



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Yr Athrofa
Addysg a'r Dyniaethau
Education and Humanities

MODULE HANDBOOK

ECDE7014

Exploring Contemporary Issues in

Education 1:

Policy Review and Critical Analysis

Doctorate in Education (Ed D)

LEVEL 7

Yr Athrofa: Institute of Education

2020 - 2021

Module Team

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We hope that you will enjoy the module and are here to help. You should:

- Make good use of the University facilities and resources
- Attend, prepare and participate in sessions
- Be self-directed and more independent learners
- Manage your time and work to meet assignment deadlines

It is your responsibility to read the University Regulations for Students, especially for regulations relating to assignments. These are available on MyDay.

All written assignments, apart from examination papers must be submitted electronically via TURNITIN.

Module Aims and Outcomes

This first module provides an introduction to the Doctorate in Education and establishes a framework for participants to explore a range of current issues facing educators and to develop personal and collective qualities, skills and experience in the exercise of educational leadership and policy development. The module will reflect on a range of contemporary issues nationally and internationally, and consider the relative success and failure of associated policies in different contexts. A solid foundation on which to build, Exploring Contemporary Issues in Education provides a framework that enables participants to contribute to an overview of the key issues facing educators and to explore one or more in depth.

The module will provide participants with the opportunity to focus in depth on an area of policy and practice that is at the forefront of their work. The assessment exercises will encourage participants to contribute directly to the national debate through publication and presentation.

Aim(s)

- To develop the higher-level critical and analytical skills required to contribute meaningfully to the education debate, across a variety of different platforms.
- To critically evaluate contrasting approaches to one or more contemporary issues relating to education in Wales, the UK and international contexts, taking into account differing educational orthodoxies.
- To critically evaluate the presentation of contemporary educational issues and proposals in legislation, statutory and non-statutory guidance, through consultation documents and the representation of those issues and proposals in the press, social media and other channels.
- To demonstrate a critical understanding of the development of education policy, its impact and its potential pitfalls; including its perception among policymakers, schools, teachers, parents, communities, and children and young people.

Learning Outcomes

Upon the successful completion of this module, the student should be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- Assess the impact of differing approaches to the presentation of policy, proposals and educational outcomes for differing audiences.
- Understand the evidence of impact that differing discourses have in promoting or mitigating the impact of educational change.
- Explore critically the relationship between education policy, implementation strategy and impact locally, nationally and internationally.
- Articulate an understanding of the challenges and opportunities in leading educational change successfully.

Session Details

This module has a total of 30 hours scheduled learning and 270 hours of independent learning. There are two days where participants and the module team work together and a programme of weekly webinars/tutorials to provide the remaining scheduled learning sessions and to support individuals and groups of participants.

Module Framework

Week	Focus and outcome	Assignment
1	Face-to-Face Day 1 (10.10.20): Overview of programme; exploring the scope of the issues facing educators in Wales and further afield; establishing priorities; exploring sources and resources; developing an understanding of learning outcomes; rehearsing the assignment requirements. Mentoring and partnering arrangements. Standards and protocols. Introduction to blog writing. Outcome: individual learning plan.	
2	Issue 1: The Great Debate – how are issues represented in different media and communities? Deconstructing the debate on education (Webinar – 20.10.20)	Blog 1
3	Confirmation of issue and focus. Blog preparation (Tutorial). Outcome: First blogs published.	
4	Issue 2: Successful Futures? – curriculum reform at home and abroad; lessons from the international community and implications for educational leadership (Webinar – 03.11.20)	Blog 2
5	Initial conclusions, blog writing and preparing for conference presentation (Tutorial). Outcome: Second set of blogs published.	Preparation for conference presentation
6	Issue 3: Squaring the circle of accountability – finding a balance between holding public services accountable and giving educators the freedom to innovate (Webinar – 17.11.20)	
7	Conference presentation. Final preparation (Tutorial). Outcome: Draft presentations complete.	
8	Issue 4: Bricks and mortar – re-structuring education to tackle 21st Century challenges (Webinar – 01.12.20)	Blog 3

9	Face-to-Face Day 2 (05.12.20): Assessment and critical analysis of presentations; commentaries and conclusions; key messages. Reflection on blog writing, look ahead to final assessments and journal article requirements. Outcome: Third set of blogs published; presentations revised and submitted for publication (07.12.20).	Conference Presentation
10	Issue 5: Poverty of ambition – what next for education? The impact of poverty on education; perennial problems; reflections and evaluations. What have we learned and what are the implications for our future learning? (Webinar – 05.01.21) Review of module.	
	Concluding messages (Tutorial). Outcome: Journal article and final, assessed blog prepared.	
	Submission of final assignment (25.01.21)	Journal article and assessed blog

Module Content

Issue 1: The Great Debate – how are issues represented in different media and communities? Deconstructing the debate on education.

Setting the scene. Issue 1 will consider the context in which UK education policy sits. It will look at the impact of politics on education, the various modes of delivery and the key stakeholders responsible for ensuring strong pupil outcomes. Issue 1 will discuss the importance of public confidence in education, and the way in which educators and policymakers seek to win favour with the wider public. It will draw upon international examples and challenge popular paradigms, with the resulting debate providing a suitable starting point for this module. It will enable a detailed consideration of media and contemporary representations of education policy and an analysis of the evidence of actual and potential impact of differing approaches.

This focus will also enable participants to make their own contribution to the debate. The exercise of 'system leadership' requires leaders throughout the system to be contributing to evidence-informed debate over the purpose, direction, content and quality of provision.

Issue 2: Successful Futures? – curriculum reform at home and abroad; lessons from the international community and implications for educational leadership.

Issue 2 draws upon the ‘live’ issue of curriculum reform – as prevalent in Wales and the wider UK as it is in many other global economies. It will consider the differing approaches to curriculum reform, and the change in mindset required by those responsible for implementation on the ground. Issue 2 assesses the international drive for curriculum change and the reasons behind it. It will look at the key features of curriculum content across the world and the challenges arising from new ways of working. Finally, it will consider the inherent risks associated with curriculum reform, the implications for teachers and leaders, and present ‘teacher agency’ as a crucial feature.

This issue will focus attention at home and abroad and will require a critical appraisal of a wealth of literature from across the globe.

Issue 3: Squaring the circle of accountability – finding a balance between holding public services accountable and giving educators the freedom to innovate.

Issue 3 considers one of education’s perennial problems – how to balance public accountability with allowing schools the freedom to innovate and work in the best of their learner’s interests. It will compare and contrast the different forms of accountability in education, and look at the response of government to performance across different benchmarking tools. Students will review the ‘perverse incentives’ of accountability measures and the impact of modes of accountability on school/classroom practice. Issue 3 concludes with a more creative look at accountability and the options available to those whose job it is to ensure high standards of education.

The research literature is extensive, international and informative. But there a number of key themes that run across jurisdictions. These will be considered in detail and students will emerge with a sound understanding of the challenges accountability poses.

Issue 4: Bricks and mortar – re-structuring education to tackle 21st Century challenges.

Issue 4 considers the structural changes to education and the various tiers running through systems across the world. It looks at the roles and responsibilities of those operating at each level of education, and the issues arising when different parts of the system falter. It will draw upon the noticeably different approach to educational structures in Wales and England, and the arguments for and against streaming. Issue 4 will allocate some time to assessing the rise of ‘Challenge’ programmes across the UK, and the benefits of collaboration as a means of school improvement.

This focus will develop a wider understanding of structural models employed across the UK and beyond, and will draw upon a plethora of recent publications that identify the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches. These issues are particularly pertinent given the precarious financial position in which the UK currently finds itself.

Issue 5: Poverty of ambition – what next for education? The impact of poverty on education; perennial problems; reflections and evaluations. What have we learned and what are the implications for our future learning?

Reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment is a perennial issue and one that has been pursued by every Welsh Government. It has, however, resulted in only mixed outcomes. The data shows incremental progress and a narrowing of the gap between e-FSM and non-FSM pupils. However, the picture varies widely across Wales and even within local communities. The Well-being of Future Generations Act places a legislative framework on all public bodies to secure improved outcomes for all. What are the prospects for success of these measures? Is enough being done to ensure all learners achieve to the best of their abilities? This issue assesses the current and historical situation, the efforts made to reduce the standards gap, and the challenges associated with doing so. It will consider the impact of deprivation, parenting and special educational needs on school standards and practice – and the lessons that can be learned from other countries.

The module concludes with reflections and evaluations of the topics covered during the period of study and challenges arising from each of the module's five core issues. Implications for assessments will be discussed and related questions answered.

Details of Assessment

Assessment Component 1 – 40% (05.12.20 & 07.12.20)

Prepare a presentation for a conference that critically evaluates a contemporary issue in education in Wales, its representation in official statements, media treatment and your understanding of its treatment in an international context (8 minutes presentation and 1,500 word equivalent supporting material).

Assessment Component 2 – 10% (25.01.21)

You are asked to contribute at least two, non-assessed blogs over the period of this semester. Personal writing, in a particular style for a particular audience, these blogs will be open for comment and collaboration within the group, and act as a valuable introduction to the blog-writing process. The assessment will take the form of a third and final blog that draws on the experiences and contributions of colleagues and tutors over the life of the semester. This third blog will be assessed and should represent participants' strongest blog to date (800 words).

Assessment Component 3 – 50% (25.01.21)

Prepare an article for an appropriate journal that follows the guidelines for contributors. Include an abstract/presentation that is suitable for submission to a research conference and for posting on a website (4,000 word paper and 150 word abstract).

Key Reading

Classification	Reading List entry	Electronic*
Essential	Coe R, Aloisi C, Higgins S, Elliot Major L. (2014) <i>What Makes Great Teaching? Review of the Underpinning Research</i> . Durham: Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring/The Sutton Trust.	☐
Essential	Hattie J. (2008) <i>Visible Learning: A Synthesis of over 800 Meta-analyses Relating to Achievement</i> . New York: Routledge.	☒
Essential	Ko J, Sammons P. (2013) <i>Effective Teaching: A Review of Research and Evidence</i> . Reading: CfBT Education Trust.	☐
Essential	OECD. (2014) <i>Improving Schools in Wales: an OECD Perspective</i> . Paris: OECD.	☒

Further	OECD. (2015) <i>Improving Schools in Scotland: an OECD Perspective</i> . Paris: OECD.	☒
Further	Painter A, Bamfield M. (2015) <i>The New Digital Learning Age: How we can enable social mobility through technology</i> . London: RSA.	☐
Further	Pashler H, Bain PM, Bottge BA, et al. (2007) <i>Organizing Instruction and Study to Improve Student Learning. IES Practice Guide NCER 2007-2004</i> . Washington, DC: National Center for Education Research.	☐
Further	Dixon P. (2016) <i>Testing Times: Success, Failure and Fiasco in Education Policy in Wales since Devolution</i> . Cardiff: Welsh Academic Press.	☐
Further	Evans G. (2016) <i>A Class Apart: Learning the Lessons of Education in post-devolution Wales</i> . Cardiff: Welsh Academic Press.	☐
Further	Wales Journal of Education. University of Wales Press. Accessed at: http://www.wales.ac.uk/Resources/Documents/WalesJournalof-Education-Volume-18.1.pdf	☒
Further	British Educational Research Journal. Wiley-Blackwell. Accessed at: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1002/%28ISSN%291469-3518;jsessionid=3AE218BCA75A03D995A142B93E27EEDD.d01t02	☒
Further	International Journal of Educational Research Elsevier. Accessed at: http://www.journals.elsevier.com/internationaljournal-ofeducational-research/	☒

Further	Cambridge Journal of Education. Taylor and Francis. Accessed at: http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/ccje20/current	☒
Further	American Educational Research Journal. Sage Journals. Accessed at: http://aer.sagepub.com	☒
Further	Deans for Impact. (2015) <i>The Science of Learning</i> . Austin, TX: Deans for Impact. Accessed at: www.deansforimpact.org/pdfs/The Science of Learning .pdf	☒
Further	OECD. (2015) <i>Education Policy Outlook. Making Reforms Happen</i> . Paris: OECD. Accessed at: http://www.oecd.org/edu/educationpolicy-outlook-20159789264225442-en.htm	☒
Further	Programme for International Student Assessment. Accessed at: https://www.oecd.org/pisa/	☒
Further	RSA Cities of Learning. Accessed at: https://www.thersa.org/action-and-research/rsaprojects/creative-learning-and-developmentfolder/citiesof-learning	☒
Further	Scottish Government. (2016) <i>National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education - achieving excellence and equity</i> . Edinburgh: Scottish Government. Accessed at: http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/01/8314	☒
Further	Fullan, M., Quinn, J., Drummy, M., Gardner, M. (2020) <i>Education Reimagined; The Future of Learning</i> . A collaborative position paper between New Pedagogies for Deep Learning and Microsoft Education. Accessed at: http://aka.ms/HybridLearningPaper	☒