

EDST 504a: History of Education Policy

Policymakers make the future. How do they make use of the past?

Summer Term 1 (May-June, 2016). Mondays & Wednesdays, 4:30-7:30PM, PON C
Dr. Jason Ellis

“An education system designed in the very different circumstances of an earlier century can’t possibly always meet the challenges students face – both now and in the future.” – *B.C. Education Plan, 2013.*

Every educational policy has roots in the past. More than that, policymakers frequently invoke history. Think ‘back-to-basics’ curriculum for example, which harkens to an instructional past that may – or may not – have existed. Or, consider the quotation above, where past history is used to justify future policy changes in B.C.

In EDST 504a you will:

- Examine educational policy history, in primarily British Columbian, Indigenous, and Canadian contexts. We will map how we got from “there” (the past) to “here” (the present).
- Analyze critically what policymakers actually accomplish when they invoke the past.
- Learn how to apply historical research to policy analysis and policymaking in education.

Selected topics:

- History of school choice and residential segregation in Canada and the United States (1954-present)
- History of educational equality and equity policies (1963-present)
- History and reconstruction of First Nations education policy (1873-present)
- History of high-stakes testing, program and policy evaluation, and “big data” in education (1960-present)

Please contact the instructor if you wish to see a tentative course syllabus. (j.ellis@ubc.ca)

*EDST 504a is a SCPE elective, but all are welcome. Previous experience in history courses is not a requirement for this course.