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Education and the Construction of Hope

Darren Webb

In the field of education the significance of hope is widely recognised (e.g. Cammarota 2011; Carlson 2005; Duncan-Andrade 2009; Halpin 2001, 2003; Harden et al. 2012; Male 2011; Thrupp and Tomlinson 2005; Veck 2014). Academic studies suggest that educational experiences and outcomes are more likely to be positive if students, parents, teachers and policy-makers possess hope. An editorial in the *Cambridge Journal of Education* declared that hope is ‘a core underpinning of education and all its processes’ (Andrews 2010, 323). Hope has also become a key element within contemporary policy discourse. ‘Giving hope’ is the mission statement of numerous educational charities while successive Education Ministers in the UK have stressed the need to ‘give children hope’. Countless ‘hope resources’ exist for parents and teachers—with titles such as *The Great Big Book of Hope* (McDermott and Snyder 2000) and *Making Hope Happen* (Lopez 2013a). Jaklin Eliot is quite right to refer to the emergence of a ‘hope industry’ (Eliot 2005, 27).

This chapter seeks to problematise simplistic and self-evident notions of hope. A framework is outlined which sees hope not as a singular undifferentiated experience that is ‘good’, but rather as a socially mediated human capacity that can be experienced in different modes. Educational policy discourse in the UK is then used as a lens through which to examine hope as a construct with complex effects. Education is a key channel through which we are taught to orient ourselves toward an uncertain future; a key channel through which hope is constructed. The chapter explores the role of education in constructing shared objectives of hope—affectively aligning us with objectives that circulate as social goods—and in framing appropriate cognitive, affective and behavioural responses. Rather than

operating as an unmitigated good, the chapter points to the complex, tense and potentially unstable operation of hope.

Hope in Educational Policy Discourse

In her first speech to the Conservative Party Conference as the UK's Secretary of State for Education, Nicky Morgan declared:

Conference, if there's one thing I ask of you today it's that we show every school that we're on their side. That everything we've done has been driven by the desire to raise standards for all pupils in all schools. And that we care more about what a young person sees as they walk out of the gate than we do about the name they see on the way in. *We care that they see hope* (Morgan 2014)

This echoed Michael Gove's (Morgan's predecessor) speech to the Party Conference the year before, when he proclaimed that 'We're making sure that the best teachers and the best heads go to the toughest areas *to give those children hope*' (Gove 2013c). Gove spoke repeatedly of giving children 'new hope' and 'high hopes' through a series of reforms that challenged what he saw as 'the culture of low expectations'. (Gove 2013a; 2013b). Those who challenge the culture of low expectations were 'fighting with passion' for 'our children's future' (Gove 2013a). More evocatively still, Morgan declared it her mission to 'slay the soft bigotry of low expectations' in order to 'give new hope for the future' to children from poor and marginalised communities (Morgan 2015).

It seems to be a requirement almost that each new government minister declares their commitment to 'hope' upon taking office. In his first written piece as the current Secretary of State for Education (in post for a month at the time of writing), Damian Hinds emphasised the need for teachers to have 'high hopes' of their students and for schools and government to

help create an environment in which children have ‘high hopes’ of themselves (Hinds 2018). The imperative to ‘give hope’ is not confined to politicians, however. One need only browse through the list of educational charities working with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds—organisations with names such as Giving Children Hope, Giving Hope, Giving Hope Inc., the Giving Hope Network, and Artists Giving Hope. The discourse of ‘giving hope’ has created a market in which organisations promote hope-giving resources or present themselves as fitting providers of England’s Academies and free schools. The Oasis group, for example, one of the largest sponsors of Academy schools in England, presents its mission as one of ‘raising aspirations’ and ‘bringing hope’ (OasisUK 2007). Bringing hope—that phrase, that imperative—is everywhere, such that to be without hope is interpreted as moral failure (Morgan 2014) and giving it becomes a mission pursued, as Morgan tells us, with the passion of a zealot (Morgan 2015).

There is a considerable body of research exploring the relationship between hope and education. In his highly influential book on *Emotional Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman claimed that hope ‘plays a surprisingly potent role in life’ and is a significant factor in explaining differences in educational attainment (Goleman 1996, 87). Subsequent research, heavily influenced—as was Goleman—by positive psychology, has sought to support Goleman’s claims. To give some specific examples of work in this area:

- it is claimed that children with high levels of hope have better school attendance, make greater use of student support resources, and achieve higher grades (Acosta 2017; Ciarrochi et al. 2007; Davidson, Feldman and Margalit 2012; Feldman and Kubota 2015; Levi et al. 2013; Lopez 2013b; Marques et al. 2015; Rand 2009; Rand, Martin and Shea 2011; Snyder et al. 2002). The link between hope and attainment is the source of considerable research, and some studies suggest that hope is a stronger predictor of academic achievement than measures of intelligence, personality, self-esteem, previous

academic achievement, or entrance exam results (Day et al. 2010; Gallagher, Marques and Lopez 2016; Lopez 2010).

- there are plenty of studies pointing to the importance of hope for teachers and schools (Bullough and Hall-Kenyon 2011; Collinson, Killeavy and Stephenson 2000; Edgoose 2010; Lopez 2013b; Shade 2006; Sezgin and Erdogan 2015; te Riele 2008, 2010).

Teachers animated by hope are said to be able to create excitement about the future, teach children how to confront obstacles and overcome problems, model a hopeful lifestyle and promote strengths-based development (Lopez 2010; Snyder 2005). There are case-studies of inspirational hope-driven teachers (Freedom Writer Teachers 2009; Schmidt and Whitmore 2010) and headteachers (Halpin 2003) who are said to offer models of how hope can transform educational practice and engage students in the educational process. Hopeful teachers are driven by a greater sense of personal responsibility (Eren 2017) and, at their best, become ‘hope generators’ (Roebben 2016).

- the importance of high-hope parents has also been emphasised, with research claiming, for example, to show a correlation between the hopefulness of parents and the life satisfaction and academic attainment of their children (Jiang, Huebner and Hills 2013). Resources of all kinds exist to bolster the hope of parents who want to help their children achieve their dreams. The bestselling *Great Big Book of Hope*, for example, offers detailed guidance on how parents can enhance their children’s hopeful orientation toward the future (McDermott and Snyder 2000).

- the significance of hope is also stressed in relation to other constructs such as happiness, well-being and resilience—key motifs within educational policy discourse. Thus, hope is presented as a key predictor of resilience and studies strive to show its importance as a protective factor in education (Davidson, Feldman and Margalit 2012).

There is a wealth of literature suggesting that hope is a significant contributor to

psychological and physical well-being (e.g. Alarcon, Bowling and Khazon 2013; Ciarrochi et al. 2015; Demirli, Türkmen and Serkan Arik 2015; Marques, Lopez and Pais-Ribeiro 2011; Yang, Zhang and Kou 2016). And meta-analyses of empirical studies identify hope as a strong predictor of happiness (Alarcon, Bowling and Khazon 2013).

All too often, however, hope is treated as an unproblematic concept. Sometimes it is simply assumed that we know what ‘hope’ is and that its importance for education is plain to see. Kraftl (2008) highlights the elision of childhood and hope—children as the future, childhood as a repository for hope, childhood as a period of natural future-oriented hopefulness—that is so easily and uncritically made by policymakers and childhood researchers. At other times hope is reduced to, or is treated as just another word for, aspiration or ambition, as if the hopes of young people consist of little more than future education or career aspirations (DfE 2014; HM Government 2011; Cummings et al. 2012; Gorard, Huat See and Davies 2012).

Equally narrow are the standard models of hope used within clinical and educational psychology. Rick Snyder’s hope theory, in particular, has informed a range of educational interventions designed to ‘give’ hope to young people (Snyder 2002). There are scales developed to measure state and trait hope and a host of hope activities, resources and therapies available (Lopez, Snyder and Pedrotti 2003; Martin-Krumm et al. 2015; Snyder 2000). The field of ‘hope studies’—studies *exploring* the experience of hope—is dominated by positive psychology. When Jaklin Eliot referred to the emergence of a hope industry, she also said that the baton of hope had been passed from theology to psychology (2005, 27). Once understood primarily as a theological virtue, hope now becomes an individual psychological state or trait, a dimension of human experience that can be quickly measured via a questionnaire and just as quickly treated through a hope intervention. A recent article in

the *Journal of Happiness Studies* had the title ‘Can hope be changed in 90 minutes?’ The answer was a resounding yes (Feldman and Dreher 2012).

Hope, however, is a complex category of human experience. Pinning down the characteristics of hope has been compared to catching the spring breeze (Li, Mitton-Kukner and Yeom 2009). It cannot simply be reduced to aspiration or self-efficacy, or, rather, the construction of hope as such is something that needs to be critically interrogated (e.g. Brown 2013). Nor is hope a singular experience that can be captured in a standardised hope scale (te Riele, 2010). As I shall argue in the following section, there are different *modes* of hoping. This means that different individuals and social classes, at different historical junctures, embedded in different social relations, enjoying different opportunities and facing different constraints, will experience hope in different ways. What I also argue—and this is important—is that the hope activities, interventions and curricula promoted by positive psychology need to be explored critically.

Modes of Hoping

An important distinction can be made between two sets of questions: those concerning the nature of hope (what hope *is*) and those concerning its characteristics (what it is *to* hope). Regarding the former, the most common response is to suggest that hope is an emotion of some kind. What kind of emotion, however, is open to dispute. Some are doubtful that hope operates as a ‘basic’ human emotion (Nesse 1999) while others regard it as the most ‘human’ emotion of all (Bloch 1995). Some see the emotion of hope as a biologically-based reaction shaped by natural selection (Maier and Watkins 2000; Tiger 1999) while others see it as a socially constructed pattern of behaviour which is learned (Averill, Catlin and Chon 1990). Some include hope—together with desire, confidence, anxiety and despair—among the list of

‘prospective’ emotions (Rycroft 1979) while others claim that hope is a unique emotion which straddles the border separating the passions from reason (Drahos 2004). Many dismiss the idea that hope is an emotion at all and characterise it instead as a cognitive phenomenon (Waterworth 2004), a cognitive process with emotional sequelae (Snyder 2002). Others suggest that hope should be considered an attitude, disposition or state of mind (Crapanzano 2003; Day 1969; Godfrey 1987; Pettit 2004). Or is it rather an emotion which *resembles* a state of mind (Bar-Tal 2001)? Or perhaps an instinct, impulse, intuition or subliminal ‘sense’ (Mandel 2002; Ricoeur 1970; Taussig 2002)? The intricacies of these debates need not overly concern us here. All we need take from them is the recognition that hope is a complex and multifaceted aspect of human experience with emotional, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions (Dufault and Martocchio 1985; Farran, Herth and Poppovich 1995; McGreer 2004; Ojala, 2017).

Regarding its characteristics, there is a tendency—within the fields of philosophy and psychology in particular—for researchers to insist that they, rather than others, have captured *the* experience of hope *in its singularity*. Acosta, for example, bemoans the fact that educators ‘do not understand the true definition of hope’ (which turns out to be Rick Snyder’s, because no other definitions are considered) (Acosta 2017, 307). Hope is not, however, an undifferentiated experience. While in its broadest sense—in the sense that we need to distinguish hope from wish, desire, belief, expectation, optimism, faith, etc.—it can be understood as *a positive orientation toward an uncertain future good*, the objective of hope and the characteristics of its positive orientation can vary in significant ways. Hope can be experienced in different modes. Each mode of hoping is distinguished by its own particular orientation toward the objective of hope and by a particular matrix of cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions. Each mode of hoping affords a different sense of human agency and a different orientation toward oneself, others and the world. And the *mode* in which hope is

experienced at any particular time, in any particular culture, within any particular group, is the result of a complex process of social mediation.

Hope, then, is not a singular undifferentiated experience but a socially mediated human capacity experienced in different modes with varying affective-cognitive-behavioural dimensions. In other writings (see Webb 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2009a, 2013a) I have developed a taxonomy of modes of hoping. Drawing on, and bringing together, research from the fields of philosophy, psychology, the health sciences, theology, politics, and sociology, I identify five principal modes of hoping: patient, critical, sound, resolute and transformative. The characteristics of these are presented in summary form in Appendix A. The framework draws on literature referred to in other chapters of this book (e.g. Day, Snyder, Marcel, all discussed by Nancy Snow in Chapter 1, and Bloch, the focus of much of Akiba Lerner's chapter). Rather than presenting these varied readings as merely different *perspectives* on hope, I take the different perspectives as expressive of the complexity of hope as an experience. While recognising, of course, that the taxonomy is an artifice that cannot possibly capture hope in *all* its complexity and fluidity, I do consider it useful as an analytical frame. It suggests that the characteristics of hope as a positive orientation toward an uncertain future good can vary immensely depending on the mode in which it is experienced. Thus, for example: hope can be active or passive; secure and trusting or restless and agitated; careful and realistic or ambitious and risky; resigned and accepting or passionate and critical; directed towards individual privatised goals or towards expansive social goals; directed towards a future that defies representation or a future given clear shape and form; apolitical or politically charged; a conservative force or a subversive one.

Much of my research over recent years can be located within the field of critical pedagogy (e.g. Webb 2009b, 2010, 2012, 2013b). More specifically I have been concerned to tease out what we might understand by *utopian* pedagogy (Webb 2016, 2017, 2018). Here, of

course, one encounters *hope* all the time. Paulo Freire famously declared that ‘without hope there is no way we can even start thinking about education’ (Freire 2007, 87) and writers such as Henry Giroux have spent their careers developing radical pedagogies of hope (Giroux 2004, 2007, 2011). What I have argued time and again, however, is that there is nothing inherently radical or subversive about hope. Pedagogies of hope can serve to reproduce social relations as well as to transform them (Webb 2013a). In exploring the relationship between hope and education, we need to extend our gaze beyond the mainstream focus on its value for particular individuals or sets of individuals, be they students, teachers or parents. We need to look in particular at the *construction* of hope—the ways in which the experience of hope is shaped and organised in, by and through channels such as political discourse, the media, art, literature, and, of course, the education system. Education is clearly a key channel through which we are taught to orient ourselves toward an uncertain future; a key channel through which hope is constructed. It is important, therefore, to examine the role of education in constructing shared objectives of hope—affectively aligning us with objectives that circulate as social goods (Ahmed 2010)—and in framing appropriate cognitive, affective and behavioural responses. As I suggested at the outset, hope is not an unmitigated good. A key concern is how subjectivities are shaped through the construction of hope; how the construction of hope teaches us to feel, appraise, express, and behave in accordance with certain cognitive, affective and behavioural frames.

The Construction of Hope within Contemporary Policy

Appeals to ‘hope’ are sometimes very explicit (Obama’s 2008 presidential campaign, for example). So too resources for ‘giving’ hope (the manuals produced by Snyder’s hope theory team—e.g Lopez 2013a; Snyder et al. 1997—include chapters on ‘teaching hope’). Any

rigorous study of hope cannot, however, confine itself to policies, practices and texts that explicitly evoke the word ‘hope’. Indeed, it would be a mistake to regard hope as the focus of this or that particular policy. Rather, *the construction of hope is at work across a range of contemporary policies and practices*. One particular area of interest is the infrastructure of emotional management erected in the UK. When emotional literacy became a mainstream educational buzzword in the late 1990s, it was presented as the antidote to moral malaise, holding out the promise of a brighter future. As Goleman put it, ‘while the everyday substance of emotional literacy classes may look mundane, the outcome—decent human beings—is more critical to our future than ever’ (Goleman 1996, 263). Influenced heavily by Goleman and positive psychology, the first decade of the new century saw the rolling out of, *inter alia*, the National Healthy Schools Programme (NHSP); Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE); Citizenship Education; Every Child Matters; and the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme.

At the heart of these pedagogies of emotional well-being is the construction of hope. What we have here is a policy ensemble framed explicitly in terms of instilling in children and young people a future-oriented understanding of themselves, others and the world, characterised by a range of specific cognitive, affective and behavioural attributes. The aim is to teach children and young people to think, feel and behave in a certain way as they orient themselves positively toward the future (e.g. DfES 2005). To give a specific example, the aim of Citizenship Education when it was introduced was to construct a shared objective of hope—an objective towards which we share an orientation as being good, an objective that provides a shared horizon with positive affective value. The objective of hope to be constructed through citizenship education was the democratic process; through citizenship education we were to be taught to value the democratic process as being good (QCA 1998). Not only was the objective of hope identified—the objective towards which we need to orient

ourselves if ‘potentially explosive alienation’ was to be overcome (QCA 1998, 16)—but we were also told how to align ourselves cognitively, affectively and behaviourally towards this objective (QCA 1998, 44). In developing the requisite values, dispositions, skills, aptitudes, concepts, knowledge and understanding (all laid out in dizzying detail), citizenship education was tasked with constructing a positive orientation towards an uncertain future—an orientation toward a future good, difficult but possible to obtain.

The need to ‘bring’ and ‘give’ hope to children and young people deemed to be without it is a much-repeated explicit rallying cry. Less explicitly, though perhaps more importantly, at work across a range of policy areas is the very construction of hope, training children and young people how to orient themselves positively towards an uncertain future. But, of course, hope is not a singular undifferentiated experience. Thus, we need to look at the *modes* of hoping constructed through education and explore the complex, tense and potentially unstable operation of hope within contemporary schooling. A crucial consideration here is the *privatisation* of hope. The private sphere has become ‘the only space in which to imagine any sense of hope, pleasure, or possibility’ (Giroux 2003, 144) such that models of ‘the good life’ have become increasingly cut off from models of ‘the good society’ (Bauman 2003). As Thompson puts it, ‘hope generally resides now in individual liberation through money or fame or both. The dreams of a better world are dreams of a better world for oneself’ (2013, 5). Objectives of hope have become increasingly individualised and privatised.

The discourse of hope within the school simultaneously (but not necessarily harmoniously) teaches children to think, feel and behave in accordance with patient, sound and resolute hope while hope in its critical and transformative—i.e. socialised—modes are more or less effectively (but not completely) negated (see Appendix A). Children are taught simultaneously to direct their hopes towards objectives that are realistic and achievable given

things as they are (sound hope) and yet to perceive themselves as capable of attaining any personal objective, even in spite of the evidence, if they engage in determined goal pursuit and effective agency thinking (resolute hope). In outlining *Positive for Youth*, the single plan for young people in England, the government urged young people to train their hopes on objectives that are both ‘ambitious and pragmatic’ (HM Government 2011, 34). To reach for the stars and keep one’s feet on the ground. At the same time, a discourse of *patient hope* operates to encourage the domesticating of circumstances; making oneself feel at home amongst the trials and tribulations of life in the secure trust that such trials have meaning (a key aim of both Citizenship Education and Positive for Youth). Moral literacy goes hand in hand here with emotional literacy. A key aspect of contemporary emotional pedagogy is character formation, instilling in children the virtues associated with patient hope: trust, patience, and responsibility.

Critics have described the emotional curriculum as a powerful form of social engineering encouraging dependence on ritualised forms of emotional support (Ecclestone and Hayes 2009a); a moralising normative political project disguised as value-neutral applied science (Dixon 2012; Ecclestone 2012; Miller 2008; Rietti 2008); and a mode of social control heavily regulating appropriate forms of emotional expression, modelled on a deficit analysis of children and young people, and serving to individualise social problems (Burman 2009; Cigman 2008; Gillies 2011; McLaughlin 2008). Using the modes of hoping taxonomy as an analytical frame, we can add here that pedagogies of resolute hope encourage the privatisation and individualisation of hope. Hope is increasingly directed towards private goals to be achieved via individualised means (by means of “willpower” and “waypower,” to use the language of hope psychology). Pedagogies of resolute hope are harnessed in the service of neoliberal human capital formation, as the objectives of hope (the individual, private goods towards which hope is directed) are increasingly narrowed so that the hopes of

young people are understood almost solely in terms of educational “success” and employability skills. At the same time, pedagogies of patient hope operate as a form of moral instruction that guide and goad us to readjust our inner attitude towards others and the world so that we develop secure trust in the meaningfulness of our shared journey and learn to wait with patience amidst life’s trials. Patient hope provides the backdrop (a *positive resignation* to the status quo; a *positive acceptance* that things make sense, *resilience* in the face of precarity) against which individuals pursue their privatised goals. A particular kind of fortitude and resilience is required in order to cope with the uncertainties of contemporary life. Thus, the role of education is to form subjectivities able to endure in patient hope as they struggle to sell their labour power and find a foothold amidst increasingly austere and precarious conditions.

Of key concern here is how emotional curricula and pedagogies serve to negate the expression of critical hope. Certain feelings are identified as ‘good’ and in need of enhancement and others as ‘bad’ and in need of inhibiting (Cigman 2008). Bad, or ‘uncomfortable’ feelings, include agitation, frustration, anxiety, and restlessness, and students who display the characteristics of critical hope—a yearning, a feeling of unfulfilment, a protest born of the sense that ‘something’s missing—are pathologised, marked out as personally lacking and in need of therapeutic intervention. As for transformative hope, characterised by a profound confidence in the collective powers of human agency, discursive work across the cultural field has ensured that utopian possibilities stretching beyond the narrow confines of the ‘realistic’ are derided as fanciful and have no place in the field of education (see Webb 2009b, 2016).¹ The work of Kathryn Ecclestone is important here, highlighting as she does how emotional pedagogies erode the idea of humans as conscious agents who realise their potential through projects to transform the world and replace it with a

narrow introspective view of humans as diminished, fragile and vulnerable (Ecclestone 2012; Ecclestone and Hayes 2009a, 2009b).

The Need for Ethnographic Research

In spite of its significance within policy discourse, few detailed empirical studies of ‘hope’ exist within the social sciences. A special issue of the journal *Children’s Geographies*, devoted to the relationship between education and aspirations, concluded that further research was needed on ‘children’s hopes for the future and the factors which influence the dispositions of individuals’ (Pimlott-Wilson 2011, 112). This has yet to be forthcoming.² There is need for ethnographic research exploring the extent to which different modes of hoping are inscribed within, and constructed through, different emotional pedagogies and curricula; looking at how emotional pedagogies work to shape children’s identities and subjectivities, their orientation towards themselves, others and the world; delving beneath the commonplace assertion that hope is significant for education (for students, teachers and policy-makers alike) and exploring in detail the characteristics and dynamics of hope as constructed and experienced within particular educational sites and settings. Key questions that require detailed exploration include:

The experience of hope

How is hope experienced and practiced by young people across different social sites and contexts?

How do young people make meaning of hope?

Conflicting experiences of hope

To what extent is there dissonance between, for example, hope as constructed and experienced within the family and hope as constructed and experienced within the school?

How do these different experiences of hope serve to shape young people's identities?

The experience of hopelessness

How are low aspirations, low hopes and hopelessness identified and treated within social policy and practice?

What is it to live life as a young person deemed to be without hope?

'Giving' hope

What does 'giving hope' look like? How is hope *given* to young people through education and other institutions?

How does the operation of hope impact on young people's orientations toward themselves, others, the world and the future?

These questions connect with two other areas of research concerned with childhood and the future. The first concerns the future-orientedness of childhood itself. For a long time, childhood was interpreted predominantly as a process of becoming; an unfolding project in which "becoming" relates to the transformation as children move into adulthood' (Harden et al. 2012). From the late 1990s, however, the construction of childhood as *becoming* was challenged by the emergent paradigm of childhood as *being*, in which children are regarded as competent social actors actively constructing their own childhood (Christensen and James 2008; James, Jenks and Prout 1998; Mayall 2002). Childhood as becoming was criticised for positioning children as incomplete, lacking, a work-in-progress. The emphasis was placed on who the child will become rather than on who the child is, with the discourse of 'development' serving to structure, stratify and discipline children's experiences of time (Christensen, James and Jenks 2001).

Understanding future narratives is important because the way we orient ourselves to the future shapes our present actions and redefines our pasts (Harden et al. 2012). Further research is needed to develop our understanding of what has been termed a ‘being and becomings’ approach, which explores the ways in which children’s orientations toward the future help shape the experiences of being a child and contribute to the formation of childhood in the here and now (Lee 2002; Qvortrup 2004; Uprichard 2008). We need not afford childhood any special relationship with hope or the future here; there is no suggestion that an abstract notion of the future is somehow inscribed within a romanticised construction of childhood (Kraftl 2008). Rather, exploring the role of education in constructing shared objectives of hope and framing appropriate cognitive, affective and behavioural responses is needed in order to examine how power operates in and through the construction of hope and the ways in which this impacts on children’s agency.

The second area of research is concerned with the increasing uncertainty of the future to which we orient ourselves. It has been suggested that traditional narratives of the lifecourse (constructed around, for example, class, gender and age) have been eroded. The ‘destandardisation’ and ‘individualisation’ of the lifecourse has given rise to both increased uncertainty regarding the future and the growing significance of individual choices (Beck 1992). In late modernity we no longer follow a traditional lifecourse but live ‘life as a planning project’ (Beck-Gernsheim 1996). Nowotny (1994), however, talks of the acceleration of time, with more activities (work, consumption, play, care) having to be compressed into a shorter timespan, while technologies ensuring that we are always available ensure also that the possibilities far exceed what can be achieved within any timeframe. The future is taken into the here and now and loses its meaning. Rather than living life as a planning project, ‘people are unable to think about the long term much less plan for it. Lived experience is imprisoned in an all pervasive extended present’ (Nowotny 1994, 517).

Research with children and young people has offered some support for both positions. Brannen and Nilsen, for example, suggest that young people, time-pressured and future-anxious, find it difficult to imagine the future or engage in forms of ‘life-planning’ (Brannen 2005; Brannen and Nilsen 2002, 2007). Others, however, claim that young people do plan for the future and have a linear forward-looking concept of the life-course (Anderson et al. 2005). There are, however, only a limited number of studies that explicitly explore the future orientations of children. The studies that do exist tend to treat ‘hope’ as synonymous with ‘ambition’ and ‘aspiration’ (Devadason 2008), focusing narrowly on employment aspirations (Harden et al. 2012), or they conflate it with other constructs such as faith and optimism (Cook 2016). As Bryant and Ellard rightly note, what is lacking within childhood and youth studies is research exploring ‘how hope is produced through social processes and spaces’ (2015, 495). The limited research that exists describes the hopes of young people (or rather, narrows the scope of hope to descriptions of weak proxy constructs such as aspiration and ambition), but ‘it does not speak to questions about what social processes produce or shut down hope’ (Bryant and Ellard 2015, 495).

Concluding Remarks

Research on hope and education has been dominated by positive psychology. Hope is conceptualised as a singular state or trait which can be measured via eight questions on a questionnaire and transformed through short classroom interventions. It is assumed that hope is a ‘good’ and that what we all need is more of it. Studies within the field of ‘hope theory’ demonstrate the good things that come when students, parents and teachers possess high levels of hope. The imperative to *give children hope* is central to contemporary policy discourse. Untheorized, and generally conflated with other constructs such as ambition or

aspiration, ‘hope’ becomes a thing that some groups of young people lack (the poor and marginalised) and ‘giving’ these young people hope becomes a mission to be pursued with the passion of a zealot.

Hope is a more complex category of human experience than this. It is not an undifferentiated experience that is ‘good’, but rather a socially mediated human capacity that can be experienced in different modes and with complex effects. Hope is constructed across a range of social sites—family, community, education, media, art and literature, public political discourse—and the modes in which hope is constructed within and across these sites may be mutually reinforcing or may produce dissonance. Within education, for example, the twin operation of resolute hope (aim for the stars) and sound hope (keep your feet on the ground) points to an instability within the operation of hope, creating a dissonance and sense of unease that could (potentially at least) underpin a more restless, agitated, critical mode of hoping.

Further research is needed in order fully to understand the complexities of hope as a human experience. What is lacking in hope studies is any detailed ethnographic research exploring how the material, social, cultural and discursive construction of positive orientations toward an uncertain future help shape children and young people’s identities and subjectivities in the present. Of particular interest is how subjectivities are shaped through the construction of hope within the school; how the material and discursive construction of hope teaches us to feel, appraise, express and behave in accordance with certain cognitive, emotional and behavioural frames. This chapter has offered some contextual and conceptual reflections. As Kraftl rightly suggests, however, ‘the task is to understand how hope is figured through the matters, routines, and practices of everyday lives’ (Kraftl 2008, 86).

Notes

1. It is interesting to note here how ‘realism’ has become inscribed within putatively ‘radical’ educational theory and research. Thus, the dominant conceptualisation of hope within the field of education studies is the ‘sound hope’ outlined in my taxonomy. In developing a philosophy of hope for working with marginalized youth, for example, Kitty te Riele calls for a hope that is ‘attainable’ and ‘sound’ (2010, 39). This resonates with the notion of ‘complex’ hope as developed by educationalists working at the Institute of Education in London (Grace 1994; Halpin 2003; Thrupp and Tomlinson 2005) and the ‘robust hope’ project involving educational researchers at the University of Western Sydney (Arthur and Sawyer 2009; Sawyer et al 2007; Singh 2007). For both complex and robust hope, the key characteristics are that the objective of hope is realistic and is grounded in a sound assessment of the evidence. While inspiring hope is presented as the educator’s duty, it is also their responsibility to avoid the kind of hope derided as fanciful, naïve, unrealistic and ‘hokey’ (Duncan-Andrade, 2009). The kind of ‘sound’ hope that educators are called to embrace and nurture is one that offers no illusions and is grounded in a realistic grasp of structural constraints (Carlson, 2005). Even those such as Giroux, working in the radical tradition of Freirean critical pedagogy, insist on the need for a utopian *realism*. For a critique of ‘sound hope’ and ‘utopian realism’ as they operate within contemporary educational discourse, see Webb 2009b, 2013a, 2013b, 2016.
2. This is recognised by Thomas Grant, whose research with working-class young people in Leicester, England, responds to the call for further research on children’s hopes for the future (Grant 2017). Grant applies the modes of hoping framework outlined in this chapter to the study of the role of habitus in helping shape and

organise young people's 'hope', understood as a complex multi-dimensional construct.

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Appendix A: Modes of Hoping

	Objective of hope	Cognitive-affective dimension of hope	Behavioural dimension of hope
<p>Patient hope</p> <p>See, for example, Marcel (1962) and Dauenhauer (1986) for classic expressions of this mode of hoping.</p>	<p><i>Unrepresentable enroutedness</i></p> <p>hope underpinned by a sense that we as human beings remain as yet incomplete and are travelling the path to ourselves. Hope directed toward the ontological journey itself and is characterised by the conviction that being <i>en route</i> makes sense and has meaning. Hope directed toward an open-ended objective that defies attempts to map it.</p>	<p><i>Secure trust</i></p> <p>a basic trust in the underlying goodness of the world; it affords a feeling of safety and security; and it enables one to relax and to let life take its course. In the end all shall be well.</p>	<p><i>Courageous patience</i></p> <p>to hope is to take one’s time and await an essentially unforeseen future. In hope one stands steadfast amidst life’s trials and humbly though courageously perseveres, securely confident that a solution to life’s trials will be found.</p>
<p>Critical hope</p>	<p><i>Negation of the negative</i></p> <p>hope directed toward a better future, a vision or sense of a world without</p>	<p><i>Passionate longing</i></p> <p>the experience of critical hope is captured by the phrase ‘something’s</p>	<p><i>Critique and protest</i></p> <p>hope is experienced as the compulsion to critically negate the conditions</p>

<p>See, for example, Bloch (1995), Moltmann (1967), and Giroux (2011)</p>	<p>hunger, oppression and humiliation but which defies the hypostasis of ‘closed’ or ‘final’ representation.</p>	<p>missing’. Hope is experienced as a restless, future-oriented longing; a sense of lack and unfulfilment; a response to an inchoate future that calls to the present.</p>	<p>giving rise to the sense of unfulfilment. To live in hope is to critically engage with the suffering of the present while remaining open to the future. A restless, future-oriented protest, criticising present negatives in light of their ultimate negation.</p>
<p>Sound hope See, for example, Day (1991), Bovens (1999) and te Riele (2010).</p>	<p><i>Realistic objective</i> the objective of hope should be realistic, grounded in a sound assessment of the evidence, recognise the obstacles confronting its realisation and be vulnerable to evidence that counts against it.</p>	<p><i>Evidence-based probability estimate</i> in order to prevent the hoper from losing their grip on reality (false hope), ‘sound hope’ is based on a careful study of the evidence and an accurate calculation of the likelihood of one’s hoped-for objective coming to pass (probability >0<1).</p>	<p><i>Goal-directed action in some cases</i> the careful survey of the evidence characteristic of sound hope leads the hoper to identify which objectives are worth pursuing and which are not. Some hopes would be considered less than fair gambles and not worth actively pursuing while those</p>

			considered more than fair gambles may prompt goal pursuit.
Resolute hope See, for example, Snyder (2002) and Pettit (2004).	<i>Ambitious high-risk goals</i> hope operates against the evidence, 'against the odds', and in pursuit of personal goals that the sound hoper would reject as unrealistic. Hope directed toward ambitious personal goals with a risk of failure and disappointment.	<i>Cognitive resolve</i> To hope resolutely is to galvanise one's cognitions in a way that overcomes the burden of evidence. To hope in this mode is to assume that one has the freedom to initiate events on the basis of goals that one sets oneself, and to assume that the world is fluid, plastic and capable of being moulded by one's agency as it moves along the pathways one has identified.	<i>Goal-directed action in cases of less than fair gambles</i> the hoper strives to realise goals that the sound hoper would have dismissed as less than fair gambles. In encountering failure, the self- perceptions of the resolute hoper mean they respond by devising different pathways or directing their energies toward different objectives.
Transformative hope	<i>Shared utopian dreams</i> hope directed toward a historical plan for a qualitatively different society, a	<i>profound confidence in the power of collective human agency</i>	<i>Mutually-efficacious social praxis</i> hope is a commitment to goal-directed social praxis through which human

<p>See, for example, Freire (1970) and Gutiérrez (2001).</p>	<p>liberating utopia shared by members of a collectivity.</p>	<p>a consciousness that human beings are self-organising and self-determining historical agents. Hope is a sense of possibility grounded in a profound confidence in the capacity of human beings to construct, both imaginatively and materially, new ways of organising life.</p>	<p>beings become the agents of their own destiny and willfully strive to create a new and better society.</p>
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