

Journal of Education Policy – 1985-2020

Easter 1984 - I and my colleague at the University of Sussex, Stephen Ball, had decided to attend the American Education Research Association Conference in New Orleans. It was the first time either of us had been to America. We decided to hire a car - an Oldsmobile Cutlass, as I remember - and drive down to New Orleans from Atlanta. As we drove we began to talk seriously about future initiatives. I had just taken over as Executive Director of Falmer Press and was beginning to launch a number of educational series with that company. One of these series was 'Educational Policy Perspectives' - over 40 books. Stephen remembers me saying as we drove into Livingston, Alabama - 'I've had this idea!' The idea was to double up and launch alongside the books a *Journal of Education Policy*. It may seem odd in retrospect, but there was no such journal at the time, even though education policy was of enormous importance, both as a research field, but also more pragmatically as an applied field of action.

We were both much exercised by the need to produce work that not only approached education policy from a scholarly point of view, but also explored its applied relevance. At the time it was a reasonable assumption that work that generated evidence about educational policies, practice and outcomes would be applied in some way to educational policy initiatives. Our starting assumption was one that subsequently became more questionable as education moved from being a state-directed policy of educational improvement and educational provision for all - to a more market-stratified delivery of educational products. The assumption that there would be more evidence-based policy has morphed into a world where what we might call prejudice-based policy is much more in evidence. In the latter genre evidence is sought only in the pursuit of predetermined views. This may sound a harsh judgement but there is plenty of evidence that this is the case. In our own country England, the 'system of education' now resembles a mishmash of educational initiatives with no coherence beyond the need to marketise and stratify whatever can be delivered. This was not in our initial conception or assumptions for the Journal but what is most notable is the way that the Journal has responded to these changes at the level of power and control of educational policy. The Journal continues to interrogate policy according to its original evidence-based mission and to provide empirical evidence and scholarly analyses which 'speak truth to power'.

Ivor F Goodson

This is the last issue of the JEP that I will put together as Managing Editor, and the contents reflect that. I will continue to be involved with the Journal but Carol Vincent (Institute of Education, UCL) will now take over that role and other changes will follow. Over 35 years of involvement in editing the Journal I have relied on and benefitted from the support and efforts of lead editors, desk editors, administrators and 1000s of conscientious reviewers – Chiz Dube, Meg Maguire, Paula Berry and Helen Wheeler deserve special mention. I express my sincere thanks to them all. Even more importantly though I say thank you to the authors of papers submitted.

I think the journal has made significant contribution to shaping and developing the field of education policy studies and I am sure it will continue to do so.

Stephen J Ball

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