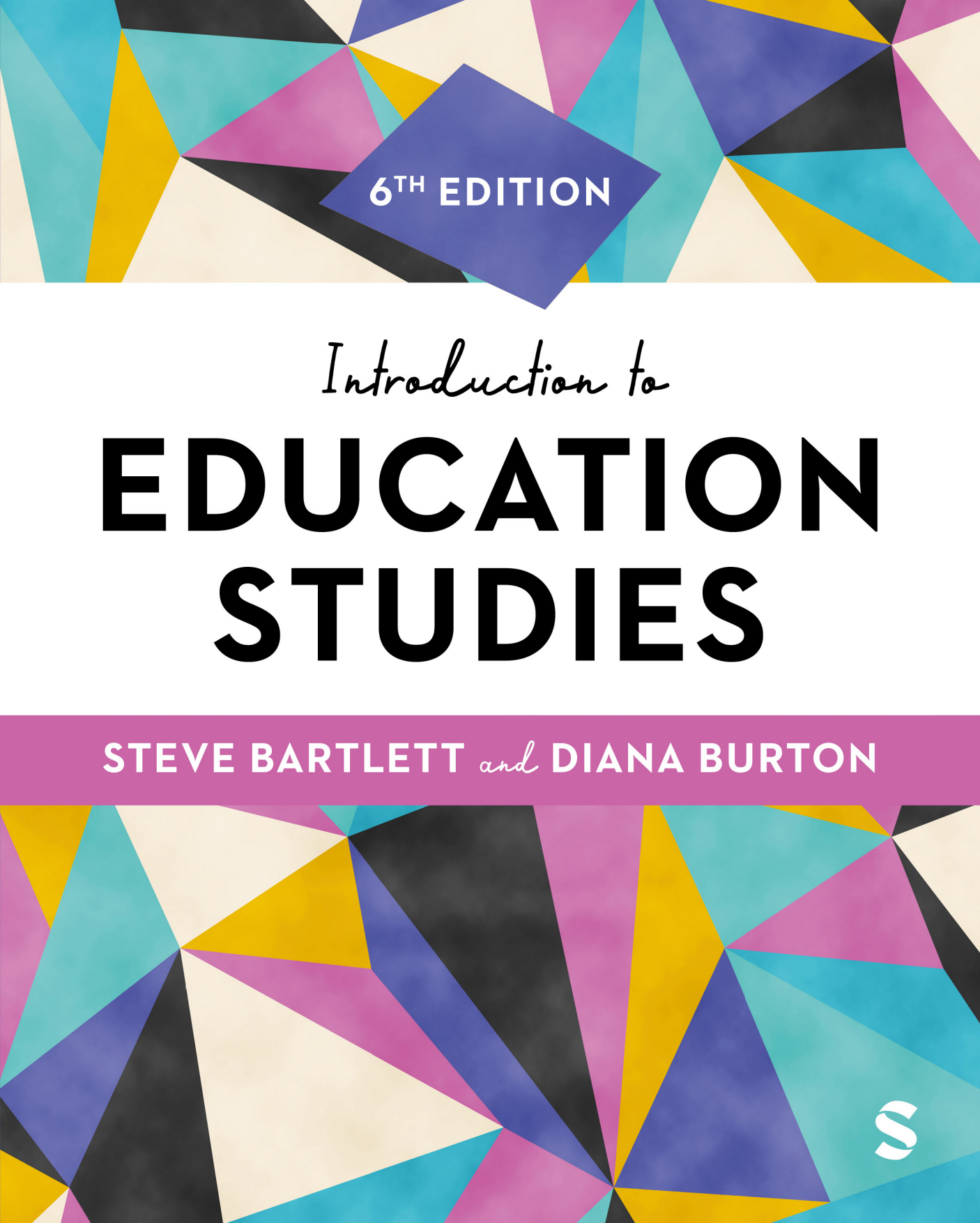
6TH EDITION
Introduction to
EDUCATION STUDIES
STEVE BARTLETT and DIANA BURTON

Introduction to

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Editor: James Clark
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Marketing manager: Lorna Patkai
Cover design: Hayley Davis
Typeset by: C&M Digitals (P) Ltd, Chennai, India
Printed in the UK

Library of Congress Control Number: 2023948310

British Library Cataloguing in Publication data

A catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library

ISBN 9781529621648
ISBN 9781529621631 (pbk)

To our sons, Thomas, Daniel, Edward and George Bartlett with
all our love and admiration for the outstanding
achievements of each one of you

Contents

List of abbreviations

AAL	African American Language
AaL	assessment as learning
AfL	assessment for learning
AoL	assessment of learning
ASC	academic self-concept
BEd	Bachelor of Education
BERA	British Educational Research Association
BESA	British Education Studies Association
BSF	Building Schools for the Future
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council
CACE	Central Advisory Council for Education
CAG	Centre assessment grades
CASE	cognitive acceleration in science education
CCCS	Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies
CSE	Certificate of Secondary Education
CTC	City Technology College
DAAL	Digital African American Language
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DES	Department of Education and Science
DfE	Department for Education

DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DI	Direct Instruction
EBacc	English Baccalaureate
EBD	emotional and behavioural difficulties
EBP	evidence-based practice
ECM	Every Child Matters
EEG	electroencephalogram
EHC	education, health and care
EI	Emotional intelligence
ELT	experiential learning theory
EMA	Education Maintenance Allowance
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
FE	further education
fMRI	functional magnetic resonance imaging
fNIRS	functional near infrared spectroscopy
FSM	free school meals
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GERM	Global Education Reform Movement
GIST	Girls into Science and Technology
HE	higher education
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Authority
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
ICT	information and communications technology
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement

IQ	intelligence quotient
ISA	ideological state apparatus
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
LA	local authority
LEA	local education authority
LSI	Learning Style Inventory
LTM	long-term memory
MAT	multiple academy trust
MBTI	Myers–Briggs Type Indicator
MFL	modern foreign language
MI	multiple intelligences
MLE	mediated learning experience
MRI	magnetic resonance imaging
NC	national curriculum
NCC	National Curriculum Council
NCIHE	National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
Ofqual	Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PBIS	positive behavioural interventions and supports
PEPS	Personal Environmental Preference Survey
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PL	personalised learning
PMT	personal mobile technology

PSE	personal and social education
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
ROSLA	'raising of the school leaving age'
SAT	Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests
SEAL	social and emotional aspects of learning
SEL	social and emotional learning
SEN	special educational needs
SES	socio-economic status
SJ	sensing and judging
SLD	severe learning difficulty
SSLP	Sure Start Local Programme
STEM	science, technology, engineering and mathematics
STM	short-term memory
TAT	Thematic Apperception Test
TechBacc	Technical Baccalaureate
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TVEI	Technical, Vocational and Educational Initiative
VAK	visual, auditory and kinaesthetic
WICS	wisdom, intelligence, creativity and synthesis
ZPD	zone of proximal development

About the authors

Steve Bartlett was Professor of Education Studies and programme leader at the Universities of Wolverhampton and Chester. He led the development of the subject at undergraduate and postgraduate level for many years, chairing the Subject Benchmarking Review Committee for QAA. A founder member and the first Chair of the British Education Studies Association (BESA), he edited the BESA journal for several years. Steve taught Sociology in secondary schools for 15 years from the mid-1970s. He also holds a master's and PhD in teacher professionalism and has supervised and examined many doctoral theses as well as externally validating and examining education studies programmes at a number of universities. He has written several education books and articles in the areas of research methods, lifelong learning, teacher development and gender.

Diana Burton is Treasurer of the British Educational Research Association and Visiting Professor of Education at the University of Wolverhampton, having formerly led education research at the university. She has held senior leadership and professorial posts at three universities, including both Pro Vice-Chancellor for research and Dean of Education posts at Liverpool John Moores University. She was Head of School at Manchester Metropolitan University where she worked for many years leading teacher education programmes, having originally been a secondary school teacher of Humanities for over a decade. Diana also holds a master's and PhD in the field of educational psychology and continues to examine doctoral theses and advise education departments across the sector. She is the author of several education books and chapters and has written over 70 research articles on pupil learning, teacher development, teacher education policy, educating children with behavioural, emotional and social disadvantage and citizenship education.

Education Studies: Key Issues Series

In the last 30 years or so Education Studies has developed rapidly as a distinctive subject in its own right. Beginning initially at undergraduate level, this expansion is now also taking place at master's level and is characterised by an increasingly analytical approach to the study of education. Several discrete study areas requiring in-depth texts to support student learning have emerged.

Introduction to Education Studies, now in its 6th edition, is the core text in this series and gives students an important grounding in the study of education. It provides an overview of the subject and introduces the reader to fundamental theories and debates in the field. The series 'Key Issues in Education Studies' has evolved from this core text and, using the same critical approach, each volume outlines a significant area of study within the education studies field. Each of the books has been written by experts in their area and provides the detail and depth required by students as they progress further in the subject.

Taken as a whole, this series provides a comprehensive set of texts for the student of education. While of particular value to students of Education Studies, the series will also be instructive for those studying related areas such as Childhood Studies and Special Needs, as well as being of interest to students on initial teacher training courses and practitioners working in education.

We hope that this series provides you, the reader, with plentiful opportunities to explore further this exciting and significant area of study and we wish you well in your endeavours.

Steve Bartlett and Diana Burton

Series Editors

- **Steve Bartlett and Diana Burton:** *Introduction to Education Studies*, 6th edition (2024)
- **Diana Burton and Steve Bartlett:** *Key Issues for Education Researchers* (2009)
- **Alan Hodkinson:** *Key Issues in Special Educational Needs and Inclusion*, 4th edition (2023)
- **Emma Smith:** *Key Issues in Education and Social Justice*, 2nd edition (2019)
- **Stephen Ward and Christine Eden:** *Key Issues in Education Policy* (2009)

New to this edition

This sixth edition of *Introduction to Education Studies* has been fully updated to take into account a range of contemporary topics that are found on Education Studies courses. These include: a discussion on education studies and employability (Chapter 1), an exploration of the policy context of research (Chapter 3), a new section on decolonising the curriculum (Chapter 5) and an extension of the overview of recent education policy in the UK to cover 2020–2023 including policy responses to the Covid-19 pandemic. Coverage of modern cognitive psychological theories of learning has been enhanced with discussion of cognitive load theory (Chapter 8) and dual coding theoery (Chapter 9). Further discussion and definition of social justice has been added (Chapter 10) and the chapter on organising teaching and learning (Chapter 11) has been revised with updates to discussion on the impact of digital developments on learning, neurodiversity and differentiation. References have been revised and updated throughout the book, so too the recommended readings at the end of chapters.

Acknowledgements

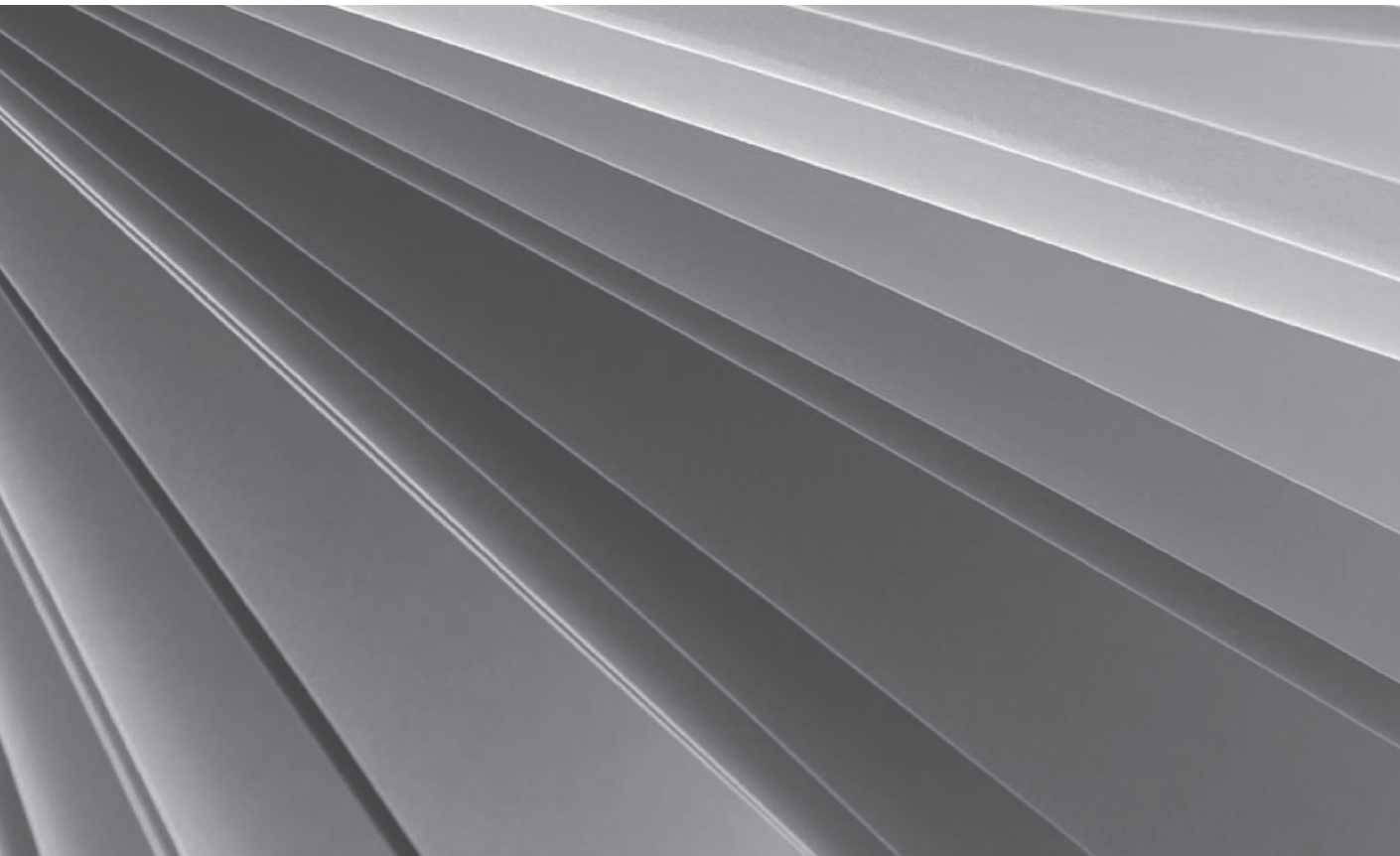
Since working on the first edition nearly 25 years ago we have got to know a great many talented lecturers across many universities with whom it has been a privilege to work to help shape the newly emergent and now well-established subject of Education Studies. It is your joint endeavour through the establishment of the British Education Studies Association, its conference and journal, and your commitment to the development of creative education studies programmes, innovative books and research publications that has inspired students to engage boldly and critically with the fascinating subject of education. We continue to value enormously the collegiality, support and friendship of you all.

We would like to thank the team at Sage for their commitment, sensitivity and wise counsel over the years. In particular our thanks go to James Clark, who has now been our publisher for three editions; we cannot thank him enough for his unstinting support, friendship and expertise. We also extend our thanks to the several reviewers over the years who have generously offered very helpful insights that have informed each developing edition.

To our many students, colleagues and friends who have patiently let us pick their brains throughout both our school and university teaching and research careers, we say a big thank you; for us, it has always been about the teamwork! Finally, we would like to thank all our wonderful readers – students, schoolteachers, lecturers and more – for your steadfast support and feedback over the years.

PART I

EDUCATION STUDIES – AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FIELD OF STUDY



CHAPTER 1

What is Education Studies?

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The first chapter will introduce you to the study of education. We examine the appeal of the subject for students and explain its rapid recent growth. While the significant contributions of the related disciplines of sociology, psychology, history and philosophy are discussed, we argue that it is the positioning of education as the central focus that provides education studies with its own identity.

EDUCATION STUDIES: THE SUBJECT

First encounters

As students of education studies, we have an interesting relationship with the subject since we are all products of education systems and thus have our own unique perspectives that are shaped by our different experiences. Education is, for most people, an integral part of our first 16–22 years of life and yet our understanding of it as a system or process, beyond experiencing it as more than a set of curriculum subjects and examinations, is often limited. The role we undertake as pupils is to experience rather than question the nature of the education system and its attendant processes. Education studies, as a subject, turns this on its head and asks us to question what education is, who it is for, who controls it and why – essentially, to think critically about every aspect of education and the societal and political structures it sits within.

Applying Critical Evaluation: Your own educational history

Think back over the time you have spent in education.

Were you ever encouraged to comment on your experiences?

Should pupils and students be involved in decisions concerning their education?

The journals and books you encounter from the beginning of your course generally assume a level of understanding and knowledge about educational issues which you are unlikely to have at this stage. Thus, while there are many texts suitable for the knowledgeable student, there are very few which may be used by the novice as an introduction to the field. This present book aims to introduce the study of education and to provide a starting point from which to progress. It outlines several major areas of education studies and the key issues therein. In the text we refer, wherever possible, to current literature which you should be able to access. We are also aware that to deal with the overarching questions and issues in such a short space can actually do them a disservice and cause distortion by oversimplification. We want therefore to emphasise that the purpose is to introduce the study of education, outline the theoretical arguments and encourage deeper exploration.

The development of education studies

In the past, education(al) studies has been seen as very much part of the education/training of teachers (Burton and Bartlett, 2006a). The study was effectively invented during the period of expansion in education post-Second World War, which created a demand for more high-quality teachers. To meet this demand the teacher training courses at the colleges of education were lengthened and the Robbins Report (1963) declared an intention to develop teaching into an all-graduate profession. This heralded the creation of the new Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree, which comprised both theoretical and practical study of education. The content of these new BEd courses was largely created from a range of subjects already in existence at the validating universities. Thus, the academic study of education came to be made up primarily of the sociology, psychology, history and philosophy of education: the so called 'foundation disciplines' (McCulloch and Cowan, 2017).

Rather than becoming a unified subject these disciplines generally remained as discrete units and were taught separately. For many students they were presented

in isolation and did not sufficiently link with the other parts of their professional training courses to make them appear worthwhile. For such students their prime focus was on the subjects they were going to teach, the teaching practice itself and, particularly, aspects of classroom management and control. In an effort to make the theoretical and academic study of education more relevant to the needs of the student teachers, many BEd programmes began to create a more integrated approach. This involved the development of what became known as *curriculum*, *professional* or even *educational* studies (Lawn and Furlong, 2009). In hindsight this can be seen as a significant point in the development of a specialist study of education.

As a result of political and economic pressures in the 1970s and 1980s the theoretical study of education as part of teacher training courses fell into disrepute. Teacher education was criticised as being too removed from the classroom. It was perceived as largely ignoring the practical nature of teaching while also promoting progressive ideologies of education. It was from the 1980s onwards that the nature of teacher education changed drastically. With the emphasis becoming firmly placed on training, any traces of academic education studies were removed from Initial Teacher Training (ITT) programmes. However, shortly after the critical study of education disappeared from teacher training courses, new programmes called education studies began to develop in the rapidly expanding sector funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). We suggest a number of reasons for the rapid growth of this subject and its popularity among the student population (Bartlett and Burton, 2006a).

The increase in student numbers entering higher education (HE) and the concomitant development of modular degree programmes, allowing more flexibility in the choice of subjects studied, meant that education studies came to be seen as an important partner for a number of combinations. Thus, students combined education studies with sports science, English, drama, religious studies, geography and the like. It took on a special significance for students planning careers that involved working with people in a variety of contexts. Teaching is often the first that springs to mind but there are also personnel management, welfare and health services, retail, publishing and a range of others.

The trend for many students who intend to become teachers to take a first degree and then a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) rather than the traditional BEd has made education studies a more attractive part of that first degree. This changing landscape of teacher training has led to many schools of education actively seeking to diversify their portfolios, making education studies an obvious addition from an institutional point of view. These changes in HE, along with the comparative decline in modular degree programmes, have led to education studies emerging as a single subject degree in its own right.

The nature of education studies

Whatever your eventual career decisions as an education studies student, you have chosen education as an academic area of study and will need to approach it in a critical fashion. You will be seeking answers to key questions such as: What is education and what are its purposes? How does learning take place and how far is achievement dependent upon natural ability or social factors such as income, life chances, gender and ethnicity? Your attention will also be drawn to educational policy and political issues surrounding education and to ways of researching these phenomena.

With the resurgence of the academic study of education and an increasing number of students with education studies in their degree title, the significance of the traditional disciplines from which it draws once again becomes apparent. Aspects of education are studied within various disciplines, specifically sociology, psychology, history and philosophy, as part of their particular interest in the human condition. However, education is also seen as a legitimate area of study in its own right by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) which considered that:

> Essentially, education studies is concerned with understanding how people develop and learn throughout their lives, and the nature of knowledge and critical engagement with ways of knowing and understanding. It offers intellectually rigorous analysis of educational processes, systems and approaches, and their cultural, societal, technological, political, historical and economic contexts. (QAA, 2019: 4)

Applying Critical Evaluation: The nature of education studies

Access the education studies benchmarks on the QAA website (www.qaa.ac.uk) and read through the statements.

How useful do you find these in outlining the subject of education studies?

How do your experiences of education studies relate to them?

This means that education is at the centre of the study and therefore draws on the other disciplines as appropriate in an eclectic manner. Thus, while psychology

students will study aspects of education as appropriate, for instance, in relation to cognitive development, education studies students will study some aspects of psychological theory when looking at the process of learning within schools or colleges. It is interesting to consider the status relations between these older and newer subjects, the longer-standing disciplines having a better developed theoretical base to consider as their own.

Davies and Hogarth (2004) were unable to identify a clear consensus about the nature of education studies, suggesting that there would be some value in exploring what might constitute its broad parameters.

Some features which, we would argue, characterise the subject are that:

- it is 'young' and developing
- it takes a critical, analytical and 'resistant' approach to the study of education
- it grapples with fundamental, contested concepts
- it explores a range of perspectives, not just those of teachers and schools
- it deals with multiple rather than singular explanations of phenomena.

Thus, the way in which education studies facilitates a critical engagement with educational phenomena contrasts sharply with the 'technical–rational' approach to teacher training described earlier. Even within non-teacher training programmes education studies is circumscribed to some extent by this pervasive culture since it must examine and describe extant education processes and systems in order to analyse them. However, the power to critique and rethink educational policies and processes is available to students of education studies in a way that is denied to ITT students. Education studies provides a set of analytical discourses that generate insights into educational phenomena as bodies of knowledge and societal conditions shift, develop and wane.

While the education studies benchmarks (QAA, 2019) provide a guide to those designing new courses, the structure and content of education studies programmes varies enormously. At the heart of each course, however, lies a critical evaluation of key issues such as the nature of education, the content and development of curricula, teaching and learning, the relationship between ability, opportunity and success, and the policy issues impacting on all of these. It is a mistake to see education studies as essentially school-focused. This can happen due to its historical connection to teacher training but is certainly not the case as all aspects of education can be included.

The subject has enormous scope – from the development of young children, through learning in HE, to the workplace and the third age – a true study of lifelong learning.

Education studies and employability

Traditionally university education was seen as being primarily about the development of intellectual and critical faculties. However, with the expansion and increasing marketisation of HE and the financial costs to students and their parents, the need to show financial benefits to this studying become more important.

Future employability is an important consideration for prospective students deciding what and where to study. Higher education providers, training agencies and potential employers all highlight what they offer to successful candidates. Universities, and the individual subject departments within them, report on the numbers of their graduates entering employment or continuing in education and training. The implication here is that what students gain through studying a particular degree course at a particular institution has made them more 'marketable'.

Statistics showing graduate employment are influenced by the state of the economy which fluctuates over time. Also, a range of factors can influence the employees' choice of occupation. Many begin their careers in junior positions, regardless of qualifications, to gain experience before being promoted. Some employees may decide to take positions offering high initial wages regardless of future prospects. Geographical area and various social factors can also influence a choice of employment.

The term 'employability' perhaps means more than just being in employment and implies an attractiveness of the employee to employers. Returning to the graduate employment statistics, a consideration when examining graduate employment could be the type of occupation. It would be useful to know whether particular employments are dependent upon specialist knowledge and skills acquired in the degree programme, or if a more general academic achievement reached in degree level study is what is required. Personal traits and 'transferrable' skills such as communication and presentation may also be important in obtaining employment. It may be worth considering to what extent these are actually part of learning programmes.

Cheng et al. (2022) suggest that a number of stakeholders, including higher education institutions, employers, and the government, are all interested in employability but for differing reasons. They portray its meaning and their role in it slightly differently and usually in their favour. This makes it an opaque term and more difficult to identify and measure.

It is these very questions surrounding the term 'employability', its meaning and how it is used, that are of interest to students of education studies.

REASONING AND CRITICAL EVALUATION IN EDUCATION STUDIES

We believe that reasoning and critical evaluation are fundamental to education studies as an intellectual endeavour and therefore of central importance within this text. Let's unpack what we mean.

A descriptive written account may be likened to a photograph or a painting. It is an instant shot. A photograph or a painting does not explain events leading up to the scene, why they occurred and what is likely to happen next. The viewer/reader can make assumptions about what is shown in the photograph or painting, but this is dependent upon their own knowledge of such scenes and their own interpretations or analysis.

Description is often seen as the first stage in the academic process. To write adequate descriptions at degree level requires a certain competence in using appropriate terminology and definitions. Descriptive accounts can be very detailed, but we need to go further. To understand and find reasons for what has happened and to predict what may happen in the future we need to explain *why* things have got to where they are, *what* caused them to be this way. Once we know these things we can try to *predict* how they will develop. Thus, a questioning approach is needed.

Questions start with the basic description of the topic under investigation, i.e.: What is this? What is happening here? type of questions. Then they can move on to how and why questions, i.e How did it get to be like this? How does it operate like this? Why is it like this and not something else? What is likely to happen in the future? What will be the effects on this if other things change? We can then apply major theories and ideas already developed within our subject area that have been used to explain similar situations to help us understand what we're looking at.

This use of careful questioning, reasoning and the application of theory to explain situations is part of a process variously called critical evaluation, critical reasoning and/or analysis. Thus, in their development, students move from giving largely descriptive accounts to more detailed analytical/critical explanations. This synthesising of knowledge, the application of theory and the criticality involved leads students to make clearer, more reasoned judgements and to form their own conclusions.

Criticality is important. It is a questioning approach, not accepting anything as given. As with any good detective work the investigator needs to be flexible and adapt their questioning according to their judgement and previous experience of such circumstances. In this way they develop a deeper understanding of 'what is going on'. Of course, there is unlikely ever to be just one possible explanation and some things can be explained in several different ways. In that case several theories can be used to provide alternative and contrasting explanations.

When embarking on degree study, students will be acquiring new knowledge and their accounts are likely to be largely descriptive, using skills they have developed prior to entering higher education. By the time they reach graduate level their subject knowledge and, more importantly, their powers of critical evaluation will have become far more developed and they should now know and be able to apply a range of ideas (theoretical frameworks) to examples. They can compare, contrast and evaluate different explanations for phenomena and then form their own reasoned conclusions. Thus, to graduate, a student is expected to be able to describe and also to critically evaluate within their subject area.

Example

In the field of education, an account may describe a particular school. It could include things such as the buildings, where they are situated geographically in relation to where the pupils live, the number of students who attend the school. The pupils could be further differentiated in terms of age, gender and socio-economic background. The number of teachers, subjects taught, length of school day and the exam results of recent years could all also be included. The more description given the more detailed our picture of the school and life within it.

However, it remains a picture and we need to move beyond description. We need to be able to critically evaluate the evidence we have in front of us to judge its 'truth' and accuracy but more importantly what it tells us about why the school is like this, what school life is like and what is likely to happen in the future (prediction) to the school and the students.

What do exam results tell us about how different pupils are achieving? Seeking an answer to this question may show variations in how pupils from different social backgrounds, ethnic groups or genders perform. Any such variations will lead to more questions. We really want to know if this happens every year. If so, what are the reasons for these variations in achievement? What can be done about them, if anything? There are many possibilities that need to be explored. It is likely that there will be a range of factors that need to be looked into further, such as: the ability of the pupils, whether some pupils are taught or treated differently, whether they behave differently, in what ways different teachers influence pupils, the effects of friends, family relationships, neighbourhood and economic circumstances, and so on. This all sounds very complex, but we need to know why pupils achieve differently. Only then will we understand the effects of schooling on them more fully. This is, of course, likely to lead us on to wider issues. Schools and other education institutions operate within the wider society so it may be other things, outside of these institutions, that are causing these variations.

Thus, having posed our questions and collected data we turn to theories or analytical frameworks to help understand what we have discovered. So, if we want to critically evaluate differential achievement of pupils, we can use a number of theoretical perspectives. For example, from a psychological perspective we could use intelligence theory to explain the differences as being due to innate ability. Alternatively, from a sociological perspective we could deploy a Marxist analysis which would claim that pupil success is mainly down to social background, particularly social class. As a student of education studies, we would seek always to consider multiple rather than singular explanations for such contested matters.

At several points in the book – in particular, in the research methods chapter when considering how to critique research and in the policy chapter when analysing education policy – we will look again at developing a critical questioning approach. In each chapter we will also stop at various points to encourage readers to apply critical evaluation via tasks which ask you to apply the theories we discuss, as we have already done in this chapter.

We now turn to the interest education holds for a number of significant disciplines concerned with the study of people and society. The discussion will illustrate how the approaches and theories developed within these disciplines may be used by those students whose main concern is the study of education itself.

THE TRADITIONAL DISCIPLINES AND EDUCATION STUDIES

Fundamental to any society, education and the processes it involves are of great interest to fields of study concerned with the human condition. In particular, we refer in this book to sociology, psychology, history and philosophy.

Philosophy

Curtis (2011) suggests that philosophy and philosophers have been engaging with questions of education, learning and teaching for more than 3,000 years, since the beginning of formal thinking. Stolz and Ozoliņš feel that 'Our modern world needs more philosophy, not less, since it is the lack of good, critical argument and assessment of the problems we face globally that result in poor judgements and,

hence, less than desirable practical outcomes' (2018: 589). The philosophy of education illuminates the ideas which underpin action and thought in education. The questions philosophers ask concern the nature and purposes of education, such as what makes an educated person, how knowledge is organised and what should be learned. They are primarily interested in the beliefs, morals and values which permeate education. These are very important ethical questions which are at the heart of the whole process and therefore appear in every aspect of the study of education (White, 2019). They are key to discussions of the nature of curriculum which derives from different ideological positions on education and the structure of knowledge. Such questions are also apparent when analysing how beliefs are translated into policy or when looking at issues of individual development and progression.

Sociology

The sociology of education examines the wider social influences upon the individual in education and analyses the processes of socialisation. Sociologists ask questions about the influences of social class, ethnicity and gender upon achievement and these are seen in relation to various ideologies which shape education. Sociological analysis is concerned with power operating at different levels in society and how this influences outcomes. This explains the sociologist's interest in the creation of education policy and its implementation (see Ball, 2021). To understand modern education systems it is vital to study the relationship between prevailing ideologies and the societal structures and values they shape through the process of education.

Psychology

The psychology of education is mainly concerned with how people learn and develop. As such it asks questions about our maturation, intelligence, personality and motivation, as well as about the learning process itself. It is interested in the relationship between nature and nurture and the way they interact to influence individual development and achievement. A psychological analysis also involves philosophical issues of the nature of knowledge and understanding and shares an interest in sociological issues since the individual is seen to be part of wider social groups. An examination of pedagogy from a psychological perspective further reveals the link between psychological and sociological theory as well as the ideological perspectives which have influenced it.

History

The history of education may suggest causal explanations for changes which punctuate the political and social timelines of educational development. It helps us to understand the evolution of the educational system and structures to date. There are key dates and events within the development of the English education system that reflect the significant political and social issues of the time. While the scope of education has changed radically since the late 19th century, the pastoral, disciplinary and knowledge distribution functions of schools and other education establishments remain significant in modern Western societies. As Dufour (2011: 3) says, 'To study the history of education in any country with a formal state education system involves engaging with and unlocking the particular interplay of social, cultural, economic and political forces at work at any given time.' Grosvenor (2018) shows the importance of a historical dimension in developing contextual understanding and strategic vision in those concerned with education in revisiting a study of the experiences of Afro-Carribean and Asian children and families within the English education system in post-1945 Britain.

Relating the four disciplines to education studies

Each of these four disciplines brings its own specific perspective to the study of education and each is interested in particular aspects as they relate to their own concerns. It is also clear that their areas of interest overlap. It is interesting that these four disciplines were the ones included in the initial BEd teacher training degrees (Dearden et al., 2009; McCulloch, 2012; McCulloch and Cowan, 2017). Others may have been incorporated. The economics of education, for instance, would look at the importance of education and training in the creation of a valuable, high skills labour force, or at the benefits of state education systems compared to the competitive provision of schooling in the light of economic theories of monopoly and market forces.

Applying Critical Evaluation: The contribution of other subjects to understanding education

How might other disciplines or subjects, such as geography or political science, be useful to draw on when studying education?

When education itself is the focus for the student, as in education studies, it is important to draw from these disciplines as appropriate. This eclectic view can provide a richer picture of the whole process and may produce new forms of knowledge and new ways of understanding.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have outlined how students first encounter education studies as a subject and the way in which critical engagement with the subject brings new understandings. We have seen how the study of education has developed, and we have outlined its key features as a subject and how its constituent elements might be described.

RECOMMENDED READING

Educationalfutures: The Journal of the British Education Studies Association (BESA, www.educationstudies.org.uk/journal).

This is the online journal for BESA. It is free to access and also part of the BESA website, which is well worth education studies students familiarising themselves with. The journal and website will introduce you to articles on the subject and also provide contacts within the field that you may wish to pursue.

Pulsford, M., Morris, R. and Purves, R. (eds) (2023) *Understanding Education Studies: Critical Issues and New Directions.* Abingdon: Routledge.

This book explores the structure and development of education studies programmes at undergraduate level.

CHAPTER 2

The nature of education

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter considers the complex nature of education as an area of study, looking at the meaning of the term itself. It moves on to a discussion of the purposes and processes of an education system that can be seen from a number of different sociological perspectives. The key educational ideologies are outlined and a typology of ideologies is considered along with the component features that are said to characterise any ideology. The chapter concludes by emphasising the importance of a critical approach to the study of education.

THE MEANING OF EDUCATION

Education is an activity we all feel that we know something about, having had practical experience of it. In a systematic study of education, however, two fundamental questions will be posed:

1. What do we mean by education?
2. Why is education important?

Finding the answers to these two questions is a complex endeavour. As students of education, the answers we give are likely to vary over time. The meaning and purposes of the term 'education' are not universally fixed and are not the same for all of us.

Personal resonances of the term 'education' are shaped by a number of individual experiences such as coming top of the class, passing examinations, going on

school trips, being made fun of by pupils or teachers, or being in the bottom set. Various groups of people are usually positioned differently in relation to education and its purposes. Political leaders, parents, pupils at school, university students, teachers, the police and factory managers will all espouse different views. These groups might themselves be differentiated: for instance, parents may be classified by income levels, marital status, age group, number of children in the family and so on. More specific questions about education help to elicit a deeper analysis.

Applying Critical Evaluation: The purposes of education

Is education a process? Is it something which we go through over a period of years? Does this process vary over time? For instance, how is education for four-year-olds in nursery different from that for 20-year-olds at university?

Is education a product to be consumed? Can it be quantified? Is the product defined as what someone can do at the end of it, i.e. a demonstration of competence at something, or is the product about exam passes? Where does intellectual development fit in here? Does the product vary? For instance, is the education of an unskilled worker different from that of a nation's leaders? Should it be different?

What does education involve? Is it about sitting at desks, learning important facts and answering questions? Does it mean being absorbed by interesting tasks or solving challenging problems? Should it make us happy or serious and should we be put under pressure and 'extended' to our limits?

Where does education take place? Is it mainly in schools, colleges and universities? Can we do it at home using information and communications technology (ICT) and learning packages delivered 'online'? Does it carry on throughout life beyond school, college or university?

It is interesting to analyse our perceptions of education using such questions. Yet the range of responses, when we compare our views to those of others, can also be disconcerting. The complexity of the area of study becomes very apparent. Deciding what education is about may mean thinking of it as a process, as something to be consumed, or as a result or product. All of these possibilities are emphasised in various ways by different people when looking at the meaning of the term 'education'. We also need to ask if education has to be intended or if it can happen by accident in an unplanned and sometimes, perhaps, unrecognised manner.

Peters (2015, originally published in 1966), a significant education philosopher, was well aware of the problems in attempting to define 'education'. He suggested that the term had been used in many different ways and, as such, was difficult to capture in any precise definition, though he was able to outline a range of 'normative' and 'cognitive' aspects associated with it. For Peters, education was deeper than just learning facts or how to do something. This more superficial approach he associated with training. Education involved a linking of concepts by the learner to gain a wider understanding of the world. In his view, for something to count as education it had to be regarded as worthwhile. In this way it was inseparable from judgements of value. It should also be learned in a morally acceptable manner; it should not involve coercion or brainwashing. This implies some agreement by the learner to take part (Peters, 2010, originally published in 1967). This view of education could certainly cause us to question some of our own experiences within compulsory education.

Consider the life histories of burglars who have been arrested, convicted and sent to prison and the questions one could ask concerning their education. What has their education involved? Could it be that they learned different things than the teachers intended? What skills have they developed? Once in prison what do such convicts learn and from whom? Do they go to education classes and listen attentively to the advice of the warders or do they 'pick up tips' from listening to and being with other inmates?

Using Peters' view of education, unreformed convicts would see their learning of how to be criminals as useful. They entered into this voluntarily and so it is morally acceptable from their position, unlike their experiences at school where they had perhaps been chastised. It also fits with their wider view of the world and how they can survive in it.

In its broadest sense education is normally thought to be about acquiring knowledge and developing skills and understanding – cognitive capabilities. It can be claimed that as humans, we are identified by our capacity to learn, communicate and reason. We are involved in these things throughout our lives and in all situations. From the earliest times people have learned from one another in family and social groups. As society became larger-scale and more complex, so systems of education became formalised and expanded. We still learn from those around us, but the education system now also plays a large part in all of our lives.

Formal education developed first for the elite minority and, over time, became compulsory for all. This is not to say that schools for the elite and those for the masses gave the same education or had the same purposes. Those being groomed to rule and those subject to being ruled have traditionally been educated in different ways and with different expectations. The time spent in educational institutions

steadily increased as children started younger and finished older than their predecessors. This trend of an increasing number of years spent in formal education continues today. The development of post-16 and higher education in recent years is testament to this while, at the same time, nursery and pre-school provision is also rapidly expanding. Since 2015, in England, young people must remain in some form of education or training until their 18th birthday.

Education has become a large industry employing many thousands of people in Britain alone. It is supposedly an important part of ensuring future economic development, yet it also imposes a major financial cost. It is presented by politicians as an investment in our future, the 'our' referring to the nation as a whole as well as to the individual. Thus, education plays a central role in society and also in all of our lives.

Applying Critical Evaluation: Education as a source of employment

Education is an important part of the economy. It is startling to note how many jobs are within, or rely upon, educational institutions.

Consider the broad economic effects of the expansion or contraction of one sector of the education system such as pre-school and nursery education, higher education or further education.

SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE PURPOSES OF EDUCATION

We may accept, then, that it is appropriate to take a broad view of the meaning of education. Turning our attention to why education is important may help us to understand more fully the meaning of the term. When looking at the purposes of education we are generally referring to the purposes of the education 'system'. It should be apparent from the previous discussion that this is likely to exclude a great deal of interesting material. While a wide detour may be made into education at the 'university of life', space does not permit this here. We will limit our concern to the 'official', or 'formal', processes of education.

The functionalist approach

The functionalist perspective views society as a system where interconnected parts function in relation to an integrated whole. Functionalism depends on the

idea that social systems are significantly determined by fundamental human needs. In this way it tends to be seen as a 'conservative' ideology. Functionalism also works with the idea of functional prerequisites: some social phenomena are simply there as they are necessary for the society to work for the benefit of all its different members. Some needs are common to all societies, implying the idea of a general human condition independent of cultural differences (consider the seminal work of one of the founding sociologists who was writing in the 19th century and whose works have been republished several times, continuing to the present day, such is his influence – Durkheim, 1947 [1893], 1964 [1895], 1970 [1897], 2014 [1893]; also Davis and Moore, 1967; Parsons, 1964). Thus, education is seen alongside other social institutions as working to create and maintain a stable society. The functionalist analogy compares society to a machine or a living organism. The different social institutions, such as the forces of law and order, the political system and also education, function to maintain the whole society. In the same way that the different parts of a machine or a body contribute to the working of the whole, if one of the parts does not function properly then this affects the whole society and may even lead to a breakdown. The main functions of education may be listed as follows.

Development of basic academic skills: In order to participate in a modern society, certain skills are seen as very important. Most notably we need to be able to read, write, perform basic arithmetical tasks, reason and problem solve. These are needed in all areas of modern life. Consider how many times you use reading skills in any one day. You could conclude that life as we know it is virtually impossible to live without them. It is amazing to think that some people do actually survive without highly developed reading skills, but they are at a distinct disadvantage and need to seek help frequently. This is not easy for them because of the social stigma attached to an adult being unable to read proficiently. The ability to use ICT is now also regarded as an essential skill. The importance of, and increasing emphasis on, the acquisition of what are variously called 'transferable', 'key' or 'core' skills is part of the rhetoric surrounding the development of an adaptable, flexible workforce for the 'skills economy'. Thus interpersonal, communication, problem-solving, literacy and numeracy skills have been promoted up the educational agenda, particularly within post-16 learning.

Socialisation: Functionalists see this as the way in which we become human. It is a process which begins at birth when we start effectively as blank slates. We develop our 'selves' as we learn what we need to know to live and operate with others in social groups. This includes language, right and wrong, expectations of

ourselves and others, how to behave in different situations and so on. It is, of course, a matter of debate as to how much our development depends upon social learning or biological processes. Socialisation is a process of induction into society's culture, norms and values. This ensures a level of social cohesion necessary for society to be sustained. It is a process which continues throughout life but which is certainly of central importance in our early years. Thus, the family and schooling have a crucial role in the socialisation process.

Social control and maintaining social order: For us to live our lives and for established social life to exist we must be assured of a level of order and safety as we go about our daily business. This involves the rule of law but also certain expected ways of behaving. These may be seen as norms of behaviour or manners. Consider how we behave in an orderly manner for much of our lives without really thinking about it. We queue up for things in shops or when waiting for public transport. We say 'please' and 'thank you' in appropriate circumstances. In public places we walk without bumping into or touching other people. We maintain appropriate eye contact and distance when conversing with others depending upon who these others are. These norms are learned and education helps in this process. Control mechanisms may be overt and show outward force, as in the case of riot police quelling trouble on the streets. Control may, however, be more covert and subtle when compliance is expected, as in the case of a disparaging look from a teacher when work has not been completed.

Preparing for work: In small-scale and self-sufficient societies children would learn about survival from adults. In these communities adults are multi-skilled and can satisfy most of their wants by using their own abilities. There may be only a few specialist roles such as healer or midwife in such groups. As forms of employment diversified and became specialised, increasingly specific training needed to take place. Payment, in the form of wages, generally reflected the level, scarcity and importance of the skill required. General qualities needed for employment such as those expressed in the transferable skills can be developed at all levels of education. Job-specific training is likely to be workplace based but also to involve further and higher education.

The functions of education may be seen to overlap. Preparation for work involves the developing of minds and learning of important skills. Socialisation is an important part of preparing for adulthood and elements of internalised social control form part of this. Different functions may be to the fore at certain times during a pupil's education. Whereas it may be appropriate to stress the development

of the mind and individual freedom to experiment at particular stages, it may be important to stress discipline and the need for self-control at others. Each of these functions can be seen to be appropriate but, taken together, there are potential tensions between them. For example, developing minds involves encouraging a questioning attitude. The image is of a learner exploring and experimenting. However, the need to maintain social order involves pupils showing obedience to authority and 'correct' behaviour. This could be interpreted as the creation of accepting, rather than questioning, individuals.

Pupils may be encouraged to question within the topics chosen by a teacher. Much primary work, for instance, involves investigations by pupils into the world around them. The children may ask questions to do with friction, life cycles, different materials and so on. They carry out investigations designed to find the answers. However, other areas of school life must not be questioned beyond a superficial level: 'Why must we wear this uniform?' 'Will all of this homework help our progress?' 'Why are we studying "this" as opposed to "that"?' Obedience is an important part of any pupil's schooling. When the characteristics of a 'good' school leaver are listed they include independence and initiative, yet prospective employers also look for a willingness to obey instructions and for a neat (in other words conforming) appearance. It seems there is a need for both self-development and self-control. The difficulty is striking a balance. We can see the importance of order, direction, control and discipline but not to the extent that it prevents questioning and individual development. This balance is a judgement which rests upon beliefs about human nature, the working of society and, thus, the purposes of education.

The stress placed upon the different functions of education may be different depending upon the pupil. Some pupils may be pushed academically while others may be prepared for low-level employment. Indeed, some functionalists, such as Davis and Moore (1967), saw the sifting of talent and allocating of individuals to appropriate roles in society as an important function of a formal education system. Some pupils may be given freedom to express themselves whereas for others the emphasis may be on modifying their behaviour. Chapters 8–10 examine this potential for treating pupils differently and posit some explanations for it.

The rhetoric of consensus

When considering the functionalist perspective on education we need to ask for whose purposes education exists. One main criticism of functionalist perspectives is the way that they see social structures according to a hidden logic of cause and effect. By saying that education functions for the whole society it is assumed that

what is good for society is good for each of us. The implication is that we all have the same needs and wants and also that there is equality of opportunity to benefit from such a system. In short it takes a consensus view of society and ignores the fact that significant differences and conflicts of interest may exist. Inequality, in terms of income or wealth, is actually seen as something which itself performs a function of encouraging us to better ourselves and, in the process, benefits society as a whole. Vital questions about conflict and difference in societies are explained away by functionalist perspectives.

The rhetoric of consensus also ignores the power differentials between separate sections of society and how these can be used to maintain superior positions. Children from certain groups are significantly more successful in education and it has been posited that this is a reflection of their economic and social background (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Research has also shown that the labelling which attaches to children in lower socio-economic groups serves to further disadvantage them (Hargreaves, 1967; Ball, 2003). Functionalist theories tend to be 'monologic'. Social phenomena are seen as having single and simple surface causes. Social conflicts are minimised and the normative elements of social life are emphasised.

Functionalists assume that the system must be maintained if the society is to survive. By reinforcing the status quo these functions actually benefit those who are in the best positions. They maintain stability and thus it is easier for those at the top to ensure that their children follow in their footsteps. Those at the bottom are, by and large, kept there. It is pointed out that it is largely their own fault for not taking the opportunities on offer. Thus, inequality is perpetuated and regarded as the 'natural' order of things. Education is seen as an important part of the unifying process needed to help maintain a level of consensus within society. Functionalist theories can be valuable in describing how societies and their various elements work together in coherent patterns but are less successful in accounting for change and conflict.

Conflict theories

From our early years we are encouraged to see education positively, as offering benefits to all. But what if, as some social theorists and education researchers have claimed, education is more about promoting dominant ideology and dividing populations into different class and occupational segments? Conflict perspectives propose that schools perform certain social functions but not necessarily to the benefit of all. Some have suggested that they serve the system well but that the system they serve is based on inequalities that schooling or education in general

should be challenging. Rather than the consensus envisaged by functionalism, conflict theorists, Marxists for example, see education as reinforcing a class system (see Anyon, 2011, for a detailed analysis of Marxist theories of education).

Marxism perceives a conflict of values in society with those of the capitalist ruling class being dominant. The education system, by operating as an agency of the state, serves to reinforce these values. It helps to keep the working class in their place while preparing middle-class pupils to 'legitimately' take over the powerful positions held by their class. Althusser (1984) formed the concept of ideological state apparatuses (ISAs), a development of the concept of government and class relations. ISAs are significant in terms of maintaining ruling-class ideology and are an important part of the means through which the capitalist state maintains control. Bowles and Gintis (1976) saw a close correspondence between how schools treat pupils and the later experiences they can expect at work. This plays an important part in preparing working-class youth for menial forms of employment. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) used the concept of cultural capital to explain how the middle classes are able to maintain their position in the process of social reproduction while making this inequality legitimate.

Gramsci (1985, 1991) claimed that ownership of the means of production cannot be enough to guarantee class rule. The ruling class must also work for 'hegemony', a key concept signifying the cultural rule of their dominant ideas and values. The ruling class needs to actively win the support of other members of society and ruling-class concessions have to be made. Gramsci put great emphasis on civil institutions and cultural practices as fields for political action and intervention. This implies a broad idea of the state, political power and authority as being located in everyday practices and ideas. Hegemony is achieved by continual negotiation and has to be constantly worked at. Thus, we see the importance of the education system. By claiming to be a meritocracy, in other words where individuals prosper by their own efforts, the education system helps to keep social order and perpetuate the existing inequalities. This is, for the classic Marxist analyst, the purpose of formal education.

Some conflict theorists would consider it possible for subversive elements to work within the system. Gramsci, for instance, suggested that the dominant class can never totally monopolise power as beliefs and ideas are constantly being contested in everyday practices (in schools and universities for example). As a consequence, social change (revolutionary action) can be located in existing institutions and everyday social practices. Others, however, see capitalism as too powerful to be overthrown by individuals. Idealists working within education to change society will, in the long term, become incorporated into the system themselves. In fact, by helping individual working-class pupils to succeed, these teachers

may ultimately be perpetuating the myth of a meritocracy. They are in the end legitimating the very education system which is helping to sustain the existing structural inequalities. In the novel *A Kestrel for a Knave* by Barry Hines, an English literature reader for many 14- and 15-year-olds in the 1970s and 1980s, the teacher who befriends and guides the poor, badly treated working-class pupil makes no difference to the overall order of things.

Thus, it might be argued that both functionalism and Marxism conceive of the purposes of education as maintaining the current order of society, but from very different standpoints.

SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE PROCESS OF EDUCATION

So far we have considered structural theories which place a clear emphasis on how structures relate to the outcomes of education in terms of the reproduction of society's institutions. Now we turn to theorists who approach the effect of education from the perspective of the individual and their interactions within it.

Symbolic interactionism

Social interactionists emphasise the actions of members of society as the source for understanding social phenomena and institutions rather than overarching structures. Max Weber (1864–1920), a prolific German sociologist, produced a hugely influential body of work which has been published and republished several times since his death (1958 [1905], 1963, 2002, 2009). Weber was interested in uncovering the meaning behind social actions. The perspective of 'symbolic interactionism' comes out of the development of Weber's thinking and US sociological traditions. George Herbert Mead is often cited as the 'founder' of symbolic interactionism. According to Mead (1934), human beings interact through symbols which define the world and the roles of social actors. (The term 'actors' is used by symbolic interactionists to refer to people playing their roles in society.) This position emphasises the importance of culture in social formations, institutions and practices such as education.

Culture specifies roles, symbols and interpretations of symbols. Symbols enable the social actors to make sense of their world. While symbols in social interactions must be shared, individuals interpret the actions, meanings and intentions of others. Social life involves an ever-active role. Mead emphasises the critical importance of role-taking and interpretation in the development of the 'self'. The idea of the

coherent self is learned and cultivated. Social institutions such as schools are composed of many roles. These roles can be chosen to some extent and are interpreted and adapted by the actor – for example, parenting can be carried out in many ways. Thus, culture is not monolithic and constraining. Subcultures exist and are constantly changing. Cultural meanings often indicate possibilities rather than requirements. Social roles are dynamic and, to some extent, fluid.

While Marxism emphasises *structures* as the dominant forces determining the shape and form of institutions and behaviours, interactionists emphasise *agency* or the freedom and ability of the individual to decide. In more recent times, the sociologist Antony Giddens (1985; Giddens and Sutton, 2017) has argued for a theory of social action that sees structure and agency as interdependent: 'structuration' relates structures to action. Giddens writes of the 'duality of structure'; structures do exist but have no existence outside the consciousness of the agents (actors) who act upon them and define them in everyday activity. Language provides Giddens with a model for 'duality of structure'. Language must be rule governed and therefore structural. It depends for its existence on the utterances of individuals who make it happen.

Poststructuralist and postmodern perspectives

Some powerful and influential ideas about culture and society come in the form of theories referred to as 'poststructuralist' and 'postmodernist', though neither of those terms can be used in a completely straightforward sense. The importance of these ideas within education is that they challenge dominant discourses and practices by suggesting that, while these things may be fixed in behaviour and institutions, they are at another level provisional. They also indicate the importance of culture, language and identity – key features of the inequalities that operate through education.

Poststructuralism provides opportunities for rethinking the school as an institution. It considers the nature of knowledge, and how it changes through history and according to culture (see Derrida, 1987; Foucault, 1977, 1988). Poststructuralism is critical of the deep-seated ideas that infuse education systems and traditions. On the whole it is anti-essentialist and anti-traditionalist. It is suspicious of ideas like truth and aware of the historical 'contingency' of ideas and 'systems of thought'. With its emphasis on the importance of language and culture, poststructuralism provides the means for examining all the mundane practices of institutional life and posing questions of them, from what texts are read in English lessons to how discourses of science and knowledge represent gender.

Differing social perspectives, such as those described in this section, are important in the study of education. It is vital to work towards some idea of the relations

between the individual, the social structure and the institutions of education. Tracking these relations is complex and problematic but important.

EDUCATIONAL IDEOLOGIES

Systems of broad beliefs and values about the nature of the world are termed 'ideologies'. Robertson and Hill (2014: 167) define an ideology as 'a more or less coherent set of beliefs and attitudes that is regarded as self-evidently true, as "common sense" in opposition to other belief systems'. Ideologies are relevant to all areas of life and are often related. Thus, understandings about human nature may be linked to beliefs about law, order, political life, the economic system, the purposes of education and so on. We have explored the purposes of education from a largely sociological perspective. There are, however, other ideologies which analyse both the purposes and nature of education slightly differently. While the education system has a purpose of social reproduction in terms of cultural, economic and political life, it also has a purpose of social transformation. Thus decisions, based upon beliefs about what is important to pass on and what needs transforming, need to be made. In this way ideologies in education are very much linked to views about how society should be organised. Hence there is a strong link between political philosophy and educational theory.

Applying Critical Evaluation: The organisation of society

There are many differing positions on the human condition. These lead to alternative visions of what is desirable and what is humanly possible in the organisation of society. These views have tended to be presented as polarised alternatives which offer differing perspectives on the purposes of a formal education system and its concomitant structure.

How do you think society should be organised in a perfect world?

How close do you think we can get to your ideal?

Plato and Hobbes

Plato argued that humans are naturally predisposed to perform certain tasks. In the Greek state he identified three levels of society – workers, soldiers and leaders. Society will be 'in balance' when people are performing the tasks for which they have a natural disposition. Thus, the purpose of the education system is to prepare

different pupils in the most appropriate way for their future roles. This means different teaching methods and content as appropriate. Plato saw traditional, high-status knowledge being appropriate for some people only and practical instruction appropriate for others; everyone 'in their place' doing what they do best leads to a stable society. It is interesting to compare this view of society with the tripartite education system set up in post-war England (see Chapter 4).

In Plato's analysis, to go against this natural order is to threaten the whole existence of society. Encouraging those not suited to rise above their station will cause social unrest, instability, disobedience and civil strife. Ultimately this must be put down by force or it will lead to revolution, anarchy and a total breakdown of the social fabric. In this way everyone in society will suffer. Thus, for Plato, order was important for the maintenance of society (Curtis, 2011).

In the 17th century Hobbes suggested that we all have natural desires which we wish to satisfy. Humans in this respect are no different from other animals and survival is of the fittest. We are, ultimately, all on our own trying to satisfy our needs and live in a hostile world – a dog-eat-dog existence. Humans do thrive in larger social groups where trade and cooperation can take place. However, the constant pressure to revert back to our natural state needs to be guarded against. Thus, for social life to be made possible there need to be rules, laws and sanctions which are rigorously enforced – for example, to take a life or to commit a crime against property leads to severe punishment.

Hobbes explained that parameters of behaviour need to be clear and enforcement strict. Anything less, any sign of weakness, will threaten the superficially stable and secure lives of us all. The line between a well-ordered society and a state of brutal chaos is slim. Respect and fear of the law are what enable a society to exist (see Kil'dyushov, 2016, for an account of Hobbes and the problem of social order). For Plato and Hobbes the importance of education in maintaining order and thus the existence of society is clear. People need strict guidelines to operate within and discipline needs to be instilled in mind and body. Order is of central importance if society, and the individuals within it, are to have a chance to prosper.

Rousseau

An alternative view of human nature is put forward by the Romantics. In the 18th century Rousseau took the view that, far from maintaining society, power in the hands of the few will lead them to reinforce their position, which itself results in tyranny. He saw this increasing oppression as leading to violent uprisings from the oppressed in their struggle for freedom. In his view what was needed was to educate all citizens fully. This involved encouraging the development of questioning

minds and giving everyone the widest of educational experiences. As our intellects develop we can all contribute to the evolution of society by continuous discussion and reason. Rousseau saw the development of a 'social contract' whereby to maintain their own freedom people respected the rights of others. This would only happen when all felt involved in the society and it would be the height of democratic development. The common good is presented as the 'general will' of the people.

Thus, self-discovery and individual development form the basis of education, for Rousseau, leading to a more liberated society (Curtis, 2011). Without this freedom there would always be oppression based on physical force. These freedoms were the very things that Plato saw as dangerous to the fabric of society. On the one hand there is the view that education should be about individual development and fulfilment. All citizens will then be able to play an active part in social life, resulting in tolerance of the views of others. This will lead to a 'better' and more just society. On the other hand, there is the belief that this freedom will lead to instability due to the innate selfishness of human nature. What is needed is social order and a structure which will enable us to lead our lives without fear and within which we can earn our living. A prime purpose of education is to develop individual discipline with a respect for authority and tradition which will ensure this. These opposing views can both be detected when examining political developments in recent education policy.

We can see how our own experiences in schools, colleges and universities mirror one or other of these sets of beliefs. When thinking of our secondary schooling we may recall the ways order was enforced: lining up outside classrooms, detentions, threat of exclusion. Rules were enforced even down to the way work had to be laid out in exercise books. While being critical of the exercise of control over our freedom, we are also aware of what it is like to be pupils in a classroom where order has broken down and the teacher has lost authority. This situation is often regarded by pupils as being fun at first but quickly turns to boredom and frustration at the lack of any constructive activity and direction. A desire grows for a return to an orderly learning environment as pupils themselves begin to complain to wider authorities. The majority of school children, without openly admitting it, welcome the structure and direction a teacher is able to give. Often, however, learning involves both individual choice and external direction and control. Most adults can recall important learning experiences which have affected their personal development, such as a moving poem or story read with feeling by another pupil or a teacher, a word of encouragement from a form tutor, finishing a piece of artwork and taking it home. Such experiences are generated as a result of this complex interaction between self-determination and teacher control.

A typology of ideologies in education

The views of Plato and Rousseau apply to the whole of society and social life. Now let us consider education specifically. Meighan and Harber define ideologies of education as:

> the set of ideas and beliefs held by a group of people about the formal arrangements for education, specifically schooling, and often, by extension or implication, also about informal aspects of education, e.g. learning at home. (2007: 218)

There have been various attempts to classify ideologies in education and Meighan and Harber outline the dichotomous approach which uses polarised types such as teacher-centred versus child-centred, authoritarian versus democratic, and so on. The juxtaposition of only two ideologies may prove rather simplistic, especially when examining long lists of polarised opposites which may or may not be related to other 'pairs' on the list. Meighan and Harber suggest that other more complex typologies attempt to go beyond this.

Lawton (1992), in a seminal account, pointed out that ideologies are used at different levels of generality. There is the broad level which is about the nature and purposes of education within a wider society, as considered, for example, by Plato and Rousseau discussed above. There is the interest group level, which is concerned with how the system should be organised, for instance whether education provision should be a totally free market where schools offer and charge for a service and the customer pays according to what is on offer, or a totally comprehensive state system for all with no choice. Then there is the teaching or pedagogic level which is concerned with the organisation and delivery of the curriculum at classroom level. This involves what should be taught and how it should be taught.

Lawton (1992) suggests that these different levels are very much linked and overlapping. For instance, views on the nature and purposes of education are influential when it comes to considering the organisation of schools, colleges and universities. They will also be significant in deciding what is the most appropriate content and methods of teaching to be applied. How individual teachers view content and teaching methods will, in turn, be linked to how they see the purposes of what they are involved in. For this reason Meighan and Harber (2007) prefer to use the concept of a network of ideologies to show how they operate between, as well as at, these different levels.

Throughout this book there are issues concerning the nature of education, how the system should be organised, what should be taught and how. The relationship and overlap between the three levels of ideology identified by Lawton will be