

Students' hopes and fears for the future

Source D. Balderstone (ed.) *Secondary Geography Handbook, Sheffield: The Geographical Association p 280.*

Focus	Age 11	Age 14	Age 18
Personal	Fear of violence Hope for good education, good job, material well-being	Desire for happiness Fear of unemployment and ill-health	Most interested in their personal future Hope for material success, good education, good job Happiness <i>per se</i> Fear of unemployment, poor health, money worries Positive that things will be better than now
Local	Keen to see the local area improved (less pollution, more recycling, less traffic; more facilities for the homeless, disabled and children) Sometimes confuse local and global affairs	Fear of crime Fear that local area will become too developed and/or rundown New technology and immigration blamed for unemployment Television blamed for increasing crime	Least positive age group about conditions improving locally Fear of crime and unemployment Hope for increased prosperity Feel strongly that there will be less racism and greater gender equality Hope for increased environmental awareness Skeptical of the influence they can have Aware of systems 'out there' that control things but don't feel part of the process Aware of political dimension but feel powerless
Global	Fear of increasing poverty and increasing pollution	Hope for eradication of global poverty and pollution Key areas of concern include global warming, ozone depletion, deforestation, nuclear war	Least positive age group about conditions improving globally – but this age group desires it the most
Visions	Commitment to improving the environment and to learning about global issues highest at this age	Less optimistic than 11-year-olds about world conditions improving and ambivalent about whether they can do anything themselves to help make the world a better place	Aware of systems 'out there' that control things but don't feel part of the process – skeptical of the influence they can have

This table shows the hopes and fears of 11-, 14- and 18-year olds in England and indicates that students have an interest in the future at the personal, local and global level. However, there is a worrying decline in optimism throughout the secondary phase. The research was completed by David Hicks and Catherine Holdenⁱ in 1995.

ⁱ Hicks, D and Holden, C. (1995) *Visions of the Future: Why we need to teach for tomorrow*. Trentham Books