Time shifts: Teaching with temporally inclusive pedagogies

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Introduction

Everywhere, people experience and interpret their lives in relationship to time. Time is the quintessential basis for and constraint upon the human experience (Richardson, 1997, p. 29).

The ability to think about and operate within the temporal dimension is complex and the processes of learning about time and our relationship with it begin at an early age and continue into adolescence and early adulthood. Time perspectives emerge from cognitive processes that separate human experience into past, present and future temporal frames. Time perspectives are a powerful influence on human behaviour and they are learned and modified by a variety of personal, social and institutional influences. These temporal frames are used to encode, store and recall experienced events. They also used in the forming of expectations, goals, contingencies, and imaginative scenarios.

In this paper, we will consider how the concept of time is developed in schools. Specifically we argue that there needs to be greater connectedness and balance between the dimensions of time in the teaching of SOSE with particular reference to the teaching of history and futures perspectives. Accordingly, in this paper we explore a range of temporally inclusive pedagogies that allow a more holistic conceptualisation of time.

The Temporal Domain

Throughout and beyond their education people will develop notions of conventional time, non-conventional or operational time and adaptation. Conventional time systems allow people to adapt to the natural environment and to work within a social system. Children are taught about conventional time in a school's curriculum, traditionally implemented as part of the Mathematics KLA. Conventional time provides a precise reference system for describing the order of any two events, describing or deducing a duration, or arranging for some future appointment such as a meeting. It is represented as clock time, incorporating days of the week, the annual calendar and intervals of historical time. Children demonstrate their understanding of conventional time by recognising and using order, recurrence and duration applied to different intervals of time. In comparison, an adult's understanding of conventional time includes knowledge beyond the structure used to describe and organise time. An adult is aware that time continues regardless of any human intervention, agenda.

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or marking device. This highlights the way in which conventional time systems can be coordinated with logical time.

Non-conventional, or Operational time, is described as the way in which people use time concepts to interact within the world. Children develop these skills concurrently as they conceptualise conventional time. Friedman (1982, p. 3) describes a hierarchy of temporal problem-solving, listing abilities which must be learned in order for a child to master understanding and operability of time concepts. The skills, acquired throughout the development of thinking about non-conventional time that he describes are:

- Judging length of time, using cues and tools, such as clocks, calendars, etc
- Judging length of time in the absence of time tools
- Ordering events
- Sequencing series of events, using inferential information
- Distinguishing Past, Present, and Future
- Representing Natural and Conventional Periods and Orders
- Other types of Problem Solving (such as the ability to wait).

Temporal perspectives are the overall span of a person’s thinking across past, present and future life domains. A person’s temporal orientation is his/her predominant thinking about one of these time frames. For example, it is recognised that the future dominates human adult consciousness. This is distinctly different to a child’s past temporal orientation. Many theorists argue that there are benefits of integrating past and present experience with future expectations in order to strengthen personal morale, enrich one's sense of self, and cope effectively with adversity. This is what Zimbardo and Boyd (1999) refer to as having a balanced time orientation, or a mental framework that allows flexibility in the temporal orientation a person operates within, depending upon contexts, resources and personal and social assessments. They warn of temporal bias, which involves a person’s overuse or underuse of any of the orientations of past, present and future. Currently, Australian education provides a temporally biased environment which advocates a rich understanding of the past, but limited, uninformed and uncritical futures dimensions.

History and time

The teaching and learning of history in schools is, and has been for decades, a highly and very publicly debated issue. Specifically, such debate has focused on what should be taught, why, how and by whom. Indeed, we are currently in the midst of a ‘history crisis’ founded on a perceived loss of national identity. Examples of this perception include television advertisements asking members of the public who Australia’s first Prime Minister was, newspaper articles pointing to Australians’ ‘historical knowledge deficit’ and the recently mooted history test for immigrants wanting to gain Australian citizenship. Politicians and the media are quick to point the finger of blame at schools, criticising what school students appear to know about history and discussing what they think students ought to know (Taylor & Young, 2003). They subsequently argue for changes to the school history curriculum as the solution to this perceived history crisis. This was evidenced in recent discussion about mandating a study of Australian history across all State and Territory schools (Packham, 15/01/07).
This history crisis, leads us to ask many questions about why we should teach history, and what should be taught. In response, the following section of the paper explores why the school history curriculum is seen as so important in addressing broader social issues; and how conceptions of history have changed over time.

**How have conceptions of history changed over time?**
The current Australian ‘history crisis’ is founded on broader international and national debates about the very nature and purpose of history. To understand this current crisis there must first be must an understanding of the broader debates shaping both this perceived crisis and attempts to address it through the school history curriculum. Specifically, conceptions of history have changed over time and these changes have significant implications for the school history curriculum. Below we briefly discuss three major conceptions of history: grand narrative history, the ‘new’ history and history as the ‘extended present’. Elsewhere we have expanded on these conceptions (see Harris and Bateman, 2007).

**Grand narrative history**
Traditionally academic historians have defined history as investigation, casting themselves in the role of detectives, seeking plausible explanations for historical events, trends, and controversies (Bain, 2006). Often the role of historian was performed by a member of the Euro-centric educated elite thus providing the elite with the opportunity to define the past and in doing so shape the present and future. Typically, history was posited as a linear, chronological examination of the past; an attempt to provide definitive answers or truths about the past and to reproduce these truths as historical knowledge.

This definition of history is known as grand narrative history and it was the prevailing conception of history through much of the early and middle 20th century. It relied on the reproduction of accepted and unquestioned grand narratives or stories about the past to maintain social control. If we were to examine the school history curriculum of the 1950s for example, we would find a school history that closely mirrored academic history. It relied on grand narratives of racial and cultural majorities and promoted a uniform national identity that ignored or marginalised the experiences of Australia’s ethnic and social minorities (Ahonen, 2001). Grand narrative history empowered particular individuals and groups and by association subjugated others.

**The ‘new’ history**
In the 1960s and 70s, amidst much social change (racial desegregation in the United States, international backlash against the Vietnam war and the sexual revolution for example) there were attempts to reorient the focus of the school history curriculum away from ‘history as an academic discipline’ towards an emerging recognition that school history is distinctly different to academic history. The emphasis of school history became “the use of ‘inquiry’ to gain an understanding of the problems of historical interpretation” (Seixas, 1993, p. 238). Rather than being seen as vesicles for historical knowledge, students were encouraged to enter the interpretive fray and develop their own, evidenced historical perspectives. History was no longer seen as an investigation of the past but as a dialogue between the past and the present; and different interpretations of historical events were encouraged. An example of this is the rise of Aboriginal Studies in SOSE classrooms in which issues such as Australia Day, which is traditionally associated with the arrival of the First Fleet, was examined
from an Indigenous Australian perspective as ‘Invasion day’. This became known as the ‘new history’.

Whilst this re-visioning of history has certainly started to break open what history is and why it is important it has also been problematic. Globalisation, the advent of new technologies, changing populations and fluctuating national borders have seen the erosion of national identity. If you consider that political power is premised on particular and often conservative notions of nationalism the problem becomes clear. How can you wield political power when there is no longer a grand narrative of nationalism to transmit to voters? At an international and national level, governments have responded to this problem by mandating conservative changes to the history curriculum. In the United States, National History Standards were introduced in 1994 whilst a National Curriculum was introduced in the United Kingdom in the same year. Both sought to exert greater control over what history was being taught and why. European governments instituted similar changes and through a process of policy-borrowing the Australian federal government has sought to exert greater control over the history curriculum through attempts at a National Curriculum (which failed in the early 1990s) and the implementation of Civics and Citizenship education across all States and Territories.

Civics and Citizenship has, in some states been embedded within the history curriculum. Some people see these moves as a rejection of the new history and a revivalism of grand narrative history. Social commentator Phillip Adams is highly critical of the ways in which politicians have oriented themselves in this ‘history crisis’ and he offers the following comments on Prime Minister John Howard:

He rejoices in the history of Gallipoli and tells us that military mess was, somehow, the making of us, that something called the Anzac spirit flows through our veins … Yet he feels no grief for the ongoing (problems) of Aboriginal history. Anzac history is, for him, living history, but that ‘other’ history he dismisses, denies and even ridicules as “black armband” (history) (as cited in Taylor, 2001, p.11).

History as the ‘extended present’

Whilst Adams’ fears of a conservative revival are founded, we believe that, at the beginning of the 21st century, school history is at a unique crossroads. It could, as Adams suggests, be reinvented in traditionalist ways or it could as we propose, be reinvented in ways that allow students to view history through various temporal frames. We suggest that a reinvention, or repositioning which will increase student engagement in learning of history, is in what we refer to as ‘history as the extended present’.

This occurs where a study of history is a study of time, not in the functional sense of time as days, months and years but time in a conceptual sense where students can view the past, present and future/s through intersecting and often conflicting narratives. In this sense, history is not just about the past and about the acquisition of historical knowledge or truths. Rather, it is about experiencing the past, present and future/s as complex, connected and personally and socially relevant. The term ‘extended present’ highlights our focus on how the past has informed and continues to inform the present and how the present seamlessly blends into the future. Rather than seeing this conception as a linear progression from past – through the present – to an inevitable future; we argue that a study of history should be multi-dimensional
and focus on multiple visions of the past and present and examine how these varied visions inform possible, probable and preferable futures.

For the learner, there are three main concepts and capacities which underpin the development of the extended present: connectedness, responsibilities, and comparisons. In the first instance, through lenses of time, we want students to acknowledge the connectedness which occurs between the different time frames. We, as living in the present, are connected to those who came before us, in many ways, and we learn this through histories, both personal and collective. We are similarly connected to those, with whom we live in the world, and we can learn this, through histories, as well as in scanning our social and cultural worlds. More abstractedly, we are connected to those who will come after us, and we can develop these understandings through the interweaving of futures and histories.

Directly emerging from this thinking, then, are ideas related to the notion of responsibilities. We have responsibilities to keep the legacies and lessons of those who came before us alive. Similarly, we have a responsibility to both present and future generations to equip ourselves with as much information as we can to make decisions both personally and globally. Within history, there are many precedents, which can contribute to our thinking and planning of various events. Further, the unprecedented events we act upon in the present become historical precedents for future generations. We have explicit responsibilities to our future peoples, and drawing upon our connectedness to past and future generations. Consciousness of the legacies we leave for future generations, and thus, our responsibilities, is integral to the decision making processes we are involved in, within the immediate present.

We believe that history is an integral part of the curriculum, in schools. Currently, however, as a domain of learning, it has lost its connectedness with students living in the world today. We need to make the relevance of historical events and constructions explicit, and clear to our learners. Thus, the third dimension of history as the extended present draws upon the rich comparisons which can be made between the different time frames of past, present and futures. Developing the notions of connectedness, and responsibilities, we can track a variety of developments in our world, through time. We can compare the ways in which people have lived, or physical worlds which have existed, and draw upon the perceptions students have of their life worlds. Further, we can come to understandings about why our world has evolved in the ways that it has, as well as drawing upon these analyses and syntheses to develop possible scenarios for the future. Using critical lenses, we can think about some of the assumptions which underpin our foresight capacities, through the examination of our historical capacities.

It is important to note that elements of all three conceptions of history are evident in the teaching and learning of history across Australian schools. How you perceive history has consequences for the ways in which you teach and learn history. As a teacher and learner of history you need therefore, to develop a conception of history that is consonant with your informed beliefs about the past, present and futures. It is also important to view history in a holistic temporal sense, that is, to see history as a bridge between the past, present and possible, probable and preferable futures. This understanding of history acknowledges that debates about the past and present seamlessly merge into discussions about the future. In this sense past historical
moments are still operating in the present either as a legacy or as a set of practices that are applied or rejected. These moments are also operating in the future as new ways of making sense of the world are discussed and debated.

With this in mind, it is hard to simply ‘know’ about the past, present and future/s. Rather, one has to engage with a variety of narratives or stories about the past, present and future/s and make sense of these in the context of their own lives. Historical knowledge is therefore multi-perspectival rather than mono-perspectival. Ahonen (2001) argues that it is exploration of marginalised narratives or perspectives that provides history with a critical community of inquiry. In this sense historical knowledge is not fixed or definitive, rather there are multiple and often competing ‘truths’ about the past. She is however, quick to point out that it is harder to govern a critical community than one that has a uniform identity – hence politicians preference for a conservative conception of school history.

**History and Futures education**

Slaughter (1995) suggests that futures education is a forward looking history, and many of the concepts from the futures field draw from rich and critical historical perspectives. In the previous section, we have considered the historical part of the extended present. In this part of the chapter we explore the futures aspect, through futures education. We examine what futures education is, why it is important and how futures perspectives are embedded within our vision of history – that of history as the extended present.

*What is Futures Education?*

Education about the future has come to prominence over the last few decades. This is evident in educational discourse and in national policy documents and State and Territory curriculum documents. This is because education needs to take account of rapidly changing social, economic and environmental world conditions and prepare young people for what will undoubtedly be a turbulent century. Indeed, one of the key roles of schools is to develop and prepare young people for ‘the future’ (Gidley, Bateman, & Smith, 2004). But what do we mean by preparing young people for the future? We argue that students need to develop tools, concepts and understandings about multiple futures so that they can become empowered in terms of shaping their personal and shared futures, rather than passively being transmitted a grand narrative future.

The development of these skills is important given that research into young people’s images and ideas of the future lead to the disturbing conclusion that for many, the future is a depressing and fearful place where they feel hopeless and disempowered to make a difference in their lives (Gidley, 2001; Hicks, 1996). Despite this fear, many students have a natural curiosity about Futures Education [FE] because it intersects with their own life interests in many ways (Slaughter, 2004, p1). FE explicitly attempts to build on this interest and counter these fears by offering a profound and empowering set of learning strategies and ideas that can help people think and act critically and creatively about the future, as opposed to trying to predict it.
When speaking of young people's views of the future a distinction must be made between 'personal futures' and their future images for their country or the world. These can be categorised as follows:

**Personal futures**: engages a person in reflection about how he/she envisions the future, specifically for that person’s lifetime. These futures consider aspects of human life, regarding health, education, professional life, economy, location, dreams, fears and aspirations. In this arena, a person draws upon his/her personal history and engages his/her understandings of the world in which he/she lives to critically identify, plan for and shape a range of forecasted futures.

**Local futures**, a person (or people collectively) draw upon his/her/their understanding of their local environment and external resources to begin thinking about how this locality will look in alternate futures. In this arena, a local environment may be understood as many things: a school, a suburb, a state or province or even a continent. It is the aspect of futures education in which people begin to work collectively to envisage and engage in productive planning and discourse about the status of the community being focussed upon and possible futures that may be worked towards. Within a school, local futures provides an opportunity for the community connected to that school, including students, teachers, families, councils and other interested parties, to identify changes and continuities and work towards the most suitable scenario. It may form the basis of a shared community project.

**Global futures** invite participants to explore and understand the world in which they are personally and collectively living. It stimulates students’ thinking about the ‘big picture’ and exploration of the deep structures of our world. These deep structures include an examination of our physical, spiritual and cognitive world, and how they came to be the way they are presently. Explicitly, a variety of worldviews may be developed and explored. Building on from these deep structures is the understanding that we are connected to those who have come before us, and will be connected to those who come after us. Futures education promotes the idea that each of us, individually and collectively, has a role to play in identifying and contributing to the shaping of the world, which is our global community.

**Why is futures education important?**
The above categories point to the importance of futures education as futures education helps students to develop futures (foresight) literacy which is the ability to be able to engage with the world using critical futures perspectives. This involves students understanding that there is not only possible option as to how ‘the future’ might be. Rather, there is a multiplicity of futures and students are encouraged to think about alternate scenarios. In schools the framework you can use to discuss these alternate scenarios is to view futures in terms of possible futures, probable futures and preferable futures. These terms can be defined as follows:

**Possible futures** are the entry level for thinking about what is possible for personal, local and global futures. Possibilities are only limited by the scope of the mind to imagine alternatives to those already suggested. In this way, every person who engages in futures thinking is able to provide a possibility. The possibilities are used in a variety of ways. A possibility is identified and ‘backcast’ in order to conceptualise how such a scenario could/would occur. Such possibilities are informed by
understandings of the present and past, and are challenged by the values and priorities held, individually and collectively.

Probable futures: A higher order skill of futures education is the ability to discern probable futures. Using multiple texts, experiences and ways of knowing about the world, and how deep structures underpinning our world are envisaged, we can use a variety of critical strategies to gauge the likelihood of possible futures occurring. In mathematic literacy, we develop understandings in chance that some things are more likely than others. In futures education this language is also developed, and what makes one future more likely than another will be informed by a number of factors, such as environmental issues, financial issues, educative issues, governance, the local and global agendas and limits of humanity.

Preferable futures are those scenarios identified individually or collectively as ones which should be worked towards personally, locally or globally. And, as discussed in probable futures, what is recognised as preferable will be informed by a range of factors such as perceptions of the world, values held, and whether these scenarios are accessible and achievable. Many preferable local and global futures are very strongly connected to many personal voices and scenarios. In preferable scenarios, futurists and futures educators deconstruct assumed futures in order to critically identify what it is that is required for future generations.

Where histories and futures meet . . . the notion of the extended present
Rather than describing the present as an instant moment, Boulding uses varying lengths of the time to view the world from different viewpoints. For example, she attempts to build connections between generations by highlighting the changes which occur within a person’s 200 year present. Boulding refers to this as the ‘extended present’ (as cited Polak, 1973) and suggests that a child’s natural extended present stretches from his/her grandparents through to the time when his/her grandchildren will be living. Narratives and recounts are therefore a rich tool in developing connections between generations, as living histories.

One of the main rationales of futures education is promoting learning which nurtures connectedness between personal lives, the lives of others and the physical environment in which each person, culture and community live. The extended present acknowledges the people who have come before us, and highlights the journeys those people have undertaken in contributing to the world as it is now, and has been for some time. The extended present does not assume that change will occur in the instant of a minute or a week, but allows people to manage reflective thinking and planning for changes in the world over a much larger time span. The extended present acknowledges a period of transition from what has been to what will be.

We cannot assume that the future will be entirely different from the world as it is today, or that it will be entirely the same. In identifying how future scenarios are deconstructed, futurists and futures educators draw upon a binary of changes and continuities. This binary is rich in asking students to examine events and processes which change and continue over time. Events which do not continue are referred to as discontinuities. Change and continuities are present in thinking about personal, local and global futures. We believe that a focus on the connectedness and changes
and continuities, associated with futures is essential in a re-conceptualisation of history as the extended present as it provides a meaningful context in which students engage in learning, and make links between different time frames.

Earlier we talked of futures as a forward looking history and the importance of students developing foresight literacy. Having foresight literacy enables students to examine those people, places and events that have come before us as a means of making good judgements in going forward. Slaughter (Slaughter, 1995a, 1996) uses the analogy of driving a car. In order to reach a destination, you consult a street directory to map out a plan. In changing lanes, or going forwards, or changing directions, a smart and safe driver always checks the rear vision mirror to make sure, of arriving at their destination in the best possible state. Using the foresight principle, it is possible for students to gain a stronger sense of the seismic forces, and systems, which ultimately generate change in our world. In a sense, foresight literacy teaches us to search for precedents, to better inform our ways forward, as well as to learn from successes and challenges of the past.

**Temporally inclusive pedagogies**

As with any effective pedagogical model, in studies of time, and change and continuities, we want to appeal to students’ curiosities about the world, and its people (peak students’ interest). Further, we want to make clear connections between what students are learning in school (knowledge, skills, values and attitudes), and what students are doing and want to do in their own lives (make learning relevant and significant to students lives). To do this we need to develop students historical and futures consciousness and as discussed previously, a large part of doing this relies on students developing historical and futures literacies. But how do you facilitate the development of historical and futures literacies? We suggest that employing temporally inclusive pedagogies is an important factor in this. You will notice that we do not refer to a temporally sensitive pedagogy – rather we use the plural ‘pedagogies’. We use the plural form because we are not advocating a particular pedagogy; rather we are advocating the use of a range of existent pedagogies in temporally inclusive ways. We are not therefore, advocating WHAT pedagogies you should use, we are instead focusing on HOW you should use them in temporally inclusive ways.

Temporally inclusive pedagogies have two main features. In the first instance, teaching and learning increases connectedness between different time frames. Figure 1 on the following page provides a classroom example of what this might look like. This example is designed for a year 7 or 8 class.
Secondly, temporally inclusive pedagogies make explicit connections between the time perspectives of the learner, along with connection of learner lifeworlds. A temporally inclusive pedagogy embraces a student’s lifeworld knowledge, and extends their understanding of continuities and changes in their world at many levels, through temporal scanning tools. They also highlight the importance of making explicit connections between what is learnt in the classroom and student’s lifeworlds. History teachers are in an enviable position in that some of the core skills we teach and the ways in which teach them are founded on making learning personally relevant.

There are many ways in which teachers can connect learning to students lifeworlds; these include the explicit teaching of empathy and the incorporation of cultural institutions in the teaching of history and futures. Empathy is an interpersonal skill that allows people to imagine (with some degree of accuracy) what it’s like to be in the predicament of another person. Figure 1.2 on the following page provides a relevant classroom example.
Additionally, empathy “entails the ability to communicate that awareness so the other person feels understood” (Blatner, 2002). Empathy is therefore a key communicative tool that allows people to effectively participate in society. It is important that we are able to empathise with people and events across a range of time periods. This allows us to understand the motives, actions and feelings of people over time and how they have influenced, and may continue to influence, society. A focus on changes and continuities over time is therefore developed and students are encouraged to see particular issues (such as children’s rights) as connected over time, across places and connected to the choices they make in their lives. Teaching history and futures provides teachers with a vehicle through which students can develop into empathic learners and empathic social participants. How can you teach empathy in the SOSE classroom? We suggest that you teach empathy through an issues-based approach and that you ensure that your pedagogy is temporally inclusive. We also suggest that your teaching of issues should have real world consequences for your students and lead towards activism outside of the classroom.

**Scenario:** Year 7 history/SOSE lesson; one week into a unit Australian Immigration; an article about child refugees appears in the paper and the next day you walk into your classroom. You show a series of PowerPoint images of children from various time periods and various places whilst reading the following statement:

*We are the world’s children.*
*We are the victims of exploitation and abuse.*
*We are street children.*
*We are the children of war.*
*We are the victims and orphans of HIV/AIDS.*
*We are denied good-quality education and health care.*
*We are victims of political, economic, cultural, religious and environmental discrimination.*
*We are children whose voices are not being heard; it is time we are taken into account.*
*We want a world fit for children, because a world fit for us is a world fit for everyone.*

Statement made by the child delegates representing the Children’s Forum at the opening of the United Nations General Assembly’s Special Session on Children in May, 2002. (Rendon, 2004).

You could use an inquiry approach to scaffold students’ engagement with this issue. Your ensuing discussion and activities should be personally relevant and should focus on students developing an understanding of the changes and continuities of children’s rights over time. Parallels between various times and places could be drawn and students could engage in backcasting and forecasting the issue. You could incorporate a range of biographical narratives highlighting the issue of children’s rights and the range of related issues (poverty, abuse, self-determination, voice and participation) and you could involve students in role-play activities that emphasise the emotive elements of this issue. Most importantly, students need to be informed and empowered to act on this information. Setting up a community project, website and/or critical community of action (see below) may be one of the outcomes of your examination of children’s rights and how they are related to Australian immigration.
The teaching of history and futures should be contextualised within the lifeworld experiences of students. As such, teachers should utilise a range of community resources such as cultural institutions to demonstrate the connectedness of history and futures education, to students' lives. Whilst history teachers often take students on excursions (typically to particular exhibitions in museums, galleries and/or archives) or invite students to participate in incursions (when guest speakers or special events are held within school ground); we argue that history teachers should utilise a broader range of cultural institutions in their teaching of history and futures and they should do so more regularly. Here, we define cultural institutions as any place or space that has had, has or may have cultural significance to a particular community. Teachers should also aim to incorporate low-cost or no-cost site visits into their teaching. Cultural institutions can be integrated into almost any history/futures unit of work. Engaging with cultural institutions (as demonstrated above) allows students to understand the real world application of what they are learning in the history classroom and it allows them to engage at a personal and empathic level with contemporary social issues across various timeframes. Figure 1.3 below provides an example of this.

**Figure 1.3:** Utilising cultural institutions to promote connectedness

**Scenario:** Year 5 classroom, two weeks into an integrated unit (SOSE, ICT and Science and Technology) on urban planning. As a class you choose a local site to examine as a case study. There are numerous websites that detail appropriate sites and provide walking tour guidelines (see for example Heritage Council of Victoria - [http://www.heritage.vic.gov.au](http://www.heritage.vic.gov.au)).

The focus of your examination is how people have utilised this place and the space(s) it encompasses over time and the impact humans have had on the natural and urban environment. Students plan a walking tour of this place (Sydney CBD for example) and together you set a series of problem solving tasks that actively involve students working collaboratively to research the changes and continuities of this place over time. Students explore issues of connectedness – how people connect to places, how the urban environment is connected to environmental issues, how decisions about urbanisation are connected to current environmental problems and how these will impact on our possible, probable and preferable futures.

Later in the unit students visit a cultural institution that allows them to creatively address the problems of urbanisation and the need for alternate patterns of urban living due to space shortages and environmental degradation. The National Museum of Australia (Canberra) has a specific gallery devoted to kids contemplating future innovations in transport and accommodation. Students design a vehicle or building for the future and then don 3D glasses for a theatrette presentation of their ideas. Similarly, the Powerhouse Museum (Sydney) has a virtual reality facility named the Wedge which allows students to physically interact in a cyber-future.
Concluding comments

This paper has highlighted the importance of teaching history and futures in ways that emphasise connectedness and pay attention to the nexus between different time frames (past, present and future). Further, this paper has demonstrated the value of teaching and learning about an extended present which links people, places and events both across time and as they relate to students lifeworlds. We believe that conceptualising history as the extended present invite the participation of students in shaping possible, preferable and probable futures.

Our world is rich with many ‘his’ and ‘her’ stories. Most of these have valuable lessons to enrich our deliberations in moving forward. This less linear approach to the study of time in our schools gives each of us a stronger sense of purpose, and critical sense of identity, in coming to understand the footprints of our predecessors, the paths we tread today and the roads we may travel in the future.

References


