



## The education debate

*Stephen J. Ball*

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Tony Blair's 1996 pre-election speech put 'education, education, education' firmly at the centre of the policy stage. Education has since become a key political issue and a major focus of media attention. It is also seen as a crucial factor in ensuring economic productivity and competitiveness. But whose interests are at the centre of this shift in education policy? And how could things be if we thought about education differently?

In this enthralling book, Stephen J. Ball guides us through the flood of government initiatives and policies that have been introduced over the past 20 years, including beacon Schools, the academies programme, parental choice, foundation schools, faith schools and teaching standards. He looks at the politics of these policy interventions and how they have changed the face of education, 'joining up' policy within a broader framework of initiatives, turning children into 'learners' and parents into 'consumers'.

Ball's sociological approach to analysing and making sense of current policies and ideas around education uncovers issues of class, choice, globalisation, equality and citizenship, as well as the conflicting needs of children and families on the one hand and the economy and the state on the other.

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