

Small Structure

The futurists believe that schools are too big, even high schools. In education, large size is a problem, not an

economic cost benefit. Some authors suggest that schools should be modeled more after the family than after big business, with its overattention to

economies of scale (Burdin and Nutter 1984). Ravitch (1983, p. 320) writes that

unlike some present schools, which are as vast and impersonal as factories, the school of the future should be modeled on a family, here, caring, knowledgeable adults would guide and instruct young people—and each person would be special.

Several authors predict that schools will become smaller in order to combat alienation and violence (McDaniel 1974, Suppes 1975, Cornish 1986). (For additional information about the desirability of small- or appropriate-scale education, see also Henson and Balentine 1984, Combs 1981, Small 1981, Shane 1980.)

Curriculum for the New Millennium

LeRoy E. Hay and Arthur Roberts

"Curriculum for the New Millennium: Trends Shaping Our Schools," a position paper published by Connecticut ASCD, identifies 10 trends that will affect the curriculum and its delivery as we move toward the year 2001.

The report was written by a committee that included classroom teachers (kindergarten through university level), building and district administrators, and representatives of service agencies and boards of education. The committee began by generating a list of trends that will affect schools by the start of the 21st century. They then researched the possible consequences of each trend. For over a year, they discussed the trends and their impact on schools, until the 10 most significant trends emerged:

- The world of work will be characterized by a continued shift from an industrial work force to an information and service work force. Technology will play a major role in almost all segments of the work force. Tomorrow's workers will need skills and attitudes different from those of today's workers.
- Technology will become even more powerful, convenient, and complex.
- The population that the educational system will serve will be quite different from today's population. It will be more ethnic and paradoxically both younger and older.
- The world will continue to become more globally interdependent.
- The American family will continue to be diverse. No single family type will represent the majority of Americans.
- Our society will demand an even more convenient lifestyle, expecting all institutions to deliver their services with ease and speed.
- The locus of control in education will continue to shift from the federal to the state level and from the central office to the building level. Decision making within school districts will be shared more with teachers.
- A shortage of qualified teachers and administrators will necessitate alternative approaches to training, recruiting, and certifying professional educators.
- Alternatives to public education will continue to grow in popularity and to gain public support.
- The number, frequency, and complexity of values questions confronting educators will increase dramatically.

For each trend, the report predicts consequences and lists possible effects on the curriculum and its delivery. For example, the "Age of Convenience" trend projects that teenagers will join the work force at earlier ages and will work longer hours; as a result, educators will rethink school schedules and the role of homework.

The 32-page report is available for \$7.00 from Edward H. Bourque, Assistant Superintendent, Fairfield Public Schools, Fairfield, CT 06430; (203) 255-8372.

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Awareness and Action

The future will arrive ahead of schedule. By considering the futurists' recommendations for change, perhaps we can restructure education before it is too late. With proper future-oriented pedagogical, curricular, and organizational changes, we can help students meet the challenges of new ages. □

¹I reviewed 209 documents published between 1974 and 1987. A total of 2,223 themes (for example, "Future students need advanced reasoning skills") were recorded in a computerized data base. I then reanalyzed and combined them into 53 categories using the constant comparative method (Glaser and Strauss 1967).

References

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