



Coles, A., Dillon, J., Gall, M., Hawkey, K., Kerr, D., Orchard, J., ... Wishart, J. (2016). Towards a teacher education for the Anthropocene. In P. Corcoran, J. Weakland, & A. Wals (Eds.), *Envisioning Futures for Environmental and Sustainability Education*. (pp. 73-85). Wageningen Academic Publishers, Wageningen, The Netherland. DOI: 10.3920/978-90-8686-846-9

Peer reviewed version

Link to published version (if available):
[10.3920/978-90-8686-846-9](https://doi.org/10.3920/978-90-8686-846-9)

[Link to publication record in Explore Bristol Research](#)
PDF-document

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Towards a Teacher Education for the Anthropocene

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This chapter, written by a team of experienced pre-service teacher educators, will set out one possible future for teacher education; a future in which prospective teachers are supported to prepare themselves for what it means to be teaching in the Anthropocene (Finney, 2014). The label 'Anthropocene' signals the shift from hopes of 'saving nature' and 'solving' problems, to living with crises and problems as our new and permanent condition (Purdy, 2015). In terms of schools and teachers, an equivalent realisation is that it may no longer be realistic to invest in promoting ideals such as student autonomy or a student-centred curriculum, the equivalent of a return to the 'natural' state of the world, as a possible future for education. Instead, effective action can spring from an acceptance of an already irrevocably-compromised system that will not escape, for example, accountability pressures that lead to a narrow focus on measurable outcomes. Indeed, the latest UK National Curriculum has largely removed 'values' from the study of Science at secondary level (ages 11-18). The future we envisage is set in this context, in which traditional subjects are employed to approach issues from a strong disciplinary perspective. We take, as examples, mathematics, science and history, to show how it would be possible to invest these disciplines with a sense of the 'uncanny' and an 'ethics of uncertainty', as values consistent with a post-human world that demands constraint (Hynes, 2015). What is common across these future stories is a teacher education in which prospective-teachers find personal satisfaction in seeking out spaces for practice that sensitise them and their students to the complexities of the world, practice that is communal and democratic; in which there is an acknowledgment of unavoidable partiality and the values inherent in even the most neutral of observations; an acknowledgment of our confusion in the face of uncertainty, and of the inevitability of paradox (see, for example, Corrigan *et al.*, 2007); and an acknowledgment of the importance of hearing voices that may be silenced, in an ethics of articulation (Purdy, 2015).

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