



Education

Question

To what extent should educational policy be informed by genetics research?

Background

Many types of research inform educational policy¹, with different regions/countries applying different findings to the practice of education. These policies have lasting effects on the individuals whose education they frame. Most educational policy makers look to recent research to better inform the educational practice within their communities.

There is much innovation in genetics research over recent decades. There are some findings suggesting link of genetics with educational attainment and social inequality. Some researchers have started to argue that if educational policy is to meet its ideal for social justice and equal opportunities for all, then findings from genetics research need to be part of informing that policy. However, previous misuse of assumptions about genes linked to eugenics and racism means that simplistic policy decisions could entrench inequality rather than support social mobility.

The task

Consider this recent journal article by Katherine Paige Harden and Philipp D. Koellinger:

'Using Genetics for Social Science' published in *Nature: Human Behaviour*.

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-020-0862-5>

If you cannot access the reading above through your school or library, please request a copy using [this link](#).

Discuss the extent that current educational policy should be informed by genetics research. Contextualise your response within the educational framework of your home country or region (or the one you know best). What sort of policies could be enacted now to promote social equality and mobility for all children? What sort of research should be conducted to better inform such a policy?

¹ 'Education policy' is a very broad term – they often include the structures, rules and regulations that underpin how education functions. Policies can be developed at the national, regional, city or school level. Here is a broad overview: <https://www.rand.org/topics/education-policy.html>