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Book Review

Anticipate the World You Want: Learning for Alternative Futures

Marsha Lynne Rhea

Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Scarecrow Education, 2005

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reviewed by Maya Horton

In her book, *Anticipate the World You Want: Learning for Alternative Futures*, author and senior futurist Marsha Lynne Rhea provides a futuristic perspective to how we approach learning. Rhea invites us to think outside of the textbook and “reorient learning from mastery of the past to preparation for the future.” Using Rhea’s thought-provoking alternative futuring techniques, readers can learn how to forecast the future challenges that learners will likely face in a rapidly changing world.

Rhea does not merely ask what can we expect in the future, but what future do we want? And what innovations can we create to get to where we want? Rhea encourages readers to look across disciplines and find out what learning is essential now for students to meet the challenges that lie ahead. Preparing our students for the future, says Rhea, requires more than simply staying in step with current technologies and advances.

While her case for anticipatory learning is impressive, Rhea’s forward-thinking approach is not entirely uncommon among leaders in education and learning.

The real question is how do educators implement the initiatives Rhea sets out in her book in the context of funding, bureaucratic and other barriers. A challenge for readers will be to balance the ideal world Rhea suggests with the reality of the educational system in America.

Still, the methodologies and examples Rhea presents are at the cutting edge, a clear break away from the standard, and perhaps all too safe, approaches to learning. Rhea successfully illustrates how important concepts like incorporating self-directed learning, volunteerism experiences, risk-taking, and identity practices into the learning environment, are not only useful, but essential for equipping young people to become the lifelong learners, contributors, and creative problem solvers we will need them to be in the future.

Indeed, school leaders can and should use this book to guide them as they initiate “anticipatory learning” discussions and think through multiple future scenarios. Doing so can ultimately empower and engage today’s learners to change American education as we know it.

Intelligent, innovative, inspiring, Rhea builds the case for staying in step with tomorrow, a nice breather from the status quo.