ever, before taking a futuristic look at education, the time ranges and three key concepts of futurology need to be considered.

First, concern for the future falls into three time ranges: the near range (the next few years); the middle range (about 1980-1990); and the far range, (1990-2000 and beyond). Most interest has developed in the middle and far range with two books considering *The Next Hundred* and *The Next 500 Years*. One author has suggested that if a young man were to plan his career with sufficient vision today he might finish his graduate work in the seventies as a futurist specializing in the eighties, become an interdisciplinary analyst and critic of the eighties while living through that decade, and thereafter in the nineties become an historian of the eighties.¹

Three key concepts in the developing field of futurism are “alternative future,” “scenario,” and “system break.” The futurist is not so concerned with predicting the future as with developing “alternative” futures. These are different, perhaps even contrasting, sets of future conditions, some of which are extrapolated from related aspects of the present or highly probable near range conditions. Other alternative futures may be imaginary leaps with little apparent grounding in the present. These may be general, sweeping descriptions. In contrast “scenarios” are scripts spelling out the sequence of events leading into a future situation. Causal processes and decision points are highlighted in a step-by-step movement from the present to a hypothetical future. For this future alternative a number of scenarios may be constructed hypothesizing the different ways in which that particular future might develop. The alternate futures and the scenarios furnish the working material for addressing specific issues, with systematic comparison assessing alternative routes. However, long-range change has seldom been straightline, evolutionary development free from surprise.

Kenneth Boulding has suggested that mechanical systems (the solar system, for example), pattern systems (the genetic system of the biological world), and equilibrium systems (ecological balance in nature) are fairly stable and predictable. Social systems, on the other hand, are evolutionary, involving processes of genetic mutation, the growth of knowledge, organizations, cultures, and societies. In the evolutionary process there is increase in complexity and sudden changes in the characteristics of the system itself. Boulding calls these sudden, un-

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