

## Chapter 6

# Conclusion

Any one policy is a battleground for the four orientations of education. Any one policy represents a point in the broader political and historical debate about education wherein a dominant orientation (globally, nationally, within a state or sector) is being further affirmed, developed, tested, challenged or even usurped. Any one policy is not actually ‘one’ policy at all, but potentially re-interpreted, alternated from or opposed by any one nation/state/region, schooling sector, school, parent, teacher or student such that the result is a plethora of different (and evolving) policies in practice and experience. What is dominant within one subject area may not be dominant within another; there are more conservative aspects of education right through to aspects that are decidedly post modern. It is for education policy researchers, interpreters and implementers to map out the landscape of education policy so that the manifestation of these orientations across it in time and space may be ascertained. It is also for us as education stakeholders (of any kind) to affect the map itself, to see what needs a bit of reconstruction and better ‘town planning’, what needs preservation and protection. Part of this task involves deciding which goals are the most desirable for education overall, but also its separate aspects, in contextual and open-minded inquiry. The current dominations of particular orientations in education policy are not asserted as how it ‘should’ be, but how it ‘is’ in the current state of education trends. Considering the full breadth of other possibilities for our education policy is essential if policy critique is to have any kind of deeper meaning beyond simply looking at simplistic descriptive statistics and figures on whether or not established policies—which may or may not be useful—are being followed.