



UNSW
SYDNEY

School of Education

EDST2032
Critical Issues in Education

Term 1 2021

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IMPORTANT:

For student policies and procedures relating to assessment, attendance and student support, please see website, <https://education.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/courses/course-outlines/>

The School of Education acknowledges the Bedegal people as the traditional custodians of the lands upon which we learn and teach.

1. LOCATION

Faculty of Arts, Design & Architecture
School of Education
EDST 2032 Critical Issues in Education (6 units of credit)
Term 1 2021

2. STAFF CONTACT DETAILS

Course Coordinator: Dr Karen Maras
Office Location: G21, Morven Brown Building
Email: k.maras@unsw.edu.au
Availability: By appointment

3. COURSE DETAILS

Course Name	Critical Issues in Education
Credit Points	6 units of credit (uoc)
Workload	Includes 150 hours including class contact hours, readings, class preparation, assessment, follow up activities, etc.
Schedule	http://classutil.unsw.edu.au/EDST_T1.html#EDST2032T1

SUMMARY OF COURSE

This course critically examines issues and innovations of contemporary relevance in state, national and global curricula. You will learn about the history and significance of curriculum innovations including learning progressions, general capabilities, and the integration of curriculum perspectives across disciplines and how these developments shape the role of the teacher, students and the broader purposes of schooling. Using social, philosophical and ethical frameworks you will evaluate the impact of these developments on education, discipline content, learning and teaching in the 21st century context.

THE MAIN WAYS IN WHICH THE COURSE HAS CHANGED SINCE LAST TIME AS A RESULT OF STUDENT FEEDBACK:

- This course has been revised to address current issues impacting curriculum design implementation and assessment in the 21st century.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Outcome		Assessment/s
1	Critically reflect on the conceptions of, purposes for, and goals of education, and how these relate to the student, the teacher, discipline content and schools	1,2
2	Critically examine contemporary curriculum developments and their impact on learning, curriculum construction, classroom pedagogy and assessment	1,2
3	Acquire and/or improve, through philosophical examination, the use of the critically reflective skills of explanation, evaluation, analysis, and argumentation	1,2

AUSTRALIAN PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS

Standard		Assessment/s
1.1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students and how these may affect learning	1,2
1.2	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of research into how students learn and the implications for teaching	1,2
7.1	Understand and apply the key principles described in codes of ethics and conduct for the teaching profession	2

NATIONAL PRIORITY AREA ELABORATIONS

Priority area		Assessment/s
A	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education	2
C	Information and Communication Technologies	2
D.	Literacy and Numeracy	2
E	Students with Special Educational Needs	2
F	Teaching Students from Non-English-Speaking Backgrounds	2

4. RATIONALE FOR THE INCLUSION OF CONTENT AND TEACHING APPROACH

- Education is a critically reflective enterprise.
The content, conduct, and organisation of education give rise to a number of critically reflective questions, which ask things like: What are the meanings of various claims or arguments made in the field of education? How should schools be structured and how should students be taught?
- As a critically reflective enterprise, questions about education cannot only be answered by gathering empirical information.
Examining questions about education can, and typically does (and justifiably so), involve gathering empirical information. However, critically reflective questions are not empirical questions: they are normative, evaluative, political, moral and/or philosophical questions.
- Critical thinking includes a range of skills that need to be acquired, and continually practised and improved upon.
This course will explain and explore what is involved in critically thinking about education and will require you to utilise critically reflective thinking skills in classroom and assessment activities.

5. TEACHING STRATEGIES

Teaching strategies used during the course will include:

- explicit teaching including lectures and a range of strategies to foster interest and support learning;
- structured occasions for reflection on learning to allow students to reflect critically on issues discussed;
- opportunities for whole group and small group dialogue and discussion, allowing students the opportunity to demonstrate their capacity to communicate;
- online learning from readings and web links on the EDST2032 Moodle website.

These activities will occur in a classroom climate that is supportive and inclusive of all learners.

6. COURSE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

Module	Lecture Topic	Tutorial Topic
Week 1	Introduction to the course Purposes of education in the 21 st century context: An overview	Mapping the roles and relationships of students, teachers, discipline content and schooling in the contemporary context
Week 2	The neoliberal cascade in education: Implications for the profession	Ideology, accountability, equity, marketisation, evidence-based innovation and standards-based education, measurement and testing.
Week 3	Curriculum development and change in Australia: Aligning national and state educational imperatives	Goals of Australian education Drivers for change and innovation Curriculum structures
Week 4	Curriculum as product or praxis?	Critical discourses in education – teacher autonomy, professional judgement and emancipatory practice
Week 5	Case Study 1: General capabilities	Creative and critical thinking – transferable skills or not?
Week 6	FLEXIBILITY WEEK	No lecture or tutorial
Week 7	Case Study 2: General capabilities (online – Good Friday)	Literacy, numeracy and digital literacy, sustainability across the curriculum
Week 8	Case Study 3: Learning progression	Learning trajectories, instructional sequences, monitoring and assessing of student learning
Week 9	Case Study 4: Cross Curriculum Perspectives	Opportunities and challenges: Integration Indigenous CCPs across the curriculum
Week 10	Plenary – big ideas, reflections and challenges	Assessment preparation

ONLINE MODULE (9 hours) – Media portfolio

This online module supports you to depth your understanding of the coursework, develop an understanding of the educational context in which teachers work and to critically analyse the big ideas discussed in the broader community about educational issues, innovations and developments associated with the purposes of education.

Collect at least 3 artefacts that address one or more of the case study topics in weeks 5, 7, 8 and 9.

Artefacts could include discussion papers, policy reports, news articles, media releases, teaching resources, podcasts and/or videos. They can be sourced from professional publications, education websites, newspapers or radio/television programs, policy think tanks, policy units, educational systems and agencies at national and state levels.

Share online links to these items with your peers.

Choose one item you have chosen and one posted by another student from a different source. These may address the same or related issues, or completely different topics.

Critically reflect on the point of view or debates represented in the article/podcast.

Reflect on the following:

What position, point of view or point of conjecture does the article support, critique or ignore? Who speaks?

Who speaks on behalf of education?

Any expert voices? (e.g. education researchers, discipline specialists?)

What may be the author's interest in raising this issue?

Who has produced or sponsored the development of the artefact, article, podcast/video? What can you infer about their motives for supporting these views or promoting this debate?

What are the impacts of the issue raised on students, teachers, schooling and discipline content?

7. RESOURCES

Required Reading

- Webster, S, & Ryan, A. (2018). *Understanding Curriculum: The Australian Context*. Port Melbourne, Vic: Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 9781108449991

Suggested Reading

- Reid, A. & Price, D., (2018). *The Australian Curriculum: promises, problems and possibilities*. Deakin, ACT: Australian Curriculum Studies Association

Other articles, resources, and materials will be uploaded to the course's Moodle website.

8. ASSESSMENT

Assessment Task	Length	Weight	Student Learning Outcomes Assessed	Australian Professional Standards Assessed	National Priority Area Elaborations Assessed	Due Date
Task 1: Essay	2000 words	40%	1,2,3,4	1.1, 1.2		Friday 12 th March 2021 by 5pm
Task 2: Reflective Portfolio	3200 words	60%	1,2,3,4	1.1, 1.2, 7.1	A,C,D,E,F	Friday 23 rd April 2021 by 5pm

Submission of assessments

Students are required to follow their lecturer's instructions when submitting their work for assessment. All assessment will be submitted online via Moodle by 5pm. Students are also required to keep all drafts, original data and other evidence of the authenticity of the work for at least one year after examination. If an assessment is mislaid the student is responsible for providing a further copy. Please see the Student Policies and Procedures for information regarding submission, extensions, special consideration, late penalties and hurdle requirements etc.: <https://education.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/courses/course-outlines/>.

Assessment Details

Assessment 1 – Essay

Purpose: To critically reflect on the conceptions of, purposes for, and goals of 21st Century education, and how these relate to the student, the teacher, discipline content and schools.

Task instructions:

- Choose an example of curriculum in your area of specialisation/method (e.g. Australian Curriculum, NSW Curriculum, or an example from an international context).
- Using the readings provided in weeks 1-4 of the course and at least two others you will find in peer reviewed journals, produce a formal academic essay, with correct structure (i.e. introduction, body, and conclusion), utilisation of relevant academic and professional resources, correct APA referencing, personal deliberation, argumentation, and presentation.

3. **ESSAY QUESTION:** Critically evaluate the orientation to education represented in this curriculum. In your analysis provide an account of the implications of this orientation to education for the roles and relationships of teacher, student, discipline content and the purposes education in the 21st century context in this example of curriculum.

Assessment 2 – Reflective Portfolio

Method: Record your thoughts on the course's readings and class material for each day:

(a) Readings: The first part of this record should be your brief reaction to each of the required readings in the Course Outline placed on the course's Moodle website: **250 words for each of the required readings (2000 words approx.)**.

You are **required** to do each of the set readings scheduled for each week prior to the relevant tutorials, as tutorial discussions are in part based upon your reactions to these readings. **You are strongly encouraged to familiarise yourself with all of the required readings before the relevant face-to-face classes begin**; reading complex academic articles more than once helps you to clarify, understand and evaluate the concepts and issues they raise.

Structure your 250-word written reaction to the readings using these 3 headings of "Main point", "Support" & "Interesting":

- Main point: What is the main point or argument of this reading?
- Support: Identify and explain the reasons, evidence, or premises that the author gives in support of this main point or argument.
- Interesting: You should take note of anything that you find interesting, or confusing, or about which you would like to raise as a question.

Bring these thoughts, questions, etc. to each tutorial, as tutorial discussions will be based upon the interaction of the class's prepared thoughts. It is also encouraged for you to bring anything of relevance that you see in the media or other outside sources.

(b) Classes: The second part of this record should be your brief reaction to the lecture and tutorial material and discussions following each day: **100 words for each of the 12 days of class. (1200 words approx.)**. For example, using any one or more of the following prompts is acceptable: What did you learn today? What (if anything) did you find interesting, or informative, or clearer, or still puzzling? That is, what is your self-evaluation of your current state of understanding of the course's material, and the debates and issues that it has raised?

Length: 3000 words approx. This is a guiding suggestion – it is not a strict upper word limit (as I do not require nor want you to artificially limit your notes). You might need to rework or 'clean up' your daily reactions for the final Reflective Portfolio submission, so that they are sufficiently clear and comprehensive.

TIPS FOR ASSESSMENT PIECES

The assessments pieces will be assessed on your demonstrated understanding of the material, and on the quality of your argument. Arguments may, and usually are, contestable. However, some arguments are good ones, and others are poor. You should endeavour to make sure that yours are good, and good arguments are clear, coherent and comprehensive.

A good argument (amongst other things) takes account of objections that have been made or might reasonably be made – not just to the conclusion, but also to the premises or the logic. You should look therefore at arguments against the conclusion that you think you should draw, and against your premises and logic. And you should give a careful reply. Ask yourself if your argument is coherent, plausible, and defensible.

Your argument's premises may include some value premises and some factual ones, or some that are both at once. (There are problems with the distinction that is claimed to exist between facts and values.) If you can defend them against plausible alternative views, so much the better.

Your argument will need to include support from academic references. Although simply relying on piecing together material from outside references will not replace having a good argument, utilising academic references appropriately will strengthen your argument. Any references must be referenced correctly in APA style, and this includes the relevant page/s number/s of the source material used where appropriate for the APA referencing conventions.

For the essay, there is likely to be more than one plausible answer to the educational issue you choose. You should combat the arguments for this/these alternative/s, if it/they clash/es with yours (which often will be the case).

Note: It is quite acceptable in this subject, and usually significantly grammatically easier, to write in the first person (e.g. "I argue that..."; "First I will examine...") in all the assessment tasks.

UNSW SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
 FEEDBACK SHEET
 EDST2032 CRITICAL ISSUES IN EDUCATION

Student Name:

Student No.:

Assessment Task 1: **Essay**

SPECIFIC CRITERIA	(-) ←	→	(+)
Understanding of the question or issue and the key concepts involved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understanding of the task and its relationship to relevant areas of theory, research and practice clarity and accuracy in use of key terms and concepts. 			
Depth of analysis and/or critique in response to the task: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> depth of understanding of relevant key concepts and principles depth of analysis of areas of educational impact on chosen topic question clarity and depth of argument in relation to chosen topic question demonstration of knowledge and understanding of physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students and how these may affect learning (Grad. Standard 1.1) demonstration of knowledge and understanding of research into how students learn and the implications for teaching (Grad. Standard 2.1). 			
Familiarity with and relevance of professional and/or research literature used to support response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reference specifically made to material, research and ideas presented in class and associated resources range of research and professional literature on education theory to support response. 			
Structure and organisation of response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> appropriateness of overall structure of response clarity and coherence of organisation, including use of section headings where appropriate. 			
Presentation of response according to appropriate academic and linguistic conventions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> adheres to word length: within 10% over/under, excluding references list clarity, consistency and appropriateness of APA conventions for quoting, paraphrasing, attributing sources of information, and listing references clarity and appropriateness of sentence structure, vocabulary use, spelling, punctuation and word length. 			
GENERAL COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT TIME			

Lecturer:

Date:

Recommended:

/20 (FL PS CR DN HD)

Weighting:

40%

NB: The ticks in the various boxes are designed to provide feedback to students; they are not given equal weight in determining the recommended grade. Depending on the nature of the assessment task, lecturers may also contextualize and/or amend these specific criteria. **The recommended grade is tentative only, subject to standardisation processes and approval by the School of Education Learning and Teaching Committee.**

UNSW SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
FEEDBACK SHEET
EDST2032 CRITICAL ISSUES IN EDUCATION

Student Name:

Student No.:

Assessment Task: **Reflective portfolio**

SPECIFIC CRITERIA	(-) ←	→	(+)
<p>Understanding of the question or issue and the key concepts involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding of the set readings and their relationship to relevant areas of theory, research and practice • understanding of the lecture and tutorial material and their relationship to relevant areas of theory, research and practice • clarity and accuracy in use of key terms and concepts • understanding of the key principles described in codes of ethics and conduct for the teaching profession (Grad. Standard 7.1). 			
<p>Depth of analysis and/or critique in response to the task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • depth of analysis of relevant key concepts and principles in the set readings • depth of analysis of areas of educational impact of the issues/concepts raised in the lecture and tutorial material • clarity and depth of argument in relation to the issues/concepts raised in the course material • evidence of personal responses to the issues/concepts raised in the course material • demonstration of knowledge and understanding of physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students and how these may affect learning (Grad. Standard 1.1) • demonstration of knowledge and understanding of research into how students learn and the implications for teaching (Grad. Standard 2.1). 			
<p>Familiarity with and relevance of professional and/or research literature used to support response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reference specifically made to material, research and ideas presented in class and associated resources • range of research and professional literature on education theory to support response. 			
<p>Structure and organisation of response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriateness of overall structure of response • clarity and coherence of organisation, including use of section headings where appropriate. 			
<p>Presentation of response according to appropriate academic and linguistic conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarity, consistency and appropriateness of APA conventions for quoting, paraphrasing, attributing sources of information, and listing references • clarity and appropriateness of sentence structure, vocabulary use, spelling, punctuation and word length. 			
GENERAL COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT TIME			

Lecturer:

Date:

Recommended:

/20 (FL PS CR DN HD)

Weighting:

60%

NB: The ticks in the various boxes are designed to provide feedback to students; they are not given equal weight in determining the recommended grade. Depending on the nature of the assessment task, lecturers may also contextualize and/or amend these specific criteria. **The recommended grade is tentative only, subject to standardisation processes and approval by the School of Education Learning and Teaching Committee.**