Sustainable Education: Policy in Search of a New Language

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This paper falls into four sections the first examines aspects of the restructuring movement in Australia. The second looks at moves within the Australian state of Queensland to develop a new language to describe the purposes of schooling. The third section examines possibilities for deepening and broadening this language in order to facilitate ever more sustainable learning structures. The fourth section takes the concept of sustainability as a layered reality that offers an holistic interpretation of human action. The argument throughout is that policy is in search of new categories to describe human activity and thus generate healthy and effective human systems. To do this we need to approach all activity from a layered stance that incorporates a variety of discourse simultaneously to enable administrators and teachers to begin to understand the environment within which a more sustainable futures-oriented learning culture can take root and thrive.

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"If we are to engage in discourse about transforming schools, then we must move beyond both superficial reforms and structural arrangements. Working at the core of school change requires us to address the value commitments that under-gird schools in our society. Only within this context can we determine if we are truly making substantive rather than ameliorative changes in the ways children learn and teachers teach."(Goodman 1995)

In this statement educational historian Jesse Goodman is situating the terrain for policy makers in the coming century within a discourse of value purposive, as opposed to managerial, restructuring. It is as if he were saying to schools and those who run them: "Know thy self!" Such an injunction is the challenge we face in our attempts to grapple with the human dimension of education, for how we see ourselves does determine how we chose to educate. Still, there is no better or more decisive a time to engage with such big questions than now, as our civilization has reached a point at which continued abuse of our physical and human environment is becoming increasingly unsustainable.

Hope, as educational futurist Dave Hicks reminds us, is what we build on when we tackle the issues of how to build sustainable pathways into the future(Hicks 1998:227). It is for this reason that sustainable educator Stephen Sterling observes:

"It may be optimistic to expect education to engage with and contribute towards resolving the modern crisis when mainstream culture and values, of which education is both parent and child, largely makes an inadequate response. Nevertheless, it is increasingly clear that, in the closing years of the twentieth century, an education that carries on its traditional role of replicating a modernist - or even restructured modernist - society unquestioningly is no longer appropriate, and that we urgently need to find new models and approaches from which to build while retaining continuity with existing good practice."(Sterling 1996: 21)

For well over a decade now Australian governments have been in the grip of a restructuring mania. Education has been a particular focus of successive state government's desire to somehow 'get it right'. The commitment to restructuring has been apolitical(Grungy and Bonser 1997) and is driven by varying degrees of recognition that our current mode of organization is having a negative impact on the social and physical environment. Both sides of the political spectrum have been in agreement on this as they seek solutions to the problem of how to best prepare our children for a future that is marked by intensification and volatility(Dwyer 2000: 161).

This shift in focus within society is making it necessary for systems to reinvent themselves. In order to accommodate change within education the shift requires less emphasis on tradition: the classics, defined subject areas, hierarchic managerial structures, etc.; and a move to situate the educational enterprise within a culture focused on continuity: values and broad interdisciplinary cognitive skills, and more inclusive, open organizational structures. In this way the past can be carried into the future along more flexible and creative pathways.

A Look at Restructuring and Sustainability

Educational researcher Kaye Schofield has observed that:

from all the evidence, ... the status quo is unsustainable. Tinkering with the shell called school will not be enough to prepare young people for a good adult life in the new century. (Schofield 2001)

Schofield's brief here was to examine the current perceptions of major community stakeholders within the Australian state of Queensland in order to establish the criteria for a policy of restructuring that would make substantive changes to the way children learn and society teaches. In the face of the unsustainable, deep changes are certainly required yet the concept of sustainability itself is ambiguous.

The shape of policy depends on how terms like sustainability are understood. For instance John Huckle describes how the concept sustainable development is torn by a 'core contradiction' between weak and strong interpretations. "In its weak mode [sustainable development] represents an emerging mode of regulation, involving forms of techno-managerialism, via which capital seeks to ensure a continued supply of the means and conditions of production on its own terms while maintaining the support of the majority of voters. In its strong form it represents a revised form of self reliant community development which sustains people's livelihoods using appropriate technology."(Huckle 1996)

The shape of restructuring has been different in Australia's states and territories but can be understood, as Grundy and Bonser observe as " a discourse, through which...'certain possibilities for thought are constructed'". How these possibilities evolve, how language is deployed, is determined by whether the stakeholders in each state's educational enterprise are committed to weaker or stronger interpretations of sustainability.

Values

David Wright, an Australian non-state school principal of more than forty years, recently observed in his retirement speech:

In how we school, in the outcomes we set for our children, we indicate what matters most to us, we lay bare our essential societal value system. (Wright 2001: 14)

The fervor to restructure draws its energy and direction from an array of competing discourses that reflect aspects of a societal value system that is 'up for grabs'. There is no longer a monolithic 'Truth' that holds society to a single direction(Postman 1996). Human organizations are coming to reflect this loss of certainty and are seeking to reinvent themselves in order to better reflect the values and skills needed to survive in changing times.

It is for this reason that we can trace the emergence of a new language of possibility within the attempts to restructure and thus cope with our volatile environment. Terms such as 'life long learning', 'learning institution', 'social cohesion', 'inclusiveness' and 'sustainability' are representative of this shift in consciousness. They are abstract and flexible terms, describing loose knit coalitions of values that represent a shift from individual dominance to interdependence (Schofield 2001: 25).

A Radical Imperative

Globally there is a sense of urgency in the restructuring of education. For Stephen Sterling this takes the form of "a radical imperative to achieve a socially, economically and ecologically sustainable basis within a historically short time..."(Sterling 1996: 18) Education, in all its forms, has a central role to play in how we respond to this imperative.

The 1992 United Nations Conference of Environment and Development's (UNCED) document Agenda 21, chapter 36.3, focusing on education for sustainability, put it like this:

Education is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of the people to address environment and development issues.... It is also critical for achieving environmental and ethical awareness, values and attitudes, skills and behavior consistent with sustainable devel-

opment and for effective public participation in decision-making. To be effective, environment and development education should deal with the dynamics of both the physical/biological and socio-economic environment and human (which may include spiritual) development, should be integrated in all disciplines...[1]

The shift here is away from the concrete enskilling of future generations with basic levels in numeracy and literacy, to a more expanded focus on the development of a value base that will allow for engagement with the forces at work on our society and environment in positive and sustaining ways.

2010: A Case in Point

Within the discourses of both restructuring and sustainability there has been a convergence in an innovative yet pragmatic policy initiative from an Australian state. Education Queensland has released *2010: Queensland State Education.*[2]

The imagination and daring of the document is a tribute to its writers. As policy it is a visionary document describing feasible and pragmatic arenas for systemic renewal. In attempting this, it illustrates the difficulties faced by a system that has been deeply at odds with itself for over a century, when it tries to implement change from within. The tensions, as attested to by Sterling above, that emerge when humanism meets managerialism head on reveal the true forum of struggle, in the realm of ideology and episteme, which has for so long dramatically distorted educational processes in the West.

A reading of the *2010* document reveals its links with the deeper paradigm shift described in the references from Sterling and Goodman and further elaborated by Schofield. It is a document clearly in line with the socio-economic aspirations and values (equity, democratic access, inclusivity) brought to international attention at the1992 UNCED conference at Rio and comprehensively outlined in Agenda 21.

The Public Good

While being this, *2010* is also a document clearly focused on what educational philosopher Brian Caldwell calls the 'public good'. In being so, it clearly has its feet on the ground. In his analysis of policy and re-

structuring in Australia Caldwell identifies a shift to 'a new paradigm for public policy' at the heart of which lie the five fundamental values of liberty, equality, fraternity, efficiency and economic growth(Caldwell 1999: 261).

Caldwell's analysis of education policy defines the public good as being a commitment to public resources, curriculum and standards frameworks, and accountability mechanisms, combined with a considerable degree of self management when it comes to allocation of resources and the quest for individual excellence for individual students(Caldwell 1999: 268). These features are to be found in the *2010* document along with the emergence of a new language to describe the state's priorities for education.

Augmenting Meaning

At the creative heart of *2010* lies the concept of the New Basics. Here we find the popular concept of 'the basics', the slogan of popular authoritarianism for more than fifty years, turned on its head. These new 'basics' focus on "four new areas of interdisciplinary learning:

> Life pathways and social futures
> Communications media
> Critical citizenship
> Environment and technologies."(Caldwell 1999: 15)

These principles build on the traditional three R's and are situated in what is described as 'quality schools'. Essentially the writers set out to "rebuild a new consensus"(Schofield 2001) by bringing within the State's educational project a set of values more in keeping with the perceived needs of a society in flux. These needs have been arrived at through a futures scanning process that used community and peak body consultation (Schofield 2001) to identify five areas of challenge in the social arena:

> Changes to Family
> Life in a cultural melting pot
> Economic change
> Emergent information technology
> A new role for government(Schofield 2001: 4-8)

The policy tacitly acknowledges that continuity, which is central to the efficacy of any educational shift in a time of change, needs to be reflected in language that augments popular meaning but is clear and sensible. In this way a new consensus can be achieved.

The New Consensus

Central to a new consensus is the ability to foster a learning and systems environment that is flexible and responsive enough to resolve the tensions inherent in the system. Of note is the fact that the values promoted in *2010* fall within Caldwell's five core values that define the paradigm of the public good:

> Liberty: Choice, democratic and tolerant schools, community involvement, flexible networks that engage business.
> Equality: Equal opportunity of access, breadth and diversity maintained through enrolment share, resource allocation, and access to IT.
> Fraternity: Inclusivity, needs based content, new learning pathways to year 12.
> Efficiency: cooperation between government agencies, full accountability.
> Economic growth: Foundations of a skilled work force(Schofield 2001: 13), school partnerships with business.

The central curricular vehicle for achieving these new priorities is the New Basics. These are described as "essential areas of learning - critical thinking, problem solving and life long learning" over the four areas of life pathways and social futures, communications media, critical citizenship, and environment and technologies(Schofield 2001: 15).

A Necessary Tension

This document clearly indicates how ideology is being played out in the arena of policy. At the heart of this consensus lies a compromise between the managerial and industrial modes of educational production and the liberatory humanist quest for the intellectual and structural flexibility to accommodate change. If there is a loser in this pact it is the classical humanist commitment to subject purity that is giving way to a transdisciplinary curriculum.

As the British philosopher Michael Fielding describes in his work, based on the mid-twentieth century Scottish philosopher John Macmurray, policy tends to fall into the areas of the functional and the personal. The functional is the societal or macro stage in which policy is written and ideologies seek to generate a hegemonic world-view. The personal operates at the communal and offers an intimate micro-climate within which societal images are generated and over-thrown.

These two domains operate within the *2010* document as two sides of the one coin and offer a creative and necessary tension "between such things as school effectiveness and transformative education, between school as learning organization and school as learning community, between teaching as a technical undertaking and teaching as a personal encounter."(Fielding 2000: 401) This dichotomy is also found in the values described by Caldwell in which those of liberty, equality and fraternity can be associated with the personal and those of efficiency and economic growth are clearly more aligned with the functional.

It has been the tendency of humanism in both its classical and liberatory modes to associate more with the personal while the modernist managerialist approach has clearly aligned with the functional. Thus we can see the New Basics as a largely humanist inspired answer to the functionality of the narrowly applied basics of the traditional 3 R's. The functional is present in the guise of state accountability, testing for standards and the role of central bureaucracy and the minister in the distribution of resources and the facilitation of networks between various departments with an interest in education.

Fielding is concerned about the retreat from the personal in his context of the English restructuring of education under Thatcher and more recently New Labor. This retreat is not found in the *2010* document with its focus on access and the New Basics. Central to these is the intention to enlarge the social capital of Australian society(Schofield 2001: 27ff). Here we have a move towards rather than away from the personal.

Missed Opportunity

In its focus on social capital and the public good *2010* is certainly offering a revolutionary reinterpretation of the purpose and nature of education. Yet in restricting the domain of *2010* to the social the authors have missed the opportunity to expand the educational debate into a fuller engagement with issues of sustainability and environment and what it means to educate the whole person. Obviously there is the potential for critical literacy to bring up questions of sustainability and the environment. These are implicit within the *2010* vision but it is revealing that such critical issues lie dormant within an otherwise bold document.

In this oversight the authors of *2010* miss a key opportunity to engage with an issue of unparalleled relevance to the public good and the future condition of personal and functional space. One is left to ponder why this

oversight occurred. Does it lie in the pragmatic nature of a document that seeks to balance the visionary with the practical? Or, is it due to a narrow understanding of education that is limited by the state's anachronistic secularist stance that discounts the inner life: the emotional and spiritual; which was tentatively included in Agenda 21? It could also lie in the desire to avoid an area of ambiguity within the state and the public sphere where a term like 'sustainable' is so deeply contested that it is better to allow it in the 'back door' by allowing schools and their communities to negotiate for sustainable educational practices that reflect the dominant values and aspirations of the community in sustainable ways?

What is clear however is that the *2010* document makes considerable progress in developing and articulating a new set of educational priorities based on values that expand the narrowly functional 'basics' that have dominated the school landscape for a century. To do this we see the emergence of a new and subtler language to describe learning and all the support structures that accompany it. The New Basics are a most sophisticated example of this reorientation of language.

Pathways to the Poetic

What is to be looked for now, is a further expansion of the language of learning to embrace, what David Wright terms, the poetic. In this way we can make room for mystery and what Wright acknowledges as the "view that, at the limit, little is knowable."(Wright 2001: 14)

At this point we reach the 'frontier' of education, a place in which, I am sure, the New Basics would be at home, if institutional constraints could be overcome. As individuals and groups flee mainstream educational options they find they are having to chart new territories. A look at the statistics on American homeschoolers underscores this fact. Educational activist and spokesman Bill Ellis recently summarized the situation this way:

> *In 1980 there were perhaps some 12,000 homeschoolers. From 1990 to 1998 homeschooling grew from 300,000 students to some 1.5 million. At this rate of growth, nearly 20% a year, the 1.5% of American children now homeschooled will grow to 24% in 10 years(Ellis(ed.) 2000).*

Similar shifts, in which consummers vote with their feet, are also evident in other Western countries. This journey includes an exploration of

learning, community, family, relationship and, for many, spirituality. This is a place of risk taking and personal commitment, as people place themselves and their children on the line. There are dead ends and scoundrels galore but there are also great rewards as people come to recognize that there are greater possibilities to be had outside of the regular houses of learning.

Whether Education Queensland has a place in this brave new world is unclear. What is obvious though is that to exist in such a space would require the transformation of both the industrial and humanist modes of thought, to allow for the flexibility called for to transcend the structural and personal constraints that lie fossilized within modern educational bureaucracy. Education in a future that has successfully negotiated these waters, may or may not be located in schools as we know them. However learning takes place, its main aim would be an extension of the Humanist liberatory project, which seeks to free individuals and communities from the narrow sentiments that cap human potential, and therefore happiness.

A Neo-Humanist Agenda

Such an extension calls for a new language that is both poetic and practical, carrying both personal and utilitarian relevance. Indian philosopher P. R. Sarkar has called this move beyond humanism neo-humanism, or the new humanism. Neo-humanism offers a layered analysis of human activity that allows for new categories like microvita to become relevant in our quest to understand and alter human activity. Such a development, which has at its root a radical shift from an episteme rooted in Greek empiricism and Enlightenment rationalism, to a spiritually activated and meditative empiricism based on the Indic tradition of Tantra, allows us to generate a neo-humanistic project which carries the threads of:

- liberatory consciousness gained through the exercise of critical futures techniques and a critically spiritual mentality
- transformative practices that work on individuals and communities through engagement with service as the core of life long learning
- an ecological awareness gained through the identification of the self with the world we inhabit
- an ethical sensibility born of life affirming relationships that are free from commodification and conditionality

- an awareness that consciousness is subtle and to engage with ones' own consciousness is also to engage with others at a meta level where myth and dreaming become the constant backdrop to human activity
- an appreciation of layered knowing which accounts for learning as a non-linear and synthetic experience

This really is the 'frontier' of a process of education that is truly sustainable as we enter an age of global imperatives that will determine the quality of life for countless future generations.

Towards a Vertical Analysis

Neo-humanism is a critically spiritual sensibility (Bussey 2000: 21-35) that takes educational debate as presented by the writers of *2010* from the layer of social policy focused on increasing a state's social capital,

into deeper areas of meaning making. These layers are best presented by futurist Sohail Inayatullah's causal layered analysis(Inayatullah 1998: 815-829).

This method provides a vertical analysis of human activity that roots meaning in global ethics instead of restricting our questioning to horizontal analyses that take no account of related forces beyond the permit of the area under examination. In this way we can see that the *2010* document, with its focus on social capital, misses the opportunity to engage with issues of human agency and thus will struggle in the face of both bureaucratic inertia and human commitment to its aims.

Essentially policy, focusing as it does on the structural, has always tended to overlook the human need to believe in something beyond themselves. It has failed to address what Sarkar calls "the longing for the great"(Sarkar 1978: 101), Wright has referred to as "the mystery of life" (Wright 2001: 18), and theologian Matthew Fox describes as "awe"(Fox 1997: 172). Such things cannot be measured within the ambit of narrow social discourse, but have very powerful intellectual, emotional and ethical ramifications for individuals. In fact physical health of state employees could be greatly improved if more attention were paid to such categories (Pirotta et al. 2000: 105-109).

Mystery is alive and well(Eisler 2001: 10-12) and we need to explore pathways to enable us to embrace this powerful force within the practical arenas of life. To do this, is to enable humanity as a species to engage in what social theorist Riane Eisler calls "meaningful evolution". Eisler

stresses the fact "that what we do in this life time is meaningful because it advances the evolution of our species and fulfills our responsibilities to this planet."(Eisler 2001: 10) *2010* moves some way towards making both the means and aims of education meaningful. I certainly felt excited reading it and recognize it to be an important step towards the widening of the educational debate. The humanist economics inherent in the concept of social capital however, fails to engage people in their hearts. To do this will require a further expansion of language to include new categories of meaning and behavior.

CLA situates social discourse close to the surface of analysis, just below litany, as it fails to contest layers of structure and myth that sustain the current system. Until it can do so by offering an alternative to powerful metaphors such as the machine or the factory, change will be hard to enact. To reach this point we must go in search of alternative metaphors to describe how we can engage in social organization. For instance ecology, the living world around us, provides us with a rich metaphor for describing human activity. It is inter-connective, interactive, ever shifting, responsive and holistic. It offers us an image of sustainability while also acknowledging that things change and that an ending is only the opportunity for another beginning.

Through the Looking Glass

To return to the opening focus of this essay we need to appreciate that society is urgently trying to understand why its systems of organization are no longer adequate to the task of generating meaning and sustainable pathways into the future. I have argued that the kind of radical intervention that Sterling suggests is needed at this time of crisis can be achieved through the application of a layered analysis to the problems we face. Such an analysis enables us to gather information, discover connections and relationships, and enact solutions across categories that have previously been regarded as inviolate.

It is as if we have joined Alice and fallen through the looking glass only to find the world not upside down at all! CLA creates the space for us to legitimately explore language in search of the possible. This is in part at least the function of restructuring. Thus we find a document like *2010* that offers us a new category like the New Basics. Each addition greatly broadens the search for meaning and has great liberatory relevance for policy and its object of attention: the education system.

In the last section of this essay I want to explore a layered interpretation of sustainability that allows for multiple readings of the concept to occur simultaneously. In doing so I will be offering an approach to critical pedagogy that is imbedded in a spiritual rationality that takes mystery as its starting point. The implications for policy will be two fold:
- Policy need not confine itself to narrow readings of social organization to be relevant to the current crisis
- Educational responses to this crisis will only be truly effective when the whole human being, not just the social, is included in the educational enterprise

Layered Sustainability

The route to sustainable education lies through an appreciation of sustainability at many layers of human action. No one layer can be said to have priority over another, being interconnected in an ecology of being that only in its entirety can be said to be sustainable. This is true because sustainability in any limited sense can only ever equal stasis, which ultimately leads to stagnancy. Physical and intellectual sustainability are needed to organize human activity, ethical and emotional sustainability are required to give this activity coherence, while spiritual sustainability is needed to give the whole process purpose and direction.

1: Physical Sustainability
Physical sustainability is that aspect of sustainability most commonly referred to by the media and politicians. Such a discourse is rooted in the Malthusian concept of crisis and is driven by the managerialist agenda of getting the most out of a resource without degrading the source to such an extent that it is no longer productive. We need to move beyond such a limited construction to explore issues of deep ecology and environmental renewal. Sustainability at the physical level should never be equated with maintenance. Such a position goes against the human drive to expand: it is a drive shared by all living things. Sustainable educational activities need to focus on deepening our individual and collective consciousness of the interconnectedness of all things and the physical practices needed to foster this awareness and ensure both the human and natural environments remain healthy.

2: Intellectual Sustainability
Intellectual sustainability focuses on the ideologies that underpin

action. It is about developing the psychic 'software' that helps us construct the critical sensibility that leads to effectively sustainable actions on the physical level. Neo-humanism is one coherent philosophical expression of this emergent sensibility as it embraces areas traditionally left out of intellectual discourse, which has tended to be grounded on Enlightenment empiricism and humanist rationality. Intellectual sustainability needs to incorporate mystery into its discourse so as not to ignore the human need for a positive acknowledgement of the indefinable within human activity. Such a shift towards a spiritual rationality has direct implications for both the ethical and emotional dimensions of human existence.

3: Ethical Sustainability

Ethical sustainability has its roots in the spiritual rationality that emerges from intellectually sustainable activity. Paradox will never be removed from life, indeed it is a necessary and creative element of our existence, but ethical discrimination will bring coherence and vision to both the intellectual and physical spheres of educational activity. In this way it will protect the heart from the stresses such paradoxes necessarily create. Ethical sustainability is the coherent application of intellectually sustainable rationality based on benevolence born of an appreciation of our relationship, both in time and across time, with the world both at an individual and collective level of action. Thus social 'knowing', as Lester Milbrath describes it, becomes an ethically centred activity which can generate physically sustainable practices."(Milbrath 1996: 191) The awareness of relationship can also be further extended through the application of a futures sensibility that gives rise to inter-generational ethics. In this way we come to feel our connections not just within time but also across it. Ethical sustainability is a central feature of educationally sustainable practice as it builds into learning, the awareness and deep appreciation of how relationship and its concomitant, responsibility, lead to the correct application of intellect for the greater welfare instead of for short term individual goals.

4: Emotional Sustainability

Emotional sustainability is becoming increasingly a priority in education as the most developed societies are suffering increasingly high levels of alienation and despair. Youth suicide rates are high and directly correlate to high stress levels at school and a pervasive sense of meaninglessness (Males 1999).[3] Materialism and consumerism are proving to be inadequate sources of hope for young people, whose essential need is for inspiration

and a sustaining wisdom culture. Sustainable educational practice has as a central tenet the evoking of inspiration and hope so as to create emotionally sustainable learning cultures which privilege relationships and purposeful engagement with learning over simplistic outcomes based teaching. Emotional sustainability is directly related to the long-term life chances of our youth. To tackle this issue squarely is to really begin to engage with education as a purposeful building of human beings with emotional strength and maturity.

5: *Spiritual Sustainability*

Spiritual sustainability is foundational to the concept of sustainability as it supplies a sense of meaning and purpose to all human activity. By embracing mystery and offering a deep sense of interconnection through meditative and reflective practices spiritual sustainability creates the emotional reserves at both an individual and collective level to sustain human activity and struggle through the most difficult of times. This generates the value base to give form and force to the ethical sustainability that shapes and directs human intellectual enquiry and ultimately directs human activity in physically sustainable ways. Educationally sustainable processes thus carry a deep sense of spiritual realities at their heart not by overt intrusions of spiritual discourse into classroom practice but rather through the underpinning of all actions with a spiritual dimension primarily generated by the living character of spirituality in the lives of the adults that make up the child's world. To begin this process we, remembering that all adults are teachers of the young, simply need to begin to explore the spiritual dimension of our own lives. Thus sustainability is to be equated with the progress of humanity founded on spiritual values that extend the range and meaning of human activities at the other levels of human action: emotional, ethical, intellectual and physical.

Educational Sustainability

This greatly expanded definition of sustainability allows us to see the strengths and weaknesses in the *2010* document. While the writers sort to generate a vision of the future that was founded on a heavy investment in social capital and a wider definition of education as encapsulated in the New Basics curriculum, they have not engaged with sustainable educational activity. In short, they have offered a horizontal as opposed to a vertical response to the current crisis in educational culture.

Sustainable educational action needs to ensure that teachers and their children, and the children's families, are enabled to lead emotionally and spiritually rich lives. This changes the whole face of education as it sees the entirety of all individuals engaged in the learning process as central to the success of the enterprise. Personal transformation is, of course, impossible to legislate and does not fall within the current parameters of professional development as described in the *2010* paper. Nevertheless, pathways to the renewal of the teaching profession can be mapped in many ways that allow for flexibility in staffing and work times, cross disciplinary approaches to content, and multi-tracking of personal and work time to allow for richly patterned lives that feed back into the classroom (Dass and Bush 1992).[4] Hand in hand with this, children's learning can be rethought to allow for more space. The artificial barriers between home and school can be blurred to allow for more interaction and interface to emerge.

Towards 2010

In bringing an expanded concept of sustainability to this examination of Education Queensland's policy document *2010: Queensland State Education* we discover the limitations experienced by insightful people working within the confines of a system constrained by its own historical roots. Because change is defined within a traditional interpretation of schooling and work related structures it is limited to manipulation of a few variables: staff, curricular objectives which are social and technological in nature, bureaucratic culture and state driven economic needs. Only limited attention can be paid to ethical and emotional needs, with the spiritual being carefully omitted. The result is, ironically, a deeply flawed but wonderfully enlightened document.

The current state of play for education in Queensland Australia would suggest then that things will go on much as they have, with considerable energy being expended on shifting a monumental system a little further to the left in terms of child centeredness. The effort is, of course, worthwhile yet entropy will remain high with staff burnout and student dissatisfaction also continuing to worry the community and families.

To educate beyond this grim scenario we need to go in search of an integration of body, mind and spirit that acknowledges the multiplicity of human expression that lies at the heart of sustainable actions. No two people are the same, but our aspirations in general terms are usually close:

fulfillment and purpose, home and family, social engagement and affirmation, security and health, all sound reasonable. To realize such wondrous things for everyone may seem utopian, but we can, by acknowledging a cluster of layered values and objectives in education, work towards benevolent educational policy that will help us on the way to deeply sustainable futures for all.

Notes

1. URL =< http://www.igc.apc.org/habitat/agenda21/ch-36.html>
2. This document and related materials are to be found at Education Queensland's sites: <http://education.qld.gov.au/corporate/qse2010><http://education.qld.gov.au/corporate/framework>
3. Males gives a vigorous overview of these figures for the US and their meaning within modern discourse.
4. Ram Dass and Mirabai Bush argue that it is only by working for both society and individual growth simultaneously that we can rise above our present circumstances. The logic is simple give teachers the space to live fulfilling lives so that they can bring personal fulfillment into the social arena.

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