

MA Education: getting ready for your course

One of the most valuable ways in which you can prepare for the MA Education course is through the reading you do prior to and during the course.

The texts recommended here will help you to start thinking about some of the major educational issues in the world today. The more you immerse yourself in a wide variety of texts, the more resources you will have for engaging with the course and producing work which is about the things which really interest, excite, intrigue or annoy you in the field of education!

Reading texts of all kinds can change how you think and can change your professional practices. It can disrupt the ways you might have previously thought and felt about social and educational issues and lead to new and unexpected ways of thinking about education. Reading will open up possibilities for practice and will help shape the inquiries you might undertake during the course in your modules and for your dissertation.

There are plenty of texts available about education and this is only a tiny fraction! Once enrolled you will have access to the wealth of scholarly articles and books available in our library, but there are many, many other texts that you can immerse yourself in prior to joining us. The recommendations below are not exhaustive and you do not need to read them all! Dip into these, select those that catch your attention. There are documentaries and films, podcasts, literature and poems and you-tube videos. There are also some recommendations for media that may be interesting to you throughout the year.

We hope you enjoy some of these texts. They come recommended by the lecturers you will be working with during the year. During induction we will spend some time talking about the texts so please be familiar with at least a few of them so you will be able to contribute to what will be the start of our course long discussions about education! Better still, bring along some of your own recommendations!

Looking forward to meeting you all, the MA team

Documentaries about education:

[The Class](#) (2009) Actually a film, but based on the autobiography of a teacher who plays a version of himself in the film so I'm putting it here. The film documents his experiences teaching in a multicultural classroom in Paris

[We are the people we've been waiting for](#) (2009) This documentary explores the extent to which young people around the world are being failed by an education system created at the time of the Industrial Revolution. Confronts expectations about what education systems ought to do.

[Two Million Minutes](#) (2009) This documentary explores the 4 years of senior school experienced by two students each in the U.S, China and India. How their time is allocated by schools, students and parents is radically different between the countries and cultures.

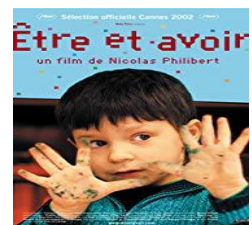


[Waiting for Superman](#) (2010) This documentary looks at the journey of students through a school system that limits their academic potential. A look at public education in America but relevant internationally.



[Please Vote for Me:](#) (2017) An interesting documentary about children in China learning about democracy. An exploration of education, democracy and our changing world.

[To Be and To Have](#) (Etre et Avoir, 2007) This documentary explores the education of students from 4-11 in a one-room, one teacher school in rural France.



[13th](#) (2016) (watch on Netflix or [on YouTube here](#)) 13th is an American documentary. It is not specifically about education, but is a powerful exploration of how racial injustice has led to recent unrest in the US and beyond



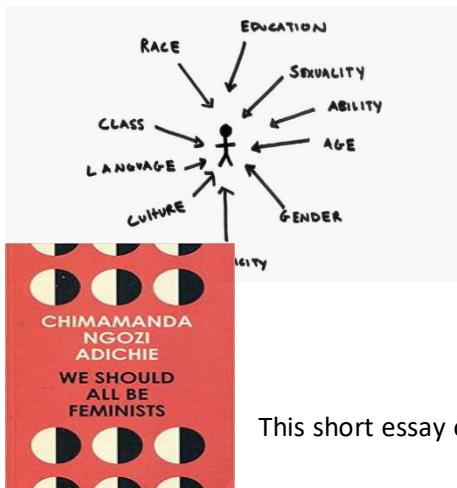
Documentaries about education:

[The Class](#) (2009)

Talks and podcasts

I really like the podcasts 'social science bites'. It's not always directly about education but the guests talk about research and interesting research methods in a range of social science areas. A good starting place is this one with Diane Reay (who you will probably come across again on the course) talking about class and education [Social science bites Reay class and education](#)

Again, likely to come up on the course, [Kimberlé Crenshaw on Intersectionality](#).



In this podcast, Kimberlé Crenshaw talks about intersectional theory – the study of how overlapping or intersecting social identities, particularly minority identities, relate to systems and structures of discrimination in society.

This short essay on feminism is available as a TED talk: [We Should All Be](#)

[Feminists](#). It is also available as a short book, asking questions about how

gender divides are harmful to both women and men and how we might raise children differently in the 21st century for experiences which are inclusive and aware.

In this TED talk, [To Learn is to be free Shameem Akhtar](#) , Akhtar talks about

posing as a boy during her early childhood in Pakistan so she could have the

privileges rarely afforded to girls. Akhtar recounts how the opportunity to get an education altered

the course of her life and the work she does in this area now.



[Video: TED Talk: What My Coloring Book Taught Me About Racism - Dr. Tiffany Bowden](#)

This is a spoken word poem about schooling and the dangers of being taught to stay between the lines!

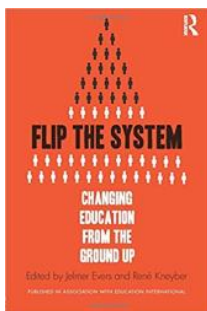
TED talks on education are well worth listening to. If you want a way in, I recommend starting with Ken Robinson, but there are plenty available here with from both UK and International speakers on a wide range of educational topics. Choose those which interest you! [TED talks on education](#)

Here is an alternative view on success in education from **Prof Thomas Sowell**, on what makes for educational success, notably for minority and disadvantaged students:

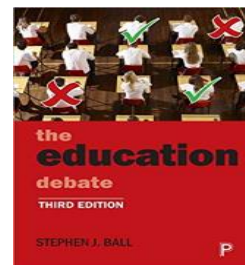
Thomas Sowell TV (2020) *Thomas Sowell on the truth behind school success (Thomas Sowell TV)*. Available at: https://youtu.be/Kkl9f_-5hzU?si=MSodATxDJ7SY5s3N [accessed: 24/8/2023]

Books, journal articles and reports for wider and deeper reading:

All these are available to buy cheaply or borrow from local libraries:

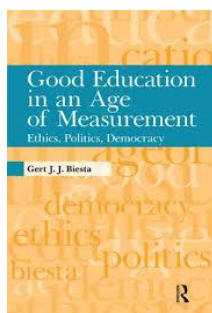


This book, **Ball, S. (2017), *The Education Debate***, offers the key debates and critical interrogation of contemporary education policy in the fast-changing field of education. A really good insight into our educational



spaces and highly recommended

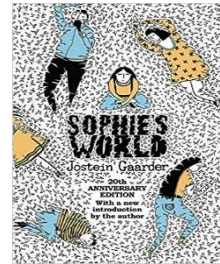
Ever, J. and Kneyber, R (Eds.) (2015), *Flip the System: Changing Education from the ground up*, is a collection of essays from teachers, academics and writers that examine and critique International educational reforms around the world over the last 20 years.



Biesta, G. (2010) *Good Education in an Age of Measurement*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.

A good introduction to the question what, and who is education for?

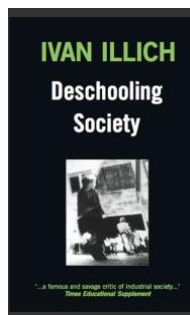
This young adult novel (Sophie's World by Jostein Gaardner) is also a history of philosophy which will help to understand some of the major schools of philosophical thought.



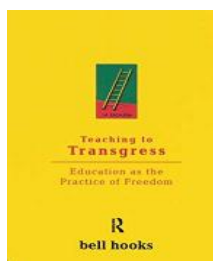
Arguing that 'education is freedom', Paulo Freire contends that traditional teaching styles keep the poor powerless by treating them as passive, silent recipients of knowledge. He suggests that through dialogue and critical thinking we can do education differently.



Ivan Illich goes a step further than Freire in his book ['Deschooling Society'](#) where he suggests that school itself is the problem and that schools should be 'disestablished'. His proposed solution is a

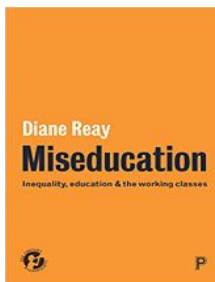
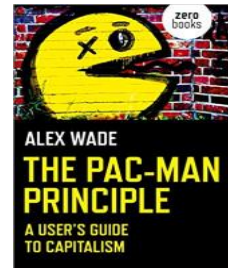


radical one.

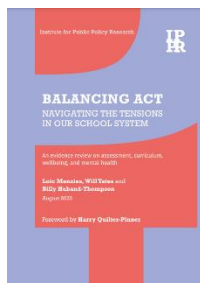


bell hooks challenges educators to rethink teaching practices in the age of multiculturalism and contends that education is a practice of freedom from racial, sexual and class boundaries.

Alex teaches on research methods and his book considers how video games, and specifically Pac-man, speaks to a range of contemporary issues in Western society, politics and culture, particularly contemporary capitalist society. Understanding how contemporary capitalism works on a global scale helps us to understand the drivers for policy decisions and enactment in education.



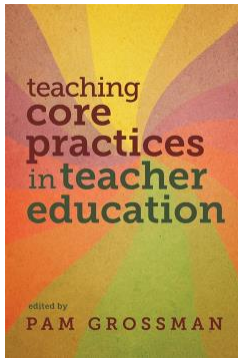
This book (2017) addresses the question of why the working classes are still faring so much worse than the upper and middle classes in education, and what we can do to achieve a fairer system.



An important recent think tank report on tensions in the current UK school education system. **Menzies, L., Yates, W. and Huband-Thompson, B. (2023).** *Balancing act navigating the tensions in our school system.* Institute for Public Policy Research. Available at: <https://www.ippr.org/files/2023-08/balancing-act-school-system-august-23.pdf> [accessed: 24/8/2023]

There are plenty of academic e-journal articles available for free on platforms like ResearchGate. This article from a key contemporary author on education Gert Biesta is an example. When critically citing references, more recent articles help with relevance in supporting your arguments and what we call 'positionality' on a topic. **Biesta, G. (2020) Risking Ourselves in Education: Qualification, Socialization, and Subjectification Revisited. *Education Theory* 70(1), 89-104.** Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342217654_Risking_Ourselves_in_Education_Qualification_Socialization_and_Subjectification_Revisited [accessed: 24/8/2023].





This is a useful book to use when considering the current ideas of curriculum

planning, management and change in England. It may be useful if you are considering a future career in education as it deals with some of the complexities around initial teacher training and policy.

Current affairs Media:

The following are good for keeping up with current issues in education:

<https://www.theguardian.com/education>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education>

Developing critical thinking and study skills

Academic Writing – A handbook for International Students. Stephen Bailey.

Battle of Ideas Festival video! Filmed at the Battle of Ideas Festival 2019 by WORLDbytes volunteers, award-winning novelists Elif Shafak and Tim Parks discuss the state of reading and writing in the twenty-first century. Fascinating discussion and feeds into big issue debates in professional educational discourse over the standardisation of educational curriculums, pressures to teach to the test resulting in superficial or surface level learning taking place.

<https://youtu.be/-8SCatoD9mw>

Films: Click on the links to see a brief of the film. Some classic movies about education!

[Goodbye Mr. Chips](#)

[Precious](#)

[Dangerous Minds](#)

[Educating Rita](#)

[School of Rock](#)

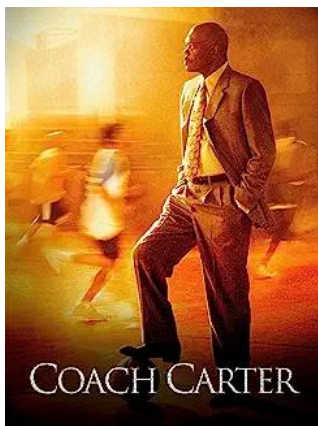
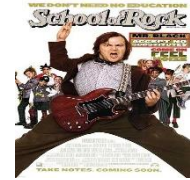
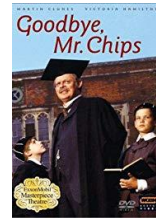
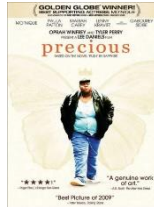
[Dead Poets Society](#)

[Stand and Deliver](#)

[The Breakfast Club](#)

[The Paper Chase](#)

[Good Will Hunting](#)



A thought-provoking film exploring some issues linked to leadership and management and how to build a team.

Developing your research skills

This is a free to view edition of a key e-book for research in education, newer editions are available online through the University library after you fully enrol - along with other useful resources to support the development of your research skills at master's level. You will become aware of these on the research methods core module (EDU7393) before starting your own dissertation research!

Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. *Research method sin education*. 6th ed. Available at: <https://gtu.ge/Agro-Lib/RESEARCH%20METHOD%20COHEN%20ok.pdf> [accessed: 24/8/2023]