

**ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL FUTURES:
PEDAGOGIES FOR EMERGENT WORLDS**

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5. A FUTURES PERSPECTIVE

Lessons from the school room

In this chapter I firstly set out some of the problems faced by practising teachers in relation to the academic field of futures studies and then clarify the educational rationale for developing a ‘futures perspective’ in the school curriculum. Whilst schools have a crucial role to play in helping young people think about the future what is actually possible and appropriate is dependent on children’s ages. I outline some of what is currently known about children and young people’s perceptions of the future and then give an example of how teachers and students who intend to be teachers can be introduced to these concerns. Finally I indicate some of the areas of futures education that require further research.

PROLOGUE

Teachers as professionals

All good futurists would probably like other professionals to be enthused about their field. This is because it seems self-evident to us that the insights from futures studies could be of benefit to most other academic fields. Wendell Bell (1997, p. xxi) thus argues that specialists in other disciplines would benefit from futurising their thinking and I would agree with this. Why, therefore, do I find social commentators generally and teachers in particular so uninformed about futures studies? I suspect Jim Dator (1998, p. 298) had the answer when he addressed readers of the *American Behavioural Scientist*:

... the chances are very good that ... you have never taken a course in futures studies; never met a person who teaches it at the university level; teach or study on a campus where futures studies is not offered; and probably associate *futures studies* (if the term means anything to you at all) either with astrology and charlatans or with Alvin Toffler, John Naisbitt, or Faith Popcorn ... Your most fundamental images of the future are almost certainly shaped primarily by films and videos you have seen.

This would certainly be true for most school teachers but it would also be reinforced by other forces relating to the professional context in which they work. Most teachers consider themselves to be first and foremost educators, that is, they feel they have an obligation to educate rather than proselytise. They thus feel it would be wrong to add things to the curriculum simply because other professionals feel they should and, anyway, the content of the curriculum may not be up for negotiation if the education system is a highly centralised one. Secondly, many

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teachers in industrialised countries have been suffering from ‘curriculum fatigue’ in particular as a result of neoliberal policies which have led to increasingly utilitarian and market driven forms of education. Thirdly, teachers may unwittingly resist innovative change because schools are but one of the many sites of cultural reproduction which reflect prevailing hegemonic forces. They, as well as their pupils, are often unable to think ‘outside the box’ whether socially or culturally, as Apple (1993) and Giroux (1992) have argued at length, or ecologically, as writers such as Orr (1994) and Bowers (1997) have argued. Western forms of education, whether as practised at home or exported, thus tend to reflect white, male, neoliberal views of the world (Apple, 2001)—and of the future (Milojević, 2002).

Children and Youth

If we believe that adults can benefit from the insights of futures studies in their personal lives, their work and their communities, then what they might or might not have learnt about futures in their youth and childhood needs to be of vital interest too. I use the term futures education, as against futures studies, to distinguish what may or may not go on in schools and formal education up to the age of 18. Whilst culture, ethnicity, gender and class will affect young people’s views of the future (as it also does for adults), what in particular affects them is the process of childhood socialisation and development.

How children conceptualise the future varies with age. In early childhood we are dealing with quite different notions of the future to those held by older children (Page, 2000). As they enter the middle years of schooling (7–14), children’s views begin to take on some aspects of adult understanding (Hicks & Holden, 1995) and these mature with age. Youth futures (15–25) have also been noted as a specific category differing in crucial ways from adult views (Gidley & Inayatullah, 2002). A range of important changes are thus taking place in youth and childhood which makes futures education a distinctly different enterprise to that of futures studies. How adults conceptualise the future is largely a result of what did, or did not, happen to them during this crucial formative period.

The Problem with Futures Studies

The problem with futures studies for teachers is that most of them will never have heard of it for the reasons given by Dator above. If they do come across the field, it appears to be an academic and research-based activity carried on in universities. This puts most teachers off because universities seem remote from their daily life in classrooms. The nature of futures studies is thus likely to be misunderstood and, even if understood, not seen as immediately useful to teachers in schools. There is nowhere I can point to at the moment in the UK as an example of good practice in futures education. Whilst the English Qualifications and Curriculum Authority has a Futures Programme (www.qca.org.uk/11232.html), on closer inspection this turns out to be primarily about the future of the curriculum and contains little that specifically helps teachers think more critically and creatively about a range of alternative futures, whether for society or education.

Many other issue-orientated academic fields *have* given rise to lively and innovative educational fields. Examples include global education, development education, environmental education, peace education, intercultural education. Whilst each maintains its own distinct identity, many see these fields as potential allies with overlapping interests. When educators refer by name to these issue-based educations what is generally missing, however, is any reference to futures studies or futures education. In other words, we have as yet to gain widespread credibility with natural educational allies. One of the few exceptions is Pike and Selby's (1999) model of global education which argues that the spatial and temporal dimensions of the curriculum are of equal importance.

FUTURES EDUCATION

Educational Rationale

Whilst 'futures education' or 'futures in education' are useful shorthand terms to designate the application of futures ideas to formal schooling and teacher training, it is important to recall that this is not generally part of the everyday vocabulary of teachers. They are more likely to talk about 'preparing children for the future' and, if urged to be more specific about the future in their teaching, would probably demand a clear educational rationale for this. This is an appropriate request for an educator to make and one that can easily be answered in the professional language of teachers as shown below in Table 1.

Table 1. Rationale for a futures dimension in the curriculum

<p><i>Pupil motivation</i> Pupil expectation about the future can affect behaviour in the present, e.g., that something is, or is not, worth working for. Clear images of desired personal goals can help stimulate motivation and achievement.</p> <p><i>Anticipating change</i> Anticipatory skills and flexibility of mind are important in times of rapid change. Such skills enable pupils to deal more effectively with uncertainty and to initiate, rather than merely respond to, change.</p> <p><i>Critical thinking</i> In weighing up information, considering trends and imagining alternatives, pupils will need to exercise reflective and critical thinking. This is often triggered by realising the contradictions between how the world is now and how one would like it to be.</p> <p><i>Clarifying values</i> All images of the future are underpinned by differing value assumptions about human nature and society. In a democratic society pupils need to be able to begin to identify such value judgements before they can themselves make appropriate choices between alternatives.</p> <p><i>Decision making</i> Becoming more aware of trends and events which are likely to influence one's future and investigating the possible consequences of one's actions on others in the</p>

future, leads to more thoughtful decision making in the present.

Creative imagination

One faculty that can contribute to, and which is particularly enhanced by, designing alternative futures is that of the creative imagination. Both this *and* critical thinking are needed to envision a range of preferable futures from the personal to the global.

A better world

It is important in a democratic society that pupils develop their sense of vision, particularly in relation to more just and sustainable futures. Such forward looking thinking is an essential ingredient in both the preserving and improving of society.

Responsible citizenship

Critical participation in democratic life leads to the development of political skills and thus more active and responsible citizenship. Future generations are then more likely to benefit, rather than lose, from decisions made today.

Aims of Futures Education

In exploring the elements of such a rationale with teachers it then becomes possible to talk about the need for a ‘futures dimension’ within the curriculum and the need for pupils to develop a ‘futures perspective’, i.e., the ability to think more critically and creatively about the future. The specific aims of futures education can be formulated as helping teachers and pupils to:

- develop a more future-orientated perspective both on their own lives and events in the wider world;
- identify and envision alternative futures which are just and sustainable;
- exercise critical thinking skills and the creative imagination more effectively;
- participate in more thoughtful and informed decision making in the present; and
- engage in active and responsible citizenship, both in the local, national and global community, and on behalf of present and future generations

Aims such as these are of interest to a wide range of educators concerned with subjects such as English, maths, science, technology, geography, history, modern languages, business studies and religious education. They are also of particular relevance to equal opportunities, multicultural education, and cross-curricular themes such as education for sustainability, citizenship, and personal and social education.

At the same time, discussion with teachers and teacher educators in various countries reveals that the future is largely a missing dimension within education. Gough’s (1990) investigation into the portrayal of futures in educational discourse is invaluable here. After examining a range of educational documents he identified three common types of reference to the future—tacit, token and taken—for-granted. *Tacit futures* are all those which are assumed and never brought out into the open. They remain hidden and unexplicated but nevertheless present. Thus the future may not even be mentioned in an educational document but assumptions about it are still tacitly present. *Token futures* often involve clichés and stereotypes presented in a rhetorical fashion. Gough (1990, p. 303) notes, “When one finds ‘the

future' (or a futures-oriented inference) in the title of an educational document it usually means much less than might be expected". *Taken-for-granted futures* occur whenever a particular future, or range of futures, is described as if there were no alternatives. Discussion of the future framed solely in terms of science and technology or work and leisure would be in this category.

Insights from Futures Studies

It is interesting to reflect on which insights and concepts from futures studies have been taken up by teachers and used in their work and also how they have been developed for use with children. Whilst the teaching materials available to schools are still relatively limited, it is nevertheless still possible to give some idea of the concepts that have been taken up. The following examples are fairly representative of responses over the last 25 years in Western education.

Amongst the concepts used in a seminal booklet from the US National Council for Social Studies (Fitch & Svengalis, 1979) are: possible, probable and preferable futures; utopian and dystopian writing; assumptions about time; scenarios; trend analysis; forecasting; cross-impact matrices; and futures wheels. Riley's (1989) resource book for teachers includes: possible, probable and preferable futures; trend extrapolation; futures wheels; Delphi technique; cross-impact matrices; scenarios; values and the future; imaging; and timelines. Pike and Selby's (1999) resource book on global education refers to: possible, probable and preferable futures; futures wheels; intergenerational justice; and sustainability. A resource book on citizenship education (Hicks, 2001) contains: images of the future; futures wheels; probable and preferable futures; rights of future generations; scenarios; and sustainable futures. Contributors to Gidley and Inayatullah's (2002) book on youth futures further confirm that a wide range of futures tools are being used with young people as does Slaughter and Bussey's *Futures Thinking for Social Foresight* (2006).

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE FUTURE

Understanding how children and young people develop their ideas about the future is crucial since it is from this formative period that adult perceptions emerge. The importance of futures education in schools lies in its capacity to challenge often unconscious processes. The literature on children and young people's views of the future has been growing slowly since the mid-90s and a flavour of this will be given under the headings primary, secondary and youth. (NB. Since 'secondary' encompasses 11–18 and 'youth' 15–25, there is an overlap between these two categories.) As you will notice the research still has a very Western bias so one should be cautious about generalising from this.

Primary Level

It is a common assumption amongst many teachers that younger pupils have little conception of issues in the wider world. However, Fountain (1990) points out that

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nursery and infant children (age 4–7) regularly: call each other names (prejudice); arbitrarily exclude others from their play (discrimination); argue over materials (resource distribution); protest that rules are not fair (human rights); quarrel and fight (peace and conflict); waste consumable materials (environmental awareness); find out that more can be accomplished by working together (interdependence). Issues that might initially be considered national or global are thus present in many classrooms and need to be recognised and worked with.

One of the few educators to explore how young children conceptualise the future is Australian early years specialist Jane Page (2000), who notes that futures educators generally ignore this age group. Her work with 4 and 5 year olds, however, shows that futures concepts are beginning to be developed at this age. The children she studied have a fundamentally different attitude towards the future, time and change than older children. Time is viewed purely in terms of the child's own activities, i.e., in four sleeps rather than four days time. They cannot understand that time exists independent of themselves, but there is a growing sense of progression beginning with notions of 'before' and 'after' and moving on to 'yesterday' and 'tomorrow'.

The 'future' means being older or things changing. There is a growing awareness of societal issues, for example the environment, war, music, places and events in the news. Thinking about the future at this age involves imaginative fantasy, past and future often get mixed up (they are both the 'not now'), and there is a great sense of control and freedom over the future in such play. Whilst this may seem idiosyncratic and unrealistic from an adult point of view, this is a vital developmental stage. Young children are developing positive feelings about their place in the future and their role in its creation and are more positive than older children about the future.

Whilst different levels of ability are found in conceptualising the future at 7–8, this is when initial manifestations of an 'adult' understanding of time begin to appear. Research by Hicks and Holden (1995) in England shows the emergence of an ability to think ahead and the realisation that the future may be something to work towards as well as something to be concerned about. Reality and fantasy may still sit side by side and children sometimes fear that their own area may be subject to violence and wars seen in other places on TV. There is a growing awareness of social and environmental issues and children are generally optimistic that the future will be better both for themselves and others. However, some think problems such as pollution and poverty may get worse. Boys often fear global disasters, for example the world exploding or aliens landing.

Secondary Level

Understandably, young people's concerns for the future tend to reflect current national and global events although these may change over time. In the 90s Hicks and Holden (1995) found that in relation to their personal futures English adolescents were concerned about getting a good job, having a good life, issues of health, good relationships and doing well at school. In relation to the futures of their local community they identified crime and violence, jobs and employment,

the range of amenities, and environmental threats as their main concerns. In terms of the global future, they were worried about issues of war and peace, environmental damage, poverty and hunger, and relationships between countries. Pessimism increased with age and most felt that they had not learnt enough about these issues at school.

Oscarsson's (1996) work with Swedish teenagers showed similar findings. A majority of pupils had a positive view of their own future, although many reported what he called 'uncertain optimism' in relation to work. Unemployment was seen as the main threat to their personal futures and, to a lesser extent, environmental problems. They had a less optimistic vision of Sweden's future, however, often expressing concern about economic conditions. Nearly two-thirds had a pessimistic view of the global future, particularly in relation to environmental issues and to a lesser extent warfare. Their views of the global future were more pessimistic than those of personal or Swedish futures. Brunstad's (2002) research in Norway and Rubin's (2000) in Finland echo some of these 'European' themes. Rubin also examines in some depth the relationship between young people's concerns and the wider socio-cultural context.

Hutchinson's (1996) work with Australian teenagers focused in particular on the nature of their probable and preferable futures. Their probable futures fell into six broad categories: i) an uncompassionate world (depersonalised and uncaring); ii) a physically violent world (with a high likelihood of war); iii) a divided world (between 'haves' and 'have-nots'); iv) a mechanised world (of often violent technological change); v) an environmentally unsustainable world (with continued degradation of the biosphere); and vi) a politically corrupt and deceitful world (where voting is a waste of time). Their preferable futures fell into four broad categories: i) technocratic dreaming (uncritical acceptance, especially amongst boys, of techno-fix solutions for all problems); ii) demilitarisation and greening (of science and technology to meet genuine human needs); iii) intergenerational equity (accepting responsibility for future generations); and iv) making peace (with people and planet via a reconceptualisation of both ethics and lifestyles). These are very powerful images for young people who said they had learnt little about futures in school.

Youth Futures

A most welcome addition to this comparative research is Gidley and Inayatullah's (2002) *Youth Futures* in which Eckersley (2002) has a chapter on Australian youth. He reports that the future most young Australians want is neither the future they expect, nor the future they are promised. Most do not expect Australian society to be better than today in 2010. They see a society driven by greed whilst what they would like is one motivated by generosity. Their dreams are for a society that places less emphasis on the individual, material wealth and competition, and more on community and family, the environment and co-operation. The belief that life would improve is a minority position and pessimism increases with age; those in their 20s are more negative than those in their teens. In an earlier account of this research, Eckersley (1999) concludes "Young people's preferred futures are

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undoubtedly idealised and utopian. Their significance lies in what they reveal about fundamental human needs ... and what they expect and what is being offered to them by world and national leaders”.

It is clear from the above that much of the existing research on young people and the future relates to Western societies so that, as yet, limited cross-cultural comparisons can be made. Research on youth futures is also, by definition, less likely to look at age differences than work done in schools. Two contrasting studies deal with Japan and Singapore. Wright (2002) examines the role of contemporary Japanese youth in challenging traditional values and argues that their ‘cool resistance’ may enable them to rewrite a future that has already been colonised by their parents’ culture. In a different vein, Oehlers (2002) explores how political and cultural pressures in Singapore have largely stifled any youth disaffection so that any debate about alternative futures is almost impossible.

TEACHER EDUCATION

A Global Dimension

For futures education to have a greater impact on schools it is clear that initial and on-going teacher education are crucial arenas to influence. The obstacles in teacher education, however, are likely to be similar to those in schools. I thus think it is tactically easier, in schools and teacher education, to get people thinking first about the need for a ‘global dimension’ in the curriculum (where are we now?) and then to go on to consider the need for a ‘futures perspective’ (what may happen as a consequence?). Thus, rather than starting with the future and explaining its importance in relation to the global issues in the present, one begins by looking at the state of the world in the present which automatically leads on to questions about the future (Hicks & Holden, 2007). What’s happening now will always be more tangible than what has yet to come. An example of this in terms of educational policy and practice comes from my own institution, Bath Spa University in the UK.

Traditionally, undergraduates training to be teachers in England used to take a degree which focused rather narrowly on the National Curriculum and the professional training of teachers. Increasingly, a number of universities have replaced this with a 3+1 route, i.e., a three-year degree (Education Studies as single honours or Education with a subject specialism as joint honours) followed by a one-year post-graduate Certificate in Education—which is where their professional training now occurs. Those who do this at Bath Spa are guaranteed a global perspective in their modular programme because it forms a key strand in the Education Studies degree. The School of Education specifically chose this strategy in order to bring breadth and depth back to the study of education.

Modules are arranged in three strands ~ A: Learning and curriculum; B: Teaching, settings and structures; C: Global and international. Education students have to choose modules from each of these groups, so all of them will have some understanding of the need for and nature of a global perspective. In their first year all students take a compulsory module entitled Education for Change which

explores three main themes: i) the nature and purposes of education; ii) the current state of the world; and iii) the need for a global and futures dimension in the curriculum. The ‘international’ modules explore the nature of education in different cultural settings. The ‘global’ modules focus on contemporary global issues and concerns. These include futures, citizenship, human rights, and sustainability.

A Futures Perspective

Table 2. ED2013 Education for the Future

<i>Description</i>
‘Futures in education’ is the shorthand term used internationally by educators who believe that one of the main tasks of education is to prepare young people for a future that will necessarily be very different from today. In the UK teachers are more likely to talk about ‘education for the future’ when they express this concern. This module will introduce you to the crucial need for a futures perspective in schools and the ways in which this can be used to enhance pupils’ learning. It will look at how young people feel about the future, locally and globally, and ways in which images of the future affect what we feel is worth doing in the present. It will explore the nature of both probable and preferable futures in the early 21st century and encourage you to think more critically and creatively about your personal and professional futures.
<i>Learning outcomes</i>
By the end of this module you should be able to:
Understand the need for a futures perspective in the curriculum
Think critically and creatively about futures related issues
Reflect critically on both the meaning and practice of futures education
Develop classroom activities that encourage futures-orientated thinking
<i>Outline programme</i>
Facing the future
Popular images of the future
Understanding futures studies
Whose futures?
The nature of futures education
A futures perspective (primary)
Young people’s views (secondary)
Envisioning preferable futures
The need for sustainable futures
Course review and evaluation

Each year around 25 second year students take module ED2013 Education for the Future. The time allowed for this module is a one-hour lecture and a two-hour seminar each week for 12 weeks. A flavour of the module is conveyed by the following details (Table 2).

EPILOGUE

Issues Arising

There are two quite different issues that I would like to raise here. The first is to do with the significance of what we are learning from the research and the second is procedural in the sense of how best to influence teachers and educational policy makers.

Whilst we now know more about *what* young people think about the future, we are only just beginning to engage with what that might *mean*. Eckersley (2002, p. 32) highlights the difficulties when he writes:

There is little doubt that many qualities that future fears might intuitively be expected to influence—hope, purpose and meaning in life, coherence, efficacy, or agency—are important to well-being. However, we may never be able to do more than suggest this because of the difficulty of disentangling concerns about the fate of the earth from the many other factors that influence these qualities, and hence well-being.

He further notes important qualifications to the belief that global pessimism might be eroding young people's well being. Firstly, the direction of any causal relationship between future pessimism and diminished well being can run two ways. Young people may feel pessimistic about the future because of their experience of the world now; at the same time, if depression levels are increasing in society then future visions are likely to become more pessimistic. Secondly, the wider research on well being shows that most people report satisfaction with their lives and that this is most influenced by family, work, friends and leisure. Thirdly, pessimism is only one of several cultural traits in modern Western society that are inimical to well being, including consumerism, deconstructive postmodernism and individualism.

Futures education has as yet to make a significant impact in schools despite a range of important initiatives instigated by committed educators in different countries (e.g., Gidley et al., 2004; Morgan, 2006). In this respect, unfortunately, I have to take issue with Slaughter (2002) who argues that there has been a shift from 'rhetoric to reality' in schools and that futures is emerging into the educational mainstream. The list, however, is still the 'usual suspects'—a handful of innovative educators in the US, Australia and the UK—but not yet a sea change in the wider educational system. One of my measures of this, as I mentioned earlier, is that futures education still seldom makes it into the list of 'issue-based educations' that socially committed educators around the world are conversant with.

Global education is an interesting case in point. It is an international educational field that has at least a 30 year history, its own professional organisations and publications, conferences, alliances, documents, agendas, official policies and curriculum frameworks (Oxfam, 2006; Pike, 2000; DfES, 2005). Most of this effort is aimed at primary and secondary schools and teacher education. If there are lessons here for futures education, it could be that it may take years of dedicated work before the need for a 'futures perspective' is as widely accepted as the need

for a 'global dimension' in the curriculum. This requires a younger generation of futures educators to be also involved in that struggle. An alternative, of course, is that futures educators should infiltrate other issue-based educations and ensure that they each contain a futures element (Hicks, 2004).

A good example of this can be found in environmental education, where a recent review of empirical studies of learners and learning (Rickinson, 2001) included a section on young people's views of the future. Conversely, I was intrigued to read a recent biography of Elise Boulding (Morrison, 2001) which was written in terms of her contribution to peace education and feminist research but made no reference to her vital work on futures. One of the most useful entry points for those educators interested in a 'futures perspective' could still be global education. Pike and Selby, influential theorists in this field, have long argued for a model of global education that contains four main elements: an issues dimension; a spatial dimension; a temporal dimension; and a process dimension. This model is described in Pike and Selby (1999) together with a range of practical classroom activities.

Research Needed

The field of futures education is still under-researched and there are many crucial issues and themes awaiting investigation. Even an initial list of basic research that needs to be done (Hicks, 2006) is quite a long one (see Table 3).

Table 3. Research needed in futures education

Images of the future

How do children conceptualise time and the future and how does this vary with age?

- How do children's views of the future vary by gender?
- How do children's views of the future vary by social class?
- How do children's views of the future vary by ethnic group?
- What is the nature of children's probable and preferred futures?
- What emerges from cross-cultural comparisons of the above?

NB. Views of the future could be broken down into personal, local, national and global.

Media influences on images

What images of the future are conveyed by children's books, comics and computer games?

What images of the future are conveyed by TV advertising?

What images of the future have been conveyed by popular movies over the last 25 years?

How do such images relate to issues of gender, age, class and Western culture?

Image and action

How do images of the future affect attitudes and behaviour in the present?

What determines reactive or proactive stances in relation to the future?

What changes in attitude and behaviour arise from extended futures-orientated work in a school or classroom?

What do teaching materials that encourage skills of participation and responsible action look like for different age groups?

Resources and policy

What do appropriate teaching materials look like for different subject areas and how can subject specialists be encouraged to develop them?

Which futures methodologies are most useful in the classroom and how can they be related to a range of other learning outcomes?

How can head teachers, school governors and parents be persuaded of the need for a futures dimension in the curriculum?

What educational bodies and which key players would need to be influenced in order to gain official backing for such a dimension in the curriculum?

This is in no way intended to be a complete list but it highlights a range of initial research possibilities.

And Finally

There is no clear body of opinion within mainstream education that understands or supports the need for a futures perspective in schools. It is still the domain of a loose international network of socially committed educators. Future steps that need to be taken could include the following:

- Creation internationally of a seed group of educators specifically committed to futures education, possibly as an offshoot of the World Futures Studies Federation.
- Creation nationally of networks of teachers and teacher educators committed to futures education.
- Setting up alliances, nationally and internationally, with colleagues working in global education, social education, education for sustainability.
- The development of teaching materials for different age groups and subject areas that embody the principles of futures education.
- Working with professional groups (e.g., teachers, head teachers, subject specialists) to incorporate a futures perspective in policy documents.
- Offering professional development programmes to schools, local authorities, curriculum development bodies and other national bodies.
- Identifying key players in education who need to be inducted into the principles and practice of futures education.
- Circulating nationally and internationally, via conferences and newsletters, examples of successful practice at all levels of education.

If official recognition of a global perspective in the UK is anything to go, by achieving the same for a futures perspective could yet take some time. Is there enough commitment internationally to attempt this? Who are the key players and where are they now? Who would be natural allies? What and where are the pressure points which need to be worked on? And how can the wider field of futures studies support those working in schools and teacher education to begin such a programme?

In discussing William Morris's great utopian novel, *News from Nowhere*, Coleman and O'Sullivan (1990, p.10) write:

Let us imagine that life is not as it is, but as it one day might be. Let us inspect the unknown terrain of the future, as if we are about to inhabit it ... the imagined future is a subversive force: the more who imagine a different kind of future, and imagine constructively, materially and determinedly, the more dangerous utopian dreams become. They grow from dreams to aims.

Morris, I suspect, would be delighted to know that in the early twenty-first century these concerns are still alive and at the heart of the academic field of futures studies—and futures education in schools.

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