

Education Studies

a student's guide

edited by Stephen Ward



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Stephen Ward**

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Education Studies

Written specifically for students on Education Studies degree courses, yet also relevant for students on teacher training courses, *Education Studies: A Student's Guide* introduces a wide range of topics and issues, from knowledge and learning, policy and schooling to the ways in which education is a force for change across the globe.

Specific topics include:

- The global dimension in the curriculum
- Cultural and religious plurality in education
- Education for sustainability
- The effective teacher
- Gender and educational achievement
- Special educational needs inclusion in mainstream schools
- Information and communication technology and learning for the future
- Language, power and education.

With chapter summaries, questions for discussion and reflection, and suggestions for further reading, *Education Studies: A Student's Guide* will be a valuable source for all students of Education Studies as well as BEd and PGCE students.

Stephen Ward is Head of Education and Childhood Studies at Bath Spa University where he formerly ran the undergraduate teacher training degree and now leads the Education Studies course.

Illustrations

Figures

2.1 The four dimensions of global education	23
8.1 Maslow's hierarchy of needs	95
12.1 Four educational ideologies	135

Tables

2.1 The four dimensions of global education	24
2.2 Global citizenship: knowledge and understanding	27
2.3 Global citizenship: skills	28
2.4 Global citizenship: values and attitudes	29
10.1 Extract from case study data	119

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Figure 2.1 is reproduced with permission from G. Pike and D. Selby, *Reconnecting: From National to Global Curriculum*, Godalming: WWF–UK, 1996. Figure 12.1 is reproduced with permission from S. Askew and E. Carnell, *Transforming Learning: Individual and Global Change*, London: Cassell, 1998.

Abbreviations

ACCAC	Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales
AIDS	acquired immune deficiency syndrome
ALS	Additional Literacy Strategy
Becta	British Educational Communications and Technology Agency
CA	classroom assistant
CAP	common agricultural policy
CDA	critical discourse analysis
DE	development education
DEA	Development Education Association
DES	Department of Education and Science
DfEE	Department for Employment and Education
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DfWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EE	environmental education
ESD	education for sustainable development
ESDGC	education for sustainable development and global citizenship
EU	European Union
GA	Geographical Association
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
ICT	information and communications technology
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
IEP	Individual Education Plan
IIGE	International Institute for Global Education
ILEA	Inner London Education Authority
ILS	Integrated Learning Systems
ITT	initial teacher training
<i>JADE</i>	<i>Journal of Art and Design Education</i>
LDCs	less developed countries

LEA	Local Education Authority
LMS	local management of schools
MPs	members of parliament
NACCCE	National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NLS	National Literacy Strategy
NNS	National Numeracy Strategy
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
RE	religious education
SACRE	Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
SCAA	School Curriculum and Assessment Authority
SEN	special educational needs
SMSO	Survey of Mathematics and Science Opportunities
TEK	traditional ecological knowledge
TIMSS	Third International Mathematics and Science Study
TTA	Teacher Training Agency
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United States of America
WMS	western modern science
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Contents

List of illustrations	vii
List of contributors	viii
Acknowledgements	xi
List of abbreviations	xii
 Introduction	 1
 Part I: Global and international perspectives	
 1 International Perspectives: The USA and the Pacific Rim Kay Wood	 9
 2 The Global Dimension in the Curriculum David Hicks	 19
 3 Education and Environment David Hicks	 35
 4 Education in Europe David Coulby	 47
 5 Human Rights and Education Heather Williamson	 57
 6 Cultural and Religious Plurality in Education Denise Cush	 67

Part II: Teaching, educational settings and policy

- | | | |
|-----------|--|------------|
| 7 | Government Policy on Education in England | 81 |
| | Stephen Ward | |
| 8 | The Effective Teacher | 92 |
| | Andy Bord | |
| 9 | Early Years Education: Children from Birth to Five | 102 |
| | Karen McInnes and Jill Williams | |
| 10 | Inclusion and Special Educational Needs: Doing a Case Study in School | 112 |
| | Mim Hutchings | |
| 11 | Gender and Educational Achievement | 123 |
| | Christine Eden | |
| 12 | Radical Education | 134 |
| | David Hicks | |

Part III: Knowledge, learning and the curriculum

- | | | |
|-----------|---|------------|
| 13 | Knowledge and Science Education | 149 |
| | Alan Howe and Dan Davies | |
| 14 | Learning and Mathematics | 160 |
| | Malcolm Hanson | |
| 15 | ICT and Learning for the Future | 172 |
| | Susan Haywood and Mim Hutchings | |
| 16 | Language, Power and Education | 183 |
| | Howard Gibson | |
| 17 | Knowledge and Learning in Art and Design | 193 |
| | June Bianchi | |
| 18 | The Humanities in Education | 204 |
| | Meg Gomersall | |
| | Index | 212 |

Introduction

WHAT IS EDUCATION STUDIES?

Education Studies is an exciting subject which can help you to understand education as a powerful force for change across the globe. It is not teacher training, nor simply the *theory* of teaching, although some people choose to take it before going on to train as teachers. As future professionals they will have a critical analysis of what education is, how it works in different countries and cultures, and visions of what it might be in different futures. Teachers should be more than 'technicians' who simply know how to deliver a national curriculum in the ways prescribed by the government. The contributors to this book are committed to this deeper understanding of what education is about.

Some take Education Studies because they are thinking about teaching but haven't yet made a definite career decision. It is also for those who have a particular interest in the theory and practice of education, such as parents or school governors. Some choose to go on to other education careers such as administrators, researchers or advisers. But Education Studies can be a subject of pure academic interest without any particular vocational outcome. It has always been possible to study fine art or architecture without becoming a practising artist or an architect designing houses. You can study education simply because it is intellectually challenging and interesting.

Education has always been a part of university teacher training courses. However, the curriculum for initial teacher training (ITT) is now regulated by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) through its *Standards for Qualified Teacher Status* (Department for Education and Skills [DfES], TTA, 2002). Some universities have chosen to separate Education Studies from teacher training in order to allow students a wider experience of educational ideas, processes and policies than those required to meet the TTA standards. It has grown to become a popular subject in undergraduate degree courses.

WHAT DO YOU LEARN AS AN EDUCATION STUDENT?

It is sometimes argued that education isn't a proper subject, or 'an academic discipline in its own right' (Davies *et al.*, 2002) and there has long been discussion about the nature of educational theory. It is not a subject with its own method like physics or history. Instead, it draws on a range of subjects and disciplines and, as an education student, you will be learning psychology, sociology, history, philosophy, ethics, politics, economics, and international and global relations. To this long list we must add knowledge of at least some of the school curriculum subjects like English, mathematics, science or art.

Education Studies might be accused of *dabbling*: pinching little bits of knowledge from other subjects and patching them together, with no in-depth study of any of them. Rather than dabbling, I want to argue that Education Studies is a synthesis – a bringing together – of different disciplines and knowledge in order to understand education as it goes on now, what it can be in different situations or what it might become in different futures.

For example, to be able to understand children's learning of mathematics in schools we need to know something of the psychology of learning, but also to know about the nature of mathematics as a subject to know *what* they are learning. We would want to know about the pupils themselves, their different experiences as boys and girls, the diverse social cultural contexts of their backgrounds as learners and their experiences of social class, perhaps poverty and racism. Of course we should look at the nature of teaching in classrooms and the ways teachers and pupils interact with each other. But mathematics teaching in primary schools in England is now determined by the government's National Numeracy Strategy, which derives from teaching methods imported from Japan and Taiwan. The methods are urged on teachers as part of government policy to increase numeracy skills so the nation's workforce can compete in the global economy. But we also need to remember that the children are being educated to live in a culturally diverse society, with a range of ideologies and beliefs, and as citizens of the European Union. They need to learn that they are living on a globe which is full of potential for the educational and technological advances and the improvement of human rights, but is simultaneously threatened by human conflict and its own self-destruction.

So what looks to be a relatively simple matter, seven-year-olds learning place value in a school in Birmingham, spiders off into a range of possibilities and issues from individual psychology to international economics and global futures. A good education student is an expert in diversity, able to capture all that is involved in the rich picture. A good educator needs not just to be able to 'do it in the classroom', but to understand what is being done and why, see beyond it and know about alternatives futures.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

The book was written by a team of Education Studies tutors at Bath Spa University who have each taught a course module on the topic of their chapter. Our job is to guide and support students' thinking and learning and we hope to introduce, in a single volume, a broad range of topics that will stimulate your ideas and your reading, so each chapter gives questions for discussion, as well as further reading.

A job for teachers is to organise knowledge so that it makes sense to the learner. It's like arranging books in a library and it doesn't always work because one book may demand to go on two or three different shelves. Education Studies is diverse and difficult to manage, but we have arranged the content of this book into three parts:

- I International and global perspectives
- II Teaching, educational settings and policy
- III Knowledge, learning and the curriculum

If you think we've got a chapter on the wrong shelf, you're probably right and that shows that you're developing your own understanding of the subject. The following is a brief summary of the sections and contents by chapter numbers.

Part I: International and global perspectives

It is easy to think of education simply as the schooling that goes on where we live. However, we now live in an interconnected world and education can be a global force for good. To understand this we need to appreciate the effects which education has on global politics, cultures and economies. The book starts by trying to expand your thinking about the exciting possibilities education holds for humanity and the world and by examining contrasts and alternatives in different countries and cultures.

- 1 There has been a great deal of interest in the UK and the USA in education in the Pacific Rim countries. Kay Wood begins by looking at reasons for this and examines the links between education and the economy. She raises the question of what education really is for: individual development or to produce a work-force for the global economy?
- 2 David Hicks explains the different ways of understanding global and international education. He argues the case for a global perspective in the curriculum and suggests the kind of skills and knowledge pupils will need to live in a globally connected future.
- 3 By examining the environmental issues, David goes on to explain the role of education in creating a sustainable future for the planet.
- 4 The international theme continues with David Coulby's analysis of the similarities and contrasts between education systems in different countries of Europe.
- 5 Human rights are high on the world's political agenda now, and Heather Williamson engages you in some moral philosophy to understand the ethical issues in the education of minority groups in different countries and cultures.
- 6 Denise Cush explores cultural diversity in education by examining different views of religious education in different countries and the issue of faith-based schools in the UK.

Part II: Teaching, educational settings and policy

Part II looks at what education *does* to pupils through teaching in educational settings and through education policy. This time the focus is mainly on the UK, but still with some international references.

- 7 Stephen Ward explains the party politics of education policy in England and how the 'new right' and 'New Labour' have developed market forces in education.
- 8 Andy Bord looks at what it means to be a teacher, the skills of active listening and communication, and asks you to think about your ideas of yourself as a possible future teacher.
- 9 The special nature of early years care and education is explored by Jill Williams and Karen McInnes. They examine different views of childhood and how these affect professional practice with young children.
- 10 The UK government's policy is for children with special educational needs to be part of mainstream education in *inclusive* schools. Mim Hutchings guides you on how to go into a school setting and carry out a case study on a child or on a classroom situation. There is an introduction to some of the research methods that you will need as an education student.
- 11 Christine Eden examines the research on gender and attainment. She shows why the focus of concern has moved from disadvantaged girls to underachieving boys.
- 12 The last chapter in this part challenges the whole concept of traditional school settings. David Hicks explains why radical educators want to take alternative initiatives, and outlines the different ideologies that underpin these ideas.

Part III: Knowledge, learning and the curriculum

Any book with an overview of Education Studies must include the curriculum and how it is learned. This is the last part, not because it is the least important, but because we want you to view learning within the global and international contexts set out in the first part. There are six chapters on different curriculum subject areas. But they are not the usual teacher-training guidance on how to teach the subject. Instead we look at the nature of each subject – its *epistemology* – what it means to learn and to know the subject. Knowledge is not just inert 'stuff' in books and CD-ROMs to be taken off the shelf, taught and learned. Knowledge is contested and dangerous with continuing debates about what should count, what is relevant, who should learn it and how. While the chapters are not about pedagogy (how to teach), they are relevant to teachers. Good teachers know the subject, but they are better teachers if they understand the nature of the subject, how it is learned, the underlying issues and debates and why some learners may find it difficult.

- 13 Alan Howe and Dan Davies challenge the traditional science curriculum which has been treated as simply a quantity of facts to be learned and tested. They explain a postmodern view of scientific knowledge and argue that pupils should learn to ask scientific questions and engage in proper scientific activities related to life in the real world.
- 14 Susan Haywood and Mim Hutchings show that information and communications technology (ICT) has powerful effects on the way we learn and on the whole nature of knowledge. They show the potential for computers in the hands of learners and how we need to prepare pupils for 'the unforeseeable future' of fast-moving technology.