

# Teaching the disciplines in Education Studies

Wendy Bignold, Philip Bamber, Alex Guilherme, Namrata Rao, Feng Su and Tingting Yuan





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## I Introduction

This report discusses the development of a disciplines-based curriculum in Education Studies at Liverpool Hope University, the BA Education. While the focus of the report is on the disciplines, a holistic view of student learning underpins the new curriculum where the curriculum is deeply entwined with the values of the University and the teaching and learning strategies these promote. As such the disciplines-based curriculum cannot be examined in isolation from other elements of the student experience.

In writing this report it is hoped that it may provide something of an academic philosophy or even a framework for Education Studies courses at other institutions or at least a document that stimulates critical debate about the future of Education Studies among teams within and across institutions. This is particularly important in the current context where the future of teacher education in universities is unclear. Education Studies has traditionally taken second place to teacher education. However, its time it takes its place as the dominant partner in the education since it offers pathways for a wide range of professions in children's and young people's service, and lifelong learning. Further, its dominance may continue as teacher education's student numbers may be decreased in universities through the favouring of the Government's school-based routes, or as remaining teacher education courses become even more politicised and technocratic. Education Studies can provide a space for rigorous, academic, critical thinking and debate, which will be key if education, both formal and non-formal, is to continue to thrive in England, the UK and internationally.

The study of Education should start from the context of the student and then move through analysis of the local and national to the international or global. This new degree aims then to combine the broadening of students' horizons with a sharpening of their intellectual skills and knowledge through the study of the composite disciplines of Education. This new foundational major is a replacement for the previous Education Studies combined degree, not merely a reconstruction of it. It is conceptually different. This is not a 'grafting' on an old tree, but a 'planting' of something new. It is a unique opportunity to create something distinctive that universities and faculties of Education have struggled with for a long time, with varying success.

The new curriculum was introduced in September 2011 and as such it is still being rolled out. This report therefore draws on our experiences with the first-year course and discusses our plans for the subsequent years. We use the word 'educators' to refer to our students who, we hope, will become educators in the communities in which they live and work. This is to say that they will support others in their learning, formal or non-formal, planned or unplanned.

## 2 The disciplines

### 2.1 Context

The new disciplines-based curriculum is mindful of the context of higher education. With changes to Government funding arrangements from 2012 and significantly higher fees being introduced, students will increasingly see a university education as a major financial investment. Therefore the education has to be of a high quality, fit for purpose and linked to employability while not necessarily being vocational or professional.

The need for a curriculum fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century was an internal driver and generated a full review of the provision in the Faculty, which resulted in a shift to a student-centred, curriculum-referenced, disciplines-orientated curriculum for all undergraduates in the Faculty, including those on Teacher Education degrees. In facing the disciplines, the curriculum embraces three types of knowledge, which are integrated

in the planned experiences of students. This recognition of the three kinds of knowledge lies at the heart of building capacity in future educators, something the Faculty strives to do. The three types of knowledge addressed within the disciplines-based curriculum are:

1. Academic knowledge – This is about scholarship and research. The role of disciplines-orientated knowledge is critical to this.
2. Professional knowledge – This allows theory to be explored through practical situations and enquiry-based learning and helps students to understand and apply academic knowledge.
3. Personal knowledge – In which the values, aspirations and emotional (and spiritual) aspects of learning and educating are formed and fostered.

The new BA Education is not just about the final outcome, the degree certificate, but about the process. As such it seeks to offer a rich, challenging, dynamic education that stretches students academically, personally and professionally. We think this is best done by the study of the cognate disciplines of Education, which for us are:

- the Sociology of Education;
- the Psychology of Education;
- the Philosophy of Education;
- the History of Education.

There are other academic disciplines we could have chosen, such as Anthropology or Politics of Education; however, we feel that the four selected are the most significant. We are looking for opportunities to introduce students to other related disciplines through taster courses in the second and third year. All undergraduate students in the Education Faculty now study the BA Education as the core component of their degree. This brings a diverse range of students and staff together to learn alongside and from each other, sharing different subject specialisms, perspectives and life experiences. It also provides a cohort of between 500 and 600 students. Working with such a large and diverse group does have its challenges, but these are not a major focus of this report.

## 2.2 Rationale for a disciplines-based approach

The broad aim of the disciplines-based curriculum is to provide an integrated foundation of key fields of educational study on which to base the formation of the educator. This Education major forms a compulsory 'pathway' for all degrees offered in the Faculty of Education. It is not a preparation for teaching, although it may be combined with a teaching-based specialism to provide routes into teaching.

The guiding principle of the curriculum is to enable students to move through Whitehead's three stages of learning in higher education (Whitehead, 1929):

1. Romance;
2. Specialisation (Precision);
3. Generalisation.

In the first year students are getting to know the disciplines, enjoying exploring them. In the second year they specialise in two disciplines, which they study in some considerable detail, with precision. In the third year they become a generalist in one of these two disciplines. That is to say that they can now apply their specialist knowledge and understanding to make generalisations about the discipline linked to different scenarios and situations.

The disciplines-based curriculum provides a research-informed, academic, intellectual and engaging learning experience of Education, which broadly reflects the QAA subject benchmark statement for Education Studies. Overall, it allows students to gain knowledge of key disciplines that have been used to explore and explain a range of educational processes and issues. Critical awareness is nurtured through reflection, evaluation and analysis of the disciplines as lenses through which to examine different educational contexts and concerns. The programme takes a traditional, classical view, but interprets it creatively to engage contemporary students with a wide interest base and varied career aspirations. The focus is not on building boundaries of knowledge of education, but on the contrary, to facilitate a more integrated and flexible use of knowledge in students' future journeys.

Previously students in the Faculty could study Early Childhood, Childhood and Youth, or Disability Studies without developing a broad and critical understanding of education. The subjects had become vocationally orientated and in doing so had lost some of their academic rigour. This was true for the Education Studies combined degree too. The introduction of the disciplines provides a very strong academic base on which to develop critical thinking and research skills. A strong critical understanding of education is important for students to inform their future judgements and actions in whatever arena of education they work in, whether as part of their careers or as volunteers. Interestingly, in Norway all first-year undergraduates are required to study Philosophy in order to develop their critical thinking skills and to pull back a swing to vocationalism and assessment-focused teaching. We have introduced Philosophy of Education and the other three disciplines for the same aim.

## 3. Teaching Education Studies

### 3.1 Issues or disciplines approach?

There are currently 25 higher education institutions with degree courses in Education Studies in England. With the exception of Liverpool Hope University none of the degrees are disciplines based, but are primarily driven by the study of educational issues. Nine of them do contain discipline modules or units, such as the History of Education or Psychological Approaches. However, overall the nine courses do lean to a more issues-based approach when considered holistically.

The use of the disciplines as curriculum content is not a new curriculum design, but it is one not currently popular in English universities. Indeed, it was argued by Phenix (1962, p. 273) 50 years ago that “all curriculum content should be drawn from the disciplines” and “only knowledge contained in the disciplines is appropriate to the curriculum”. He described disciplines as knowledge organised for instruction; namely, for teaching and learning. Although the academic debates in the contemporary social sciences are very much cross-disciplinary, the learning of disciplines is seen as a crucial basis for undergraduate study by the Faculty of Education at Liverpool Hope University.

### 3.2 International perspectives

There are always debates about the significance of the disciplines in higher education (Trowler, 2012). It is interesting to consider the curriculum developments discussed in this report from an international perspective. The Faculty is able to do this in its teaching as the core Education Studies team has lecturers from 11 different countries.

Taking the example of China, where Education is an increasingly popular academic subject at higher education, a disciplines-based curriculum is well established. The Institute of Education at Beijing Normal University (the top faculty of Education in China) has a BA curriculum that centres around the psychology of education, philosophy of education, sociology of education and physiology of education. Students use

these theoretical perspectives to study educational subjects such as Pedagogy, Economy and Management of Education, Early Childhood Education, Special Education and Educational Technology.

In India, Education as a subject is taught as a part of the professional degree, Bachelor of Education (BEd). A typical degree in Education consists of the academic knowledge and pedagogic knowledge of the teaching subjects, e.g. English, Physics and Chemistry, and enhancing the understanding of Education as a subject in its own right through the teaching of Psychology, Philosophy, Sociology and History of Education and research within Education. An example of a typical undergraduate curriculum is that at Kadi Sarva Vishwavidyalaya University, which focuses on philosophy and sociology as foundations of education, the psychology involved in learning and teaching and the ancient education system in India.

In Brazil, Education is offered at graduate and postgraduate level at virtually all public institutions. Some of these (e.g. Universidade de São Paulo and Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina) have a strong focus on research and on forming academics. A typical curriculum encompasses disciplines such as Anthropology of Education, Economy of Education, Sociology of Education, Psychology of Education, Philosophy of Education, History of Education and Comparative Education. Paulo Freire and Darcy Ribeiro remain major influences in the Brazilian educational system and academia.

## 4. Teaching the disciplines

### 4.1 Curriculum structure

The Year 1 (Level C) course considers education from the widest possible perspective to include the historical and contemporary, local and global, themes and questions that continue to animate and inform the study of Education. Adopting an expansive view it is designed as an introduction to the disciplines of History, Philosophy, Sociology and Psychology in the context of education. The curriculum is carefully planned to challenge and excite the new students and to motivate them to pursue a rigorous academic inquiry in this field.

The first-year curriculum is structured in discipline blocks, as illustrated in Appendix I. The first year it was taught there was a five-week introduction: one week for the overall course, followed by a one-week introduction to each discipline. Feedback from students and staff was that this structure lacked momentum and provided too long a lead in to the main curriculum. The structure has been modified now to consist of a one-week introduction to the overall course followed by six weeks of each discipline, the first week of six being the introduction. This engages student more quickly in the actual disciplines. The disciplines were ordered Sociology, Psychology, Philosophy, History. We chose to teach Sociology and Psychology first as we thought more students might be familiar with these from GCSE or A-level study and we had staff expertise already in the Faculty. Although this would have been true for History we were waiting to recruit staff expertise in this area. A first-year reader is being developed. This will contain some of the seminal texts students are expected to read, or extracts from them, accompanied by a short critique and some key questions to help students engage with the texts.

To study within the contemporary context of education, the Faculty of Education has developed its disciplines-based curriculum according to the following two principles:

(1) The disciplines-based curriculum has an integration of theories/theorists and current national/global issues. For example, in the discussion on 'political philosophy' within the Philosophy block, students are encouraged to broaden their knowledge of western political philosophy and philosophies from other countries, such as Confucianism. In Sociology, courses are designed on theoretical foundations from Marx and Weber to Bourdieu and Bernstein, and also on the contemporary marketisation of education linking with neoliberalism and globalisation theories.

(2) The disciplines-based curriculum has an interdisciplinary perspective in teaching and learning. For example, during the discussion on ‘evacuation history’ in the History block, students are encouraged to think about evacuees’ social backgrounds and their education in this historical period. Similarly, examining ‘ethics of education’ in Philosophy, students are required to find solutions to ethical dilemmas through looking at diverse aspects of educational practice such as the social relationship between teachers and students, which draws on sociology, psychology and philosophy.

In Years 2 and 3 (Levels I and H), the four constituent disciplines become more compartmentalised as students begin to specialise in their academic study. While this has advantages in focusing criticality and intellectual thinking, there is a danger that students will lose touch with the disciplines they have chosen not to specialise in. To overcome this, students will work in cross-discipline groups on enquiry-based learning (EBL) or research tasks during which there will be planned opportunities for all students to continue to have an engagement with all four constituent disciplines.

Year 2 not only involves a critical study of ‘learning and teaching’ in the context of English schools and those in other countries, but a much broader interpretation of the term to include, for example, lifelong learning and non-formal education through two of the four disciplines, chosen by each student. In parallel with exploring two of the four key disciplines, students will engage in the study of research methodologies and techniques and related ethical issues as a foreground for a major research component in their final year.

Year 3 has a much tighter focus as students develop further their expertise in one of the four disciplines through the themes of leadership and management in education. Again this is not the conventional notion of leadership and management in education, but one that is far broader and more creative. As with Year 2 there is an explicit research component, which allows students to apply research methodologies and ethics in a study within one of the disciplines. The nature of the research students undertake may differ significantly from current empirically driven projects to ones that are discipline based. An example of this would be a student’s researching the effect of the French Revolution on the education system in France and the contemporary parallels.

## 4.2 Case study of the development of Philosophy of Education

This report is going to give the example of Philosophy of Education to illustrate the development of one of the disciplines. A detailed outline of the Philosophy component and resources used with students are given in Appendices 2 to 5 as examples. Philosophy is not a widely studied subject in UK schools; however, some students do get acquainted with the subject through Religious Education GCSE/A-level (e.g. an Ethics module). As a consequence of this the majority of students reach tertiary education without a proper familiarity with the subject. This situation contrasts with that of other countries where Philosophy is either a traditional subject (e.g. France, Italy, Greece) or a compulsory one (e.g. Brazil).

The development of Philosophy as a discipline in the BA Education had to take this above into account while designing the curriculum and syllabus. We also had to bear in mind the difference between *educational philosophy* (“the systematic study of particular aspects of educational theory” (e.g. special educational needs)) and *philosophy of education* (“the ideas of the great educators ... for whom education was discussed in the context of ... ethical formation and the character of learning” (e.g. Freire)) so to provide a balance between the two (Haldene, 2012). As a result of this, in their first year (Level C) students are introduced to the subject during a period of five thematic weeks. Epistemology, Ethics, Political Theory and Philosophy of Religion are presented and connected to issues in education during the course of the first four weeks. In the last week, students begin to learn about the educational views of two 20<sup>th</sup>-century thinkers (i.e. Martin Buber and Frantz Fanon).

The second year (Level I – 12 weeks) is more focused on *educational philosophy* and introduces students to a range of ethical perspectives and how they bear upon educational ideas and practice. Students engage with ethical theory (utilitarianism, deontology, virtue theory) and are encouraged to demonstrate their relevance to modern education through some ethical issues (e.g. special educational needs, plagiarism). Assessment is by means of a long essay (3,000 words).

The third year (Level H – 24 weeks) is centred on *philosophy of education* and takes students through the history of philosophy as it applies to Education Studies. It is intended that students develop a deep understanding of a few key thinkers in the field (e.g. Plato, Rousseau, John Dewey, Paulo Freire, Martin Buber). The course was structured so to encourage students to gain a deep understanding of some key texts in Education (e.g. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*) and to introduce past and current research in the field (e.g. Martin Buber and non-formal education). In order to prepare students for postgraduate work the assessment at this level is through a research project (4,000 words) on a topic of their choice (within the framework of the syllabus) that has been approved by the Philosophy team.

Our experience has been that the majority of the academic staff and students find Philosophy a challenging, enjoyable and interesting subject. We expect that a considerable proportion of the first-year cohort will choose Philosophy as one of their options for their second and third years. The identity of the Philosophy team within the Faculty of Education has been further emphasised through the creation of a Special Interest Group in Philosophy (SIG), which will support research and inform the development of the syllabus. In addition to this, we have established the north-west branch of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain (PESGB) in the Faculty. These developments have led to the organising of national conferences at Liverpool Hope University to help us develop our expertise and profile in this discipline. We are also actively establishing links with other faculties of Education in Europe through the Erasmus Staff Mobility Programme so to exchange experiences and research outputs, again seeking to develop further our discipline expertise.

### 4.3 Staffing of the disciplines

As with many other faculties of Education we had traditionally been staffed by teacher educators. Our earlier Education Studies degree had been taught by such colleagues. Over the past three years we have particularly sought to appoint new staff with strong academic, rather than professional, backgrounds – of course it is possible to have both – and expertise in one of the four disciplines. All tutors in the core Education Studies team have doctorates, with one awaiting a doctoral viva. This academic strength illustrates significant and planned change in the Faculty from a ‘college’ of teacher training to a university faculty of Education.

Each member of the core team faces one of the four disciplines and makes a major contribution to teaching and research in this discipline. However, because of the size of our cohorts, 530 in 2011-12 and 600 predicted in 2012-13, they also teach, or to be more specific, facilitate learning, in the other three disciplines. Each discipline has a named co-ordinator, responsible for curriculum development in the discipline, although the actual curriculum planning and review involves all core team members facing that discipline. A larger team of tutors from across the Faculty facilitate a weekly tutorial with ten students each. Their role is not to be discipline specialists but learning facilitators.

### 4.4 Teaching and learning

A multifaceted approach to the curriculum has been taken to develop learning opportunities and activities beyond the conventional notions of tutor-led learning. The student experience is considered holistically with opportunities for learning to take place in many different contexts and places and between different groups; this includes peer-to-peer, expert-to-student and tutor-to-student activity in small and large groups. This approach has enabled us to create an all-embracing curriculum, by which we mean a

curriculum without boundaries. This is based on a model for learning where four elements are closely entwined. These are:

- curriculum;
- relationships;
- disposition to learning;
- space for spiritual and emotional reflection.

The model for learning outlined above and that drives the student experience is shown in Appendix 6. The weekly design of the learning and teaching activities within which students move scaffolds student learning. Using our model for learning we have constructed a course with the following weekly components:

<b>Weekly event</b>	Discipline lecture	Discipline reading seminar	Discipline EBL task	Discipline tutorial (ten students)	Keynote lecture (may be discipline linked)	Academic skills lecture
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Students encounter formal taught sessions in conjunction with other sessions, which nurture their own personal understanding of key concepts. Students therefore have opportunities, on a weekly basis, to learn about new concepts, individually consider these and discuss them in less formal sessions, such as seminars and virtual forums, constructing knowledge with expert others and their peers. We believe that every student should be known by at least one tutor, to enable a professional, supportive, close relationship to be developed that will facilitate learning. As such students are in tutorial groups of ten with one tutor for the most significant element of the week. This is underpinned by the belief that all effective education is based on right relationships. The tutorials allow the student to flourish through a confident relationship with an expert tutor – experts have flexibility in teaching and need not be disciplines experts.

Students' academic skills are developed in enquiry-based learning (EBL) and reading group sessions. In these sessions students first work closely with their peers focusing on prescribed weekly tasks and reading, and then with a tutor and third-year student mentor.

As time goes by the EBL sessions become less prescribed and facilitators (tutors) support students in considering their own questions in relation to given scenarios. In this way the student begins to take a more active role in considering how these questions can be explored, thereby gaining a deeper understanding of the discipline and the requisite skills to tackle complex problems in the future. The EBL tasks give students opportunities to apply the disciplines to real-life scenarios.

The learning and teaching strategy and the high quality of provision and diversity of activities seek to develop a love of learning and a commitment to lifelong learning in the students, with tutors acting as role models. Final-year Education Studies students have been employed to work alongside the tutors to act as mentors and role models in academic reading and critical thinking, engaging new students in dialogue and debate about the discipline-based reading. Perhaps unsurprisingly, feedback from both students and mentors indicates that this teaching strategy has had a positive impact on both parties and is something we plan to develop further.

#### **4.5 The use of technology to support the disciplines**

For the teaching of what is quite a complex course and to such a large cohort of students, a number of educational technologies have been utilised. The University's virtual learning environment, Moodle, has been used as a learning platform and a gateway to facilitate students' learning. It has been used not only as a place for students to access all learning materials, but more importantly as a medium to create an

online learning community. In order to achieve this, many Moodle features have been used, particularly the online forum and wiki. For instance, online forums have been used as a form of a weekly virtual task. During the Philosophy block, which is set out in Appendix 2 as an example, students are encouraged to create their own web resource on Wikispaces (see Appendix 5). In addition, the following technologies have also been used:

- online submission of the course assignments;
- using online database for EBL tasks;
- digital marking of students' assignments on tablet computers;
- trial of digital portfolios of students' engagement with academic knowledge;
- use of online reading list for easier access to the required reading;
- use of photo gallery in Moodle to illustrate relevant educational issues in different contexts.

We have trialled the use of a digital portfolio in the delivery of this course. This is an electronic collection of evidence that shows students' learning journeys during their first year of Education Studies. The portfolio particularly focuses on seminar tasks and reading tasks. The portfolio records each student's seminar contributions and reading group discussions. At the end of the academic year, students were presented with a copy of their group portfolio, which allows them to reflect on their continuous personal development over the year. This does not form part of the assessment. Instead, it is a way of celebrating what our students have achieved. The overarching purpose is to create a sense of personal ownership by the students, as individuals and in their groups, of their accomplishments.

#### 4.6 The development of values

Liverpool Hope University is the only ecumenical university in Europe. Its Christian foundations have formed a modern university that seeks to develop the whole person in mind, body and spirit. It is committed to being a collegium: a community of scholars, students and staff. The Faculty of Education is driven in all its activities by the philosophy that education is a means of humanising society. The content and pedagogy of the new curriculum are shaped by this commitment. The curriculum is therefore driven by values as well as academic disciplines. They are developed throughout the BA Education in the curriculum and in the relationships established. The curriculum draws on examples of educational thinking and issues that relate to social justice in the UK and overseas. Relationships between tutors and students, students and students facilitated by the strong core team, small tutorial groups and interactive peer activities promote collaboration, co-operation and co-dependence. As such it is not the outcome of the taught curriculum, but the process of learning and of transformation through education that is important to us and that we have sought to plan for.

The disciplines-based approach supports the development of students as it encourages and requires critical thinking and reflection; to do so the teaching and learning activities are underpinned by the relationships which they facilitate. It is not just a curriculum for the study of disciplines, but also for the development of the self.

## 5. Discussion

From both a staff and student perspective, the weekly discipline focus is structured to revolve around the tutorial. These tutorials are crucial to the success of the course as they provide a safe place for the students to really engage with the disciplines, to discuss them and to practise using the appropriate academic language. These tutorials are not led by discipline experts, but are supported by a piece of reading and the weekly discipline lecture. Providing a quality student experience across 53 tutorial groups led by 53 different tutors with diverse research and teaching expertise was seen to be a particular challenge. Therefore a relatively simple structure was adopted for the tutorials, whereby students take it

in turns to prepare five statements in relation to a particular focus. Examples include: 'What are the five most important points on the topic 'education cannot compensate for society' or 'the role of the university in the 21<sup>st</sup> century'?' The student experience of the tutorials is not uniform, although it is comparable; this is probably both desirable and inevitable given the range of academics involved.

In recognition that academic staff are not necessarily experts in the discipline focus for that week, they are provided with concise supporting notes, from a member of the relevant discipline team. The aim is to provide enough to support staff as required without patronising experts in the field.

Staff have found these weekly tutorials of ten students an invaluable opportunity to dissect material covered in the weekly discipline lecture. It would seem that this approach is particularly useful for a disciplines-based curriculum and serves to give the course coherence from both the staff and student perspective. For instance, tutors have commented:

*I am enjoying the opportunity to integrate the 4 disciplines – the seminars are an invaluable opportunity to revisit things, make connections.*

*I have been able to consider how aspects of the course relate to each of the students individually – it enables me to draw upon the personal experiences of students to illustrate the theories being covered as part of the taught course.*

One member of staff described how the disciplines-based approach had required a shift in their approach to the curriculum from being “resource full” to “resourceful”. They described how previously they had filled curriculum sessions with structured activities that they now realise had inhibited discussion. It is the discussion, the process of engaging with the disciplines, that underpins a disciplines-based approach rather than a top-heavy formal curriculum.

Requiring students to actually engage with the disciplines through academic reading, EBL tasks and the tutorial discussions clearly places demands upon students. They can, and have, found it frustrating, destabilising and uncomfortable in the beginning in ways that cannot be predicted or accounted for. It is clearly a pedagogical approach that is not subservient to the mantra of student satisfaction but does, we believe, promote student learning.

At the end of their first year of study students were asked to choose which two of the four disciplines they wished to study further in the second year. It is interesting to look at their choices as one way of understanding their perspectives on the disciplines and their attitudes towards studying them. Students studying the disciplines as part of their Teacher Education degree are required to study Psychology and then choose from Sociology and Philosophy as it is felt that these three disciplines are most important for being a teacher. Students studying the disciplines as part of a BA Education degree had a free choice from the four. The most popular choice for second-year study is Sociology, followed by Psychology, then Philosophy and lastly History. Because Primary teaching students are required to take Psychology this will be the largest discipline cohort in the second year.

Their reasons for choosing the disciplines were interesting and suggest that many of them are seeking academic challenge (77%), that they want to be made to think rather than just take the easy option of studying further a subject they have already studied at A-level, for example. This is illustrated in the following quotes from students:

*For Philosophy, it is new to me and I would really like to explore it further on the course because I found it very interesting.*

*Philosophy is something I have never studied before. I am interested in learning new things in a subject I don't know much about yet.*

*The challenging thought and exploration of the Philosophy course is appealing to me.*

Less surprisingly, some students chose disciplines they thought related well to their other degree subject or career aspiration (85%). For example:

*I want to do Psychology because I'd like to do music therapy and think that it will help me. I want to do Philosophy because I think ethics in education is very important.*

*I think that Psychology and Sociology are very much linked to the classroom and will be easy to apply to the classroom on placement. I feel that Philosophy does not offer this.*

*I believe that Sociology will allow me to better develop my understanding of theory of education and to be more hands on with the community.*

The student choices and the reasons for their choices are interesting as they do indicate engagement with the disciplines rather than just an acceptance of the curriculum presented to them.

## 6. Conclusion

The move to a disciplines-based curriculum in Education Studies at Liverpool Hope University was not a response to market demand or a strategy to increase student achievement when measured by degree classification. However, we think that the new curriculum will be popular in the market and will positively impact on student achievement through enhanced engagement. Instead it was driven by a desire to transform students into future educators, critical thinkers with a profound understanding of education who can facilitate their own deep learning and that of others. What began as a review of the curriculum resulted in something much bigger and more significant. The paradigm shift has been to move responsibility for education from the tutor to the student. A disciplines-based curriculum facilitates this with its focus on critical thinking, precision in relation to the key elements of the disciplines and expected student engagement. If students do not engage then they will not be successful from an assessment perspective or from a self-development perspective.

The question for us is how do we know that students are engaging with the disciplines as opposed to just being present in classes? We can discern their engagement with the disciplines by their contribution to the tutorials. The dialogue they have with their peers, their confidence in this and their proficiency in using the language of the disciplines is evidence that we can look for. It is not measurable, but then true learning rarely is.

The introduction of a disciplines-based curriculum has been a process of significant change for the Faculty and one we are still working through. The initial impact it has had on staff and students is exciting, but there is much that requires review and revision. Change happens quickly, but innovation takes time.

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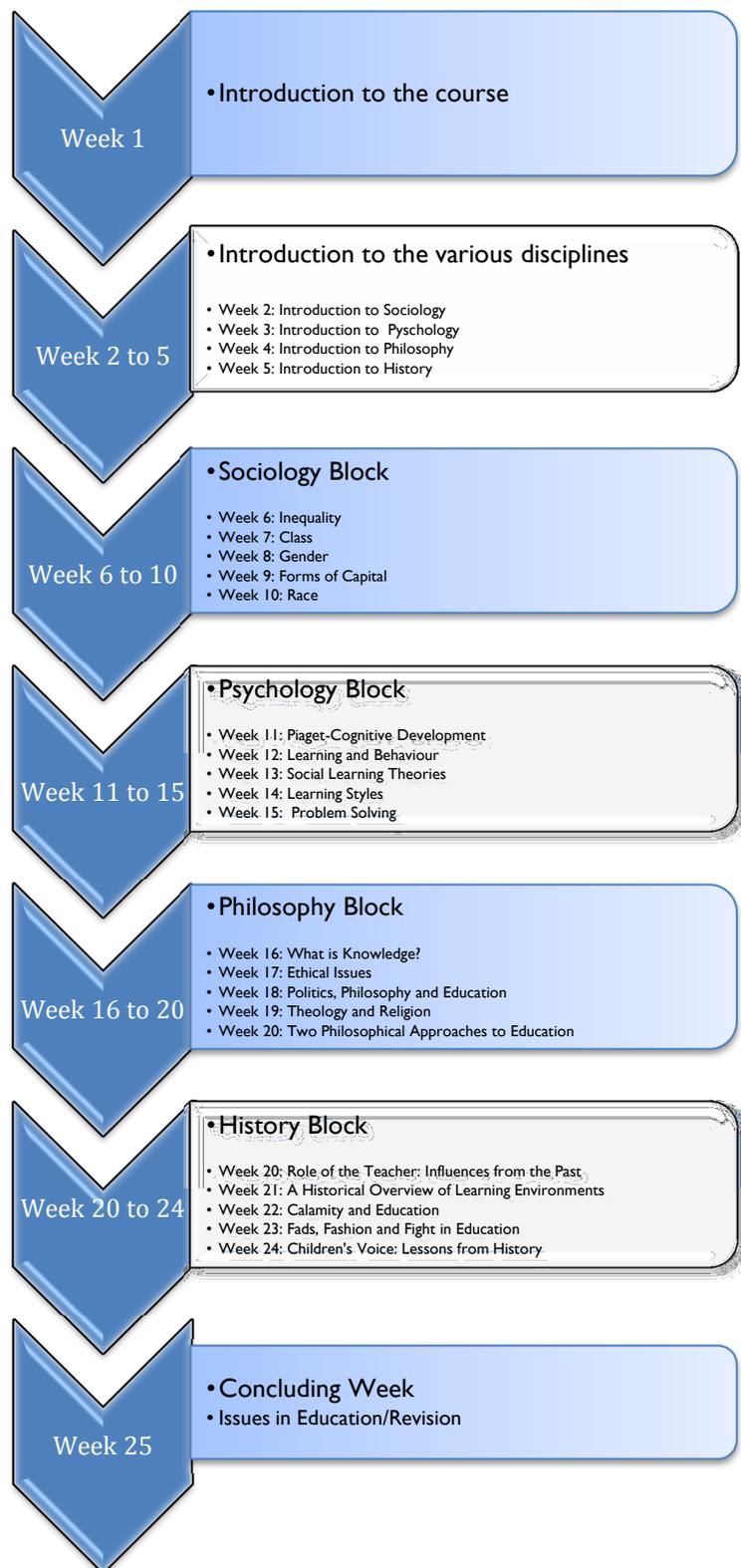
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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Outline of first-year (Level C) course



## Appendix 2: Outline of the Philosophy of Education block

	<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Week 2</b>	<b>Week 3</b>	<b>Week 4</b>	<b>Week 5</b>
<b>Discipline lecture</b>	Epistemology: What is Knowledge?	Ethics: Ethical Issues in Education	Politics and Education	Religion and Education	Two Philosophical Approaches to Education: Martin Buber and Frantz Fanon
<b>Reading class</b>	Two articles: i. rationality; ii. Plato's 'The Allegory of the Cave'.	'The Experience Machine' by Robert Nozick	'The Morality of School Choice' by Adam Swift	'Student Charter for an ecumenical university'	Two articles on Brazil: i. philosophy as a compulsory subject; ii. interculturalism and education.
<b>Seminar</b>	Two articles: i. rationality; ii. Plato's 'The Allegory of the Cave'.	'The Experience Machine' by Robert Nozick	'The Morality of School Choice' by Adam Swift	'Student Charter for an ecumenical university'	Two articles on Brazil: i. philosophy as a compulsory subject; ii. interculturalism and education.
<b>EBL</b>	Students are introduced to Wikispaces	Students are introduced to some ethical issues in education	Students work independently and design a website giving advice to teachers and educators on an ethical issue	Students work independently and design a website giving advice to teachers and educators on an ethical issue	Students present their website

## Appendix 3: A Philosophy of Education reading task

### **Essential reading:**

Nozick, R. (1974) The Experience Machine. In: *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. New York: Basic Books, pp. 42-45. Available directly via the Philosophy of Education reading list.

An additional source for this reading group discussion (if you have time):

'The Philosopher's Arms' a radio show previously broadcast on BBC Radio 4. The episode is called 'The Experience Machine' (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0145x8b>). It is just under 30 minutes long.

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**Before coming to the reading session have a think about the following questions:**

1. A friend, a brilliant scientist, has built an Experience Machine. If you plug into this machine you'll have the illusion of a very happy life – a happier life than you currently have. Inside the machine you'll have all the experiences of a fulfilling marriage, lots of friends, a successful career. You won't know you're hooked into a machine. Your friend says that once you're hooked in the machine, you won't be able to be unplug yourself: you'll be there for the rest of your biological life. You fully believe all your friends claims about his machine.

**Would you plug yourself in?**

2. Your friend has tinkered with the Experience Machine. Now you can set the machine so that you are only hooked into it for one week.

**Would you plug yourself in?**

3. Janet had 30 Facebook friends whom she met on the internet. She drew immense satisfaction from interacting with these friends. But Janet's Facebook friends were not real people – they were virtual characters created by a games manufacturer. Janet died without finding out the truth about her Facebook friends.

**If her life had been just the same, but with real people as Facebook friends rather than fake ones, would Janet's life have been better?**

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Plugging in is an attractive proposition. But Nozick actually presents this argument in order to refute a kind of utilitarianism called *ethical hedonism*. The hedonist simply pursues pleasure and assumes that pleasure is the route to happiness. Nozick wants to make the point that our true happiness is a complicated business. He provides us with three reasons not to plug into the machine.

1. *We want to do certain things, and not just have the experience of doing them*
  - "It is only because we first want to do the actions that we want the experiences of doing them." (Nozick, 1974, p. 43)
2. *We want to be a certain sort of person*
  - "Someone floating in a tank is an indeterminate blob." (Nozick, 1974, p. 43)
3. *Plugging into an experience machine limits us to a man-made reality (it limits us to what we can make)*
  - "There is no *actual* contact with any deeper reality, though the experience of it can be simulated." (Nozick, 1974, p. 43)

**Some further questions:**

1. In the associated BBC radio programme, David Willetts (Minister for Universities and Science) asks the following question: “What if we could go in the chemist and buy a happiness pill? Should we go and buy it?”
  - a. A pill that makes you happy – with no apparent negative side effects. How would you answer this? Discuss your ideas. Can these arguments be used to justify the use of recreational drugs?
  - b. If a pill can make you better at exams, with improved concentration and memory retention then should you take it?
2. “Happiness is not the same as well-being.” This idea is also developed in the discussion.
  - a. What about pleasure – are their different forms of pleasure? Does pleasure bring about happiness, or well-being, or both? Can you think of a situation where some discomfort (something other than pleasure) can bring about well-being? How are these questions related to utilitarianism (the greatest good for the greatest number)?

The logic of this argument is as follows (remember that ‘P’ refers to a proposition, and ‘C’ refers to a conclusion):

- P1: Experiencing as much pleasure as we can is all that matters to us;
- P2: If we will experience more pleasure by doing x than by doing y, then we have reason to do x;
- P3: We will experience more pleasure if we plug into the experience machine than if we do not plug into the experience machine;
- P4: We have reason to plug into the experience machine (P2 and P3);
- C1: If all that matters to us is that we experience as much pleasure as we can then we have reason to plug into the experience machine;
- P5: We have reason not to plug into the experience machine;
- C2: Experiencing as much pleasure as we can is not all that matters to us. (C1 and P5).

**Further resources (if you wish to look into it):**

- <http://www.bu.edu/wcp//Papers/Valu/ValuRive.htm>
- <http://blog.practicaethics.ox.ac.uk/2011/09/the-experience-machine/>

## Appendix 4: A Philosophy of Education tutorial task

Tutorial topic: What are the most significant ethical issues faced by educators today?

Two students should work together to prepare to speak about ethical issues faced by educators today. Students should feel free to discuss any topics they wish, but they will need to write up their ideas and be prepared to get the ball rolling.

During the lecture you have been introduced to a number of relevant ideas which you could develop during the tutorial. For example:

- The narrowing of curricula in schools and universities. Are we pursuing more 'utilitarian' needs?
- Educators like to say 'Every child matters?' Why does every child matter?
- Cognitive enhancement. Why should a person's right to self-improvement be limited? When should we limit the human right of freedom of choice?
- When should school rules be broken? Or should rules always be followed?

The tutorial might discuss these, but also other relevant ethical questions.

In preparation for this tutorial you are asked to read the following (Available directly through the Philosophy of Education reading list):

Connolly, P., Cox-White, B., Keller, D. and Leever, M. (2009) Case Thirty-Seven: Fire Up the Coffee Pot! Break out the Ritalin! – Performance-Enhancing Drugs in Academia. In: *Ethics in Action: A Case Based Approach*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 481-490.

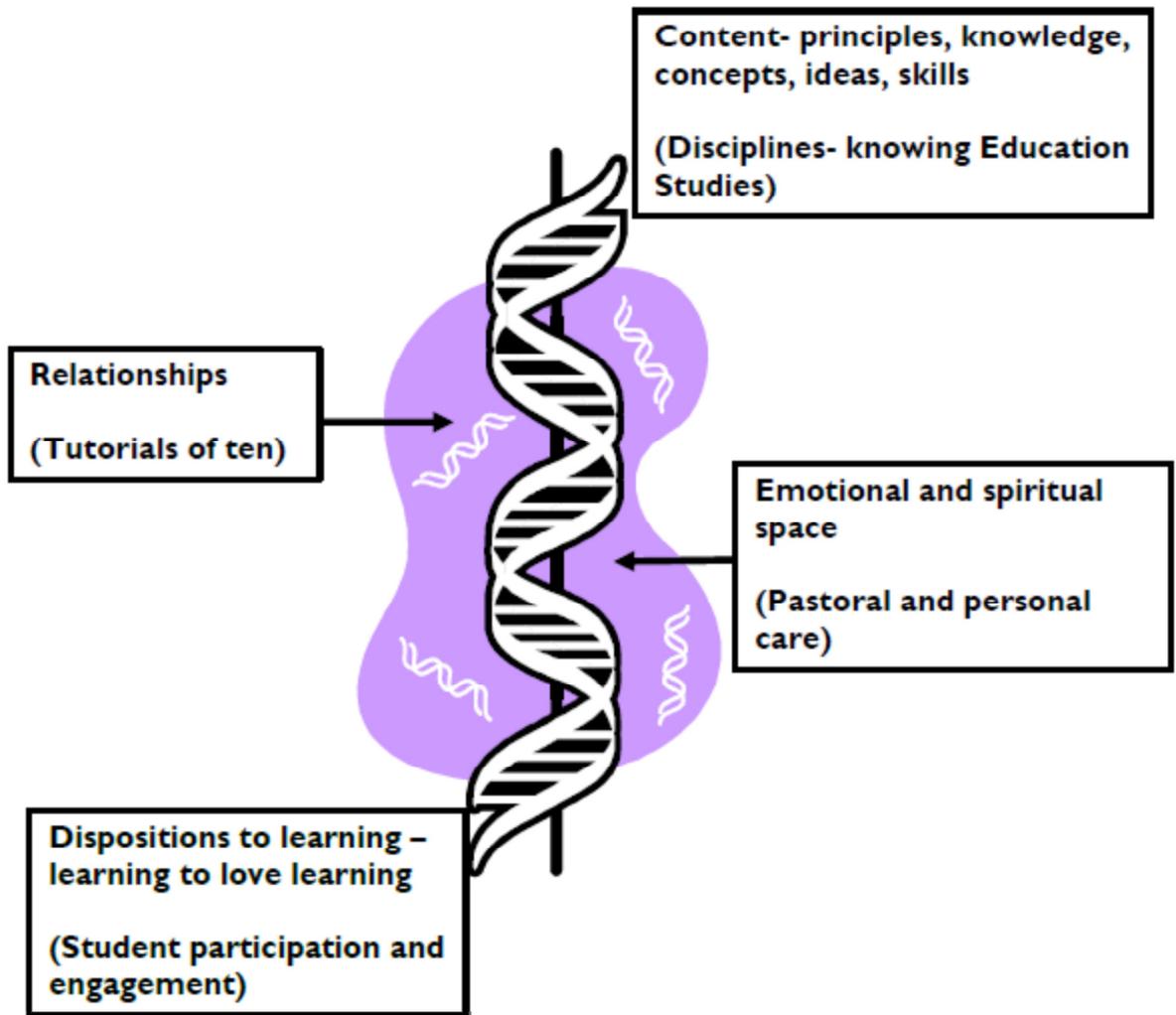
For Monday reading session you will also have read the following short extract (this will also be helpful):

Nozick, R. (1974) The Experience Machine. In: *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. New York: Basic Books, pp. 42-45.

## Appendix 5: A Philosophy of Education EBL task

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Theme:</b> Philosophy of Education (Applying Ethics to Education – Making a Wikispace website)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <p><b>Overall aims</b></p> <p>The overall aims of the coming weeks of EBL are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To understand and apply ethical theories to educational contexts.</li> <li>2. To appreciate the role of online collaboration in a new context.</li> <li>3. To learn new skills of website construction.</li> <li>4. To consider the perspectives of educators, but also students in ethical dilemmas.</li> </ol>                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <p><b>Overall task</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During this EBL students will be given a range of ethical dilemmas from educational contexts.</li> <li>• In groups, students will analyse the ethical issues.</li> <li>• Groups will then develop a Wikispace website that is designed to give ethical advice for educators to manage this situation effectively.</li> <li>• These websites will then be peer-reviewed and updated accordingly.</li> </ul>                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <p><b>Arrangements for this week</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EBL session will be split and students will be working in the IT labs – some students will have sessions from 11-12, some will have sessions from 12-1.</li> <li>• Details of these arrangements will be clarified during the academic lecture and notices on doors will also redirect students to their IT lab for this week.</li> <li>• Students do not need to bring anything with them to this IT session – full instructions will be given during the session.</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <p><b>Resources needed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• access to a PC (students are assigned to IT labs);</li> <li>• instruction sheet – this will be provided during the session itself.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p><b>Other useful resources:</b></p>                                                                                                                             |
| <p><b>Next week</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A number of ethical case studies will form the basis of a discussion on ethics. This will take place in the usual EBL classrooms.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p><b>Reminders</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are reminded to keep the login details that they create during this activity</li> </ul> |

## Appendix 6: A model for learning



## Contact us

**The Higher Education Academy**  
**Innovation Way**  
**York Science Park**  
**Heslington**  
**York**  
**YO10 5BR**

**+44 (0)1904 717500**  
**[enquiries@heacademy.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@heacademy.ac.uk)**

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