



# CCE Seminar

Monday 19th May, 13:00-14:00, DMB GS5

## Young people, optimism and nature: a fragile balance for education

*Professor Margaret Robertson, La Trobe University*

### Abstract

'Student voice', 'learning for engagement' and 'students' well-being' are frequent phrases used in project titles for education research. As John Dewey taught us more than one century ago the lived experiences of students are of paramount importance for teachers to understand. How well we do this is reflected in the responses young people make to questions related to their favourite places, places of concern, and advice for teachers on how best to teach for students' continuing engagement. With examples drawn from projects that include the 1996 Land-Use UK project I try to identify the patterns in students' responses to these questions. A recurring theme relates to nature, access to open spaces and a sense of restriction or general pessimism about green spaces. Questions that deserve some reflective comment include: Have we learnt anything in this time period or are regulatory measures making the task for teachers and teaching more difficult? How are young people faring in this complicated world of information / knowledge paradoxes?

Margaret Robertson is Professor of Education at La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia. Her research interests include seeking ways to better understand young people's relationships with place and developing strategies to include their voices in decision making. A research quandary of personal interest is how they juggle the competing demands of living locally and communicating globally. For a brief time a former researcher in the Faculty of Education with the Land Use UK Project, Margaret was first introduced to Cambridge by the late Dr Rex Walford. Her interests stem from a long career associated with Geographical Education in schools and higher education.



**ALL WELCOME - Refreshments available**

**Centre for Commonwealth Education**

Faculty of Education  
University of Cambridge  
[www.educ.cam.ac.uk/centres/cce](http://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/centres/cce)  
bsjh2@cam.ac.uk Tel: 01223 767680

