



# Introduction

*Change is inevitable. Progress is optional.*

—Anonymous

Think about it: That energetic, inspired child who emerged from kindergarten in 2005 will graduate from high school in about 2017 and college in about 2021. That same student will likely celebrate a 90th birthday in 2090. Many members of the kindergarten class of 2005 will live beyond 2100, into the 22nd century. The average 2010 high school graduate will turn 65 in about 2057 and could confront 90 candles on a birthday cake in 2082. What's the conclusion here? The future is in school *today*.

None of us asked to be born at this time in history, but here we are. We are the first generations of people capable of destroying the world, and we may be the last generations who can save it. Much will depend on how we educate our people. Education is that important, and the future is coming at us at warp speed. There is no place to hide.

Forget the status quo. It has become a ticket to obsolescence. There is no more business as usual. We now realize that, in a fast-moving world, the organization, community, or country that unleashes the genius of its people through the best possible education will move forward at an unprecedented rate. Unfortunately, the organization, community, or country that does *not* unleash the genius of its people through the best possible education will fall backward at the same dizzying pace.

# The Leader as a Connected Generalist

*Too many of today's organizations are overmanaged and underled.*

—Warren Bennis (1998)

We all know the story. With only a hammer and chisel, the carver is intent, masterfully shaping a stone. An onlooker asks, “What are you doing?” Stopping for a moment, the carver eagerly replies, “I’m building a cathedral.” The carver could have said, “I’m chiseling a stone,” “I’m making a gargoyle,” or “I’m carving a stone for the west wall.” This artisan knew the stone had to be masterfully carved, but he also knew it was part of something even more majestic.

At its best, education is majestic, touching every aspect of human endeavor. That pervasiveness means that educators who hope to prepare their schools and their students for the future must be connected to the complex, fast-moving world around them.

Pursuing this noble and never-ending goal will require all the visionary leadership we can muster. Leading the process of developing a constantly evolving vision for education won’t be easy, but it’s sure to be the most exciting and important thing we could ever do.

Insightful leaders in education are the first to admit that a 20th century system may not be adequate to prepare students for life in the 21st century. Change is tough, but change may be less of an issue than deciding what we need to become. What are the characteristics of an education system that will groom students—in our community, in our country, in the world—for life in a global knowledge/information age?

# PART 2

## Tools and Techniques for Scanning the Environment

Future-focused leaders face what seems like a daunting task. They are expected to be constantly in touch with the environment—with trends, issues, and other forces that affect their organization, industry, or profession. Any one of those trends, issues, or forces will likely enhance or inhibit their progress or ultimate success.

Part 2 explores tools and techniques for reading the internal and external environment, from identifying and analyzing trends and issues to discovering gaps between where we are now and where we would like to be in the future.



## 4.1

## 16 Trends That Will Profoundly Affect Education and the Whole of Society in the 21st Century

**Note:** The symbol → indicates a clear, nearly unmitigated trend from one condition to the next, while ↔ indicates a trend that can be expected to develop or continue based on evidence and the reality that certain existing conditions are very likely unsustainable. In some cases, a tug is evident between current and future conditions.

1. **For the first time in history, the old will outnumber the young.**  
(Younger → Older) (Worldwide: Developed World: Younger → Older, Underdeveloped World: Older → Younger)
2. **Majorities will become minorities, creating ongoing challenges for social cohesion.**  
(Majority/Minority → Minority/Majority)  
(Worldwide: Diversity = Division ↔ Diversity = Enrichment)
3. **Social and intellectual capital will become economic drivers, intensifying competition for well-educated people.**  
(Industrial Age → Global Knowledge/Information Age)
4. **Standards and high-stakes tests will fuel a demand for personalization in an education system increasingly committed to lifelong human development.**  
(Standardization → Personalization)
5. **The Millennial Generation will insist on solutions to accumulated problems and injustices, while an emerging Generation E will call for equilibrium.**  
(Gs, Silents, Boomers, Xers → Millennials, Generation E)
6. **Continuous improvement and collaboration will replace quick fixes and defense of the status quo.**  
(Quick Fixes/Status Quo → Continuous Improvement)
7. **Technology will increase the speed of communication and the pace of advancement or decline.**  
(Atoms → Bits) (Macro → Micro → Nano → Subatomic)
8. **Release of human ingenuity will become a primary responsibility of education and society.**  
(Information Acquisition → Knowledge Creation and Breakthrough Thinking)
9. **Pressure will grow for society to prepare people for jobs and careers that may not currently exist.**  
(Career Preparation ↔ Career Adaptability)

<b>5.2</b>	<b>Probability/Impact Matrix for Setting Priorities</b>	
	← Probability →	Low
↑ Impact ↓ Low	High Impact High Probability  <i>Drivers</i>	High Impact Low Probability  <i>Possible drivers, wildcards</i>
	High Probability Low Impact  <i>Conventional expectations</i>	Low Probability Low Impact  <i>Inconsequential</i>
<p><i>Note: This matrix is based in part on concepts developed by Howard Chase (1984). The terms “drivers,” “possible drivers,” “wildcards,” “conventional expectations,” and “inconsequential issues” were part of a similar matrix used by Clem Bezold, Marsha Rhea, and Bill Rowley of the Institute for Alternative Futures in a presentation titled “Wiser Futures,” during a pre-conference session at the World Future Society annual conference in San Francisco, July 18, 2003.</i></p>		

If an issue is *high in impact but low in probability* (upper-right quadrant), you may want to keep a file and consider whether the issue might be emerging. It is important to note that although an issue may be low in probability, wildcards or unintended consequences can seem to come out of nowhere, triggered by an unexpected event, discovery, or the proverbial “straw that broke the camel’s back.” John Petersen, a noted futurist and founder of the Arlington Institute in Arlington, Virginia, suggests wildcards fall into one or more of six categories: natural disasters, biomedical developments, geopolitical or sociological changes, technology and infrastructure upheaval, surprise attacks, and spiritual/paranormal events. Specifically, wildcards could include the collapse of the U.S. dollar, a worldwide move toward a noncarbon economy, or a major disruption of the information system. By anticipating wildcards, you can consider what must, can, or should be addressed; what you might prepare for; what could happen without warning; and how possible wildcard events might be changed (Petersen, 1999, pp. i–iii, 36–37).