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Introduction

The purpose of this book is provide people in schools, teachers, parents and students, with an alternative strategy for improving the quality of education than the one that currently seems to be in vogue - that of parent choice and the market. The international research has indicated that recent reform activities have not been too successful, there is no evidence that they improve student learning for all students and there is starting to be evidence that they might diminish success, if improving the quality of education for all students is the criterion.

The alternative that we seek to propose is built on the recent research into school effectiveness and school improvement and is called the Third Millennium School. We seek to provide a rationale for its implementation, and describe both a changed focus and a changed scope for education and the processes necessary to bring this about. This book may cover some areas that are also of concern to other writers, but we would like to suggest that we differ from other books on the future of education in a couple of ways. The first is that all of the suggestions made in this book try to promote global learning, that is, to take issues, values and knowledge that are of concern to the international community and build them into the regular curriculum, and second, we are promoting proven strategies designed to engage students in their learning, that is, to move from the cycle of tell me, I forget and show me, I remember, and into the cycle of involve me, I understand. It is these two features, global thinking and engagement, that we believe are the core of learning in the Third Millennium and the issues that schools need to take seriously if we are to prepare young people for the future.

Y2K: A time for review

The turn of the millennium is perhaps the most interesting of times, for it gives us the opportunity to not only review the progress that has occurred in the decade of the 1990s, but also provides us with that broader perspective of what has happened in the 1900s and even progress through the whole millennium. Education has played a central role in shaping the events of the millennium, so it is of value for us to do such a review for education, and its most physical of manifestations, the school.

If we take a step backwards, a step away from the excitement and trauma of current restructuring efforts that are happening in all parts of the world, we can look at the progress made in education over the course of the second millennium. Then we can not only see the giant strides that have been taken in that time, but we can also see some trends that might help us to chart the way forward. For instance, it is possible to look at the progress of education in various ways. First, we might consider the focus of education at various times during the millennium. This provides us with an understanding of the purpose of education and who was involved in its development and delivery.



Chapter 1:

Third millennium schools: a new way of reforming education

There are two ways of getting to the future: We can either let someone else shape it for us or we can take part in its construction ourselves.

Responding to rapid change: Future shock?

In recent times education systems around the world have recognised the need for schools to change the way in which they went about their task. If we look at human history, it will not take us long to discover at least two things have been the dominant shapers of recent society.

First, human progress never seems to stop and it seems to be happening at an ever-increasing rate. Toffler introduces the book *Future Shock* by saying 'This is a book about what happens to people when they are overwhelmed by change. It is about the ways in which we adapt - or fail to adapt - to the future' (Toffler: 1971: 1). 'Future Shock' was a term that Toffler had coined in 1965 'to describe the shattering stress and disorientation that we induce in individuals by subjecting them to too much change in too short a time' (Toffler: 1971: 2). Perhaps the most interesting fact about *Future Shock*, is that it is now nearly thirty years old. Two generations of students have passed through school since the book was written, yet it could be argued that we have done little to address the issues that Toffler identified. Yet we can list many things that we now have to deal with that we didn't even think about in 1971, mobile phones, personal computers, heroin, crack and a variety of other drugs currently abused by large numbers of young people, the Internet, AIDS, the fall of the Berlin wall, terms such as 'ethnic cleansing', mass shootings in schools and public places, are just a few.

Perhaps the most pervasive of these rapid changes is the change in technology. Yet technology is a double-edged sword. Technology might be seen as having a positive influence in the sense that it enables many services to be delivered cheaply and efficiently, but it can also be seen as having a negative effect in the sense that it has dislocated many workers whose jobs were replaced because of that technology. This 'good news-bad news' factor is perhaps best characterised by the concern about the change from the old to the new millennium, where not only will increasing advances in technology lead us to the development of the information age, virtual schools and, possibly, virtual everything else, but it has also brought with it the potential seeds of destruction with the unknowns surrounding the Millennium Bug.



Two examples of how the speed of change has quickened are provided, that of flight and that of communication. What is obvious in both examples is that it took humans around a hundred years to move from a non-powered to a powered approach, but in the hundred years since that first major development, there have been many changes that have come in increasingly shorter times.

Flight

Event	Year	Years Ago	Generations Ago
First Balloon	1784	216	7.2
Zepplin	1900	100	3.3
Powered Flight	1903	97	3.2
First Jet Flight	1942	58	1.9
First Space Flight	1957	45	1.5
Man on Moon	1969	31	1.0
Reusable Spacecraft	1977	23	0.8

Communication

Event	Year	Years Ago	Generations Ago
Wired Telegraph	1784	216	7.1
Wireless Telegraph	1891	109	3.5
First Radio Program	1906	93	3.1
First Colour TV	1928	72	2.3
First Computer	1942	58	2.0
TransAtlantic Telephone	1956	44	1.5
Home computers	1976	24	0.8
Home Video recorders	1979	21	0.7
CD-Rom	1990	10	0.3
World-Wide Web/Internet	1994	6	0.2

The second major element that has affected our lives in recent times is the emerging globalisation of the economy, which has changed the way in which we think about ourselves and the world. It is no longer possible to shelter a particular country from the international marketplace. The economic, environmental or political decisions made in one country affect many others in turn. Again this is a double-edged sword. The global economy could be seen as having a positive influence in that it has opened up new markets, previously unattainable, and has generally lowered the prices of services and goods to consumers, but can also be seen as having a negative influence because of the potential for leading to what Martin and Schumann (1997) call a '20:80 society'. In this scenario, '20 per cent of the population will suffice to keep the world economy going and the unemployed 80 per cent will be pacified by the modern equivalent of bread and circuses but without nearly so much bread'. Townsend and Walker (1998) argued that eighty percent of the Australian population were worse off financially in 1996 than they were in 1983. Given that this is likely to be the case in many other western countries as well, the world may well be moving towards this scenario.