

Sixteen Trends Their Profound Impact on Our Future

Implications for Students, Education, Communities, and the Whole of Society

By Gary Marx

Ordering information: Additional copies of *Sixteen Trends: Their Profound Impact on Our Future* may be purchased for \$37.50 each. Quantity discounts available.
ISBN 1-931762-48-1

Order from: Editorial Projects in Education. Telephone: (800) 445-8250.
Fax: (301) 280-3250. Email: Books@epe.org. Web site: www.edweek.org/go/books.
Add \$5.50 per book for postage and handling.
Phone orders accepted with Visa, MasterCard, or American Express.

© 2006, Gary Marx and Educational Research Service. All Rights Reserved.
Reprinted 2008 and 2011.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:

Marx, Gary.

Sixteen trends, their profound impact on our future : implications for students,
education, communities, countries, and the whole of society / by Gary Marx.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 1-931762-48-1

1. Education—Forecasting. 2. Educational planning. 3. Social prediction.

4. Forecasting. I. Title.

LB41.5.M265 2006

370.9'05—dc22

2006002687

Note: The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the opinions or positions of members of the Creating a Future Council of Advisors, Educational Research Service, ERS founding organizations, or Editorial Projects in Education, Inc.

Contents

Introduction	1
Trend 1: <i>We're not as young as we used to be!</i> For the first time in history, the old will outnumber the young	17
Trend 2: <i>Highly diverse ... and looking good.</i> Majorities will become minorities, creating ongoing challenges for social cohesion	39
Trend 3: <i>Knowledge! It's the engine of the new economy.</i> Social and intellectual capital will become economic drivers	65
Trend 4: <i>Convergence and miniaturization ... less is becoming more.</i> Technology will increase the speed of communication and the pace of advancement or decline	87
Trend 5: <i>The future is already here.</i> The Millennial Generation will insist on solutions to accumulated problems and injustices, while an emerging Generation E will call for equilibrium	119
Trend 6: <i>Let's get personal.</i> Standards and high-stakes tests will fuel a demand for personalization.....	141
Trend 7: <i>Assignment—put ideas together!</i> Release of human ingenuity will become a primary responsibility of education and society	163
Trend 8: <i>Every day, in every way, we're getting better and better.</i> Continuous improvement will replace quick fixes and defense of the status quo.....	181
Trend 9: <i>Let's try to do the right thing.</i> Scientific discoveries and societal realities will force widespread ethical choices	199

Trend 10: *The Earth is our home. Treat it well.*
Common opportunities and threats will intensify a worldwide demand for planetary security..... 215

Trend 11: *I want it my way!*
Polarization and narrowness will bend toward reasoned discussion..... 235

Trend 12: *We're all in this together.*
International learning, including diplomatic skills, will become basic..... 249

Trend 13: *Give me a break!*
Greater numbers of people will seek personal meaning in their lives in response to a fast-moving society..... 271

Trend 14: *Poverty makes us all poor.*
Understanding will grow that sustained poverty is expensive, debilitating, and unsettling 281

Trend 15: *What am I gonna do?*
Pressure will grow for society to prepare people for jobs and careers that may not currently exist 295

Trend 16: *Educators ... apply here!*
Competition will increase to attract and keep qualified educators..... 311

Conclusion: *Dealing with the Trends*..... 325

Appendix: *Additional Trends*..... 341

References/Endnotes..... 349

About the Author..... 371

Acknowledgments..... 373

Creating a Future Council of Advisors..... 375

List of Figures 378

Index..... 379

Foreword

In 2000, Educational Research Service teamed with futurist Gary Marx to produce the book *Ten Trends . . . Educating Children for a Profoundly Different Future*. That publication has drawn significant attention to the urgency of considering the implications of trends in shaping the futures of educational systems and other institutions. Since then, demand continued to grow for the next generation of the resource valued by thousands of educators as well as leaders in business, government, and the community at large. That is why the Marx-ERS team has reunited to produce this expanded and complex new book.

Sixteen Trends . . . Their Profound Impact on Our Future is by no means the final word on trends affecting our society. It focuses on just a few of the hundreds of trends that will likely have a profound impact on our institutions and on each of our lives. As we think about the future, this book is not intended to end the conversation but rather to start it. A smaller book, *An Overview of Sixteen Trends*, is also available to carry basic information about trends and their implications to expanded numbers of people.

Each of the chapters in this book focuses on one major trend, first summarizing the trend and then outlining the trend's implications for society and education. Each chapter concludes with a listing of questions and activities to stimulate further thought, discussion, and action. These questions and activities are believed to be especially useful to current and future educational leaders, system study groups, and planning teams. Each chapter also includes a listing of suggested resources for additional reading and consideration.

This book is intended to provoke the thinking of anyone in society, from individual voters to policy makers, who stands in a position to shape the future of our schools and education systems, businesses, communities, and even the whole of our society. It is meant to stimulate planning, breakthrough thinking, risk taking, and thoughtful action. Ideas for using the publication are provided in the Introduction chapter under the heading “How can I use this publication?” Additional ideas are offered in the final chapter of the book.

However you use them, we hope the points made within these pages will ignite interest that challenges the status quo and encourages imagination.

Katherine A. Behrens
Chief Operating Officer
Educational Research Service