

# EQ212-15 Education and Social Justice

**20/21**

**Department**

Education Studies

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 2

**Module leader**

Emma Smith

**Credit value**

15

**Module duration**

10 weeks

**Assessment**

100% coursework

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

---

## Description

### Introductory description

This module is about fairness and social justice in education. Fairness is a widely used word and a fashionable political slogan but what does it really mean to have a fair society or indeed a fair education system? For example, is it fair that children from poorer families tend to do less well in school academically? Is it fair that students now have to pay large sums of money to study at university? Or is it fair that if families have the money they are able to 'buy' a 'better' education for their child?

In this module we will look at the educational inequalities that may accompany individuals from birth, through school and beyond. We will examine initiatives such as Sure Start, the Academies and Free Schools programme, and current educational issues such as the expansion of higher education and the inclusion of young people with special educational needs in mainstream schools. We will also look at the education systems in other countries, particularly the United States, to consider whether they have a 'fairer' system than we do.

[Module web page](#)

### Module aims

This module will explore issues of inequality and social justice in Education. It will draw upon research, policy and contemporary thinking in the field to provide an overview of the educational

inequalities that exist and persist throughout an individual's educational trajectory. The module will consider educational experience as being both lifelong and society wide and will describe the inequalities that may accompany individuals from birth, through their school experience and into the formal and informal modes of learning that they may elect to undertake later in life. The module will emphasise the policy context of many contemporary initiatives which attempt to ensure that education experience is fair.

## **Outline syllabus**

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

This is an outline of topics which will be covered in the 30 hours of teaching (including lectures and seminars)

An Introduction to Education and Social Justice  
Social Justice and Inequality in wider society  
Education and Social Justice: What is the right thing to do?  
Social Justice and Inequality: childhood poverty and inequality  
Inequalities and student outcomes: a national perspective  
Inequalities and student outcomes: an international perspective  
Schooling and social justice1: school choice  
Schooling and social justice 2: school diversity  
Education in the United States of America – an introduction  
Reducing inequality in American schools? Holding schools accountable  
Included or excluded? Fairness, inclusion and special education  
Well-being and happiness? Pupils' experiences of social justice in school  
Higher Education and Social Justice  
Not in Education, Employment and Training?  
Learning a trade? What happened to vocational education  
So what can be done to reduce educational inequalities?

## **Learning outcomes**

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge and critical understanding of the interaction between social and educational inequalities at different stages of the life course
- Undertake a critical engagement with some of the key theoretical and philosophical ideas around issues of inequality and social justice
- Demonstrate knowledge and critical understanding of the impact of major government policies which aim to reduce educational inequalities
- Examine the empirical research literature around interventions to reduce educational inequalities and use established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis

## **Indicative reading list**

Smith, E., (2012 and 2018), Key Issues in Education and Social Justice, London: Sage (1st and 2nd editions)  
Sandel, M.J., (2010), Justice: What's the right thing to do? London: Penguin  
Wolf, A., (2000), Does Education Matter? Myths about education and economic growth, London: Penguin  
Dorling, D., (2012) Fair play a DanielDorlingreader on social justice, Bristol: Polity Press

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

## **Research element**

Students are presented with data related to educational inequalities in a British city. They are required to analyse the data in order to understand patterns of inequality and educational and social segregation.

## **Interdisciplinary**

The module focuses on the politics and sociology of educational inequality

## **International**

There is a brief focus on international patterns of educational inequality and implications for global social justice.

## **Subject specific skills**

Students should demonstrate a critical understanding of:

- the diversity of learners and the complexities of the education process
- the complexity of the interaction between learning and local and global contexts, and the extent to which participants (including learners and teachers) can influence the learning process
- the societal and organisational structures and purposes of educational systems,
- data relating to children and young people
- the interrelationships between political, economic, cultural and ideological contexts in the lives of children and their families and communities

## **Transferable skills**

Key transferable skills addressed in this module include:

- Analysis and decision making
  - Basic numeracy skills
  - Data handling
  - Intellectual ability
  - Problem solving
-

# Study

## Study time

| Type          | Required                     |
|---------------|------------------------------|
| Lectures      | 10 sessions of 1 hour (7%)   |
| Seminars      | 10 sessions of 2 hours (13%) |
| Private study | 120 hours (80%)              |
| Total         | 150 hours                    |

## Private study description

Independent study hours include background reading, completing reading/other tasks in preparation for timetabled teaching sessions, undertaking research using the library resources, follow-up reading work, working on individual and group projects, the completion of formative and summative assignments, revision.

## Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

---

## Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

### Assessment group A

|                          | Weighting | Study time |
|--------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Assignment               | 100%      |            |
| A 3,000-word assignment. |           |            |

### Feedback on assessment

Assignment feedback as standard.

---

## Availability

## Courses

This module is Core optional for:

- Year 2 of UPSA-C804 Undergraduate Psychology with Education Studies

This module is Optional for:

- Year 2 of UEQA-X35B Undergraduate Education Studies