

# **Education for the Twenty First Century**

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**Foreword by the Hon. Barry Jones**

## **Introduction**

### **The Dimensions of Change**

Chapter One reviews the evidence for pessimism in the world and in education. In contrast to most educational writing (which focuses largely upon the *internal* functioning of educational systems) it locates the source of systemic problems in redundant aspects of the industrial worldview. It shows how education has been affected by e.g. economic rationality and reductionism. The chapter outlines the basis for a shift of emphasis away from the industrial worldview and its pessimism toward informed optimism and hope. It shows how a broad and constructive approach to education can be derived from a perspective which draws on different sources.

### **Industrialism and its Consequences**

Chapter two considers some of the major external changes which are leading us away from industrialism. It considers the nature of the post-industrial economy, new employment patterns and the new demands upon education. It places these considerations in the context of wider geo-political shifts such as the rise of the Pacific Rim. The role of information is examined and the question is raised as to whether this can legitimately be equated with wisdom.

### **Global Consciousness: The One World View**

Chapter three argues that global consciousness is a factor in the new world view. It suggests that higher awareness, critical thinking and foresight are supportive of global sensibility.

### **Beyond Scientific Materialism**

This chapter looks at the evidence for the emergence of a different worldview. It considers new insights in quantum science as well as some of the changes in cognitive and epistemological frameworks. It specifically examines some of the possible components of a hierarchical, non-instrumental paradigm of knowledge which is applicable to education.

### **What Will Become of Education?**

Immediate consequences include the following. The rejection of instrumental and reductionistic approaches. Better application of what we already know about schools. The

creation of school cultures which utilise some of the most fruitful symbols, metaphors, paradigms and myths. Finally, we consider schools as post-bureaucratic organisations.

### **The Shift from Past to Future**

The shift from a taken-for-granted immersion in the past and present toward the full implementation of a futures orientation is identified as crucial for education. The significance of futures *per se* and of futures concepts is explored. The origins of futures in education are considered. The chapter concludes with implementation issues and suggested guidelines for future development.

### **What Can I Do? Some Bridging Strategies**

This chapter begins with practical teaching/learning objectives. Ten general guidelines and six teaching strategies are given. Some relate to intangibles such as language, metaphors, imagery etc. Others involve the teaching of specific futures-related concepts, skills and capacities. All enable individuals to understand change and to feel empowered to take part in shaping it. There is also a strong emphasis on strategies for dealing with students' fears and concerns about futures. The Chapter ends by answering some common questions asked about futures and education.

### **Conclusion: The Promise of the Twenty First Century**

Finally, we look beyond the year 2000. Drawing together all the threads of the argument, we suggest that the shifts discussed above could enable Western culture to develop in a new direction according to a different dynamic and worldview. If some of the changes we have discussed above are taken up and implemented, they will help encourage a new flowering of individual and cultural possibility. This era could be truly *post*-industrial (in the sense of leaving behind the mistakes and dead ends of the industrial era). We propose a particular model of culture which educators can use as a conscious goal and an enabling image of the future. Instead of relying upon the baser laws of economic exchange and reductionistic enquiry, we look toward the most highly developed human capacities and understandings available to us through the Perennial Tradition. The new era could be known as the Age of Wisdom Culture.

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