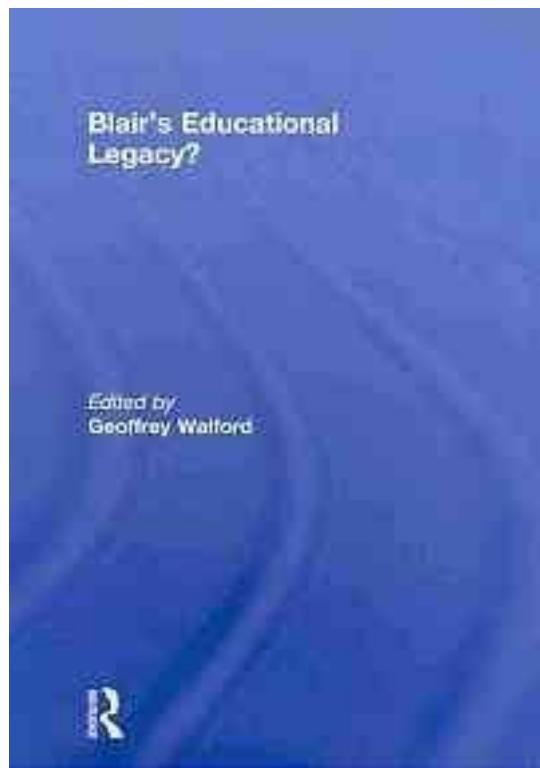


Blair's Educational Legacy?



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The United Kingdom General Election on 1st May 1997 gave a landslide victory to a re-vitalised Labour Party. Tony Blair became Prime Minister with a huge Commons majority of 179 over all other parties. Such a majority meant that extensive changes of policy could be implemented with little effective opposition. During the election campaign Tony Blair had repeatedly claimed that the top three priorities of a New Labour government would be 'education, education, education', and on page two of the Labour Party's election manifesto a smiling Blair is seen with Nelson Mandela - the unacknowledged originator of the oratorical education triplet. Following a third

Election victory in 2005 and after over ten years as Prime Minister, Blair finally stepped down to Gordon Brown in mid-2007, but only after a promotional 'final tour' that lasted several months. Towards the end, Blair devoted considerable efforts to try to ensure that his legacy would be positive and that he would be remembered for more than his role in the Iraq war. But what is his legacy in the field of education? This book brings together the assessments of key educational researchers who have been centrally involved with both the critique and implementation of various policy developments. It is now time to make a solid academic evaluation of his influence on education. This book is timely, and relates directly to the central policy themes of the last decade. It considers the relationships between theory and practice and examines the nature of policy and politics. Each contribution will review empirical data and policy changes relating to Blair's period as Prime Minister and will make an assessment of the enduring effects of changes in policy. Each will assess the long-term and lasting effects as well as the shorter-term responses. This book was published as a special issue of the Oxford Review of Education.

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目录:

[Blair's Educational Legacy? 下载链接1](#)

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