our advisory group – Leon Feinstein, Institute of Education, University of London; Howard Glennerster, London School of Economics; Ann Gross, DfES; Ruth Lister, Loughborough University; Diana McNeish, Barnardo's; Chris Power, Educational Consultant; and Ray Shostak, HM Treasury – for their invaluable critical friendship. Needless to say, however, the views expressed in the report, and any errors or shortcomings it may contain, are entirely the responsibility of the research team.

Executive summary

Introduction

This study reviews the literature on poverty and education in order to (a) identify principal conceptualisations that underpin different approaches and (b) examine educational policy interventions. A mapping framework has been created that synthesises the research literature on the relationship between poverty and education. Its purposes are to identify the various and principal conceptualisations of the relationship between poverty and education and to make explicit the underlying assumptions upon which those conceptualisations rest. In addition the framework sets out key examples of the findings of research within each identified conceptual area.

Mapping the terrain – organising the education and poverty literature

The review has generated explanations of the link between education and poverty that cohere, to a greater or lesser extent, around three different foci:

- micro-level explanations that focus on the individual
- meso-level explanations that focus on immediate social contexts
- macro-level explanations that focus on social structures and inequality.

The most fundamental difference that appears to underpin how the literature is organised is in the way in which various explanations understand the role of education in producing what we might call the ‘good society’ – and hence what counts as ‘good education’. The report makes a distinction between two broad positions: functionalist and socially critical.

Functionalist assumes that education plays an important part in the proper functioning of society. The problem it seeks to explain and/or solve is that these supposed benefits often do not materialise in the case of individuals and groups from poorer backgrounds. Explanations are offered in terms of dysfunctions at the level of the individual learner (the micro focus), the social contexts within which the learner is placed such as schools, families and neighbourhoods (the meso focus),

the underlying social structures such as class, race and gender (the macro focus) out of which those contexts arise, or some interaction of these.

Socially critical assumes that education is potentially beneficial. The problem it seeks to explain and/or solve is whether its benefits can be realised simply by overcoming specific problems in its contribution to the social and economic growth of a particular country. The ability to engage with economic and social development is inherently inequitable, and education in its current form reflects unequal distributions of power and resources. Socially critical explanations tend to either focus on the meso and explore the ways in which schools systematically marginalise certain groups of learners, or focus on the macro and demonstrate how privileged groups within society sustain a whole range of social structures – including the education system – to maintain their positions of privilege. These studies often reveal and encourage activist approaches with and within marginalised groups in order not only to ‘answer back’ on how they are positioned, but also to recognise the value and contribution that those deemed to be poor can and do make.

Key findings: the functionalist perspective

The macro focus

Explanations adopting this focus tend to see the relationship between poverty and education as resulting from underlying social structures – though these are, of course, mediated by factors at the meso and micro levels. A summary of the main approaches includes:

- An analysis of the impact of globalisation and the resulting forms of social exclusion reflected in aspects of spatial ghettoisation, health inequalities, high levels of unemployment, poor housing and poor infrastructures for such individuals/communities. Together these factors are linked to, and compound, poor educational attainment.
- Research evidence to show how taxation and reduction in child poverty have contributed to educational investments by those families experiencing poverty.

The meso focus

Studies at the meso level have examined (a) some of the socially and culturally mediating impacts that peer groups, the family and neighbourhoods have had on young people and their understanding of, aspiration towards, and capability within schools; and (b) the processes of schooling and delivery of other public services more generally that have aided or constrained educational achievement for such young people. The main themes in this work can be summarised as follows:

- Globalisation has had an impact on the way families and communities living in poverty experience life. Of particular importance is the ghettoisation of particular neighbourhoods with a lack of employment and effective public services that is likely to impact on self-esteem, and a lack of resources that results in poor health and diet, all of which when taken together impact on the ability of families to support young people with education.
- Different neighbourhoods and communities can provide differential levels of social and cultural capital that can alleviate some of the material aspects of poverty and provide improved opportunities for educational success for certain groups of young people.
- Effective parenting linked to notions of the educational aspiration of parents, educational support and stimulation for young people in the home, secure and stable home environments and participation within school is central to young people's educational success.
- Schools with particular strategies and approaches can make a difference in areas of 'challenge'. This is heavily influenced by the compositional make-up of schools, the constraints that poverty exerts on the schools, the capabilities of teachers and the nature of educational markets in such areas.
- Improved public sector service delivery can improve families' and young people's access and achievement within school but the ability to develop effective multi-agency working is constrained by professional and organisational boundaries.

The micro focus

Explanations that are located at the micro level include concerns about (a) individual identity and its links to action and (b) notions of hereditary differences particularly located around IQ. These can be summarised as follows:

- The individual is seen as having much greater levels of individual choice through the enhancement of particular forms of social capital that might provide 'bridges' for young people into experiencing and hence valuing education. This approach recognises the importance of appropriately developed and culturally embedded mentoring programmes in order to provide opportunities for broadening networks of influence for young people.
- Some research focuses on notions of constrained inherited capabilities and intelligence that preordain an individual's ability to succeed in society. This provides few opportunities to ameliorate the position an individual has due to the inherited capabilities with which he or she is born. This approach has been heavily criticised methodologically, theoretically and morally.

Integrating explanations

The review also highlights studies that are more integrating in their analysis. Many start at the micro level but interlock with factors at the meso and macro levels. Much of the work focuses on bio-psychological perspectives that focus on human and self-development and the interactive influences of genetics and environment in the contexts and relationships within which this development is enhanced or constrained. This body of research can be summarised as follows:

- Integrating literatures start from a developmental psychological viewpoint and then build levels of theory on how particular variables at different levels of experience create risk or resilience in the lives of young people and consequently affect their ability to actively engage with education.
- Research highlights particular risk factors such as family characteristics linked to issues such as maternal depression, violent neighbourhoods or negative peer group socialising. Some research identifies moderators to risk, particularly the development of a warm caring relationship with a significant adult or within a caring community. Other studies examine the way factors experienced at a distance from the lives of families, such as parents' educational qualifications, are then mediated through particular forms of lived experiences for those families that result in particular levels of educational achievement for young people associated with those families.
- Such studies are complemented by early child development research that focuses on the importance of these issues in early childhood and that recognises aspects of neurobiology. This reflects the more sophisticated work undertaken

by geneticists who have examined the environmental impact on genes and in particular how poor environments can biologically alter capability.

Key findings: the socially critical perspective

The macro focus

Studies from a socially critical position assume that education can both challenge existing power structures and enable democratic development. However, education in its current configuration is variously implicated in creating, reproducing and enhancing inequality. Education is viewed as having never been developed to be enabling and educative for all young people in a manner that might challenge existing social structures. A summary of the key points is provided below:

- There is an identification of global and national social and economic structures that determine educational provision and achievement.
- Many studies examine how power structures impact on the lives and educational experiences of particular groups.
- There has been the development of a critical analysis of functional policy interventions such as educational choice and the market.

The meso focus

The socially critical perspective at the meso level contains studies that focus on neighbourhoods, community radicalism, different school curricula and culture and the potential that these have for changing power relations within education. These can be summarised as follows:

- Research studies that provide an account of the lives of people in neighbourhoods and communities.
- Studies that have emphasised more radical and democratic approaches to running classrooms and schools that have challenged and changed existing power relations through, for example, the way teachers and pupils interact and the way school governance relates more directly to community needs.

- Interventions that focus on community radicalism in ‘answering back’ and creating equitable educational opportunities.

Since research from a socially critical perspective tends to focus on the social, there is little which focuses primarily on the micro level. Likewise, there are few studies from this perspective which integrate these different levels of analysis.

Current policy interventions

The report highlights how both functionalist and socially critical explanations relate to current policy developments that focus on educational disadvantage. Recent years have seen a plethora of policy initiatives in England and the report provides examples of policy interventions such as Excellence in Cities, Connexions, Sure Start, Educational Maintenance and full service extended schools and how they embody the sorts of explanations provided within the report. The review of such interventions suggests that almost all focus in a piecemeal fashion on mainly meso-level factors that appear to be based on a functionalist explanation of those aspects. The report highlights how there is very little in educational policy that focuses on macro explanations and hence on developing macro interventions. In addition, none of the socially critical explanations appear to be reflected in policy. It is also clear that those interventions that have been implemented have so far had only very partial impacts in breaking the link between poverty and poor educational attainment. The review clearly points to the fact that policy needs to simultaneously address a whole series of factors and at different levels if it is to have any meaningful impact. In other words it needs to have an overarching vision of how various interventions fit together and for what purposes.

The report concludes by outlining the most fundamental issues facing educational policymakers. These are characterised as issues of *scope*, *coherence* and *power*.

Scope

The research evidence reviewed indicates the need for extensive and complex policy interventions if the established relationship between poverty and poor educational outcomes is to be disturbed. There is no single explanation for why learners from poor backgrounds do badly in educational terms. Rather, there are multiple factors implicated at the micro, meso and macro levels. There are no magic bullets that will enable such learners to perform as well and derive the same educational benefits as their more advantaged peers. Instead, what are needed are interventions which address the full range of factors and which operate at all three levels.

Coherence

A related problem for policymakers is the coherence of their interventions. Once the ‘magic bullet’ approach is abandoned, an attractive alternative is the ‘scattergun’ approach – in other words, to undertake a wide range of relatively small-scale initiatives in the hope that separately or together some of them might make a difference. The issue facing policymakers is how to make multiple interventions coherent, how to sequence them chronologically, and how to prioritise the most effective or most important interventions amongst all those which might or should be employed.

The research evidence reviewed offers some guidance on these matters. There is work which evaluates the effectiveness of particular interventions or estimates the impact of particular factors on the poverty–education relationship. However, such evidence is always likely to be partial, given the complexity of factors involved, the difficulty in measuring the impacts of some of these factors, and the inevitability that past interventions are located in sets of circumstances which might be significantly different from those existing when policymakers have to take their decisions. This suggests that policymakers need to develop more fully their own ‘theories of change’ about how interventions are likely to work and then develop these theories through the careful monitoring of how interventions actually impact on the factors towards which they are directed.

Power

The socially critical perspective outlines clearly the view that the relationship between poverty and education is unlikely to be disturbed unless fundamental issues of power and interest, advantage and disadvantage are addressed. Simply tackling the presenting ‘problems’ of poverty and education will, this perspective suggests, ultimately prove to be ineffective if underlying inequalities are permitted to reproduce these problems in other forms.

Given that policymakers are implicated in these inequalities, particular forms of courage are required for them to step outside the social arrangements which have placed them in a privileged position in the first place. It is tempting to say that this cannot happen – except that there are multiple examples of politicians who have taken this step, or whole countries that have taken different directions, or, on a more modest scale, of individual educators who have addressed these issues in their own schools and classrooms. Moreover, in democratic countries – even ones where the ‘democratic deficit’ is large – those who reach privileged positions in public service do so, in part at least, because other citizens enable them or allow them so to do.

In that sense, all citizens are policymakers and all are involved in formulating policy interventions. In situations where particular explanations of poverty and education dominate the thinking of elected and appointed policymakers, it may be that the best hope lies in grass-roots movements in schools, classrooms and communities across the country.

Notions of scope, coherence and power are reflected potentially in opportunities posed by the Every Child Matters agenda that has been embodied in the Children Act 2004 and that requires schools to focus on the holistic needs of young people. Additionally there are possibilities of new forms of democratic engagement within schools and between schools and community that are reflected in the 'new localism' agenda where the delivery of core public services to communities comes under the control of representative neighbourhood structures and systems.

1 Introduction: background and aims to the study

Societies in economically developed countries such as the UK face something of a paradox. Within such societies, formal education tends to be available on a more or less equal basis to all children and young people, regardless of their family background. Moreover, the education systems of these countries are well resourced, offer high quality experiences, and are likely to have sophisticated mechanisms for targeting attention and resources to the most disadvantaged learners. It is reasonable to suppose, therefore, that formal education will equalise the effects of different family backgrounds and, in particular, that it will offer a route out of poverty for the most disadvantaged young people. Yet all evidence over many decades and from many countries seems to show that family background continues to be a major determinant of educational outcomes for children and young people. Put simply, the poorer a child's family is, the less well they are likely to do in the education system (see Appendix 1 for more details on the link between education and poverty). Far from offering a route out of poverty, education simply seems to confirm existing social hierarchies.

Although this relationship between poverty and educational outcomes is an international phenomenon, it is one which has attracted much recent attention in the UK in general and England in particular. Successive educational initiatives across many generations – the 'tripartite' system of schooling,¹ the move to comprehensive schools, the introduction of a national curriculum, the post-1997 'standards agenda' – have failed to end this relationship in the way that had been hoped. One reason is that, although there is widespread agreement that poverty and poor educational outcomes are related, there is much less agreement as to why that should be the case. Competing explanations – in terms of the differential distribution of educational opportunities, the cultures of poor communities, the dynamics of poor families, the quality of schooling in disadvantaged areas, and many more – have been advanced. Policymakers and practitioners are therefore faced with a bewildering array of possible explanations, each of which seems to be supported by equally convincing evidence and argument. It is hardly surprising, therefore, if their interventions often seem to be based on the latest explanation to be advanced, the one which is argued for most fiercely by its proponents, or the one which is most politically convenient.

The purpose of this report is to review some (though by no means all) of the research literature on poverty and education, and attempt to identify the different ways in which that relationship has been conceptualised and explained. We have organised those explanations into what we call a 'mapping framework'. In other

words, we have tried to identify clusters of explanations which share features in common, and have tried to show how these differ from each other and, equally important, how they might relate productively to each other. We have also looked at the literature on policy and practice interventions to understand the explanations on which those interventions – implicitly or explicitly – rest. This has been a starting point for thinking about what sorts of interventions our map of the field suggests might be most appropriate, or at least how policymakers and practitioners might set about designing such interventions. We also hope that our work will be useful for researchers in positioning their work within the field as a whole, and identifying where the gaps in our understanding and evidence lie.

The scope of the study needs to be clarified. First, it is not definitive. Our map of the field is one amongst many that might be constructed, and it is also one which inevitably simplifies what are often complex explanations. We therefore advise readers to use it as a springboard for exploring the primary literatures on which it is based, so that they can come to terms with those complexities for themselves. Second, it is not itself a new explanation of the poverty–education relationship. In mapping out current explanations, we have made no attempt to go beyond them in order to offer something ‘better’. Third, it is not a handbook for action. We believe that there are important implications for policymakers and practitioners in our work and we have tried to make these explicit. However, we have made no attempt to evaluate the different explanations currently on offer in order to identify the most powerful and persuasive ones, or to identify the most promising courses of action. Our view is that there is no ‘magic bullet’ in this field. Effective interventions in the education–poverty relationship are likely to be multidimensional and to demand social action well beyond the remit of education policy – or, indeed, of public policy as a whole. If there is one lesson from our work, it is that single-strand interventions aimed at ‘quick fixes’ are almost certainly doomed to failure.

Such debates bring us to the heart of our research. In the following chapter, we describe in more detail how we set about reviewing the literature in this field and developing our ‘mapping framework’. In Chapters 3 and 4, we describe the two major families of explanations – we call them ‘perspectives’ – we identified. In the final chapter, we explore the implications of our work for policy and practice.

2 Project methodology and mapping framework

Research design, methods and analysis

We undertook our review by identifying research-relevant literature which explicitly addressed the relationship between poverty and educational outcomes, and by reading as much of this as we could in the time available. This literature included research texts, policy papers, evaluations and various other reports. As we read, we began to develop a provisional mapping framework, and we tested this in a sensitising seminar with academics across the University of Manchester and also in discussions with our advisory group. As the framework developed, we invited a wider group of researchers and policymakers to an international seminar in order to examine and challenge our framework. We used the seminars and advisory group to provide advice on key literatures to help refine the framework, and we used the enhanced mapping framework to structure database interrogation, keyword searching and screening criteria and the development of a database-categorising framework. A more detailed explanation of the research methods used in the research is provided in Appendix 2.

Structuring the framework

In mapping out the terrain we wanted to examine how various literatures helped suggest or explain the links between poverty and low educational outcomes. We became aware that there was little agreement about a linear causal effect between poverty and education, and set ourselves the task of organising this complex literature into ways that simplified this complexity.

From our readings the literature appeared to cohere, to a greater or lesser extent, around three different foci:

- Explanations that focus on the individual including areas such as the characteristics of the individual or his/her relationship with family or teachers or peer groups. We have termed the focus of these studies as being at the 'micro level'.
- Explanations that focus on 'immediate social contexts' that might be located in families, communities, schools and peer groups. We have termed the focus of these studies as being at the 'meso level'.

- Explanations that focus on social structures and/or are linked to notions of power and inequality. We have termed the focus for these studies as being at the ‘macro level’.

We use ‘micro’, ‘meso’, and ‘macro’ only in the sense defined here. We have attempted to handle the underlying complexities that could be obscured by interrogating particular explanations in terms of the following questions:

- Within the broad identification of the factors linking education and poverty, what *specific* factors are identified and how are these understood?
- Although the fundamental explanation may be located within one particular aspect at the micro, meso or macro level, are the other levels taken into account and, if so, how?
- What are the implications of the explanation for the possibilities of changing the poverty–education relationship?

Our reading of these explanations has led us to recognise that there are differences in views of the role of education in producing what we might call the ‘good society’ – and hence what counts as ‘good education’. In particular, we would like to make a distinction between two broad positions. These are summarised in Table 1. While both regard education as a good for the individual and society, they differ in relation to what sort of a good it is and how it is to be produced.

Table 1 Mapping the terrain – organising the education and poverty literature

Perspectives and knowledge claims about education	The foci	Sites – the locations within foci	Purposes of, and pressures on, the explanations	Policy implications
Functionalist	Micro Meso Macro Integrated	Individuals, families, schooling, neighbourhoods, peer groups, and/or the system(s)	Explanation and/or intervention	Ways of examining the purpose and enhancing the functionality of the education system
Socially critical	Micro Meso Macro Integrated	Individuals, families, schooling, neighbourhoods, peer groups, and/or the system(s)	Explanation and/or intervention	Ways of examining the purpose and enhancing the functionality of the education system

The first we label as the 'functionalist' position, because it takes it for granted that education plays an important part in the proper functioning of society. When it works well, education is seen as bringing benefits both to society as a whole and to individuals within that society. There is ample scope for debate about precisely what these benefits are or should be, but typically they include economic development, social cohesion and enhanced life chances for individuals. The problem, as seen from this perspective, is that these supposed benefits often do not materialise in the case of individuals and groups from poorer backgrounds, and this failure calls for explanation and intervention.

Commonly, explanations tend to be offered in terms of dysfunctions at the level of the individual learner (the micro focus), the social contexts within which the learner is placed such as schools, families and neighbourhoods (the meso focus), the underlying social structures such as class, race and gender (the macro focus) out of which those contexts arise, or some interaction of these. Examples of explanations that might be said to broadly fit within this category include the correlation between educational achievement and social class explained through language (Bernstein, 1961), values (Hyman, 1967) and parental interest and support (Douglas, 1964). Crucially, however, the assumption is that, if specific (albeit complex) problems in the way education works within society can be overcome, its expected benefits will indeed materialise.

The second position, which we label here 'socially critical', likewise assumes that education is potentially beneficial. However, it doubts whether its benefits can be realised simply by overcoming specific problems in its contribution to current social arrangements. Those social arrangements are themselves seen as being inherently inequitable, and education in its current form reflects unequal distributions of power and resources. The failure of education to produce benefits for people living in poverty is not simply a glitch in an otherwise benevolent system, but is a result of the inequalities built into society and the education system alike. It follows that, if educational benefits are indeed to be realised, a form of education is needed which is *critical* of existing arrangements and which can both challenge existing power structures and enable democratic development. Examples of explanations that broadly fit into this category include work that raises wider questions of power, hierarchy, social control and cultural reproduction (Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977), the nature of curriculum design (Jackson and Marsden, 1966) and teaching and learning approaches (Freire, 1970). In addition, socially critical approaches have criticised assumptions about issues of representation, identity and place with regard to the relationship between education and lived experience. Furthermore these approaches can be activist through giving recognition to the experiences of young people, families and communities and, through local action,

legitimate ways of living and making a difference to prevailing social and economic circumstances. Hence many explanations within this perspective focus on the possibilities of radical interventions at the macro and meso levels such as tax reforms and investment decisions at the national level and new forms of democratic management and leadership at the school level. Studies often examine either the possibilities of such interventions or the realities of small-scale attempts at such interventions.

What we have highlighted in terms of functionalist and socially critical explanations and interventions are familiar, though relatively crude, distinctions. In practice, these positions could be interdependent. For any conceivable construction of 'education', it is important to know both whether things are working as well as they might and how particular assumptions, values and patterns of advantage and disadvantage are inbuilt. It is entirely possible, therefore, to ask both functionalist and socially critical questions of education at a particular time and place, just as it is possible for researchers to do work that draws on both positions. In this respect it is important to avoid easy assumptions. One might be that functionalism necessarily implies approval of the status quo, or that socially critical approaches necessarily relate only to some ideal and unrealisable social context. However, as we shall argue later in this report, one of the fundamental problems of attempts to understand – and take action in relation to – the poverty–education relationship is that explanations drawn from these two positions rarely engage with each other, other than through processes of somewhat dismissive critique (Shain and Ozga, 2001).

A further issue that needs to be borne in mind when reading categorised explanatory accounts or intervention strategies suggested by research is that the relationship between the professional practice of researchers and interventions intended to break the link between poverty and educational experiences and outcomes is complex. The disposition to research and develop interventions, and to work on securing change, is related to personal interest combined with an increasing demand to demonstrate the impact of research on policy and practice. Additionally, the increase in commissioned research by government and agencies means that researchers within both the private and public sectors are frequently involved in project work that is directly related to delivering outcomes. Many researchers do see it as central to their project to engage in practice at the micro and/or meso and/or macro areas of interest. Some involve themselves in data gathering at a macro level so that their work influences national strategy (see e.g. Feinstein *et al.*, 2004); some operate at the meso level and focus, for example, on schools and both gather data and work with students, teachers and the community to make changes (see e.g. Thomson, 2002); and some operate at the micro level and work with individuals and families in raising and meeting aspirations (see e.g. Luthar and Zelazo, 2003). There are

those who locate their work in the functionalist paradigm and, for example, work on school effectiveness at one or more levels of interest (see e.g. Muijs *et al.*, 2004) and there are those who work in the socially critical paradigm, and, for example, work on bringing about change through national and local action on inclusion (Anyon, 1997). By implication we caution against the possibility of stereotyping any researcher's work on account of the particular types of engagement with policy and practice in the work they undertake and which we describe in this report.

3 The mapping framework, research literature and policy implications within a functionalist perspective

As we began to indicate in the previous chapter, the key ideas in the functionalist position can be examined with a micro, meso or macro focus and also through integrating these. This section of the report will characterise some of these key explanations and interventions using this framework.

The functionalist perspective and the macro focus

Explanations adopting this focus tend to see the relationship between poverty and education as resulting from underlying social structures – though these are, of course, mediated by factors at the meso and micro levels. A summary of the main approaches is provided in Box 1.

Box 1 Functionalism and the macro focus

- Globalisation has resulted in particular forms of social exclusion for particular individuals and communities. This is reflected in aspects of spatial ghettoisation, health inequalities, high levels of unemployment, poor housing and poor infrastructures for such individuals. Together these factors are linked to, and compound, poor educational attainment.
- There is evidence of how taxation and reduction in child poverty have contributed to educational investments by those families experiencing poverty.

In the past, macro-level explanations may have focused on relatively stable social structures. In the context of a manufacturing-led economy, relatively clear distinctions between workers, managers and owners (amongst others) led to an interest in the role of social class in shaping educational outcomes. The different skill levels needed by groups in different socio-economic positions might be seen as resulting, ultimately, in differential educational opportunities, expectations and resources, reflected most obviously in the limited access to secondary education for working-class children prior to 1944 and the sharply differentiated tripartite system thereafter.

Although the basic structure of this explanation has remained the same, a theme of particular importance in this literature latterly has been the impacts of globalisation on national and local economies, particularly in relation to changed labour market conditions. Work that has examined notions of globalisation in advanced economies has tended to focus on issues of de-industrialisation, restructuring and post-industrialisation (Lash and Urry, 1994) and the corresponding spectrum of opportunities and constraints generated by such transformations. In many respects it is the constraints of these transformations that have been experienced most forcibly by many of the poorest communities, constraints that many theorists have argued can be understood as forms of 'social exclusion' (Byrne, 2005). This term is heavily contested, particularly in relation to notions of poverty and inequality (Lister, 2004). Nonetheless, what the concept of social exclusion enables us to examine are some of the dynamic processes which generate growing levels of societal polarisation that have had a negative impact on the ability of individuals to partake in and/or engage with aspects of mainstream society – what some have termed a 'deprivation of capability' (Sen, 2000).

The argument is that the simple stratifications of educational and other opportunities associated (rightly or wrongly) with class have now become much more complex. In particular, many young people and communities are now confronting differently constituted labour markets that reflect the emergence of the post-industrial society, where much employment takes the form of either high-value-added, knowledge-driven tertiary sector work (for instance, in finance or the new media and cultural industries), or the more mundane, flexible, part-time and inherently insecure service sector work (Brown, 1999). However, various forms of social and economic restructuring have resulted in many of the poorest families and communities being left further behind, with growing evidence that geographical areas are spatially excluding those most disadvantaged into ghettoised locations (Meen *et al.*, 2005). These locations are often characterised by inadequate housing and poor levels of resources, infrastructure and health provision where educational attainments are frequently at their lowest (Hastings *et al.*, 2005).

Studies have been undertaken that have generated a variety of quantitative indicators of some of the impacts of social exclusion in poor neighbourhoods. These have included those relating to the levels of one-parent families, employment, crime, educational outcomes and health, and some of the impacts of child poverty reduction strategies on family spending. For example, the Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE) has generated a series of reports on economic exclusion and income dynamics; social welfare institutions; family change and civil society; community/area polarisation and regeneration; and exclusion and society. The aim of these reports is to understand the dynamic processes at work within its areas of

study and to investigate the individual characteristics and social institutions which prevent exclusion and promote recovery, regeneration and inclusion. Part of this work has included examining the reduction in child poverty post 1997 and how this has impacted on changing spending patterns of families, particularly in relation to the raised spending that went into child development (Gregg *et al.*, 2005).

In general terms, the conclusion of this work is that social position continues to shape educational outcomes, but that it does so in complex ways. Rather than a large section of society facing limited opportunities, different forms of 'exclusion' impact on different groups, frequently interacting so as to compound one another's effects. So, people living in poverty face forms of exclusion which may differ between inner cities, peripheral housing estates and rural locations, or between different ethnic groups, or between the genders. They may be compounded by health inequalities (Acheson, 1998; Exworthy *et al.*, 2003), transport difficulties, lack of access to financial services, family breakdown, and so on. For those facing multiple exclusions of this kind, the impact on educational outcomes may be far worse than the impact of 'class' alone. We will shortly consider research which explores how these factors operate at the meso level. However, macro-level explanations are distinguished by tracing these factors back to the underlying social processes – notably, the impacts of economic globalisation – from which they are seen to spring.

The functionalist perspective and the meso focus

These macro-level explanations lead naturally to attempts to explain how, at the meso level, different forms of exclusion impact on educational outcomes. Recently there has been a range of research that has examined (a) some of the socially and culturally mediating impacts that peer groups, the family and neighbourhoods have had on young people and their understanding of, aspiration towards, and capability within schools; and (b) the processes of schooling and delivery of other public services more generally that have aided or constrained educational achievement for such young people.

The main themes in this work are summarised in Box 2.

Box 2 Functionalism and the meso focus

- Globalisation has had an impact on the way families and communities living in poverty experience life. Of particular importance is the ghettoisation of particular neighbourhoods with a lack of employment and effective public services, low levels of bridging social capital,¹ a lack of role models for young people, forms of discrimination that are likely to impact on self-esteem and a lack of resources that results in poor health and diet, all of which when taken together impact on the ability of families to support young people with education.
- Different neighbourhoods and communities can provide differential levels of social and cultural capital that can obviate some of the material aspects of poverty and provide improved opportunities for educational success for certain groups of young people.
- Effective parenting linked to notions of the educational aspiration of parents, educational support and stimulation for young people in the home, secure and stable home environments and participation with school is central to young people's educational success. However, such notions are premised on social class, maternal levels of education and material deprivation, all of which positively correlate with poverty. In addition schools and teachers often have negative views about the nature of communities', parents' and young people's aspirations for education in areas of challenge and poverty.
- Schools with particular strategies and approaches can make a difference in areas of 'challenge'. However, the extent to which such schools can make a difference is heavily influenced by the backgrounds of the pupils in schools, the constraints that poverty exerts on the schools, the operational capabilities of teachers and the nature of educational markets in such areas.
- Improved public sector service delivery can improve families' and young people's access and achievement within school but the ability to develop effective multi-agency working is constrained by professional and organisational boundaries.

The impacts of globalisation on particular families and communities

The Social Exclusion Unit, through its Policy Action Team reports (National Strategy for Urban Renewal, 2000), has examined the various barriers to achievement and attainment that individuals, families and communities have experienced owing to poverty generated by the dynamics of globalisation impacting on particular

communities in specific locations. These reports together suggest that poor educational outcomes stem from both a variety of factors that shape the nature of schools (see below) and the various socially excluding factors that impact on young people outside of school. These latter factors include the spatial ghettoisation of particular poor neighbourhoods, a lack of jobs and infrastructure in such neighbourhoods and poor opportunities for developing networks of trust within and between communities. In addition, an often cited factor is a lack of appropriate role models within families which may have little or no history of work, and pressure on very poor families to secure an income greater than that available from education and training. These studies have also identified a lack of development of appropriate bridging social capital and cultural capital² within peer groups, family and communities that have limited the capacity of people to realise their potential at school.

One of the central issues that these studies highlight through their analysis of social exclusion is the behavioural manifestations that social class differences linked to poverty generate amongst individuals and families. Rothstein's (2004) work in the USA is an illustration of a much larger body of research that makes clear the links between social class and poverty and educational outcomes. In his analysis of the connection between poverty and poor educational attainment he examines the way the social, cultural and economic positions of a particular social class (see previous section) are mediated at the meso level through individual, family and community characteristics and the behavioural manifestations of those classes. He sees social groups as being defined by particular factors that then find expression in the contexts of families, schools, communities and peer groups. His message is that those from a lower social class, and in particular those in poverty, will demonstrate a collection of occupational, psychological, personality, health and economic traits that have the capacity to predict in a relatively deterministic fashion an average performance in education and other areas of life that is qualitatively different from that of middle-class and relatively well-off families/groups. Rothstein's traits manifest themselves in three main ways:

- (a) Work/unemployment – Rothstein believes that people living in poverty are less likely to be in work arenas that offer significant cognitive challenges. Employment therefore provides less opportunity for individuals to exercise and/or develop their cognitive abilities. They are more likely to be in disciplined situations and hence not be in a position to effectively question the basis for decisions. They are also more likely to be unemployed, which fosters even fewer opportunities to have control over life experiences. These experiences taken together, therefore, are unlikely to provide a positive rationale for education within such families, hindering the development of positive and effective role models for young people.

- (b) Income and wealth – a lack of resources is likely to have a chronic impact on families' quality of housing, diet, educational resources and on the general requirements of family living. In addition poverty also manifests itself in social housing, often accompanied by high levels of mobility and hence changes in schools that are likely to have an impact on educational performance. Taken together these factors are likely to impact negatively on the ability of families to support young people in education.

- (c) Health – young people in poverty are more likely to experience vision problems that will then impact on their ability to function in school. Hearing and ear infections are also more likely to occur amongst those in poverty as are oral hygiene and tooth decay problems and asthma which may keep young people awake at night and may cause extended or frequent absences from school. Other examples include poor nutrition sustained over time, less adequate paediatric care, use of alcohol during and after pregnancy, more exposure to cigarette smoke, and low birth weights.

These separately may not be so important but taken together are likely to create a cumulative disadvantage as regards educational outcomes.

Neighbourhoods and ethnicity

It has long been accepted that particular minority ethnic populations are at greater risk of low educational outcomes (Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups [Swann Report], 1985; Pathak, 2000). The Department for Education and Skills (DfES, 2005) notes that Black Caribbean and White/Black Caribbean (mixed heritage) pupils are amongst the lowest-achieving pupils in the final years of statutory schooling (alongside Gypsy/Roma pupils and Travellers of Irish Heritage) with Indian, Chinese, White/Asian (mixed heritage) and Irish pupils being amongst those minority ethnic groups more likely to gain five or more A*–C (i.e. 'top grade') GCSEs. Amongst those lowest-achieving minority ethnic groups, the rates of special educational needs and permanent school exclusions are also higher than for other minority ethnic groups and whites (DfES, 2005). It has also long been established that particular minority ethnic groups are likely to suffer from higher levels of poverty and associated problems relative to majority white populations (Berthoud, 1998; Dorsett, 1998). As will be discussed elsewhere, some researchers have sought to locate the reasons for this within the individual, looking to genetic differences to help explain this apparent difference in educational achievement and attainment (e.g. Jensen, 1984). Others have rejected this view in its entirety and pointed to structural factors and stereotyping of ethnic minorities as a major cause for minority ethnic low achievement (Verma, 1985).

Others, however, have sought to locate and explain this apparent difference through articulating social differences that may exist between groups of different ethnic and racial origins. One such explanation comes from the notions of cultural and social capital differences whereby it is argued that differences in these capitals (alongside other forms of capital) amongst various ethnic and racial groups can result in different enabling or inhibiting factors towards educational attainment. For example, Kalmijn and Kraaykamp (1996) and Carter (2003) explore the way in which cultural capital as related to race could be playing a vital role in the closing gap between black and white students in schools in the USA and might explain part of what they see as the black–white convergence in schooling outcomes.

LaVeist and Bell McDonald (2002) suggest that in the USA, when whites and blacks (as defined by the authors) from similar areas are compared, white outcomes from education are at the very least the same as, if not worse than, black outcomes despite ‘race’ being seen as a key determinant of educational success. They argue that this may be to do with black communities sticking together across the social strata through well-formed social links (to do with race and or/faith), thus offering young poor blacks access to middle-class African Americans and with a consequent higher value placed on education as a way to do better in life. The authors suggest that this increased social and cultural capital can help offer black youth a legitimate example of the benefits of education and can thus serve as an educational advantage. The authors argue that their findings run counter to ideas of black underachievement through identity and culture which argue that many black youths, particularly males, view education as ‘acting white’. By way of contrast their research illustrates a higher level of aspiration towards education amongst African Americans than other accounts such as these suggest.

Patterns of ethnicity differ significantly, of course, between the USA and the UK. Moreover, in the UK there are also strong interactions between ethnicity and faith, and some studies have examined the role of faith communities in the development of social capital. Furbey *et al.* (2006) show that faith communities can contribute substantially to social capital gains in communities which can be seen to lead to higher educational attainment, lower crime levels, improved health and so forth.

Parenting and young people’s preparedness for, and support in, schools

Central to much writing on the link between education and poverty within a functionalist perspective is the level and type of parenting that young people experience with regard to preparedness for, and support in, schools. The research focuses on both the way parents interact with their children in preparing them more

or less fully for schooling and on the way parents and teachers view each other's support for the education of the children under their responsibility.

Desforges and Abouchaar (2003), reviewing the research literature on the relationship between parental involvement in children's education and educational outcomes, highlight a number of findings. First, parental involvement takes many forms including good parenting in the home with the provision of a secure and stable environment, intellectual stimulation, parent-child discussion, good models of constructive social and educational values and high aspirations relating to personal fulfilment and good citizenship; contact with schools to share information; participation in school events; participation in the work of the school; and participation in school governance. Second, the extent and form of parental involvement is strongly influenced by factors including family social class, maternal level of education, material deprivation, maternal psycho-social health, single-parent status and, to a lesser degree, by family ethnicity. Third, the extent of parental involvement diminishes as the child gets older and is strongly influenced at all ages by the child characteristically taking a very active mediating role. Fourth, parental involvement is strongly positively influenced by the child's level of attainment: the higher the level of attainment, the more parents get involved. Perhaps the most important finding is that parental involvement in the form of 'at-home good parenting' has a significant positive effect on children's achievement and adjustment even after all other factors shaping attainment have been taken out of the equation. In the primary age range the impact caused by different levels of parental involvement (in this extended sense) is much bigger than differences associated with variations in the quality of schools. The scale of the impact is evident across all social classes and all ethnic groups. However, differences between parents in their level of involvement were associated with social class, poverty, health and also with parental perception of their role and their levels of confidence in fulfilling it. In a similar vein, Scott *et al.* (2006), in their report on a controlled trial of a parenting programme in primary schools, offer evidence of parenting programmes leading to improved standards of parenting and child behaviour at school.

As highlighted at the beginning of this section, there are also studies that examine how parental engagement in pupils' education can be differently interpreted by families themselves and the teachers of pupils from those families. For example, Lawson's (2003) study addresses teachers' and parents' perceptions of the meanings and functions of parental involvement in their children's education. Analysis revealed that teachers and parents can have different perceptions of parental involvement. In his study of schools and families in one low-income, urban community, the author suggests that parental involvement can mean different things to teachers who tend to be more 'schoolcentric' as opposed to parents who can be more

'communitycentric'. In many respects teachers' prevailing orientations toward parents suggested that they were seen as having poor parenting skills and capabilities with regard to education. This orientation contributed to a fairly systematic silencing of the strengths, struggles and 'communitycentric' worldviews evident in the parents' explanations. The author argues that parental involvement is a limited and limiting concept in low-income ethnically concentrated communities because the notion is largely the domain of teachers within a narrow schoolcentric view. Lareau's (1987) study asks similar questions, particularly in relation to what schools ask of parents and the variations in teachers' expectations of parental involvement in elementary schooling. Their research suggests that there are a variety of factors that affected parents' participation in their children's education – parents' educational capabilities, their view of the appropriate division of labour between teachers and parents, the information they had about their children's schooling and the time, money and other material resources available in the home.

Lareau argues that 'the differences in social, cultural, and economic resources between the two sets of parents help explain differences in their responses to a variety of teacher requests to participate in schooling' (1987, p. 81). As schools tend to favour the school–family relationship model more likely to be accessed by the middle-class parents, those parents have an advantage over working-class children and parents. If schools were to promote different types of school–family relationships – it could be argued that 'middle-class' ways of doing things may then not act as a 'social profit'. Middle-class relations, according to Lareau, are not intrinsically better; rather they are just tied more closely to the school's aims and objectives. Lareau argues that the standard of a school's expectations should be problematised as not neutral. She states that 'these results suggest that social class position and class culture become a form of cultural capital in the school setting' (1987, p. 82) and argues that it is unfair that all schools ask the same from all parents regardless of social class. However, not all cultural resources are valued equally in contributing to this.

Schools operating in challenging circumstances

There are sets of literature at the meso level that are specifically located in schools and school markets. This broad range of work suggests that particular forms of schooling, school/educational markets and the particular types of compositional mixes of schools are key to explaining different educational outcomes. Much of the work that focuses on in-school issues falls under the umbrella terms 'school effectiveness' and 'school improvement' (SESI) and in the early stages of its development was predicated on two interrelated hypotheses. One was that educational outcomes were not *entirely* determined by social background. The

other (foundational for the movement but less often made explicit) was that it was at the level of the individual educational institution – notably, the school – that the link between background and outcomes could most effectively be broken. For many years, therefore, work in SESI focused on identifying the factors in school organisation and leadership, in classroom practice and teacher behaviour, and in policies impacting on these which could generate positive outcomes from schools regardless of the backgrounds of students. Crucially, there was an assumption that these factors would be common to all schools. Although schools in disadvantaged urban contexts were recognised as presenting significant problems, the assumption was that it was the schools themselves – and, in particular, the practices of their teachers, headteachers and governing local education authorities (LEAs) – which created the problem rather than simply the social context in which those schools found themselves.

Perhaps the most extensive literature review that examined international research evidence on school improvement in socio-economically disadvantaged areas was that conducted by Muijs *et al.* (2004). They start by acknowledging that schools in difficult and challenging circumstances have received increasing policy, and to some extent research, attention and that these schools ‘must exceed’ what might be termed as ‘normal efforts’ because of the increased socio-economic problems in the wider areas they serve. In their review, a number of themes emerged including the following:

- A focus on teaching and learning – academic focus is more prevalent in effective low-SES than in effective high-SES schools.³
- Leadership – effective leaders exercise indirect but powerful influence on school effectiveness, particularly through distributed forms of leadership.
- Creating a positive school culture – this includes developing a blame-free culture, continuity in approach, setting high expectations, developing coherence and open communication, minimising the high staff turnover and enhancing teachers’ beliefs in the effectiveness of proposed interventions.

Finally, the authors stress that it is not enough to create improvement, but it is crucial that every effort is made to sustain the improvement.

The introduction of markets into education as a way of improving school performance was brought about by the Education Reform Act of 1988. Markets were seen as a key tool for improving school performance, particularly in areas of urban challenge and where, according to a number of commentators, many schools were

underperforming. One of its main functions was to make schools compete with each other for 'customers', i.e. pupils, and it was hoped that schools that did not make the grade would eventually improve or close. As a key part of this, the Act introduced a national curriculum and standardised tests whereby the results, published in the public domain, could then be used by parents as consumers of education to make choices on the best school to which to send their children.

Amongst the strongest advocates of market initiatives are scholars such as James Tooley who argues that market approaches to education 'bring in delivery mechanisms that are responsive to what parents and students require, meet the needs of all, including the most disadvantaged, and succeed in raising educational standards' (Tooley *et al.*, 2003, p. 5). Alongside advocates of full market forces in the field of education, there are also those who argue that quasi-markets are better placed to improve the costs and efficiency of state-provided services such as education (Le Grand and Bartlett, 1993). Bradley and Taylor (2002) suggest that quasi-markets in education have resulted in parents taking advantage of choice, with schools with 'good' exam results improving their enrolment numbers vis-à-vis other local schools with lower results. However, Gorard's review of market reforms suggests that 'reforms are likely to be both less effective than originally suggested by some, and less damaging than feared by others' (Gorard, 1997).

School improvement and school social context

There has been a growing number of studies that have examined the school social context as it impacts on the ability of schools to drive up improvements or minimise drop-outs (Crowder and South, 2003). For example, Hallinger and Murphy's (1986) research in the USA, while acknowledging school effectiveness variables, goes beyond the school effectiveness perspective to stress the importance of school social context and how certain variables vary according to this context. Reflecting some of the above literatures on the differential nature of parental engagement with young people and with schools, they highlight how parental involvement, parental expectations and attitudes to education and preferences on the curriculum may vary according to the social context of the school. In particular they found that the school's social context influenced the breadth of the curriculum, the allocation and use of instructional time, the instructional leadership role of the principal, the nature of the school reward system, and the type of expectations embedded in school policies and practices. The implications for intervention are that well-publicised school effectiveness factors should not be treated in a homogeneous way but should be applied with consideration according to each school's specific social setting.

There have also been other studies that have examined schools in challenging circumstances that sensitise SESI to issues of context and mix. For example, Lupton's study (2005) summarises the distinctive features of the contexts of high-poverty schools and illustrates how these contexts impact on the processes and practices of the schools. In terms of the distinctive features of these schools in high-poverty contexts, Lupton argues that they are characterised by unpredictability in the working environment. She argues that although these schools are differentiated, they have in common many things not shared by schools in less disadvantaged areas such as low prior attainment and poverty manifesting itself in poor health and diets, lack of uniforms, equipment and parental contributions for enrichment activities. Lupton also argues that these schools tend to have an emotionally charged atmosphere with children often sharing this with teachers and, as such, the teachers she interviewed talked of 'mothering' and 'caring' for the children and the comparison with 'social work' was also made (Lupton, 2005, pp. 594–5).

In addition these contexts impacted upon teachers' recruitment, retention and behaviour. For example, schools in challenging contexts had difficulties in staff recruitment and retention owing not only to the context but to the perceived underperformance of the school and bad local press. There was evidence of pressures on teacher performance whereby daily 'firefighting' would divert attention away from teaching and learning and could lead to lowered expectations of themselves as teachers as well as of the pupils. Work by Thrupp (1999) points to how particular mixtures of young people in schools from different socio-economic backgrounds can suggest 'tipping points' where schools either struggle to achieve educational success or make improvements. This is complemented by Levačić and Woods (2002) (see also Woods and Levačić, 2002), who looked at the differences in the rate at which schools improved their GCSE results between 1991 and 1998. Their analysis revealed that two variables were found to have the most impact on examination improvement: (a) a low concentration of social disadvantage relative to other local schools (this is the most influential variable in explaining improvement in exam results over time); and (b) starting from a low base level of GCSE results. They also argued that schools with high levels of social disadvantage were likely to be dually handicapped as their relative social disadvantage tended to get worse over time.

Schooling and multi-agency working

A growing body of research has highlighted the problems of providing effective public services to families and communities that are experiencing growing levels of social exclusion. The arguments here revolve around how professionally and

organisationally separate mechanisms for delivering public sector services in challenging areas have historically failed to recognise the joined-up nature of the problems that many families and communities were experiencing. These reports are suggestive of the need for new forms of multi-agency working. The multi-agency approach to tackling poverty offers the justification that problems that are complex and multifaceted need multi-agency partnership solutions that can harness the strengths and expertise of several different welfare perspectives (Milbourne *et al.*, 2003; Atkinson *et al.*, 2005). Such an approach has been characterised as an attempt to offer 'joined-up solutions' to 'joined-up problems' (Milbourne *et al.*, 2003). Multi-agency working to tackle poverty-related issues in educational settings commonly include collaborations among departments, organisations and professionals from the educational, social work and health sectors. Examples on a large scale include Education Action Zones, Health Action Zones, the New Deal, Centres for Excellence, Sure Start, Connexions, Children's Funds and Children's Trusts. Evidence of successful multi-agency working is provided by Webb and Vulliamy (2004) who examine local multi-agency collaborations aimed at tackling exclusion in secondary schools. Overall, the programme was rated as successful with six out of seven schools enjoying benefits on various levels, for schools, youngsters and their families. Among the most commonly reported benefits were improved home-school communication, additional support for youngsters within the schools, practical advice on behavioural management for parents as well as support for the whole family, mobilising other agencies into collaborating and providing services and cost-effectiveness.

Many studies also examine issues that assist or hinder the development of multi-agency working. These can be categorised in the following ways:

- (a) Critical success factors include the need for managers to have very clear and unambiguous ideas of the kind of programme to be established; the need for team members to have a professional predisposition to bottom-up approaches that assists them to enable and empower disadvantaged communities; and non-hierarchical, flat management structures based on mutual respect (Milbourne *et al.*, 2003; Bagley *et al.*, 2004).
- (b) Hindrances include the tensions between collaborative and competitive approaches and the consequent pressures for organisations to act in their own interests by, for example, pursuing higher places in educational league tables (Machell, 1999; Milbourne *et al.*, 2003). Difficulties are also highlighted in terms of networking and cultural capital brought from previous interpersonal partnerships (Milbourne *et al.*, 2003). Related to these issues is the difficulty for practitioners to operate at a level that is highly sophisticated and to juggle demands that are beyond their traditional professional roles (Engestrom, 2001; Anning, 2005).

The functionalist perspective and the micro focus

Explanations that are located at the micro level are summarised in Box 3 and include concerns about identity and its links to actions taken by young people in a world of choice possibilities (Giddens, 1991; Beck, 1992) and the notions of hereditary differences particularly located around IQ (Herrnstein and Murray, 1994; Rutter, 2003).

Box 3 Functionalism and the micro focus

- The individual is seen as having 'choice' in an era of globalisation. The opportunity to shape one's path with regard to education suggests the need to enhance particular forms of social capital that might bridge young people into experiencing and hence valuing education. This approach recognises the importance of appropriately developed and culturally embedded mentoring programmes in order to provide opportunities for broadening networks of influence for young people.
- Some research focuses on notions of constrained inherited capability and intelligence that preordain an individual's ability to succeed in society. This provides few opportunities to ameliorate the position an individual has due to the inherited capabilities with which he or she is born. This approach has been heavily criticised methodologically, theoretically and morally.

The individual, identity and choice

Issues of individual identity and choice have been examined by sociologically informed researchers. They reflect a view that the emergence of a 'risk' society with complex and uncertain pathways to adulthood generates a plethora of choice options. Here the discussion is about how the dynamics of globalisation that have compressed time and space and that have broken down the structuring influences of traditional bureaucratic capitalist organisations (Sennett, 2006), community organisations, the church and extended families have resulted in greater opportunities for young people to shape their life chances. However, these potential life chances come with an attendant and associated array of extended risks and opportunities. The result of this for young people is that they are viewed, and view themselves, as being personally responsible for their actions. Their actions will then be reflected via the networks of influence of which they choose to be a part and that will then shape ultimately how and whether they get on in education. These arguments suggest that notions of social class have declined and class identities have been dissipated and replaced by 'individualised social inequality' (Beck, 1992, p. 88). The implications of this for education are described below:

Schooling means choosing and planning one's own educational life course. The educated person becomes the producer of his or her own labour situation, and in this way, of his or her social biography ... Depending on its duration and contents, education makes possible at least a certain degree of self-discovery and reflection. The educated person incorporates reflexive knowledge of the conditions and prospects of modernity, and in this way becomes an agent of reflexive modernisation.

(Beck, 1992, p. 93)

Perhaps the most important set of studies that have examined the impact of poverty and disadvantage on identity and choice amongst young people has been research that has examined skills formation, career choices and the transition experiences of young people as they progress from adolescence and schooling to adulthood and work. For example, Brown (1999) and Coffield (2000) see skills formation as being more about the development of the social capacity for learning, innovation and productivity than it is about the development of purely technical skills. As this report highlights earlier, the social capacity of learning skills in various informal and formal contexts can be closely aligned to the development of social and cultural capital. This is a process that creates an embedded cultural 'know-how' that is also enhanced by the resources accrued by individuals from others through their high-trust social relations in varied networks of influence (Ball, 2003). In addition, and reflecting some of the insights developed by Rudd (1997) and Archer and Yamashita (2003), research has shown that life chances for young people can be both constrained and enhanced by the informal learning and identity-forming experiences developed through networks of relations that are central to an individual's life experiences (Raffo and Reeves, 2000; Raffo, 2003). In addition there is evidence that 'turning points' (Hodkinson *et al.*, 1996) in young people's lives can occur when there is a coming together of various new networks of experiences which provide a weight of evidence, influence and support that then creates a new confident understanding for the individual with the capacity to inform new actions.

These examples suggest that the ability of individuals to meet the changing structural demands of globalisation are dependent on the quantity and quality of access to appropriate material and symbolic resources and information. However, for those in disadvantaged situations the reality is that social relations are often linked to high-risk situations (for example, a lack of employment opportunities or stable home environments) without appropriate material and symbolic resources such as income or adult role models to support them. The challenge for on-going policy development in this area, therefore, is one of elaborating how particular systems and institutions, such as school careers curricula and Connexions, can develop practices that are

sensitive to how young people develop their various 'capitals' and how these can be enhanced to enable more effective choices about education to be made.

Genetics and IQ

In contrast to the above research that locates change and development in young people via individual choice and experience, a differently constituted body of research suggests that the link between education and poverty can be traced back to individual genetic and inherited differences. The explanation for low educational success of such theories is that young people who do not succeed educationally are those that have inherited poor cognitive capabilities such as low IQ and dysfunctional behavioural traits. The correlation between education and poverty is premised on the notion that those in poverty are more likely to show low cognitive and psychological capabilities which, in turn, are associated with them in living in poverty. Poverty is concentrated in particular areas because there is a tendency for the reproduction of such inherited traits and capabilities between people of similar genetic make-up who live in such areas. The work of Jensen (1984) perhaps most strongly articulates this theory. He argues that there is such a thing as 'g' which means general intelligence. This, he asserts, can be measured through particular forms of tests. Jensen's work is particularly provocative as he argues that tests which measure 'g' show different levels of general intelligence amongst different ethnic groups. Jensen argues that evidence is overwhelmingly supportive of 'g' but that there are two main reasons why this may not be politically or socially acceptable:

- It doesn't allow for the possibility of raising children's intelligence.
- It doesn't offer readily acceptable explanations for race/ethnic group differences in test scores.

The later work of Herrnstein and Murray (1994) and their thesis in their book *The Bell Curve* is strongly linked to Jensen's perspective. They argue that intelligence exists and is accurately measurable across racial, language and national boundaries. Intelligence is one of the most, if not *the* most, important correlative factor in economic and social success in general in America, and is becoming more important. According to this school of thought, intelligence is largely (40 per cent to 80 per cent) genetically heritable and there are racial and ethnic differences in IQ that cannot be sufficiently explained by environmental factors such as nutrition, social policy or racism. They argue that nobody has so far been able to manipulate IQ long term to any significant degree through changes in environmental factors, and in light of their failure such approaches are becoming less promising. Finally they argue that

as a country the USA has been in denial of these facts, and in light of these findings a better public understanding of the nature of intelligence and its social correlates is necessary to guide future policy decisions.

In terms of legitimacy and claims to knowledge, both these studies and the particular perspective underlying them have been heavily criticised methodologically, statistically and morally. For example, Holtzman (2002) sets about assessing the claim by Jensen and Herrnstein and Murray that educational low achievement or underachievement is due to hereditary class differences in IQ. He suggests that the reality is much more complicated than this picture would have you believe. He suggests that genes interact with other genes and that a wide variety of environmental factors and thus inherited social class differences are a myth perpetuated by and acting as a justification by ruling groups for their power and privilege. Holtzman explains the principles of genetics and how genes function to show it cannot explain the perpetuation of complex traits: 'inherited genetic factors cannot provide the explanation of social organization' (2002, p. 529).

The functionalist perspective and integrating explanations

There are perspectives that are more integrating in their analyses. They may, for example, start at the micro level but interlock with factors at the meso and macro levels. Here much of the work focuses on bio-psychological perspectives that focus on human and self-development and the interactive influences of genetics and environment in the contexts and relationships within which this development is enhanced or constrained. This is summarised in Box 4.

Box 4 Functionalism and integrating explanations

- Integrating literatures start from a developmental psychological viewpoint and then build levels of theory on how particular variables at different levels of experience away from the individual create risk or resilience in the lives of young people and consequently their ability to actively engage with education.
- Research highlights particular risk factors, for example family characteristics linked to issues such as maternal depression, violent neighbourhoods or negative peer group socialising. Some research identifies moderators to risk, particularly the development of a warm caring relationship with a significant adult or within a caring community. Other studies examine the

Continued

way factors experienced at a distance from the lives of families, such as educational qualifications, are then mediated through particular forms of lived experiences for those families that then result in particular levels of educational achievement for young people associated with those families. Various macro-, meso- and micro-level variables are then examined within an integrated theory often referred to as a bioecological systems theory that synthesises many of the different risk and protective factors.

- Such studies are complemented by the early child development research that focuses on the importance of these issues in early childhood and that recognises aspects of neurobiology. This reflects the more sophisticated work undertaken by geneticists who have examined the environmental impact on genes and in particular how poor environments can biologically alter capability.

Risk, resilience and a bioecological systems framework

Writers from within a developmental psychology research perspective propose an integrating approach. Although primarily concerned with an examination of those risk factors that impact on the micro and in particular the individual psychological development of young people, they are clear that many of these are both mediated and moderated by factors associated with a meso focus located in families, peer groups and the community more generally. There are, for example, certain attributes associated with poverty that are experienced at first hand by the individual. The literature refers to these as proximal factors and they are exemplified by issues such as stressed parenting and experiences of community violence that are likely to create risk for individual development. At the same time certain research writings within this perspective highlight how certain protective factors such as caring and warm adult relationships can at times moderate some of these risk factors.

The motivation for much of this work is to find ways of developing intervention strategies that might create resilience in young people facing adverse situations. Writers have identified a number of distal (at a distance from the individual and not directly experienced by the individual) and proximal (experienced directly) risk factors that either by themselves or concurrently influence differentially the general self-development of young people and by implication the probability of their educational success. At the same time as describing the links between risk and individual vulnerability much research also examines those variables (and the interventions that might generate those protective variables) that create resilience against risk. So, for example, the 'at risk' factors include both distal and proximal factors.

Proximal

- community violence
- maternal depression and anxiety disorders possibly linked to potential drug abuse
- parental divorce/bereavement
- negative peer group socialising influences
- parental stress related to economic well-being, e.g. housing, access to resources
- particular processes in families and disturbed family functioning – hostile family environments, effects of maltreatment, ineffective parenting, unresolved discord, insufficient child monitoring and supervision, lack of close relationship with one or both parents
- racism and discrimination in the lives of minority ethnic families (this can also operate as a distal factor in relation to broader patterns in society)
- low individual IQ
- personality traits, temperaments and disorders
- gender
- risk, agency and self-development.

Distal

- negative neighbourhood influences
- levels of social isolation for families in particular communities
- inner-city deprivation.

An example of a study that examines the proximal risk factors associated with parental mental health issues and poverty is provided by Ellenbogen and Hodgins (2004). This research explores the impact on children's psychosocial functioning of parents with high levels of neuroticism (e.g. anxiety, anger, or depression) who live in poverty. Their results suggested that high neuroticism in parents living in poverty

and with major affective disorders (mental disorders that primarily affect mood and interfere with the activities of daily living) is associated with inadequate parenting practices and the creation of stressful family environments. These factors are subsequently related to psychosocial problems among offspring that then result in poor educational engagement for those young people.

Other studies, rather than focusing on the impact of proximal risk factors per se, instead focus on the mediators of risk and, in particular, how distal factors can be mediated by proximal factors. So, for example, Feinstein *et al.* (2004) examine how parental educational qualifications can act as a distal factor with regard to the future capabilities of young people in families. He demonstrates how qualifications can act as a risk for young people if parents lack them, or be protective if parents have them. He then makes the links between distal factors and the various family characteristics that manifest themselves as proximal factors, such as parental attitudes and capabilities in supporting young people with their education. These proximal factors are then seen as key influences in the way young people can, or want to, interact with education.

Others studies, instead of focusing purely on risk, examine how childhood resilience factors can moderate risk. Luthar and Zelazo (2003), for example, examine a number of proximal factors at the meso level that can moderate and help protect young people against some of the risks highlighted above. Their main finding is that resilience rests, fundamentally, on relationships – particularly in families, peer groups and schools. For example, during childhood years, early relationships with primary caregivers affect several emerging psychological attributes and influence the negotiation of major developmental tasks. Accordingly, serious disruptions in the early relationships with caregivers – in the form of physical, sexual or emotional abuse – strongly impair the chances of resilient adaptation later in life. Luthar and Zelazo are clear that good relationships are built on warmth and support on the one hand and appropriate control and discipline on the other. In the context of families, these skills/attributes are important aspects of parenting and there is a recognition that these skills may be difficult to sustain in the face of major life risks such as chronic poverty and ill health. In addition, where communities are at risk of violence or discrimination, resilience for individuals and families may only be fostered if these are clearly combated to ensure physical and emotional safety. However, it is also the case that the community can provide protective factors when a child's own parents are, for whatever reasons, partially or wholly incapacitated.

Others again suggest that certain distal and proximal risk factors are so endemic in areas of chronic poverty that there are few possibilities for protective factors to mediate or moderate positively. The focus in these studies tends to be at a macro

and meso level. For example, Cauce *et al.* (2003) in their work noted that the riskier the setting, the fewer the protective factors likely to be present. They point to areas of concentrated poverty in inner-city USA where studies have explored the level of observed or experienced violence, individual and peer group dysfunctional behaviour, high-risk sexual behaviour or substance abuse and poor educational outcomes. For Cauce *et al.*, the very nature of deprived inner-city neighbourhoods, the dangers they pose and the sheer grind of daily living under the onslaught of poverty-related stress strongly militate against the development of parenting skills and other protective factors.

These examples of studies that examine risk and resilience focus on the macro, meso and micro either separately or in a more integrated way and are complemented by other studies that emanate from within an ecological systems approach that attempts to model the linkages between the systems at various levels as they impact on the individual. Bronfenbrenner's theory (1979) defines complex 'layers' of environment, each having an effect on a child's development. This theory has recently been renamed 'bioecological systems theory' to emphasise that a child's own biology is a primary environment fuelling his or her development. A good example of the use of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological approach is Eamon's (2001) review of the effects of poverty on children's socio-emotional development. She suggests that the nested structures of the ecological environment proposed by Bronfenbrenner's model provide a useful framework for examining theories of the effects of economic deprivation on children's socio-emotional development. She highlights that within the microsystem of the home, stress-coping theory and family process models frequently are used to explain the socio-emotional developmental effects of poverty. The stressful life events or chronic strains caused by economic deprivation appear to affect children's socio-emotional functioning by eroding parental coping behaviours, creating psychological distress and marital discord, and resulting in parenting practices that are uninvolved, inconsistent, emotionally unresponsive and harsh. Her review suggests that practitioners such as teachers and social workers who work with low-income families and children with socio-emotional problems should assess parental psychological distress, coping behaviours, the quality of the marital or partner relationship and parenting practices to assist in selecting appropriate interventions. In addition she highlights how parent-child interactions may not always account for the relation between poverty and children's socio-emotional functioning. Hence poverty may result in children's socio-emotional problems by impeding or influencing peer relations, or because they attend low-quality schools or are exposed to unsupportive school environments. Her review of research in this area suggests that increasing support in parents' social networks and communities may decrease parental psychological distress and improve parenting practices.

Assessing the child's exposure to violence and associations with dysfunctional peer interaction also provides information for intervening at the individual, family or community level. Consistent with Bronfenbrenner's conceptualisations, researchers and social workers frequently recognise that developmental processes may be contingent on a particular culture or subculture, including shared beliefs and knowledge, and on available economic resources and opportunities. Social policies that increase access to economic resources and good quality housing, neighbourhoods, schools, nutrition and health care are likely to enhance processes in the more immediate system levels and result in better developmental outcomes. Historical and life events, and individual change across the life span, also have important influences on child development. Although chronic poverty has detrimental effects on children's socio-emotional development, income loss appears to be particularly disruptive to parent-child interactions. Social policies that educate families concerning these risks and ensure families have access to mental health services and economic resources may help to stabilise the parent-child interactions that appear to have detrimental effects on the socio-emotional functioning of both younger and older children.

Genetic and environmental interfaces

More sophisticated models associated with genetics are represented in new work that crosses the boundary between the individual and the environment and examines the interface between biological processes and environmental factors that generate psychopathological responses.⁴ Of particular interest here is what Rutter (2003) refers to as gene-environment interaction (GxE), which refers to genetically influenced differences in individuals' sensitivity to particular environmental factors, and gene-environment correlations (rGE), which refer to genetically influenced differences in individuals' exposure to particular environmental factors. His view is that until very recently, much genetic research was concerned with partitioning population variance into effects attributable to genes and those due to environmental influences, with the implicit assumptions that these effects summed to 100 per cent and that no others could be involved. According to Rutter, both sets of assumptions are mistaken. Segregating genes (i.e. those that vary among individuals) and specific environments does not account for all variance. Biological maturation (genetically programmed by genes present in all people) may influence resilience. In other words, both normal and abnormal psychological development will be influenced not only by genetic (G) and environmental (E) acting independently and additively but also by a combination of G and E interacting through both GxE and rGE. Examples of this include notions of neuroplasticity⁵ where there is structural and functional reorganisation of the brain in response to environmental inputs such as experiences

of violence. For example, there is much evidence that environmental factors over time can influence children's inherited attributes including IQ and individual temperaments. Hence young people living in unsupportive and poor stimulating environments are likely to see their IQ diminish over time. There is a view, therefore, that heritability does not imply intractability but that risk factors associated with certain environmental elements can have very negative influences on apparently heritable traits. DiPietro (2000) sets about evaluating the current state of knowledge that relates to early child development in brain research and in particular the potential misuse of such information. For example, she suggests that focusing too heavily on using science results in early academic and science enrichment programmes as a particular indicator of childhood development obscures the potential effects of other factors such as the relative burden of poverty. An emphasis on intellectual functioning therefore misses the most compelling evidence on the role of early social environments in mediating the establishment of neural networks that regulate children's responses to stress and the capacity for self-control and self-regulatory and coping behaviours.

This work is supported by Locurto (1990) who illustrates the potential malleability of IQ drawing on adoptive family studies. He argues that studies from psychology and science have neglected issues around the malleability of IQ and that evidence shows that IQ is malleable to some extent, but he argues that some paradoxical problems exist. To illustrate this point he argues how people have become taller over time or how people on average do better in IQ tests over time to show at least simplistic evidence that genes change over time. Locurto argues against simple environmentalism on the one hand and simple hereditary arguments on the other. He asserts that available evidence on the interaction of environmental and genetic factors is not entirely clear. Evidence, he suggests, currently shows that approximately one third of the influences on IQ are neither genetic nor environmental. Instead they are viewed by Locurto as being more complex and possibly linked to within-family differences.

Early childhood development perspectives

There are various literatures that have specifically focused on early childhood development in the context of dramatic transformations in the social and economic circumstances under which families with young children live. Much of this literature reflects the US Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development report *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Child Development* (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000). This report draws together research findings from neurobiology, behavioural sciences and social sciences and covers

the period from before birth until kindergarten. It includes efforts to understand how early experience affects all aspects of development – from the neural circuitry of the maturing brain, to the expanding network of a child's social relationships, to both the enduring and the changing cultural values of the society in which parents raise children. There is a recognition of the scientific gains that have generated a much deeper appreciation of (a) the importance of early life experiences, as well as the inseparable and highly interactive influence of genetics and environment, on the development of the brain and the unfolding of human behaviour; (b) the central role of early relationships as a source of either support and adaptation or risk and dysfunction; (c) the powerful capabilities, complex emotions and essential social skills that develop during the earliest years of life; and (d) the capacity to increase the odds of favourable development outcomes through planned interventions.

What the general findings suggest is that there are four overarching themes that link into numerous core concepts of development. These themes are that (1) all children are born wired for feelings and ready to learn, (2) early environments matter and nurturing relationships are vital, (3) society is changing and the needs of young people are not being addressed and (4) interactions among early childhood science, policy and practice are problematic and demand rethinking. Perhaps most importantly there are a number of implications for how poverty intervenes in these four themes and hence influences development and educational achievement and success. With regard to the first theme, what the literature suggests is that development in the early years is both highly robust and highly vulnerable. In other words, what happens during the first months and years of life matters a lot, not because this period of development provides the blueprint for adult well-being, but because it establishes either a sturdy or a fragile foundation for what follows. However, there are also clear signs that these early development opportunities are strongly associated with social and economic circumstances that are predictive of subsequent academic performance.

With regard to the second theme, again there are risks associated with poverty. As highlighted in previous sections of the report that focus on explanations generated within a functionalist perspective, poverty can generate parental stress and mental health problems and can locate families in demoralised and violent neighbourhoods. Circumstances characterised by multiple, interrelated and cumulative risk factors impose particularly heavy burdens during early childhood and are most likely to incur substantial costs to both the individual and society in future. In addition there is evidence from behavioural and neurobiological sciences that documents a range of environmental threats associated with poverty that impact on the central nervous system. With regard to the third theme, social and economic transformations are posing serious challenges to the efforts of parents and others to strike a healthy

balance between spending time with their children, securing their economic needs, and protecting them from the many risks beyond the home that may have an adverse impact on their health and development.

Synthesising the literature from a functionalist perspective – implications for policy and practice

Explanations that focus on the dynamics that generate social exclusion highlight how certain individuals, families and communities are marginalised and potentially made poorer by a lack of access to education. There are structural barriers that result from a lack of resources for neighbourhoods and for individuals and families that live in those neighbourhoods. This lack of resources is linked to unemployment or poorly paid employment and is exacerbated by the poor infrastructures of health, housing and transport in such neighbourhoods. This perspective is suggestive of the need for educational intervention strategies to deal with barriers to educational access, aspiration, progression and opportunities for lifelong learning. By enabling educational success, young people, families and communities experiencing the greatest levels of disadvantage and poverty will be provided with opportunities to develop and demonstrate capability and therefore access the new opportunities that globalisation brings to the UK. In addition we have described explanations that have highlighted the risk factors of experiencing poverty at the meso level for families, communities and peer and ethnic groups and some of the challenges that schools and other public services in such areas experience. At the individual micro level there has also been an exploration of identity and the role of individual choice as well as the constraining ideas of inherited individual capabilities. Perhaps most interesting have been explanations that have attempted to integrate the macro, meso and micro around notions of risk and resilience with approaches that advocate a bioecological systems approach and one that integrates neurobiology, behaviour and social sciences through a focus on early childhood development.

What these explanations suggest is the need for a range of interventions at the macro, meso and micro levels. These are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2 Functional interventions

Level	Functional interventions
Macro	Local and national economic development strategies
Meso	Support for parents and parenting as knowledge and developable skills Multi-agency working to support individuals, families, and communities Improved school effectiveness in areas of poverty and disadvantage
Micro	Recognition and development of positive and productive relationships within communities and schools

With regard to the macro issues highlighted, the evidence appears to point to the need for strategies that would maximise the opportunities for wealth creation inherent in globalisation, while minimising the sharp polarisations which globalisation seems to entail. This seems to imply particular sorts of national economic development policies, complemented by local strategies in the more economically vulnerable areas. These might well be accompanied by redistributive and 'safety-net' policies, such as child poverty reduction strategies and financial support mechanisms for young people and their families. In addition, at the meso focus of analysis, the difficulties of providing appropriate parenting for those families living in poverty suggest the need for effective family support. Whether current models of parenting classes and parenting networks are appropriate is a moot point. However, as the child development literature suggests, interventions might profitably focus on the pre-school and early school ages.

The evidence points to a need both to develop the appropriate values and norms in young people for the importance of education and to help parents provide support for education. It is also clear from the risk and resilience studies that interventions which create protective factors for young people in their immediate social context or create opportunities at a distance that help to moderate various immediate risk factors can be implemented at various stages in a young person's development. What this literature suggests is that young people do have agency and can construct paths that enable the developments of new identities and, consequently, of what they want to achieve from life and through education. The various research studies point to those factors that appear to influence this agency. For example, close, warm, adult relationships or role models are seen as being protective for individuals experiencing a number of risk factors. These could be in the guise of effective teacher–student relationships, through close mentoring roles or via the aspirations of parents. What these relationships can do is enable young people to re-imagine their identities, desires and choices with regard to education. There are also indications that identities developed through being part of positive networks of support, influence and reciprocity are also important frameworks for explaining the differences in experiences and response that particular individual and neighbourhoods make to living in poverty. Providing young people with supportive networks might well be part of a wider set of strategies to develop social capital in neighbourhoods of disadvantage.

This body of research also highlights how environmental factors can have an impact on inherited attributes such as IQ. There seems to be good evidence that an enriched environment with sustained levels of stimulus and support for young people can, over time, improve IQ, and that, conversely, deprived environments with low levels of stimulus and support can reduce IQ levels. It seems that living in poverty

is likely to result in impoverished environments that are insufficient to maintain IQ levels. The policy implication is that young people living in such environments might need to be targeted for enriched and sustained opportunities for enhanced and stimulating experiences to compensate for environmental deficits.

In addition, there are factors at the meso level that reflect the multifaceted nature of some of the problems that young people and their families face. They point to the need for public services, including education, to work in a multi- or inter-agency way so that joined-up solutions are developed with families and young people that deal with their holistic concerns. However, there also issues about the nature of schools, schooling and educational markets in areas of disadvantage that are also potentially creating problems for educational success for young people and their families who live in poverty. These include the need to examine compositional mixes of pupils in schools, the types of neighbourhoods that schools are located in, the effective leadership styles and approaches that succeed in schools in challenging circumstances, and the teaching ethos and curriculum provision that most successfully retain and generate educational success in such schools.

4 The mapping framework, research literature and policy implications within a socially critical perspective

The socially critical position assumes that education can both challenge existing power structures and enable democratic development. This suggests that education in its current configuration should not be seen as an unproblematic good and that its benefits cannot be taken for granted as either neutral or benign. On the contrary, many commentators on educational policy and practice, as it has historically evolved, suggest that education is variously implicated in creating, reproducing and enhancing inequality. They suggest that education was never developed to be enabling and educative for all young people in a manner that might challenge existing social structures.

Almost all of the explanations and suggested interventions based on a socially critical perspective appear to be at the macro and meso levels. At the macro level research focuses on global economic structures and power inequalities that result in poorer educational outcomes for certain class, gender and ethnic groups. Meso-level analysis tends to focus on the possibilities of changed power relations in the classroom or between school and community, or on reviewing 'emancipatory' curricular interventions. Since many of the writings from a socially critical perspective focus on the social there is little in the literature where the main level of analysis is on the individual and at the micro level. Certain radical developmental psychologists have worked on the interface between a focus on the individual and the impact of community but often in response to what they see as a conservative bias in much mainstream developmental psychology (Holzman, 1997). In addition there is the work by Davies (2006) and Youdell (2006) who draw on the philosophical work of Judith Butler, focusing on the way in which the individual psyche develops. They argue that identities are heavily shaped by external power relations which constrain or enhance the possibilities that individuals can achieve. Their ideas suggest that educators and policymakers need to take responsibility for the way in which taken-for-granted practices and discourses can limit individuals' life chances. Some of these ideas are taken further in the meso section below. Since this area of conceptualisation is limited and, when it does focus on education and poverty, tends to leach out into other levels of analysis, we have decided not to have a separate section in the report that focuses exclusively on the socially critical perspective at the micro level.

The socially critical perspective and the macro focus

A summary of the key points is in Box 5.

Box 5 Socially critical perspectives and the macro

- An identification of global and national social and economic structures that determine educational provision and achievement.
- An examination of how power structures impact on the lives and educational experiences of particular groups.
- Critical analysis of functional policy interventions such as choice and the market.

Education as integral to reproducing social disadvantage and poverty

Maguire's (2006) re-examination of studies in education and poverty from the 1960s and beyond offers an illuminating recent statement that reflects a socially critical perspective. Essentially, education is seen as a 'classed' phenomenon where the curriculum, the preparedness and support of young people for such a curriculum and the way the curriculum is structured and implemented through schools offer advantages to the middle classes at the expense of the working class and the poor. It therefore reflects the existing inequalities in society rather than offering a way out of those inequalities. Maguire quotes Williams (1973) on the way education is implicated in social reproduction:

Yet we speak sometimes as if education were a fixed abstraction, a settled body of teaching and learning, and as if the only problem it presents us is that of distribution ... when this selection of content is examined more closely, it will be seen to be one of the decisive factors affecting its distribution.

(Williams, 1973, p. 145)

Maguire is characteristic of work that underpins a socially critical perspective in concluding that the role of education in society is not about equality and social justice but rather about normalising exclusion and failure for some and success for others.

Maguire and other researchers within this perspective take a somewhat different view on the relationship between globalisation and education than do commentators from a functionalist perspective. Globalisation is not just a problem – and a source of social problems – to be managed so that education can produce its intended

benefits. Rather, as Lipman (2004) has noted, education is explicitly tied to global economic competitiveness and into the 'normalising discourse' – the network of language and ideas that presents the effects of globalisation as inevitable – that sustains globalisation. Lipman quotes Rizvi and Lingard (2000) who suggest that educational policy is linked to national economic planning with the skills of a nation highlighted as being important to attract capital to specific places. Curricula are more and more being directed towards the economy, particularly those for the working class or poor, through a variety of school-to-work programmes in the USA or enhanced vocational programmes in schools and post-16 colleges in the UK. Ideologically educational policy is being linked to national economic planning through human capital development discourses that define education as workforce preparation. As Ozga (2000) notes, this 'economising education' is placing more and more emphasis on standards and testing that are eroding the concept of education. Morrow and Torres argue:

The overall effect is to shift education towards competence-based skills at the expense of the more fundamental forms of critical competence required for autonomous living and active citizenship.
(Morrow and Torres, 2000, p. 47)

Lipman, in challenging the prevailing 'truth' that capitalist globalisation and neoliberal policies are necessary and inevitable, continues by suggesting that education policy is the product of specific economic and social agendas rather than being a necessary outgrowth of an inevitable economic and social order. Although neoliberal social policy is presented as the inexorable result of the logic of economic imperatives, it is in fact the result of an 'ideological convergence – most notable in the English-speaking world – upon neo-liberal educational recipes as a specific response to globalisation and international competition' (Morrow and Torres, 2000, p. 45).

Other critical studies examine the power dynamics within particular places and at particular times that manifest themselves structurally, economically and culturally on particular groups of people and on how they experience education. For example, Jean Anyon's (1997) book *Ghetto Schooling* shows that concentrated poverty and racial isolation result from issues of power that link to a long historical evolution, in part the product of political and corporate decisions about which the urban poor had no say. She takes as her focus Newark, New Jersey, the third oldest major city in the United States and among the first to experience industrial decay and a majority black population. The degree of racial segregation evident by the 1960s in Newark meant that, more than ever before, urban children were other people's children, not worthy of educational investment. Anyon's recommendations for present-day reform focus on a renewed war on poverty. She feels that if we are to eliminate ghetto schools,

we must ultimately 'eliminate poverty' itself (1997, p. 164). Such radical proposals, befitting her structural analysis, are redolent of William Julius Wilson's suggestions at the end of *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987). Like Wilson, Anyon contextualises educational reform by demonstrating through her analysis that educational inequality is inseparable from class and racial inequality. The history she details explains how poverty has come to be so concentrated in hyper-segregated inner cities and their schools.

Challenging education policies of choice, standards, middle-class values and the market as ways of enhancing educational outcomes in areas of poverty

Smith and Nobel (1995), in their discussion of poverty and schooling in Britain in the 1990s, discuss the way in which educational access, opportunities and outcomes in education are unequivocally biased against poorer members of the UK. They argue that the language of 'choice', 'standards' and the 'market' that dominates education policies favours the middle class. The work of Harris and Ranson (2005) complements this view. They assert that 'choice' and 'diversity' are unlikely to reduce the gap between disadvantage and achievement. They suggest "that not only will "choice" continue to reproduce the inequities of the neo-liberal marketplace and strengthen the traditional hierarchies and boundaries of class, race and gender, but also that "diversity" signals a return to clearly segmented education provision with selection as the central allocation mechanism' (Harris and Ranson, 2005, p. 572). Instead they propose what Apple (2001) calls 're-positioning', whereby every endeavour should be made to try to understand policies and practices from the viewpoint of those who have the least power.

Gewirtz's (2001) study takes a slightly different approach in critiquing strategies that hope to reform 'the culture of achievement' by changing attitudes (of teachers and parents) and effectively making working-class and poor parents emulate their middle-class counterparts, thereby eradicating class differences in education. The paper looks at what is involved in normalising middle-class educational values, attitudes and behaviours and in particular points to approaches that appear to be part of this resocialisation package:

- 1 promoting active consumerism in the education marketplace (e.g. the DfES website gives advice on how to 'choose' a school through the use of league tables and other published data)
- 2 promoting parental 'policing' of schools (intervening when necessary)

- 3 remaking parents as 'home educators' (possessing and transmitting appropriate forms of social capital)
- 4 investing in social capital with self-confidence and social networks identified as the characteristics useful to exploit the education system to their best advantage.

Gewirtz critiques this package by arguing that in a hierarchically ordered, competitive society, education is a positional good and there is therefore insufficient room for everyone to be a winner. She points out the contradiction of policies such as the widening opportunity rhetoric alongside policies that reinforce inequities in hierarchical local educational markets. Second, Gewirtz argues that such policies fundamentally miss the point as to why many working-class parents are not like archetypal middle-class families: 'Poverty, and the stress, ill-health and poor living conditions associated with it, make it difficult for large sections of the population to prioritize education' (2001, p. 374). Third, Gewirtz is critical of the perceived need to universalise middle-class values, particularly in the way such values (a) enhance the 'instrumental, self-promoting, competitive, individualist manner of the active consumer' (2001, p. 374), (b) reinforce the policing of schools and (c) constantly construct children as learning at home. Fourth, she argues that lone-parent working-class mothers in particular straddle two very contradictory roles expected of them by New Labour policy – to get paid employment and yet to be active parents in education. Finally, Gewirtz argues against the moral authoritarian overtones of policies intended to resocialise working-class parents and that perpetuate a deficit model of working-class parents. Within current policy discourses working-class parents, she argues, are passive. The way for parents to be active in this structure is through individualist, choice-based consumerism rather than through collective, political variants of active parenting.

A re-examination of ethnic disadvantage, poverty and educational underachievement – critical race theory

The socially critical perspective of critical race theory (CRT), which first arose as a counter-legal scholarship in the USA in the 1970s (Ladson-Billings, 1998), has been an important contributor to theoretical and empirical debate in education for over a decade in the USA (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995). Although writers within a functionalist perspective are also interested in the problems surrounding race and ethnicity, CRT attempts a more radical view of the way in which racism is at work in society and its institutions within the education system. CRT posits racism as a normal and natural part of everyday society in the USA (Ladson-Billings, 1998), the UK (Gillborn, 2005) and other Westernised countries. Ladson-Billings (1998)

suggests that in the USA, racial categories have fluctuated over time but two polar categories have remained, those of black and white, and that these cultural rankings have persistently told us who is white and, more importantly, as she points out, who is not white. Ladson-Billings adds here that who is and who is not white is not merely a matter of biology or individual construction, but rather is decided through different political, economic, social and cultural circumstances. Mexicans, for example, were once considered 'white' but, through shifts linked to the above factors, have now moved out of the 'white' category (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 8).

In essence, critical race theory seeks to problematise the fundamentals of 'whiteness' rather than simply to look at racism in order to better understand issues of race, race inequity and racism in education and society more generally. Gillborn (2005) argues that the notion of 'white supremacy' used by CRT goes beyond the narrowly defined notions of white supremacy as associated with small racist/fascist-type explanations or organisations. He argues that 'white supremacy' here refers to the more normalised and taken-for-granted notions which are much more powerful and wide-ranging.

With regard to using CRT in examining education policy in England, Gillborn suggests the need to challenge the view that all policy making has the best of intentions for all members of society. Gillborn sets out to explore the active role that education policy has had in maintaining and extending race inequality and oppression. He does this by exploring three central tenets to education policy. First, he explores the priorities of education policy (i.e. who or what is driving it); second, he explores who are the beneficiaries (i.e. who wins and who loses); and finally he looks at outcomes in terms of the effects of policy. With regard to educational policy priorities, Gillborn argues that:

Regardless of the political persuasion of the incumbent political party, therefore, race equity has constantly to fight for legitimacy as a significant topic for education policymakers. This is a key part of the way in which education policy is implicated in white supremacy.
(Gillborn, 2005, p. 493)

With regard to educational policy beneficiaries, Gillborn refers to the concern to drive up standards through national testing and how year on year there has been an improvement in those 16 year olds gaining five or more GCSEs at grade C or above. However, he notes that students from minority ethnic backgrounds have not always shared equally in these gains. He suggests that 'black' students in particular now find themselves even further behind white students than they were during the 1980s. Gillborn also refers to groups such as Indian or Chinese students who tend

to perform better on average than their white counterparts and explains how these groups are used to deny that racism takes place. With regard to outcomes, Gillborn suggests that different patterns of educational achievement can at least in part be traced to different processes within schools. For example, black children are more likely to be excluded than whites, and setting (a form of selection) by ability, currently favoured via policies, tends to position black children disproportionately in the lower sets. Gillborn argues that inequity after inequity occurs that in many ways renders success almost impossible for particular groups such as black children.

The socially critical perspective and a focus on the meso

A summary of the key points is in Box 6.

Box 6 Socially critical perspectives and the meso

- An account of the lives of people in neighbourhoods and communities.
- Studies that have emphasised more radical and democratic approaches to running classrooms and schools that have challenged and changed existing power relations through, for example, the way teachers and pupils interact and the way school governance relates more directly to community needs.
- Interventions that focus on community radicalism in ‘answering back’ and creating equitable educational opportunities.

A different take on schooling – emancipatory curricula and pedagogies and democratic leadership and engagement

For critically orientated researchers education practices and systems are not simply less than optimally effective in responding to the needs of learners from poor backgrounds; they are deeply implicated in maintaining the poverty–education relationship, and hence in reproducing the very problem which they are seeking to solve.

In this situation, writers within a critical perspective are interested not so much in ‘improving’ education as it currently stands as in changing the way in which it embodies unequal power relationships. Typically, this means that they seek to define forms of educational practices and systems which problematise and challenge those relationships. In other words they work for forms of ‘critical’ or ‘emancipatory’ pedagogy, curricula and leadership. Freireian pedagogies, for example, aim to

challenge conventional hierarchies and to redefine a range of features of educational processes, including non-hierarchically-based teacher–student relationships and a curriculum which enables learners to recognise and challenge existing power structures. In Freire’s (1970) work education becomes a tool for the emancipation of the oppressed and a means of developing consciousness so that reality can be transformed. Learning becomes based upon the lived experiences of learners and focused upon actions arising out of dialogues with others that have the capacity to transform lives.

Fielding (2006a), in his attempts to radicalise debates about the personalisation of education, articulates the need for education, and particularly the management and leadership of that education, to be concerned first and foremost with the personal and then to examine the functional as a way of maximising the personal. He sees the personal as being manifested in fulfilling interpersonal relations, social justice and in pursuit of ‘the good life’. The functional are all the administrative, curricular, management and leadership and teaching arrangements within schools that are put into place to achieve the personal. In terms of possible actions to achieve the personal he recommends two requirements:

the first is that they have within them, individually or in combination, reference to normative structural and organisational change that insists not only on the integrity of the ends and means, but also on the actual experience of persons in community as the ultimate arbiter of their legitimacy; the second is that their advocacy of personal and interpersonal flourishing not only acknowledges and understands the persistence of power, but also sets in place arrangements that guide its egalitarian realisation.

(Fielding, 2006a, p. 8)

In articulating such a position he reinforces the need to develop opportunities in schools for authentic student voice that might enable staff and students to work and learn in partnership; for schools to provide ‘discursive and dialogic spaces’ for staff, students and the wider community to discuss and develop practice; and for the emergence of democratic public spaces in schools where teachers can derive mutually supportive engagement, companionship and enquiry. He also reinforces the need to problematise the inevitability of school leadership and hierarchical systems of control, power and authority. Fielding’s work is complemented by Pat Thomson (2002) in her research on Australian schooling where she speaks of the need for a commitment to a pedagogic process which creates opportunities for learning and for individuals and communities to ‘answer back’ through the development of critical literacies¹ as a means of enabling them to defend and develop their localities. Part

of this work arises out of the Disadvantaged Schools Programme (DSP) in Australia that was launched in 1974 and lasted until 1990 (Connell *et al.*, 1992).

Re-interpreting disadvantaged neighbourhoods

There have been studies that have examined more critically the nature of neighbourhood and the deficit connotations of neighbourhood that are both implicit and explicit within functionalist perspectives. Put simply, functionalist perspectives see disadvantaged neighbourhoods as presenting self-evident problems which call for policy interventions. Critical researchers, on the other hand, are interested both in the processes of globalisation which create such neighbourhoods (as we saw above) and in the way the characteristics of these neighbourhoods come to be constructed as problems within particular sets of social arrangements and the ideologies which sustain those arrangements. Problems of these kinds cannot be 'solved' unless those underlying processes, arrangements and ideologies are themselves changed.

So, for example, there are researchers who have examined the way geographical forms of exclusion (Sibley, 1995) are emerging in terms of both where people live and where children and young people go to school. These forms of geographical exclusion result in children and young people who live in areas of poverty being constructed as abject and/or considered out of place in specific contexts and in specific schools. Bauder (2002), for instance, uses the notion of cultural exclusion as a way of highlighting how young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods with different reputations (based in part on the ethnic and class make-up of these neighbourhoods) are steered towards particular training and educational opportunities in education. Likewise, Gulson (2005) has suggested that particular forms of neighbourhood redevelopment, linked to various area-based educational interventions that have focused on developing aspiration towards careers afforded by these developments, have had a debilitating effect on the educational identities of young people and communities in poorer surrounding areas. At the same time, other social groups, which possess the necessary personal resources, are able to do well out of the new situation, selling their skills for ever-increasing amounts on the labour market. Inevitably, they too congregate in certain parts of the city, contributing to an overall polarisation which was compounded by further divisions on ethnic grounds. In addition Bauder (2002) approaches the notion of neighbourhood effects through reference to their ideological underpinnings. He suggests that the idea of neighbourhood effects implies that the demographic context of poor neighbourhoods instils 'dysfunctional' norms, values and behaviours into youths, thus triggering a cycle of social pathology. It is argued that neighbourhood effects are part of a wider discourse of inner-city marginality that stereotypes inner-city neighbourhoods. In

effect, this leads to what Bauder sees as essentialist conceptions (fixed traits that do not allow for variations among individuals or over time) of neighbourhood culture among employers, educators and institutional staff which then further contribute to the neighbourhood effects phenomenon.

Some of these ideas are complemented by Mirón's work (2006). At one level Mirón is concerned with social representation in relation to the way in which social researchers represent poverty and the quality of schooling. His view is that by overemphasising the continual links between them, the probability that education and poverty will continue to 'enjoy' strong associations is likely to increase. Mirón recommends that more attention needs to be paid to the theoretical problem of representation (or labelling) of poor education and the material conditions of poverty. He believes that the question of *how* poor underachieving students, particularly in inner-city and rural environments, are portrayed through possible racial, gender, class and sexuality stereotypes is relevant. Perhaps of greater consequence are the largely unintended policy consequences that such stereotyping may induce.

Parenting and developing young people's resilience in disadvantaged communities

Much of the literature within a functionalist perspective highlights deficits or differences in parenting styles amongst families living in poverty that result in a lack of preparedness for, and support in, schools for young people. Young people's passive acceptance of the socialising effects of delinquency and dangers posed to well-being within neighbourhoods of poverty is also seen to generate risk factors amongst young people that might hinder educational performance. However, there are other writings that take a radical and critical approach to what are viewed as victim blaming and the labelling of families, communities and young people as being poor, in deficit or at risk that are contained in many of the studies within a functionalist perspective (Lister, 2004; Cooper and Christie, 2005). Their arguments are that this type of labelling has a tendency to pathologise families and young people and hence to do more harm than good (Franklin, 2000). In contrast they highlight the diversity of competencies, attitudes and behaviours that reflect varying bonding social capitals, support and engagement activities, and different and yet equally prized sets of values that have enabled forms of community activism against the material odds of poverty and inequality. At times these actions are strategic and at times they are ways of coping or fighting back. Together they are suggestive of the varying personal, political, everyday or strategic actions that are proactively taken by young people, families and communities dealing with poverty.

Within the field of education there is a recognition that such a perspective is suggestive of how young people actively make use of the social resources, peer networks, family and the informal economy to variously act out forms of emancipation, resistance and accommodation to education (Willis, 1977; Hodkinson *et al.*, 1996). A recent and important study provides a critique of deficit notions of parenting and pathologised notions of risk and danger for young people in poor neighbourhoods (Seaman *et al.*, 2006). This study set out to develop understanding of these issues by examining the experiences and perspectives of parents and young people living in four areas of disadvantage in the west of Scotland. Two linked studies explored the ways parents and young people in ordinary families acted together and separately to cope with adverse environments. The study highlighted the following pertinent issues:

- Most parents and young people saw school as a haven from risks (although there were reports of bullying), but some parents spoke of schools not involving them enough in issues concerning their children.
- Most parents said they maintained open and democratic styles of parenting which respected young people's views and opinions. Children usually confirmed this. Discussion between parents and children was normally the cornerstone of discipline and, when negotiating rules, parents encouraged their children to be open about their activities.
- Parents had high aspirations for their children and expected their children to move away from the area as adults to optimise their educational and employment prospects.
- Many of the children had high educational aspirations but opted for traditional non-professional jobs, often gender related (e.g. girls: beautician, hairdresser; boys: joiner, mechanic).
- Parents and young people recognised the importance of education and qualifications for success in the adult jobs market and access to more interesting and better-paid jobs. However, many had access to a limited supply of advice and guidance when it came to new forms of work (such as creative and media occupations) or jobs not traditionally entered into by people from disadvantaged backgrounds (such as medicine or law).
- For some, limited income and well-learned avoidance of debt could also affect their capacity to meet the costs of entering higher education and taking on student loans.

Synthesising the literature from a socially critical perspective – implications for policy and practice

From a socially critical standpoint, the relationship of research to policy and policymakers is problematic for two reasons. First, the relationship between poverty and education is not the result of one or more specific functional problems which can somehow be ‘fixed’. It demands, at one level or other, a change in underlying structures and power relations, whether this be in the classroom, in the relationship between disadvantaged groups and public policy, or in fundamental social structures. The sorts of interventions which policymakers and practitioners have at their disposal may well be inappropriate for these sorts of changes.

Second, if current education practices and systems at various levels are implicated in the maintenance of inequality, then policy and policymakers are part of the problem rather than part of the solution. Rather than providing policymakers with options, therefore, writers have, to some extent, to stand outside the policy process, offering critique and, ultimately, hoping to engender or support movements which will wrest control of policy from its current owners and deliver it to those who are disadvantaged by current arrangements. In education and social systems which are unequal, policy is inevitably produced, the critical perspective argues, by the powerful in order to serve the interests of the powerful. Almost by definition, therefore, policy interventions which actually exist are precisely the sorts of policies which need to be changed. This is an issue to which we shall shortly return.

A summary of socially critical approaches is given in Table 3.

Table 3 Socially critical interventions

Level	Socially critical interventions
Macro	Human rights, social justice and democratic agendas
Meso	Community activism
Micro	Small-scale changes in the location and exercise of power

In practice, many writers from within a socially critical perspective simply maintain their distance from questions of alternative policies and policy processes. It is possible to deduce from their critical accounts some implications about what alternative policies might be, but these are rarely made explicit and the question about how such policies might come into being is rarely addressed. A second group, including Freire and the advocates of critical pedagogy, advocate a sort of ‘revolution from within’. They accept that large-scale structures of power are difficult to shift, but hold on to the possibility that small-scale changes of power are more feasible, at the

level, for instance, of interactions with individual learners, or changes in individual schools and classrooms. They tend to speak, therefore, to the radicalised teachers and school leaders who might be able to bring about such changes, and to hope that these will accumulate into something more large scale.

A third group is prepared to work within existing power structures, but in the belief that they are not quite so fixed as they might seem, and that political processes are available which are capable of changing them. There is, for instance, a good deal of work currently emerging from the USA which draws on a tradition of community activism and civil rights work to suggest that popular movements can be created which may be capable of changing the control and direction of policy.

For example, Jean Anyon's view of reform in the USA leaves no doubt that as disadvantaged urban education's failure is rooted in social and historical context, so must its reform be. Hence fundamental interventions are theorised at the macro level, deal with the causes rather than just the symptoms difficult to change and require forms of political association that may take time to bring about. However, she also recognises the need to act at the meso level and she articulates interventions that are located at this level, are more amenable to change, deal with symptoms rather than causes, and focus on issues associated with the renewal of school leadership, improving teaching and learning in schools and developing full-service schooling. In her latter work Anyon (2005) continues to rehearse her explanatory reasons for educational failure by suggesting how current economic policies are geared to the wealthiest in US society and why changes must be made if we are to eradicate urban poverty, especially among the most vulnerable groups, African Americans and Hispanics. She argues that without changes in economic policies, we can never hope to see meaningful education reform. At the same time, however, she points the reader in the direction of how to effect social change. For example, she offers an extensive review of the civil rights movement along with other well-known movements in US history which have done, or are doing, things to make a difference. Unlike the second group of socially critical writers referred to above, she recognises that the efforts of small groups cannot bring about the widespread support necessary to significantly impact public policy. Instead she suggests that established groups should form coalitions with other groups with the same purpose or similar goals and work together. She is optimistic that when groups come together with strong support to make demands on our political system, changes occur. Communities that seek changes in urban education must, she argues, demand equity by drawing attention to the inequities of urban schools in contrast to suburbia. Change is a slow process, but change requires action. Sit-ins, bus-ins and boycotts of corporations are a few examples of taking action.

Gewirtz's (2001) position suggests that education could be based on different principles from those that currently focus on middle-class values. She argues that we need to look at the damaging effects of the competitive, instrumental and 'pushy' nature of middle-class educational norms rather than to simply endorse them. Second, Gewirtz suggests the need to sort out the disparities of wealth and power and the hierarchies that structure schools and employment that are largely responsible for differences between classes. Finally she explores the need to develop decision-making structures and curricula which engage with, and give voice to, the diverse experiences and views of working-class children and parents as well as the middle classes.

Although we remarked earlier that conventional policy interventions are by definition the wrong sort of interventions, it can be argued that, even within the socially critical perspective, this is not entirely the case. In other words, it is possible to identify at least some interventions which seek not simply to 'improve' this or that aspect of educational systems, but to redistribute power within those systems. Such examples will always be susceptible to critique, but may offer a useful counterweight to the position that everything done in and by the current system is equally oppressive. Current examples might include student councils, the local governance of schools, the increasing capacity on both sides of the Atlantic for local groups to establish and manage their own schools, the ability of learners to chart their own way through alternative learning pathways, and the involvement of local communities in shaping education services through regeneration initiatives, locally commissioned children's services and extended schools. To these can be added countless school and classroom practices which are in some way participatory or emancipatory. The implication of all these is that changing the distribution of power within education systems may be a matter of shifting complex balances rather than of large-scale reversals of existing patterns.

5 Policy possibilities: a review of current interventions and possible futures from a functionalist and socially critical perspective

Having explored some of the arguments, evidence, explanations and possible policy interventions underpinned by both functionalist and socially critical perspectives, this section of the report examines how these explanations relate to current policy developments that focus on educational disadvantage. Recent years have seen a plethora of policy initiatives across the UK, particularly in England. It is beyond the scope of this report to examine all of them. We have, therefore, selected five which, we believe, are both important in their own right and typical of the sorts of approaches currently favoured by policymakers. Our aim is not to characterise the whole of educational – let alone wider public – policy in terms of these particular initiatives, but to use them as examples of the ways in which policy interventions embody the sorts of explanations that we have outlined in previous sections.

Excellence in Cities

Excellence in Cities (EiC) (DfES, 2006) in England is an initiative to provide additional resources to schools in the most challenging of circumstances to help them improve and be more effective in delivering educational outcomes. The programme has a number of strands of activity that in many respects focus on individual pupil development within the school. Funds to support the appointment of learning mentors provides opportunities for targeting additional guidance and support to pupils most 'at risk' of failing within the system. These at-risk pupils are often denoted as having 'dysfunctional' families, behaviour disorders, low aspirations, low self-esteem and health difficulties. In many respects these types of labels reflect some of the risk factors that developmental psychologists have argued create difficulties for young people and that would therefore require protective or moderating variables to be put in place to obviate possible vulnerability. As Luthar and Zelazo (2003) highlighted above, warm, supported and concerted adult relationships can provide some level of protection against these risk factors and in many respects the learning mentor's role appears to reflect some aspects of this role. The Talented and Gifted strand within Excellence in Cities works on the assumption that many young people who are naturally gifted are not achieving appropriate educational success within schools and in addition do not have aspirations for further and higher

education. Additional targeted curriculum initiatives, after-school clubs and summer schools are provided as ways of trying to counter potentially poor environmental factors in the home and community. This aspect of policy complements the above research that recognises the deleterious effects on pupil IQ over time and on self-esteem if young people are left to develop in poor environments that lack cognitive stimulation.

The final strand within the Excellence in Cities initiative is the City Learning Centres that provide additional resources not only to support poorly resourced schools and improve pupil ICT skills but also to offer a community resource aimed at enhancing parental access to education. This education might then result in skills and qualifications that would translate into improved work opportunities and ultimately enhanced aspirations towards lifelong learning that would shape the educational support given to children in those families. This type of intervention reflects the importance of developing aspiration amongst parents that has been recognised as a central prerequisite for creating aspects of resilience in young people defined as being at risk. In addition, parental qualifications are one of the variables that positively correlate to more support for children's education in the home and at school and improved educational outcomes. One can therefore interpret EiC from a functionalist perspective as attempting interventions at both the individual and meso levels that (a) help to obviate the risks of poor physical environments and (b) encourage adults and parents to develop educational aspirations, acquire appropriate parental skills and achieve qualifications. Although one can see many potential benefits to these strategies, what does the evidence suggest as to how the poverty and education link has been affected by such interventions?

The national evaluation of EiC (Kendall *et al.*, 2005) highlighted a number of key findings in terms of the extent and nature of the impact of EiC on the educational performance of young people. At Key Stage (KS) 3 there was evidence of enhanced Maths attainments and improved performance of pupils designated as talented and gifted when compared to those not so designated. Pupils referred to a learning mentor had lower levels of attainment than similar pupils, but there was evidence to suggest that early mentoring had enabled some pupils to overcome barriers to learning. However, the City Learning Centres appeared to have little impact on attainment. At KS4 in 2003 there was little evidence to suggest that pupils in EiC areas were making more progress than similar pupils in non-EiC areas. Pupils identified as gifted and talented generally had higher levels of attainment than otherwise similar pupils not so designated. The impact of being designated as gifted and talented was not uniform, however, and was influenced by pupils' level of attainment at the end of KS3, their attitudes to education, their behaviour and their ethnicity. In relation to the Learning Mentor strand, there were positive associations

between mentoring and achievement for some groups of pupils and some outcome measures. Perhaps most importantly the impact of EiC was greatest in schools in more challenging circumstances. There is, therefore, some evidence to suggest partial ameliorative impacts and positive outcomes from the initiative. Overall, however, the evaluations do not provide a strong endorsement for the success of EiC in making a major difference to the education and poverty link.

Connexions

The Connexions Service was developed to focus clearly on providing both individual support and careers advice to young people. However, much of the new service is targeted at young people deemed to be at risk of failing within the education system by either dropping out or underachieving. The initiative focuses on developing in young people reflexivity and rational decision-making skills that will help them with their own individual self-development, career exploration and career management. In other words it is focused on enabling smooth transitions for young people from school to adulthood and work. Personal advisers from the Connexions Service provide access to information, advice and guidance on careers issues that might enable young people to reflect, make decisions and progress. For the most vulnerable, at-risk and disadvantaged young people personal advisers also undertake one-on-one support via an 18-point assessment, planning, implementation and review process that attempts to systematically personalise young people's ownership of their careers decision and actions with a view to empowering them to remove barriers and develop resilience and agency with regard to transition. Having made a choice based on this individualised support, young people are then expected to undertake courses and programmes of study that meet their aspirations and needs.

Here the focus is very much on choices and paths with the recognition that transition from schooling and adolescence to adulthood and work for young people is now more complex, particularly with regard to accessing the more highly paid sections of changing labour markets. There is a recognition that young people who are most vulnerable or at risk again require this detailed and ongoing support from a personal adviser (PA) who not only advises, but acts as a trusted advocate for the young person. One can see close parallels between this advocacy role and the importance that the risk and resilience literature places on supportive and aware adult relationships for young people. The literature would suggest that the nature of the role in terms of relationship building is as important as the advice being given. Again what does the evidence suggest about the impact of the Connexions Service working with such vulnerable young people?

Research by Hoggart and Smith (2004) suggests that Connexions is achieving positive impact, of different types, with different groups of young people, including those at risk. The primary mechanism of impact lies in the interaction of PAs and young people where a trusting relationship is key to the impact with young people at risk. In addition they highlight the importance of bringing young people into the Connexions process as early as possible in order to draw up a sensitive and well-timed assessment of risk and priority and also to have the time to build up trust. They also found that many of the young people in the sample faced multiple risks in their lives and needed intensive attention. They suggested that a holistic and non-stigmatising approach to these problems was most effective, with single-stranded interventions demonstrating least impact. However, what they also recognised was that the level of impact of Connexions was affected by the level of resources available and how they are deployed. In addition the assessment of risk and priority was not fully effective for the young people in this study. While need and support are being matched to some degree, it is not a perfect or consistent match. About half the young people in the top two priority groups reported that they were not receiving current support. Even where assessment was working well, there was not always the capacity within Connexions to respond to the issues highlighted. There was significant unmet need amongst young people who satisfied the requirements for intermediate or intensive support but did not receive it. In addition there were other difficulties that included:

- failures to identify risk early and prioritise prevention
- presentation and branding of the service that does not convey its holistic nature
- a failure to deal with urgent presenting needs
- loss of contact, especially without explanation to the young person
- insensitive, intrusive or too early assessment
- a rigid focus on the target and pressure on young people to take up (sometimes unsuitable) educational and vocational options
- referral without complementary and continuing support
- a failure to follow up interventions
- a lack of exit strategies.

The suggestion from the review is that such an initiative, although welcome, has problems in terms of resources and operational strategies (harking back to some of the issues highlighted in analyses that focused on multi-agency working) overcoming the many and difficult challenges that many young people face. In some respects this reflects the writings of Cauce *et al.* (2003) above who suggest that single interventions based on creating particular forms of resilience often struggle to make an impact when having to cope with multiple and severe levels of disadvantage.

Educational Maintenance Allowance

The Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is a weekly allowance of, at the time of writing, up to £40. This is available to 16–19 year olds from lower-income families who remain in full-time education after the end of compulsory education. Its purpose is to enhance the educational progression, retention and success of young people living in relative poverty. The findings from the evaluation by Middleton *et al.* (2005) suggest that EMA has the strongest impact upon the destinations of specific target groups who tended to be under-represented in post-16 education, namely young men, young people from lower-income families, and those who were not high achievers at Year 11. However, their report did not suggest that EMA had any statistically significant impact on post-16 attainment as a whole. The review seems to suggest that success at KS4 is the most important indicator for progression and attainment beyond 16 but that the allowance has supported transition for many young people who would not have otherwise progressed. The evidence points to the importance of making resources available to young people, in particular those most economically challenged, to make up for some of the lack of resources within the home.

Sure Start

Sure Start was set up to enhance the functioning of children and families living in disadvantaged areas by improving services provided in local programme areas. In many respects Sure Start reflects the research of early child development studies highlighted above. Hence typically such services included parenting support, access to health provision and childcare and educational facilities for young parents. Sure Start is strategically situated in areas identified as having high levels of deprivation and is an intervention to enhance the life prospects of young children in disadvantaged families and communities. The programme is area based, with all children under four and their families living in a prescribed area serving as the targets of intervention. This means that services within a Sure Start area are

universally available and thus limiting any stigma that may accrue from individuals being targeted. By virtue of their local autonomy, Sure Start areas do not have a prescribed curriculum or set of services. Instead, each Sure Start area has extensive local autonomy concerning how it fulfils its mission to improve and create services as needed, without specification of how services are to be changed.

As Melhuish *et al.* (2005) suggested, this general and highly varied approach to early intervention seemed to contrast markedly with virtually all other early interventions demonstrated to be effective (e.g. Webster-Stratton, 1993; Olds *et al.*, 1999; Ramey *et al.*, 2000; Love *et al.*, 2002; Sanders, 2003). In contrast to these projects which were guided by clear models of typically centre- or home-based service delivery, Sure Start aimed to deliver a wider and more varied range of services. The findings from the evaluation suggested that the differential beneficial and adverse effects that did emerge indicated that among the disadvantaged families living in the deprived Sure Start areas, parents/families with greater human, social and cultural capital were better able to take advantage of Sure Start services and resources than those with less human, social and cultural capital (i.e. teen parents, lone parents, workless households). The finding that an intervention produced greater benefits for the moderately disadvantaged than for the more severely disadvantaged resonated with other evaluations of such interventions (e.g. Early Head Start: Love *et al.*, 2002) and points to some of the issues highlighted above about how particular groups are better placed to make use of current resources and can acquire further resources of support through their engagement with networks.

Full service extended schools

Community-oriented schools under the guise of the full service extended schools (FSES) initiative constitute focal points at which strategies for raising educational standards overall are supported by strategies for targeting support to schools serving disadvantaged populations, and strategies for tackling neighbourhood and family problems. The first moves in this direction emerged under the aegis of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and were seen as part of a multi-strand approach to neighbourhood disadvantage (DfEE, 1999) and to the Government's conceptualisation of social exclusion. Worklessness and education are at the heart of the analysis. Adults are workless because they lack the skills to make them employable. Worklessness corrodes their 'will to win' and leads to lowered expectations. These are then transmitted to children who expect little of themselves and have no role models for how to be effective learners. FSES aims to reverse this cycle by re-engaging adults in learning, raising their expectations and creating positive role models for children and young people to follow.

However, the multidimensional conceptualisation of social exclusion implies a multi-strand role for FSES. The idea of schools as ‘focal points’ for communities, for instance, hints at some concern with fragmentation as a characteristic of disadvantaged communities and with cohesion (Cantle, 2001) as a desirable outcome. Similarly, the role for community-oriented schools within the more recent Every Child Matters agenda (DfES, 2003a, 2004a, 2004b) focuses on the delivery of services for children and families which will address their health and social needs rather than – or as a pathway to – raising their expectations and achievements. In the same way, the detailed guidance on FSES proposes no fewer than 23 possible outcomes from community-oriented schools, ranging from improved access to childcare and ICT, through reductions in health inequalities and the number of unemployed people, to better school security and improvements in students’ behaviour (DfES, 2003b). In other words, FSES are expected to intervene in the multiple problems which beset children, families and communities living in disadvantage. However, at the heart of these interventions is a commitment to education as the pathway to achievement and hence to employment and social inclusion – and to raised expectations as a necessary precondition of raised achievement. One can see how explanations for such an intervention clearly fall within a functionalist perspective. At the same time there are elements to the initiative that mirror a more integrating explanation of the link between education and poverty and that focus on both micro issues associated with holistic child development needs and meso-level development through enhanced family and community engagement via parenting classes, crèches and skills development programmes. In addition there is a recognition of the need for a more integrated approach to delivering certain core public services via a multi-agency strategy located in the school that links into meso-level multi-agency working documented earlier. So what does the evidence suggest about this more coherent and wider range of activities that fall under the banner of full service extended schools?

Initial evaluations suggested that there is good reason to believe that full service extended schools appear to have important positive effects as well as offering a good return in relation to their low level of additional funding (Cummings *et al.*, 2004). In later evaluations there was anecdotal evidence of positive outcomes from the full service extended schools with regard to raised attainment, increased pupil engagement with learning and a growing trust and support between home and school. There was also multi-agency working that brought some benefits to children and their families (Cummings *et al.*, 2005). The authors also suggest that these initial data provide some evidence for a way of intervening to break the cycle of disadvantage in some of the areas that they serve. However, Cummings *et al.* (2004) warned that the extended schools should not impose professional views of what is ‘needed’ on the communities they serve but rather that there should be community

consultation and participation that reflect the communities' actual needs. In addition, Dyson and Raffo (2007 forthcoming) highlight how community-oriented schooling such as FSES might need to engage more widely in local and regional regeneration strategies if they are to have a more substantial impact on the link between education and poverty.

Policy interventions and explanations

As we have shown above, the various current policy interventions imply one or more of the explanations we set out about the nature of the relationship between poverty and poor educational outcomes. This diversity, for example, is illuminated in one way by the Sure Start initiative where the explanation is couched in terms, amongst other things, of family processes and early child development issues. In another way the Excellence in Cities initiative implies an explanation predominantly in terms of school improvement that focuses on resilience-building activities and enriched environments. Although these examples demonstrate diversity of explanation and intervention, what they also demonstrate is the acceptance of a particular perspective about the nature and purpose of education and also a specific level at which explanations and interventions are explored separately to improve education in areas of poverty. First, the perspective is essentially functionalist in that education is seen as a 'good' and as a prerequisite for the development of economic and social well-being in the UK. Excellence in Cities, Connexions, Sure Start and full service extended schools are all about enabling young people to improve how they engage with education to improve their educational outcomes and hence their life chances. Second, there is an implicit and perhaps incoherent theory of change in the way such varied educational policy and practice is seen as ameliorating the problems of poverty and poor educational outcomes.

This incoherence is reflected in the disparate meso-level explanations and interventions that focus separately on (a) improving the educational processes in schools and (b) providing the appropriate support for young people and families in order that they might be able to maximise these opportunities within schools.

However, what this approach perhaps underemphasises is the extent to which disparate meso-level interventions can resolve the problem of education and poverty, particularly when the problem may have at its root particular macro-level socio-economic developments that have created conditions of poverty for many young people and families and generated a deprivation of capability to engage successfully with education and life more generally.

In contrast to this potentially narrow and inchoate theory of change, this report suggests that the linkage between education and poverty, whether from a functionalist and/or socially critical perspective, is one that is both complex and interacting, with little indication that one single explanation or disparate set of explanations can hope to account for the essential reason for the linkage. Hence there is every reason to believe that no single or disparate set of interventions can resolve the problem. So, for example, the school improvement and school effectiveness movement highlighted above, and which in many respect was, and still is, viewed as of paramount importance by policy in dealing with the problem, will always be doomed to failure in dealing with the problem of educational inequality. This is because it has focused almost exclusively at one level, the meso level, and been located within one site of the school and the specific educational processes linked to that site. Of course improvements have been made but in the most optimistic of analyses these have only been marginal. One might suggest that there are two reasons for this. First, and reflecting critiques outlined above, it did not take into account in a considered or integrated way other meso-level factors such as:

- various risk factors linked to communities experiencing poverty
- the importance of parents in preparing and supporting young people through education
- the need for education to work with other public sector services to effectively meet a more holistic set of family and community needs generated by the experience of being socially excluded.

The second reason is that school improvement and school effectiveness did not recognise factors at work at other levels of analysis. It did not appreciate how the forces of globalisation were impacting on certain communities, nor did it see how schools/education might take part in the redevelopments of those communities through various regeneration initiatives. Schools did not see themselves as an embedded part of social and economic policy but merely there to uncritically contribute to it. In addition, school improvement and effectiveness did not recognise how changing transition experiences associated with increased levels of decision making and choice were becoming ever more important in the lives of young people and how these were then influenced by particular networks of people that were often separate and external to the school. The same type of arguments could be made of any one of the other interventions highlighted above, be they Sure Start, Connexions or full service extended schools.

Our review clearly points to the fact that policy needs to simultaneously address a whole series of factors and at different levels if it is to have any meaningful impact. In other words it needs to have an overarching vision of how various interventions fit together and for what purposes. Table 4 summarises the various explanations and interventions at the micro, meso and macro levels underpinned by either a functionalist or socially critical perspective that are developed in the report.

Table 4 Education and poverty – a summary of explanations and interventions

	Sites	Explanations – factors affecting education	Interventions
<i>Functionalist</i>			
Macro	National and local economy, social structures, 'the system'	Globalisation and changes in local and national economies Resultant social exclusion Tax and spending on public services	Local and national economic development strategies
Meso	Neighbourhoods, peer groups, school systems	Reductions in child poverty Work/unemployment Income and wealth Health Neighbourhoods and ethnicity Parenting Schools operating in challenging circumstances School improvement	Support for parents and parenting skills Multi-agency working to support individuals, families and communities Improved school effectiveness in areas of poverty and disadvantage
Micro	Individuals, the family	Multi-agency working Providing choices and social capital to encourage and support education (e.g. mentoring) Inherited capability and intelligence	Recognition and development of positive and productive relationships

Continued

Table 4 Education and poverty – a summary of explanations and interventions – continued

	Sites	Explanations – factors affecting education	Interventions
Integrating	Combinations of the above	Psychological development and interaction of genetics and environment Risk and resilience	
<i>Socially critical</i> Macro	National and local economy, social structures, 'the system'	Education reproducing inequality, social disadvantage and poverty Challenging politics of choice, standards, middle-class values and the market	Human rights, social justice, democracy
Meso	Neighbourhoods, peer groups, school systems	Ethnic disadvantage (critical race theory) Curriculum Teaching practices Leadership and engagement Reinterpreting 'disadvantaged neighbourhoods'	Community activism
Micro	The individual psyche	Parenting and resilience Identities are heavily shaped by external power relations which constrain or enhance the possibilities that individuals can achieve	Small-scale changes in the location and exercise of power

At present educational policy is piecemeal and largely focuses on those issues at the functionalist meso levels that are easiest to examine, most susceptible to short-term interventions and least socially and politically destabilising. This has resulted in a plethora of initiatives at the school, family and, to a lesser extent, neighbourhood level. And as we have shown concurrently, significantly less attention has been paid to the social and economic conditions created by aspects of globalisation and the associated class, gender and ethnicity issues within which these initiatives are set.

Our examination of literatures associated with aspects of the socially critical perspective point to the way inequalities are inherent at the macro level and reproduced at all other levels. From this perspective, policy that attempts to ‘improve’ the meso level without examining the inherent inequalities associated with the macro level can only at their very best be described as ameliorative. However, the problem for the socially critical perspective is that it is policymakers who need to address these issues and policymakers by their very position are often viewed as part of the problem rather than as part of the solution. There is, however, some hope with regard to developments in pupil voice, critical voice and aspects of community engagement and/or control over education which point to possibilities for change from below that would create a momentum with the potential to drive policy.

Three issues for policy

We wish to conclude by outlining what we believe are the most fundamental issues for policymakers – and in this group we include educators as policymakers in their own schools and classrooms, as well as national and local policymakers. These issues we characterise as ones of *scope*, *coherence* and *power*.

Scope

It seems to us that the research evidence we have reviewed indicates unequivocally the need for extensive and complex policy interventions if the established relationship between poverty and poor educational outcomes is to be disturbed. There would appear to be no single explanation for why learners from poor backgrounds do badly in educational terms. Rather, there are multiple factors implicated at each of what we have called the micro, meso and macro levels. It would therefore seem to be the case that, as we observed earlier, there are no ‘magic bullets’ that will enable such learners to perform as well and derive the same educational benefits as their more advantaged peers. Instead, what is needed are interventions which address the full range of factors and which operate at all three levels.

As we have just seen, one problem for policymakers is precisely that ‘magic bullets’ are politically highly desirable. It requires the expenditure of a good deal of political capital (and, indeed, of high levels of economic resources) to undertake wide-ranging interventions where outcomes might be uncertain or delayed. In particular, it is easiest for policymakers to work at the meso level, where policy can be made to ‘bite’ more easily and where vested interests can be dealt with in manageable packets.

It is much more difficult for policymakers to contemplate the more fundamental and politically painful changes that are necessary to intervene at the macro level. Equally, it is difficult for policymakers to find ways of intervening at the micro level, or, indeed, in those meso-level factors that are not directly within their control. It is one thing to target some limited additional resources into schools; quite another to change the ways in which particular families function on the one hand, or set about significant redistribution of wealth on the other.

Coherence

A related problem for policymakers is what we might call the coherence of their interventions. Once the ‘magic bullet’ approach is abandoned, an attractive alternative is the ‘scattergun’ approach – in other words, to undertake a wide range of relatively small-scale initiatives in the hope that separately or together some of them might make a difference. The issue facing policymakers is how to make multiple interventions coherent, how to sequence them chronologically, and how to prioritise the most effective or most important interventions amongst all those which might or should be adopted.

To some extent, the research evidence we have reviewed offers some guidance on these matters. There is work which evaluates the effectiveness of particular interventions or estimates the impact of particular factors on the poverty–education relationship. Some of these findings we have reported incidentally, though it has not been the purpose of this study to review these systematically. However, such evidence is always likely to be partial, given the complexity of factors involved, the difficulty in measuring the impacts of some of these factors, and the inevitability that past interventions are located in sets of circumstances which might be significantly different from those obtaining when policymakers have to take their decisions.

We believe, therefore, that there is no substitute for policymakers developing in as careful and robust a manner as possible their own ‘theories of change’, and no alternative other than to develop these theories through the careful monitoring of how interventions actually impact on the factors towards which they are directed. Again, this flies in the face of much of what we know about the policy process, where more immediate pressures and opportunities tend to militate against a considered, reflective and long-term approach. The challenge for policymakers, therefore, is to remain steadfast in the face of such immediate concerns.

Power

If the critical perspective teaches us one thing, it is that the relationship between poverty and education is unlikely to be disturbed unless fundamental issues of power and interest, advantage and disadvantage are addressed. Simply tackling the presenting 'problems' of poverty and education will, this perspective suggests, ultimately prove to be ineffective if underlying inequalities are permitted to reproduce these problems in other forms.

Given that policymakers are implicated in these inequalities, particular forms of courage are required for them to step outside the social arrangements which have placed them in a privileged position in the first place. It is tempting to say that this cannot happen – except that there are multiple examples of politicians who have taken this step, or whole countries that have taken different directions, or, on a more modest scale, of individual educators who have addressed these issues in their own schools and classrooms. Moreover, in democratic countries – even ones where the 'democratic deficit' is large – those who reach privileged positions in public service do so, in part at least, because other citizens enable them or allow them so to do. In that sense, all citizens are policymakers and all are involved in formulating policy interventions. In situations where particular explanations of poverty and education dominate the thinking of elected and appointed policymakers, it may be, as Jean Anyon suggests, that the best hope lies in grass-roots movement in schools, classrooms and communities across the country.

What, therefore, do notions of scope, coherence and power suggest for policy and practice developments in 2007 and beyond?

Clearly there are already some policy moves to scope educational processes into wider contexts and levels. This is reflected in initiatives such as Every Child Matters and community-oriented full service extended schools (FSES). The Every Child Matters agenda, operationalised in the Children Act 2004 and supported by a range of guidance documents (DfES, 2003a, 2004a, 2004b), promises to take a holistic and coherent view of the needs of children and families and to create integrated structures and services aimed at meeting those needs in a coherent and co-ordinated way. At the same time, the development of community-oriented schools such as FSES (DfES, 2002, 2003b) offers an opportunity for the development of a robust theory of change that examines how (a) a range of services to children, families and communities and acting as the base for other community agencies seems to offer a new model of schooling and (b) policy and practice at the local level is attempting to integrate or lock educational initiatives such as FSES into economic regeneration. This suggests that within such a policy development there is a possibility for educational action to have both scope and coherence.

There are also lessons for educational change in relation to issues of power. These resonate with other areas of social policy, particularly around notions of democratic engagement, and might be expressed in schools through the development of enhanced student voice and aspects of Freireian critical pedagogy and critical literacies that are linked more widely to democratic capabilities. There is evidence of nationwide networks in England, such as the University of the First Age, where innovative pedagogies are being used to develop children's learning, with and through others, in schools and the wider community (see www.ufa.org.uk). Additionally, there is evidence of school- and community-based schemes to develop student participation in educational policy making (e.g. Fielding 2001, 2006b; Hollins *et al.*, 2006). These democratic capabilities are currently being pursued through the new localism agenda for communities that focuses on issues of citizenship, neighbourhood renewal and community empowerment and is suggestive of the need for local people to be consulted and to have a direct say over the approaches and type of public service provided at the local level. What we have here is the possibility of an active engagement by local people in more radical forms of school governance that has at its core the notion of democratic renewal through user engagement in service delivery and decision making. Democratic renewal suggests the participation of local people in decisions about aspects of their lives. With regard to schools this suggests the need for representative and democratic forms of governance where local people are enabled to decide on all aspects of rationale, strategy and definition of service quality. The rationale for this approach is strongly linked to the redistribution of power and a desire to ensure more local control over public services. With regard to the practical possibilities for such redistribution of power, community-oriented schools such as FSES have the potential within them to engage, on more equal terms, with young people, families and communities in the educational enterprise – a type of engagement that offers opportunities for greater democratic possibilities (Borg and Mayo, 2001). The notion of creating greater democratic involvement for families and communities is not simply in supporting and learning within and from the school, but also in shaping the direction taken by the school and the nature of the education on offer. The implication is that community-oriented schools may address not only the material or (hypothesised) cultural disadvantages of the communities they serve, but also the disadvantages in terms of involvement in democratic governance.

As we have seen in our analysis of educational policy and practice that is generally underpinned by mainly a functionalist perspective, the idea that people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage might need to involve themselves in more direct political action, is absent from current educational debates in the UK. However, it is a little more familiar within the socially critical perspective where there is a contemporary history of disadvantaged groups making what Lister (2004) describes

as the move from 'getting by' to 'getting organized'. Moreover, and as our report has highlighted, the different demographics, political history and organisation of schooling in cities in the USA seems to be bringing ideas of community organisation and control into greater prominence there (see, for instance, Shirley, 2001; Anyon, 2005). There is, of course, little evidence of similar movements in the English education system and a considerable effort of optimism is required to believe that they might now emerge. Nonetheless, it is possible *in principle at least* that community-oriented schools could begin to open up new democratic opportunities and that a new role for schools in relation to inequality might, in time, arise with such opportunities.

Notes

Chapter 1

- 1 The Tripartite System, known colloquially as the grammar school system, was the structure by which Britain's secondary education was organised between the 1944 Butler Education Act and 1976. Secondary schools were divided into three categories, grammar schools, technical schools and secondary modern schools. Pupils were allocated to each according to their performance in the Eleven Plus examination.

Chapter 3

- 1 Bridging social capital: the value assigned to social networks between socially heterogeneous groups.
- 2 Cultural capital: forms of knowledge, skill, education or any advantages a person has which give them a higher status in society, including high expectations. Parents provide children with cultural capital, the attitudes and knowledge that make the educational system a comfortable familiar place in which they can succeed easily.
- 3 SES: socio-economic status.
- 4 Psychopathological responses are behaviours or experiences which cause impairment, distress or disability, particularly if they are thought to arise from a functional breakdown in either the cognitive or neurocognitive systems in the brain.
- 5 Neuroplasticity (variously referred to as brain plasticity or cortical plasticity) refers to the changes that occur in the organisation of the brain, and in particular changes that occur to the location of specific information-processing functions, as a result of the effect of learning and experience.

Chapter 4

- 1 Critical literacy is a critical thinking tool that encourages readers to question the construction and production of texts. Using critical literacy tools, readers consider inclusion, exclusion and representation in texts, relate texts to their own lives, and consider the effects of texts. Critical literacy is not simply a means of attaining literacy in the sense of improving the ability to decode words, syntax, etc. In fact, the ability to read words on paper is not necessarily required in order to engage in a critical discussion of 'texts', which can include digital media (movies), art and many other means of expression. The important thing is being able to have a discussion with others about the different meanings a text might have and teaching the critical literacy learner how to think flexibly about it. Critical literacy primarily deals with issues of language and power and the ways in which texts work to position readers in particular ways. It is also concerned with examining the positions from which we read the word or the world. In some cases critical literacy involves taking social action to change inequitable ways of being.

Bibliography

Acheson, D. (1998) *Independent Enquiry into Inequality in Health*. London: The Stationery Office

Anning, A. (2005) 'Investigating the impact of working in multi-agency service delivery settings in the UK on early years practitioners' beliefs and practices', *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 19–50

Anyon, J. (1997) *Ghetto Schooling – A Political Economy of Urban Educational Reform*. New York: Teachers College Press

Anyon, J. (2005) *Radical Possibilities: Public Policy, Urban Education, and a New Social Movement*. New York: Routledge

Apple, M. (2001) *Education the 'Right' Way: Markets, Standards, God, and Inequality*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer

Archer, L. and Yamashita, H. (2003) 'Knowing their limits? Identities, inequalities and inner city school leavers' post-16 aspirations', *Journal of Education Policy*, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp. 53–69

Atkinson, M., Doherty, P. and Kinder, K. (2005) 'Multi-agency working: models, challenges and key factors for success', *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 7–17

Bagley, C., Ackerley, C.L. and Rattray, J. (2004) 'Social exclusion, Sure Start and organizational social capital: evaluating inter-disciplinary multi-agency working in an education and health work programme', *Journal of Education Policy*, Vol. 19, No. 5, pp. 595–607

Ball, S.J. (2003) *Class Strategies and the Educational Market: The Middle Class and Social Advantage*. London: RoutledgeFalmer

Bauder, H. (2002) 'Neighbourhood effects and cultural exclusion', *Urban Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 1, pp. 85–93

Beck, U. (1992) *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. London: Sage

Bell, D. (2003) 'Access and achievement in urban education: ten years on', speech to the Fabian Society by David Bell, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, London, Ofsted

- Bernstein, B. (1961) 'Social class and linguistic development: a theory of social learning', in A.H. Halsey, J. Floud and C.A. Anderson (eds) *Education, Economy and Society*. New York: Free Press
- Berthoud, R. (1998) *Incomes of Ethnic Minorities*. Essex: Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Essex
- Borg, C. and Mayo, P. (2001) 'From "adjuncts" to "subjects": parental involvement in a working-class community', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 22, No. 2, pp. 245–66
- Bourdieu, P. and Passeron, J. (1977) *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. London: Sage
- Bowles, J. and Gintis, H. (1976) *Schooling in Capitalist America*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul
- Bradley, S. and Taylor, J. (2002) *The Report Card on Competition in Schools*. London: Adam Smith Institute
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979) *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
- Brown, P. (1999) 'Globalisation and the political economy of high skills', *Journal of Education and Work*, Vol. 12, No. 3, pp. 233–52
- Burrell, G. and Morgan, G. (1979) *Sociological Perspectives and Organisational Analysis*. Aldershot: Gower
- Bynner, J. and Joshi, H. (2002) 'Equality and opportunity in education: evidence from the 1958 and 1970 birth cohort studies', *Oxford Review of Education*, Vol. 28, No. 4, pp. 405–25
- Byrne, D. (2005) *Social Exclusion*. Buckingham: Open University Press
- Cantle, T.C. (2001) *Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team*. London: Home Office
- Carter, P.L. (2003) "'Black" cultural capital, status positioning, and schooling conflicts for low-income African American youth', *Social Problems*, Vol. 50, No. 1, pp. 136–55

- Castells, M. (1996) *The Rise of the Network Society*. Oxford: Blackwell
- Cauce, A., Stewart, A., Rodriguez, M., Cochrane, B. and Ginzler, J. (2003) 'Overcoming the odds? Adolescent development in the context of urban poverty in Suniya Luthar', in *Resilience and Vulnerability: Adaptation in the Context of Childhood Adversities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Chitty, C. (2002) 'Education and social class', *The Political Quarterly*, Vol. 73, No. 2, pp. 208–10
- Coffield, F. (2000) *The Necessity of Informal Learning*. Bristol: The Policy Press
- Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups [Committee appointed by the Department of Education and Science under the chairmanship of Lord Swann] (1985) *Education for All: Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups*. London: HMSO
- Connell, R.W., White, V.M. and Johnston, K.M. (1992) 'An experiment in justice: the Disadvantaged Schools Program and the question of poverty, 1974–1990', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 447–64
- Cooper, C.W. and Christie, C.A. (2005) 'Evaluating parent empowerment: a look at the potential of social justice evaluation in education', *Teachers College Record*, Vol. 107, No. 10, pp. 2248–74
- Crowder, K. and South, S.J. (2003) 'Neighborhood distress and school dropout: the variable significance of community context', *Social Science Research*, Vol. 32, pp. 659–98
- Cummings, C., Dyson, A. and Todd, L. (2004) *Evaluation of the Extended Schools Pathfinder Projects*, DfES Research Report RR530. Nottingham: DfES Publications (<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR530.pdf>, accessed on 26 April 2006)
- Cummings, C., Dyson, A., Papps, I., Pearson, D., Raffo, C. and Todd, L. (2005) *Evaluation of the Full Service Extended Schools Project: End of First Year Report*, DfES Research Report RR680. Nottingham: DfES Publications (<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR680.pdf>, accessed on 26 April 2006)
- Davies, B. (2006) 'Subjectification: the relevance of Butler's analysis for education', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 27, No. 4, pp. 425–38

Demie, F., Butler, R. and Taplin, A. (2002) 'Educational achievement and the disadvantage factor: empirical evidence', *Educational Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 101–10

Desforges, C. with Abouchaar, A. (2003) *The Impact of Parental Involvement, Parental Support and Family Education on Pupil Achievement and Adjustment: A Literature Review*, Research Report 433. London: DfES

DfEE (1999) *Schools Plus: Building Learning Communities. Improving the Educational Chances of Children and Young People from Disadvantaged Areas*, a report from the Schools Plus Policy Action Team 11. London: DfEE

DfES (2002) *Extended Schools: Providing Opportunities and Services for All*. London: DfES

DfES (2003a) *Every Child Matters*, Cm. 5860. London: The Stationery Office

DfES (2003b) *Full-Service Extended Schools Planning Documents*. London: DfES

DfES (2004a) *Every Child Matters: Change for Children in Schools*. London: DfES

DfES (2004b) *Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners*. London: The Stationery Office

DfES (2005) *Ethnicity and Education: The Evidence on Minority Ethnic Pupils*. London: HMSO

DfES (2006) *Excellence in Cities*. <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/sie/eic/>

DiPietro, J.A. (2000) 'Baby and the brain: advances in child development', *Annual Review of Public Health*, Vol. 21, pp. 455–71

Dorsett, R. (1998) *Ethnic Minorities in the Inner City*. Bristol: The Policy Press in association with JRF

Douglas, J.W.B. (1964) *The Home and the School*. London: MacGibbon & Kee

DWP (2006) *Households Below Average Income – 1994/95 to 2004/05*, National Statistics bulletin, Department of Work and Pensions, March 2006. Available at: http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/hbai/hbai2005/first_release_0405.pdf (accessed 19 June 2006)

Dyson, A. and Raffo, C. (2007 forthcoming) 'Education and disadvantage: the role of communited-oriented schools', *Oxford Review of Education*

Eamon, M.K. (2001) 'The effects of poverty on children's socioemotional development: an ecological systems analysis', *Social Work*, Vol. 46, No. 3, pp. 256–66

Ellenbogen, M.A. and Hodgins, S. (2004) 'The impact of high neuroticism in parents on children's psychosocial functioning in a population at high risk for major affective disorder: a family-environmental pathway of intergenerational risk', *Development and Psychopathology*, Vol. 16, pp. 113–36

Engestrom, Y. (2001) 'Expansive learning at work: toward an activity-theoretical reconceptualisation', *Journal of Education and Work*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 133–56

Exworthy, M., Stuart, M., Blane, D. and Marmo, M. (2003) *Tackling Health Inequalities since the Acheson Inquiry*. Bristol: The Policy Press

Feinstein, L., Duckworth, K. and Sabates, R. (2004) *A Model of the Inter-generational Transmission of Educational Success*, Wider Benefits of Learning Research Report No. 10. London: Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning

Fielding, M. (2001) 'Students as radical agents of change', *Journal of Educational Change*, Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 123–41

Fielding, M. (2006a) 'Leadership, personalisation and high performance schooling: naming the new totalitarianism', submitted to *School Leadership and Management*, 17 May 2006

Fielding, M. (2006b) 'Leadership, radical student engagement and the necessity of person-centred education', *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 299–313

Filmer, D. and Pritchett, L. (1999) 'The effect of household wealth on educational attainment: evidence from 35 countries', *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 85–120

Filmer, D. and Pritchett, L.H. (2001) 'Estimating wealth effects without expenditure data – or tears: an application to educational enrollments in states of India', *Demography*, Vol. 38, No. 1, pp. 115–32

Franklin, W. (2000) 'Students at promise and resilient: a historical look at risk', in M.G. Sanders (ed.) *Schooling Students Placed at Risk*. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum

Freire, P. (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. London: Continuum

Furbey, R., Dinham, A., Farnell, R., Finneron, D., Wilkinson, G., Howarth, C., Hussain, D. and Palmer, S. (2006) *Faith as Social Capital. Connecting or Diving?* Bristol: The Policy Press in association with JRF

Gewirtz, S. (2001) 'Cloning the Blairs: New Labour's programme for the re-socialization of working-class parents', *Journal of Education Policy*, Vol. 16, No. 4, pp. 365–78

Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Cambridge: Polity Press

Gillborn, D. (2005) 'Education policy as an act of white supremacy: whiteness, critical race theory and education reform', *Journal of Education Policy*, Vol. 20, No. 4, pp. 485–505

Glennerster, H. (2002) 'United Kingdom education 1997–2001', *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, Vol. 18, No. 2, pp. 120–37

Gorard, S. (1997) 'Market forces, choices and diversity in education: the early impact', *Sociological Research Online*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (<http://www.socresonline.org.uk/2/3/8.html>)

Gregg, P., Waldfogel, J. and Washbrooke, C. (2005) *Expenditure Patterns Post Welfare Reform in the UK: Are Low Income Families Starting to Catch Up?*, CASE Paper 99. London: Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, LSE

Gulson, K. (2005) 'Renovating educational identities: policy, space and urban renewal', *Journal of Education Policy*, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 141–58

Gunter, H. (2005a) 'Conceptualising research in educational leadership', *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership*, Special Edition: *Researching Leadership – A Review of Progress*, Vol. 33, No. 2, pp. 165–80

Gunter, H. (2005b) *Leading Teachers*. London: Continuum

Hallinger, P. and Murphy, J.F. (1986) 'The social context of effective schools', *American Journal of Education*, Vol. 94, No. 3, pp. 328–55

- Harris, A. and Ranson, S. (2005) 'The contradictions of education policy: disadvantage and achievement', *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 31, No. 5, pp. 571–87
- Hastings, A., Flint, J., McKenzie, C. and Mills, C. (2005) *Cleaning Up Neighbourhoods: Environmental Problems and Service Provision in Deprived Neighbourhoods*. Bristol: The Policy Press
- Herrnstein, R. and Murray, C. (1994) *The Bell Curve*. New York: Simon & Schuster
- Hirsch, D. (2004) *Strategies Against Poverty: A Shared Road Map*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Hodkinson, P., Sparkes, A.C. and Hodkinson, H. (1996) *Triumphs and Tears: Young People, Markets and the Transition from School to Work*. London: David Fulton Publishers
- Hoggart, L. and Smith, D.I. (2004) *Understanding the Impact of Connexions on Young People at Risk*, DfES Research Report 607. London: DfES
- Hollins, K., Gunter, H. and Thomson, P. (2006) 'Living improvement: a case study of a secondary school in England', *Improving Schools*, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 141–52
- Holtzman, N.A. (2002) 'Genetics and social class', *J Epidemiol Community Health*, Vol. 56, pp. 529–35
- Holzman, L. (1997) *Schools for Growth: Radical Alternatives to Current Educational Models*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum
- Hyman, H.H. (1967) 'The value systems of different classes', in R. Bendix and S.M. Lipset (eds) *Class, Status and Power*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul
- Jackson, B. and Marsden, D. (1966) *Education and the Working Class*. Harmondsworth: Penguin
- Jencks, C. (1972) *Inequality: An Assessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America*. New York: Basic Books
- Jensen, A.R. (1984) 'Test validity: g versus the specificity doctrine', *Journal of Social and Biological Structures*, Vol. 7, pp. 93–118

Kalmijn, M. and Kraaykamp, G. (1996) 'Race, cultural capital, and schooling: an analysis of trends in the United States', *Sociology of Education*, Vol. 69, pp. 22–34

Kelly, A. (1995) *Free School Meal Contextualisation of GCSE Examination Results*, Report of the National Consortium for Examination Results, Stockport LEA, January

Kendall, L., O'Donnell, L., Golden, S., Ridley, K., Machin, S., Rutt, S., McNally, S., Schagen, I., Meghir, C., Stoney, S., Morris, M., West, A. and Noden, P. (2005) *Excellence in Cities: The National Evaluation of a Policy to Raise Standards in Urban Schools 2000–2003*, DfES Research Report RR675A. Nottingham: DfES Publications (<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR675A.pdf>, accessed on 26 April 2006)

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998) 'Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education?', *Qualitative Studies in Education*, Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 7–24

Ladson-Billings, G. and Tate, W.F. (1995) 'Towards a critical race theory of education', *Teachers College Record*, Vol. 97, pp. 47–68

Lareau, A. (1987) 'Social class differences in family–school relationships: the importance of cultural capital', *Sociology of Education*, Vol. 60 (April), pp. 73–85

Lash, S. and Urry, J. (1994) *Economies of Signs and Space*. London: Sage

LaVeist, T.A. and Bell McDonald, K. (2002) 'Race, gender, and educational advantage in the inner city', *Social Science Quarterly*, Vol. 83, No. 3, pp. 832–52

Lawson, M.A. (2003) 'School–family relations in context: parent and teacher perceptions of parent involvement', *Urban Education*, Vol. 38, No. 1, pp. 77–133

Le Grand, J. and Bartlett, W. (eds) (1993) *Quasi-Markets and Social Policy*. Basingstoke: Macmillan

Levačić, R. and Woods, P.A. (2002) 'Raising school performance in the league tables (Part 1): disentangling the effects of social disadvantage', *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 207–26

Lipman, P. (2004) *High Stakes Education*. London: RoutledgeFalmer

Lister, R. (2004) *Poverty*. Cambridge: Polity Press

Locurto, C. (1990) 'The malleability of IQ as judged from adoption studies', *The Psychologist II – The Bulletin of the British Psychology Society*, Vol. 14, pp. 275–92

Love, J., Kisker, E.E., Ross, C.M., Schochet, P.Z., Brooks-Gunn, J., Paulsell, D., Boller, K., Constantine, J., Vogel, C., Fuligni, A.S. and Brady-Smith, C. (2002) *Making a Difference in the Lives of Infants and Toddlers and Their Families: The Impacts of Early Head Start. Volume 1: Final Technical Report*. Princeton, NJ: Mathematica Policy Research Inc. Available at: <http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/PDFs/ehsfinalvol1.pdf>

Lupton, R. (2005) 'Social justice and school improvement: improving the quality of schools in the poorest neighbourhoods', *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 31, No. 5, pp. 589–604

Luthar, S. and Zelazo, L. (2003) 'Research on resilience: an integrative review', in Suniya Luthar (ed.) *Resilience and Vulnerability: Adaptation in the Context of Childhood Adversities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Machell, J. (1999) 'The lost boys or the great unwashed? Collaborative strategies to address disaffection', paper presented at the BERA Annual Conference, University of Sussex at Brighton, 2–5 September

Maguire, M. (2006) 'Education and poverty: a matter of complexity', paper presented at University of Manchester International Seminar on Education and Poverty, Manchester, March 2006

Meen, G., Gibb, K., Goody, J., McGrath, T. and Mackinnon, J. (2005) *Economic Segregation in England: Causes, Consequences and Policy*. Bristol: The Policy Press

Melhuish, E., Belsky, J. and Leyland, A. (2005) *Early Impacts of Sure Start Local Programmes on Children and Families: Report of the Cross-sectional Study of 9- and 36-Month Old Children and Their Families*, DfES Research Report NESS/2005/FR/013. London: DfES

Middleton, S., Perren, K., Maguire, S., Rennison, J., Battistin, E., Emmerson, C. and Fitzsimons, E. (2005) *Evaluation of Education Maintenance Allowance Pilots: Young People Aged 16 to 19 Years*, DfES Report No. RR678. London: DfES

Milbourne, L., Macrae, S. and Maguire, M. (2003) 'Collaborative solutions or new policy problems: exploring multi-agency partnerships in education and health work', *Journal of Education Policy*, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp. 19–35

Mirón, L. (2006) 'A response to the Education and Poverty Working Paper', paper presented to the International Seminar of Education and Poverty, funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, School of Education, University of Manchester, March 2006

Morrow, R.A. and Torres, C.A. (2000) 'The state, globalisation, and educational policy', in N.C. Burbules and C.A. Torres (eds) *Globalisation and Education: Critical Perspectives*. New York: Routledge

Mortimore, P. and Whitty, G. (1997) *Can School Improvement Overcome the Effects of Disadvantage?* London: Institute of Education, University of London

Muijs, D., Harris, A., Chapman, C., Stoll, L. and Russ, J. (2004) 'Improving schools in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas – a review of research evidence', *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 149–75

National Strategy for Urban Renewal (2000) *Policy Action Team Report Summaries: A Compendium*. London: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

Nutley, S., Davies, H. and Walter, I. (2002) *Briefing Note 1: What is a Research Synthesis?* St Andrews: Research Unit for Research Utilisation, University of St Andrews. Available at: <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~ruru/Conceptual%20synthesis.pdf>, accessed 29 April 2005

OECD (2001) *Knowledge and Skills for Life: First Results from PISA 2000*. Paris: OECD

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005) *Mainstream Public Services and Their Impact on Neighbourhood Deprivation*. Available at <http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/document.asp?id=1044>

Olds, D.L., Henderson, C.R., Kitzman, H., Eckenrode, J.J., Cole, R.E. and Tatelbaum, R.C. (1999) 'Prenatal and infancy home visitation by nurses: recent findings', *Future of Children*, Vol. 9, pp. 44–66

Ozga, J. (2000) *Policy Research in Educational Settings*. Buckingham: Open University Press

Pathak, S. (for DfEE) (2000) *Race Research for the Future: Ethnicity in Education, Training and the Labour Market*, Research Topic Paper RTP01. Nottingham: DfEE

Raffo, C. (2003) 'Disaffected young people and the work-related curriculum at Key Stage 4: issues of social capital development and learning as a form of cultural practice', *Journal of Education and Work*, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 69–86

Raffo, C. and Reeves, M. (2000) 'Youth transitions and social exclusion: developments in social capital theory', *Journal of Youth Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 147–66

Raffo, C., Dyson, A., Gunter, H., Hall, D., Jones, L. and Kalambouka, A. (2006) 'Education and poverty: mapping the terrain and making the links to educational policy', paper presented to the International Seminar on Education and Poverty, funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, School of Education, University of Manchester, March 2006

Ramey, C.T., Campbell, F.A., Burchinal, M., Skinner, M.L., Gardner, D.M. and Ramey, S.L. (2000) 'Persistent effects of early childhood education on high-risk children and their mothers', *Applied Developmental Science*, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 2–14

Ribbins, P. and Gunter, H. (2002) 'Leadership studies in education: towards a map of the field', *Educational Management and Administration*, Vol. 30, No. 4, pp. 387–416

Rizvi, F. and Lingard, B. (2000) 'Globalisation and education: complexities and contingencies', *Education Theory*, Vol. 50, No. 4, pp. 419–26

Rothstein, R. (2004) *Class and Schools: Using Social, Economic and Educational Reform to Close the Black–White Achievement Gap*. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute

Rudd, P. (1997) 'From socialisation to postmodernity: a review of theoretical perspectives on the school-to-work transition', *Journal of Education and Work*, Vol. 10, No. 3, pp. 257–80

Rutter, M. (2003) 'Genetic influences on risk and protection: implications for understanding resilience', in Suniya Luthar (ed.) *Resilience and Vulnerability: Adaptation in the Context of Childhood Adversities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Sanders, M.R. (2003) 'Triple P – Positive Parenting Program: a population approach to promoting competent parenting', *Australian e-Journal for the Advancement of Mental Health*, Vol. 2, No. 3. www.auseinet.com/journal/vol2iss3/sanders.pdf. Also available at: http://www.pfsc.uq.edu.au/02_ppp/ppp.html

Scott, S., O'Connor, T. and Futh, A. (2006) *What Makes Parenting Programmes Work in Disadvantaged Areas? The PALS Trial*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Seaman, P., Turner, K., Hill, M., Stafford, A. and Walker, M. (2006) *Parenting and Children's Resilience in Disadvantaged Communities*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Sen, A. (2000) *Social Exclusion*. Manila: Asian Development Bank

Sennett, R. (2006) *The Culture of the New Capitalism*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press

Shain, F. and Ozga, J. (2001) 'Identity crisis? Problems and issues in the sociology of education', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 109–20

Shirley, D. (2001) 'Linking community organizing and school reform: a comparative analysis', in R.L. Crowson (ed.) *Community Development and School Reform*. Oxford: JAI

Shonkoff, J.P. and Phillips, D.A. (eds), for the Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development (2000) *From Neurons to Neighbourhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press

Sibley, D. (1995) *Geographies of Exclusion*. London: Routledge

Smith, T. and Nobel, M. (1995) *Education Divides – Poverty and Schooling in the 1990s*. London: Child Poverty Action Group

Social Exclusion Unit (1998) *Bringing Britain Back Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*. London: HMSO

Thomson, P. (2002) *Schooling the Rustbelt Kids: Making the Difference in Changing Times*. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books

Thrupp, M. (1999) *Schools Making a Difference: Let's Be Realistic! School Mix, School Effectiveness and the Social Limits of Reform*. New York: Taylor & Francis

Tooley, J., Dixon P. and Stanfield, J. (2003) *Delivering Better Education: Market Solutions for Educational Improvement*. London: Adam Smith Institute

United Nations (2005) *The Millennium Development Goals*. <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/#>

Verma, G.J. (1985) 'The Swann Report and ethnic achievement: a comment', *New Community*, Vol. 12, No. 3, pp. 470–5

Webb, R. and Vulliamy, G. (2004) *A Multi-agency Approach to Reducing Disaffection and Exclusions from School*, DfES Research Report RR568. Nottingham: DfES. Available at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR568.pdf> (accessed on 1 July 2006)

Webster-Stratton, C. (1993) 'Strategies for helping families with young oppositional defiant or conduct-disordered children: the importance of home and school collaboration', *School Psychology Review*, Vol. 22, pp. 437–57

Williams, R. (1973) *The Long Revolution*, 3rd edn. London: Pelican Books

Willis, P. (1977) *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*. Aldershot: Gower

Wilson, J. (1987) *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press

Woods, P.A. and Levačić, R. (2002) 'Raising school performance in the league tables (Part 2): barriers to responsiveness in three disadvantaged schools', *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 227–48

Youdell, D. (2006) 'Subjectivation and performative politics – Butler thinking Althusser and Foucault: intelligibility, agency and the raced–nationed–religioned subjects of education', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 27, No. 4, pp. 511–28

Appendix 1: Definitions of education and poverty

Mapping the major conceptualisations of the relationship between education and poverty immediately throws up issues about how both terms might be defined. Although of immense interest these extensive and detailed debates are beyond the remit of the project. However, what the report does offer is some broad working definitions of these terms that reflect explanations that we can work with and that at the same time set parameters for the research.

When examining notions of education, the report primarily focuses on young people's experiences of formal education in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors in developed countries and, more specifically, how these experiences translate into outcomes. Educational outcomes can be both narrowly and more broadly defined. Narrow definitions of educational outcomes generally refer to educational attainments as measured in England, for example by Key Stage (KS) 2, 3 and 4 results, GCSE scores, Standard Assessment Targets and Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs). Alternatively they may refer to data regarding enrolment and retention as young people complete their compulsory schooling and progress through further and higher education. However, broader definitions of outcomes may reflect wider notions of educational capability that include, for example, creativity, citizenship and emotional intelligence and reflect umbrella terms such as educational well-being. Some of these broader definitions of educational outcomes are now encompassed within educational policy in England through Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003a) with its 'five outcomes' – being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a contribution and economic well-being. The report seeks to reflect both broader and narrower notions of education when examining the links between education and poverty.

The definition and measurement of poverty is also a highly contested area. Key issues in the definition include the extent to which poverty describes an absolute state or relative inequality. Absolute definitions are based on access to basic resources to sustain life (e.g. food and shelter). Relative definitions are based on indicators of access to goods or activities that are deemed essential or appropriate in particular societies at particular points in time. Absolute poverty is a relatively rare phenomenon in the world's richer countries and consequently most indicators of poverty in such countries are based on relative indicators.

Studies deploying relative indicators suggest that a significant minority of young people live in poverty. According to UK national statistics, 'in 2004/05, there were 2.4

million children living in households with below 60 per cent of median income on a Before Housing Costs basis, 3.4 million After Housing Costs. This represents a fall of 700,000 since 1996/97 on a Before Housing Costs basis; and a fall of 800,000 After Housing Costs' (DWP, 2006, p. 1). Child poverty is also inequitably distributed geographically with an increased risk of experiencing child poverty being associated with living in particular regions or localities. For example, a study by Hirsch (2004) for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that 70 per cent of the most deprived areas in the UK are found in the four cities of Glasgow, London, Liverpool and Manchester. They are home to 128 of the 180 wards where more than half of families are out of work and relying on benefits. Evidence in such wards suggests that those young people most at risk of living in severe and persistent poverty are those in lone-parent families, whose parents are unemployed or working part time, in families with four or more children, and with a mother aged under 25 (DWP, 2006). Other groups that are also particularly at high risk of living in poverty in such areas are those from ethnic minorities, disabled people, local authority housing association tenants and those with no formal educational qualifications (DWP, 2006).

The link between poverty and poor educational outcomes

Although the concepts of poverty and education are contested, the link between education (as defined in various ways and in relation to indicators of enrolment, retention and outcomes) and poverty in the UK and elsewhere has been demonstrated clearly. Those young people who live in conditions of poverty, however defined, are more likely not to enrol or be retained in education and are more likely to achieve poorer educational outcomes than young people living in relative affluence. Conversely those not enrolling or being retained in education and those achieving low educational outcomes in either narrow attainment terms or in more general terms of educational well-being are also more likely to then experience poverty. In addition these findings are consistent from one generation to the next (Bynner and Joshi, 2002). Other research has demonstrated the link between schools serving poor communities and some of the lowest levels of aggregate educational attainment to be found in those areas (Kelly, 1995; Mortimore and Whitty, 1997; Demie *et al.*, 2002; Bell, 2003). For example, the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU, 1998) found that five times as many secondary schools in 'worst neighbourhoods' had 'serious weaknesses' (as defined by Ofsted) as was typically the case, and children drawn from poorer family origins were more likely to have been in the lowest quartile of attainment in educational tests than their more affluent counterparts. Evidence from England (Glennerster, 2002) shows that, at Key Stage 3 (age 14), for schools with more than 40 per cent free school meals (FSM), no pupils achieved the standardised age-related performance level in English, compared with 83 per cent of pupils in

schools with less than 5 per cent FSM. Evidence from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005) shows that key attainment in 2001/02 increases steadily from pupils in schools that are located in the most deprived wards to those in schools in the most prosperous wards. In addition, the OECD's (2001) PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) study, analysing the literacy and numeracy levels of 15 year olds in developed countries, found that the UK performed relatively well at both the highest and lowest ends of the achievement scale. However, to an extent unmatched in most other countries, the distribution of educational achievement maintained pre-existing inequalities, with differences between high and low attainment accounted for by socio-economic class and, by implication, levels of relative poverty (Chitty, 2002).

This is not simply a UK phenomenon. In the USA, Jencks's (1972) comprehensive study showed that whatever type of school children attended, their educational performance reflected the socio-economic position of their parents. There are also complementary links between education and poverty in less developed countries where enrolment into and retention in education are strongly linked to levels of poverty (Filmer and Pritchett, 1999, 2001). Although beyond the scope of this report, studies for UNESCO and the development of United Nations Millennium Development Goals for education (United Nations, 2005) highlight the impact across the world of absolute poverty on young people's opportunities to access and succeed in education.

As we indicated earlier, there is much debate about those factors associated with poverty that appear to exacerbate or ameliorate educational outcomes. Within such discussions there are those who talk about the personal and/or social/cultural attributes that individuals and their families and communities possess (sometimes defined as risk factors) which predispose them to low educational attainments, lower life chances and hence greater levels of poverty. Others talk about how power and inequality create levels of poverty that in themselves exclude and marginalise some groups of young people from mainstream society and the mechanisms, including education, of that society that have the effect of replicating social inequalities. This exclusion often generates low aspirations towards formal education and hence low attainment. Other studies specifically implicate aspects of the education system itself in creating and reproducing educational inequalities. Such explanations suggest that policymakers and educational practitioners privilege particular curricula and modes of operation that exclude and alienate some groups from education. Other studies focus on what they see as an incomplete correlation between education and poverty and highlight those individuals and institutional features associated with positive educational outcomes and/or that demonstrate aspects of resilience against what appear to be high levels of adversity. The main part of the report examines these issues in more detail.

Appendix 2: Research design, methods and analysis

Design

We undertook a literature review in the form of a ‘conceptual synthesis’ (Nutley *et al.*, 2002) of research evidence. According to Nutley *et al.*, the aim of conceptual synthesis ‘is not to provide an exhaustive search and review of all the literature published in the field ... Instead the aim is to identify the key ideas, models and debates, and review the significance of these for developing a better understanding of research utilisation and evidence based policy and practice implementation’ (2002, p. 2). Therefore, a conceptual synthesis differs from both traditional narrative reviews of research and systematic reviews in that it is concerned not only to synthesise the substantive findings from research, but also to identify the conceptual bases out of which they have emerged. We use the term ‘conceptual synthesis’ as it denotes a broad approach to reviewing research evidence as opposed to a prescribed methodology. However, this approach has a long history which can arguably be traced back at least as far as Burrell and Morgan’s (1979) classic account of ‘sociological paradigms’. More recently Gunter has undertaken a conceptual synthesis of the research literature on educational leadership (Ribbins and Gunter, 2002; Gunter, 2005a, 2005b) which provided the team with valuable experience of this approach.

An effective conceptual synthesis of the sort we utilised is based on:

- identifying an appropriate level of analysis in terms of the sorts of assumptions which will be surfaced
- ensuring that the full range of conceptualisations is identified
- ensuring that the assumptions of each conceptualisation are identified accurately and that research studies are allocated reliably to different conceptualisations.

However, unlike a systematic review, which demands a comprehensive search for all relevant research reports, our conceptual synthesis depended on locating only key exemplary items. ‘Key’ in this sense refers to pieces of research literature which are particularly illuminating of assumptions and/or which review the research within a conceptualisation and/or which have been particularly influential in determining the direction taken by research.

Methods

Sensitising seminars – University of Manchester and International Seminar

Two sensitising seminars were established whose task it was to ensure that our review took full account of all relevant disciplinary perspectives and was not skewed by the reviewers' educational backgrounds. The Humanities Faculty in the University of Manchester houses one of the largest concentrations of social scientists in the country. The newly established Centre for Equity in Education, under whose aegis this review is conducted, collaborates with many of these and we drew on these links to invite colleagues from across the faculty to participate in the reference group. This reference group participated in an initial 'sensitising seminar' which helped us to:

- identify and articulate provisionally the major conceptualisations
- identify key literature
- identify keywords and an appropriate search strategy.

The group then received and commented on a mid-point progress report and on an early draft of our final report.

An advisory group meeting also took place in London consisting of the project team and the Joseph Rowntree Advisory Panel members:

- Dr Leon Feinstein, Institute of Education, London
- Professor Howard Glennerster, London School of Economics
- Ann Gross, Divisional Manager, Extended Schools and Childcare
- Professor Ruth Lister, Loughborough University
- Diana McNeish, Policy, Research and Influencing Unit, Barnardo's
- Chris Power, Former HMI
- Ray Shostak, Managing Director of Public Services, HM Treasury
- Helen Barnard, Education and Poverty Programme Director, Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

The Advisory Panel members provided eminent and critical support which resulted in our developed thinking. A number of issues were raised by various individuals on the panel about the review team's emerging classificatory framework.

The second seminar, which included both UK and international delegates, took place in Manchester at the end of March 2006 and lasted three days. During the seminar, the group's draft review document on conceptualisations of poverty and education was presented and participants were invited to provide feedback. Also, many of the participants provided their own contributions on poverty and education. Among the participants who presented their own work were John Bynner, Leon Feinstein, William Franklin, David Hulme, Ruth Lupton, Meg Maguire, Pat Thomson and Geoff Whitty. The seminar further provided opportunities for group discussions and plenaries. Outputs from the seminar included:

- feedback on the mapping exercise in relation to conceptual frameworks presented
- general ideas about the review's format and content
- areas that required further examination (e.g. temporal and spatial elements, extending more to policy literature, policy initiatives, national interventions, etc.).

The final product of the seminar included a redrafted review document which was sent to all contributors for further feedback.

Literature searching

Reviewing the literature constituted a major methodological aspect of this project. This section describes the specific methodological steps undertaken in order to identify, obtain and review relevant materials. Identifying the literature involved a variety of sources, described below. There were three analytical tasks in reviewing the literature: first, testing and elaborating the preliminary characterisation of conceptualisations; second, making explicit the implications of each conceptualisation for research and policy; and, third, articulating the actual and potential relationships between different conceptualisations.

Sources of searches

There were six main sources for identifying relevant project material. These included:

- 1 Citations in key articles. These were identified using the research team’s prior experiences and sensitising seminars and included all potentially relevant subject areas:
 - education
 - economics and political science
 - sociology
 - geography
 - epidemiology/medicine.

- 2 Searches through electronic databases. These covered journal articles, books and book chapters, reports and key speeches. Since the purpose of the study was to map the available literature and conceptualisations rather than to provide an exhaustive literature review, only key papers/articles/books were located, tagged and retrieved. These included terms relating to education and terms relating to poverty. A list of terms/keywords relating to each is presented in Table A2.1.

Table A2.1 List of review-specific keywords/terms

Education	Poverty
School/schooling	Social class
School performance	Low income
Educational outcomes	Deprivation
Educational attainment	Disadvantage
School/educational results	Disaffection

Several combinations of keywords were attempted in order to achieve maximum sensitivity in the retrieval of as many relevant papers as possible. ‘Keywords’ or ‘descriptors’ were used as identified in the articles’ titles and abstracts (rather than ‘free text’ terms unless the database offered no option). The bibliographic databases searched are shown in Table A2.2.

- 3 Further key references were identified and located through scanning the reference lists of the main readings in the area (snowballing). Snowballing was necessary in order to ensure that the main conceptualisations/theorisations in the literature had been identified and obtained.

- 4 Additional searching via the SWETSWISE facility was also undertaken. This is a journal subscription tool offering simplified online access and searching of electronic publications.

Table A2.2 List of bibliographic databases used

Discipline	Bibliographic database
Education	ERIC (Educational Resources Information Centre) BEI (British Educational Index) AEI (Australian Educational Index)
Psychology	PsycINFO (Psychological Information)
Social Science	Web of Knowledge (Web of Science) Social Work Abstracts CAB Abstracts Database Social Work Abstracts Social Services Abstracts Social Science Index Database IBSS Database (International Bibliography of the Social Sciences)
Economics and Political	EconLit – Social (Policy and Practice, Sciences Index) International Political Science Abstract Social Policy and Practice Database Social Science Index Database International Political Science Abstract

- 5 The websites of relevant bodies and professional organisations were also searched in order to identify key research, reports, reviews etc. For example, among the sites accessed were the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the DfES, the Nuffield Centre, ESRC, the Social Exclusion Unit, the World Bank etc.
- 6 The three-day International Seminar provided the opportunity for discussions on the available literatures and invitees had the chance to comment on our bibliography and to add to it where appropriate. Furthermore, all participants were invited to suggest further literature that they thought should be considered for the purposes of our review.

Database interrogation, keywords searching and screening criteria

Once key conceptualisations, literature sources and keywords had been highlighted through the first stage of literature search described above, the international research evidence was identified and interrogated. One of the research team (Dyson) has led EPPI (Evidence for Policy and Practice Information) systematic reviews and is very familiar with the rigorous techniques for searching, developing explicit inclusion/exclusion criteria, data extraction and establishing reliability which are characteristic of such reviews but which can be transferred to the conceptual review proposed here. Rather than identifying all the potentially relevant literature (the volume of which would be unmanageable and unnecessary), we focused on:

- reviews of research evidence which synthesise findings from a range of relevant studies
- reports of studies where empirical findings are theorised on the basis of explicit conceptualisations of links between education and poverty
- reports of studies which have been particularly influential in the development of the field.

We therefore conducted the latter stages of our search through a combination of:

- branching searches which tracked citations in key texts identified from our existing knowledge and the sensitising seminar
- selective database searches, focusing on reviews and on recent studies which might themselves form the basis of further branching searches.

Following both Ribbins and Gunter (2002) and standard systematic review procedures, we developed protocols which allowed standard questions to be asked of each reviewed piece of research literature. These questions identified both substantive findings and underlying assumptions about poverty–education relationships.

Analysis

The responses to these protocols constituted the secondary data which we analysed. Analysis involved three tasks:

- 1 testing and elaborating the preliminary characterisation of conceptualisations
- 2 making explicit the implications of each conceptualisation for research (e.g. in terms of methods and substantive focus) and policy (in terms of theories of change)
- 3 articulating the actual and potential relationships between different conceptualisations (e.g. where assumptions overlapped or differed, where there had been actual engagements between conceptualisations and where potential engagements might arise).

Task 3 was particularly important, since it was at this point that an attempt was made to examine the possibilities of synthesising different conceptualisations. All three tasks, however, had a strong interpretive element and this required team members to work together to cross-check and interrogate each other's interpretations. These interpretations were then further checked by our interdisciplinary reference group. During this latter task of articulation three different frameworks for mapping the data and allowing outcomes of the review to be organised were developed. A full account of the process is included in Raffa *et al.* (2006).

Electronic tools used for storing and managing the secondary data

Reference Manager – storing, searching and managing publications

All identified searches of electronic databases produced a range of items that were deemed relevant and which were imported into a Reference Manager bibliographic application database. Initially 9,300 papers were imported. These excluded publications from the educational databases (ERIC, BEI and AEI) which were stored in separate Microsoft Word files. This number generally excluded duplicates between different databases. However, when papers had been keyed into more than one single database using slightly different formats (e.g. capitals for all title words etc.) the Reference Manager was unable to identify them as duplicates and listed them more than once. Once identified these duplicates were later deleted.

The lists of searches produced and imported in the Reference Manager database were inclusive and the majority of hits therefore irrelevant. Two of the team members undertook the task of scanning the titles and abstracts generated by electronic database searches. Initially, titles/abstracts that appeared to be irrelevant to the subject area were immediately disregarded. Titles and abstracts identified as possibly relevant were given a 'Y' (Yes) code so they could be obtained in either electronic or hard copy format and reviewed at a later point. In order for a study to be considered relevant, it had to address explicitly or implicitly the relationship between education and poverty. Furthermore, studies that were considered to be relevant for background reading were also considered as 'relevant' and were marked 'Y'.

Storing secondary data

Access database

Copies (electronic or hard) of the materials identified as relevant were obtained, read or scanned and annotated in order to prepare for the review. The Access database was used to organise and store the main articles reviewed including themes and/or conceptualisations from the mapping exercise.

The main areas included were:

- study/paper ID and paper details (author, date, title and source)
- country of study
- summary of study (what the study says, evidence used in the study, main outcomes, explanatory frameworks/concepts)
- how the study fits with the paradigm/framework and in which quadrant
- paradigm details
- what the study says about the relationship between education and poverty
- whether the study mainly describes/explains the above relationship or goes on to suggest/describe interventions aiming to alter the poverty–education relationship
- any other notes.

Microsoft Word sheets

After the Advisory Panel meeting and the reformulation of our mapping framework, it was decided that the database was in need of amendments that took into consideration the changes made. It was also felt necessary that a new method of storing and investigating the literature was required that would make storage faster and easier. Therefore, a Microsoft Word template was designed that was used for storing data for each publication. The type of data collected was very similar to what had been collected previously and included:

- full reference

- study type (e.g. book, journal article, book chapter, review etc.)
- country the study/work originates from
- what the study says
- type of research evidence
- scale of research
- main outcomes
- what it says about the relationship between poverty and education
- what are the main loci/factors of the study (e.g. individual, peer, family, school, neighbourhood, systemic society/economics etc.)
- what other loci/levels are mentioned.

Alongside this information, questions were formulated that might help to interrogate the literature further. These included what the main focus of the research was; what secondary purpose there might be with regard to the description, explanation or intervention highlighted; how the article suggests ease of change with regard to intervention either implicitly or explicitly and where the change would come from; and whether the study/piece of literature had an emancipatory or deficit perspective. Finally, where interventions were indicated in a study, a note was made as to whether the interventions sought were curative or ameliorative.

