

World Yearbook of Education 1998: Futures (1998)

David Hicks and Richard Slaughter (eds)

Introduction

The World Yearbook of Education 1998 takes up the topic of Futures Education. The book is arranged in three parts. *Part one* deals with the foundations of futures education. Here seven futurists from the USA, Canada and Australia consider themes such as: understanding the field of FS, the nature of global change, the knowledge base of FS, non-western perspectives, listening to future generations and feminist perspectives. *Part two* looks at the practice of futures education in a range of contexts from early childhood to post-graduate studies. With nine chapters, this is the heart of the book. It shows very clearly how futures education has taken a range of forms and approaches in different places. Yet it also coheres around a number of common themes. One of these forms the subject of *Part three*: educating for a sustainable future. Four chapters cover various aspects of this key theme from different national viewpoints.

Overall, this hardback may be the most substantive work on futures education yet published. Its price may be a deterrent for some. The book is, however, clearly pitched at university and college libraries where it will no doubt be accessible to a new generation of students and researchers. As such it is a useful addition to the somewhat sparse futures ed. literature. Our main concern is that, while academics and practitioners in schools will welcome and use such books, those who are responsible for running school systems are looking the other way. These systems give cause for grave concern because they are still operating according to the dictates of defective economics and short-term politics. Both de-focus 'the future' and lock educational institutions into a modus operandi that is still driven by the past and present and not at all responsive to the emerging and increasingly urgent challenges of the near-term future.

Hence this book will be welcomed by those who already see the point of re-orienting education to the future. But it will probably be ignored by those who presently wield executive power over increasingly redundant education systems. The social costs of this omission, and the costs to young people, are incalculable.

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