Reimagining the learning profession: Transforming education for the future

Educators
AUSTRALIA

Learning Creates
AUSTRALIA

CSE CENTRE FOR STRATEGIC EDUCATION

Leading educational thinking and practice

Contents

CSE CENTRE FOR STRATEGIC EDUCATION
Leading educational thinking and practice

This paper is intended to encourage discussion of major issues in education. Views expressed by the authors do not necessarily represent views of Centre for Strategic Education. Comments on papers are most welcome.

This publication is designed as a discussion paper. It has been jointly developed by representatives of Learning Creates Australia, Centre for Strategic Education (CSE) and Educators Australia. The writers invite readers to provide feedback and insights.

Introduction

Relationships and the dynamics between educators, students and communities are at the heart of the learning experience. Educators around the world are under pressure to solve increasingly complex problems about how we can future-proof our learning systems to improve learning outcomes and the learning experience.

Preparing young people for a world that will require them to keep on learning, in different roles, throughout their life, is a unifying concept. Unfortunately, right now, too many teachers – and their students – are surviving and not thriving.

Education has the potential to contribute to how we all adapt to rapid advancements but, for it to keep pace with global change, the interests, health and wellbeing needs of young people must be prioritised. The recently released Schools Plus report reveals that since 2020 children's wellbeing has become schools' highest priority, stating that

> *... without a foundation of positive wellbeing and mental health, children can struggle at school, fall behind in their learning and fail to develop the healthy relationships and self-confidence they need to succeed. This can have lifelong consequences for both individuals and the community.*

(Schools Plus, 2024)

Too many young people are disengaged from learning and school. Those at the greatest risk of disengagement – young people from low socio-economic backgrounds, those experiencing homelessness or other childhood trauma, young people with disabilities, and First Nations young people – are the most vulnerable, and their futures are most at stake. Teachers should be empowered with the tools and confidence to create changed environments and to implement strategies and approaches that can positively impact learning, engagement and wellbeing outcomes, reducing absenteeism and minimising classroom disruptions.

Our learning system must prepare young people for future employment, attract a new teaching workforce and harness the opportunities that AI and new technologies present. Also, for our learning system to be working well, it needs to tackle the global pressures that are causing ever-deeper inequity. The Education Commission estimates that if current trends continue, more than 800 million children and youth will not be on track to learn the skills needed to thrive now and into the future (Education Commission, 2019).

… it appears that the one-teacher-one-classroom model is no longer fit for purpose.

Given the complexity of our world and the multifaceted needs of students, there is clearly no 'one-size-fits-all' approach that will serve the development of our learning system. There is no blueprint or coordinated impression of a preferred future state that we can easily implement. We won't find ourselves at a moment in time where we can switch from one way of doing things to another.

We can start, however, to join the dots between hundreds – if not thousands – of examples of leadership and innovation in schools and jurisdictions, documented in a plethora of globally published papers, some of which are referenced in this discussion paper.

The Australian Teacher Workforce Data has revealed 6,000 teachers left the profession within a single year, and only half of teaching students are finishing their degrees. On a global scale, the reality is an estimated 69 million teachers must be recruited globally by 2030 if we are to meet our sustainable development goals (UNESCO, 2016). Teacher shortages are also particularly persistent in communities with socio-economic disadvantage, with a lack of teacher availability around particular subject areas. This often means that many students miss out on key learning opportunities in subjects or disciplines where their passions and interests could be nurtured.

Those who are delivering learning through the one-teacher-one-classroom model – instructing from the front of a large class – are increasingly isolated, ill-supported and stretched; it appears that the one-teacher-one-classroom model is no longer fit for purpose. Like other professions and disciplines, the education workforce will evolve and reinvent itself as new generations bring their own ideas and experiences to the table.

Together these issues raise a number of questions. What impact could these forces have on the traditional profession of teaching? What could a recruitment journey look like to fulfil this global need?

What does it mean for students, employers – or schools as a whole? What are the possible future roles we will all play and how will they change?

In response, the notion of who a teacher is and where learning can happen is part of the emerging conversation. Globally, our education workforce is evolving to include entrepreneurs, health and welfare professionals, parents, volunteers and students themselves. So could our teachers be anthropologists, data scientists, designers, neuropsychologists, builders, pilots and nurses, carers of our country and community?

As an expanded pool of experts for the teacher workforce emerges, so too does the concept that where we learn is no longer restricted to a room, a class or even a school. We can start to broaden the map of places where formal learning can occur. The school fence can become more porous to the outside world.

In a powerful example, in Brazil's rural Amazonian community, television sets linked to satellites now give students real-time access to teachers thousands of kilometres away who are delivering study plans and lessons in engaging formats including video and animation. Over 300,000 young Brazilians have been part of the initiative, which reduced the school dropout rate by nearly half between 2008 and 2011 (Economist Impact, 2020).

> We can start to broaden the map of places where formal learning can occur. The school fence can become porous to the outside world.

In parallel, a number of jurisdictions are

> *... working to provide students with a broader range of learning opportunities than can be provided within classrooms and schools alone. They recognise that learning in the 21st century needs to draw on the resources of the wider ecosystem within which schools operate, including local community organisations, non-formal learning institutions, businesses, families and higher education institutions.*

(Masters, 2023)

Teachers are now working with young people in a range of settings – without the constraints of bricks and mortar or geographic boundaries.

While it is most likely that there will remain a role for a central hub with some kind of marked space for learning (whether that be a school, an outdoor area or community space) learning opportunities can clearly be validated and recognised without having to divide them into physical or virtual experiences.

There are many examples from various global contexts that seek to unpack the role of people and place through a revitalised learning system that is closer than we think.

The emerging role of place in learning systems

The lines between formal and informal or community-based education will continue to blur as many kinds of organisations and many kinds of curated and free-choice learning experiences contribute to increasingly diverse constellations of learning experiences.

(Knowledgeworks, 2015)

Over time, the language we use to describe the interaction between our physical learning spaces and our virtual spaces has shifted to keep pace with how technology unfolds, but also, how people respond and behave, which is often hard to predict. Hybrid learning, blended learning, remote learning, online or virtual learning – whatever the phrase – the use of technology is a defining feature.

Where we learn is not restricted to a room, a class or a school. At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, around 1.5 billion students were essentially evicted from their physical school grounds and forced to learn somewhere else. Nonetheless...

> *Despite the diversity of economic, technological and societal changes in the past decades, 'the place called school' is still the dominant model for educating young people, even if schools and schooling systems look different across the world. Our schools are deeply rooted in our societies and in our current ways of living, seeing and thinking.*

(Burns, 2022)

However, adaptive learning technologies, including AI-powered, are starting to deliver on the promise of personalised and more equitable learning. These technologies have enormous potential to improve the effectiveness and quality of education.

Simulators, with virtual and augmented reality, may allow learners, especially those in vocational education and training programs, to develop practice-oriented skills in a safe environment that mimics the workplace. AI-enabled technologies can support inclusive education and equity. AI-based accessibility tools, using techniques such as speech-to-text and auto-captioning, can serve visually-impaired or hearing-impaired learners to better participate in classroom activities. Other learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dysgraphia could also be detected sooner and addressed with a mix of technology and human interventions (OECD, 2023a).

The most interesting stories about learning come from a focus not on the mode or the aids themselves (the screens, the cameras, the computers) but on the learning design choices that people can make as they create learning experiences.

> *There are different groups of learners that are engaging in the same learning experience in different contexts; ie, the challenge of having a class of learners where some of them are present in a physical classroom with a teacher while others are learning in a different place.*

(OECD, 2023a)

As we have noted, while we anticipate that there will be a significant role for a central hub, other learning spaces will expand. These spaces can be integrated in ways which we often don't even notice as more and more of our everyday activities enhance the role of AI, science and technology.

Allowing the school gates to open up to the outside world, and to broaden the map of places that formal learning can occur, is becoming more common.

Consider the following quotes and Figure 1.

A powerful example of this is the PNGAus Partnership Secondary Schools initiative that partners 12 Australian and 12 Papua New Guinean schools to explore STEM, Literacy and capabilities like Design Thinking. To witness 180 students engaging in a design sprint to improve water, sanitation, hygiene and wellbeing in their schools across Google Meet, uploading their solution sketches to a Jamboard for digital critique, and creating video pitches to share with each other, shows the power of space when designing hybrid learning experiences.
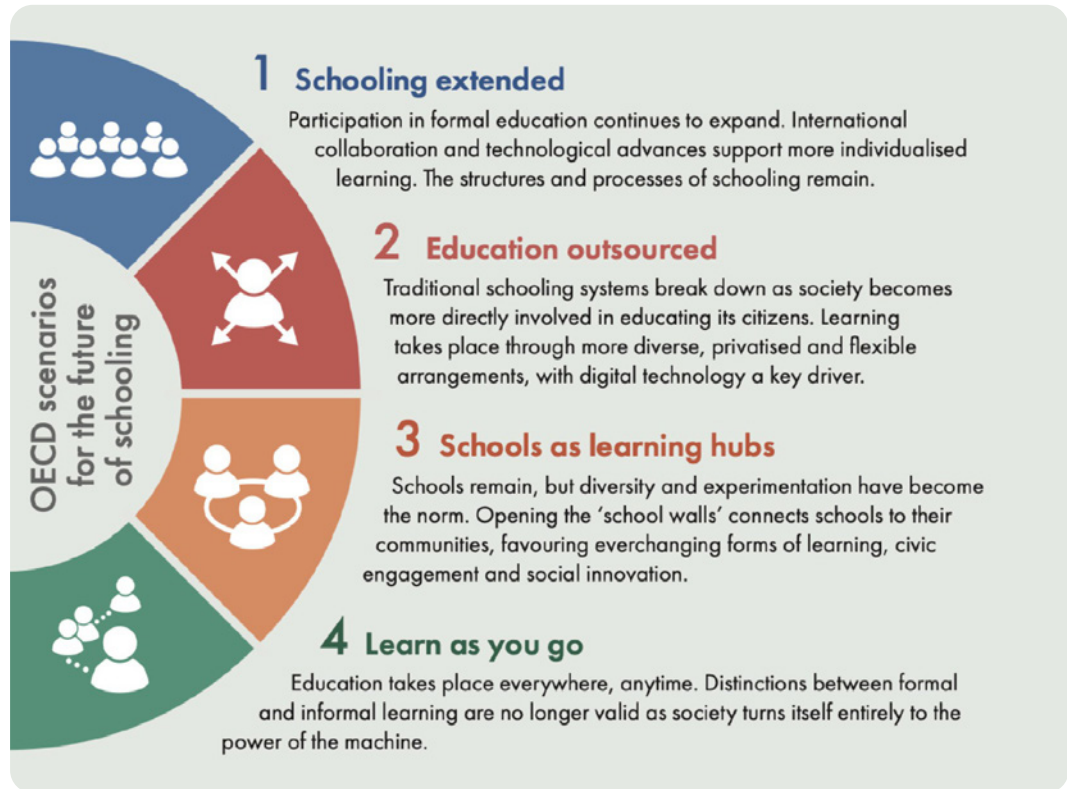
(Harte and Howarth. 2022)

At XP Schools in England, every student, every week has a learning experience offsite, in the local community, in workplaces or in museums. Learning happens anywhere. Indeed, the first experience of learning that students and teachers have at XP Schools is a week of outward-bound activities; camping, abseiling and building up the sense of belonging or, as XP say, their sense of 'crew' that sets them up for learning anything, anywhere.

(Harte and Howarth, 2022)

There is strong agreement across OECD countries that the rise of new digital technologies carries real risks – but also incredible potential. Human relationships are paramount for education. Productively using technology will require intentional collaboration among teachers, students, governments and tech businesses. It will mean trusting and empowering teachers and students to use technology well, while also establishing global standards for responsible use and holding stakeholders accountable for putting students' wellbeing first.

(OECD, 2023b)

Figure 1. The 4 OECD scenarios for the future of schooling

OECD scenarios for the future of schooling

1 Schooling extended
Participation in formal education continues to expand. International collaboration and technological advances support more individualised learning. The structures and processes of schooling remain.

2 Education outsourced
Traditional schooling systems break down as society becomes more directly involved in educating its citizens. Learning takes place through more diverse, privatised and flexible arrangements, with digital technology a key driver.

3 Schools as learning hubs
Schools remain, but diversity and experimentation have become the norm. Opening the 'school walls' connects schools to their communities, favouring everchanging forms of learning, civic engagement and social innovation.

4 Learn as you go
Education takes place everywhere, anytime. Distinctions between formal and informal learning are no longer valid as society turns itself entirely to the power of the machine.

Source: OECD (2020) *Back to the Future of Education: Four OECD Scenarios for Schooling*, OECD, Paris.

With technology taking us through different learning journeys, learning beyond the classroom, outside of the immediate school environment, ensures students gain knowledge, experiences and skills from hands-on or tangible situations that have a real connection to the world around them – from their local community through to global challenges.

Real-world learning experiences are taking place in more school settings and break with the traditional boundaries of where school learning starts and ends. This kind of learning enables more of an interaction between students' personal interests and helps to prepare them for future encounters in their personal, academic, social or professional lives. They can apply their learning to real-world situations and make stronger connections to the kinds of roles they want to take on into their future.

> *There is more project-based learning, in which students learn to work together to explore opportunities. Boundaries between disciplines are broken down. The day, the week and the term are reorganised to allow more time for learning when it is required. The hierarchical architecture of the traditional school is becoming more like a community, a network or a platform.*

(Leadbeater, 2022)

With our teacher workforce already stretched and with many schools grappling with financial constraints, the potential to share experts across a range of schools could yield valuable results. While one school may have its own 'data steward', a cluster of schools may share one. Regardless, the role that data can play is another factor in unlocking how teachers can reacquaint themselves with why they took up teaching in the first place. With more time to focus on their students, the exhausting side of teaching could be liberated by putting smart data to work.

Knowledgeworks had the following to say about this.

> To create an equitable future of learning, education stakeholders can shift the focus from traditional school systems to community-level ecosystems. They can staff those learning ecosystems with diverse and networked constellations of educators representing a range of professional expertise and backgrounds.
>
> **(1) Learning Pathway Designer** – *Works with students, parents, and learning journey mentors to set learning goals, track students' progress and pacing, and model potential sequences of activities that support learning experiences aligned with competencies.*
>
> **(2) Competency Tracker** – *Tags and maps community-based learning opportunities by the competencies they address, in order to support the development of reconfigured personalised learning pathways and school formats.*
>
> **(3) Pop-Up Reality Producer** – *Works with educators, subject matter experts, story developers and game designers to produce pervasive learning extravaganzas that engage learners in flow states and help them develop relevant skills, academic competencies, and knowhow.*
>
> **(4) Social Innovation Portfolio Director** – *Builds networks in support of meaningful service-based learning and community impact, by linking student action-learning groups seeking to develop core skills and knowledge with organisations seeking creative solutions.*
>
> **(5) Learning Naturalist** – *Designs and deploys assessment protocols that capture evidence of learning in students' diverse learning environments and contexts.*
>
> **(6) Micro-Credential Analyst** – *Provides trusted, research-based evaluations and audits of microcredential options and digital portfolio platforms, in order to provide learners and institutions with comparative quality assurance metrics.*
>
> **(7) Data Steward** – *Acts as a third-party information trustee to ensure responsible and ethical use of personal data and to maintain broader education data system integrity and effective application through purposeful analytics.*
>

The emerging role of teachers and students

The teacher as a coach or mentor, guiding the student is a more recent image of schooling. It is just one example of how students are becoming partners with their teachers in how learning is delivered – sharing agency as they think about the true purpose of learning.

> *Agency does not depend on any one body of knowledge. It becomes the way to integrate knowledge from across disciplines ... to see challenges and opportunities from many vantage points.*

(Leadbeater, 2022)

The story of school in Australia today is unpacked in many reports that describe the increasing disengagement of students. This narrative is persistent. In the face of such challenges, many educators are attempting to tackle the disengagement factor by providing students with more agency in their learning – to increase their motivation to learn and make the experience more relevant to their lives, in the hope that it will address disengagement.

Learner agency has been described as being about autonomy, choice and self-regulation in learning, where a student can progress from one learning stage to the next, once they feel confident and capable in a knowledge area, selecting their resources as they go and connecting their personal interests with their assignments and presentations.

Considering that teachers claim that one of the biggest challenges their schools are facing is disengagement of children, the role of agency is paramount.

In many settings, students are expected to be able to reflect on their own learning progress, identify their strengths and areas for improvement, and set meaningful learning goals for themselves. Because student-teacher interactions are considered a key component of education quality, teachers are encouraged to use student-led assessment strategies – such as self-assessments and conversations with students about their experiences, agency, and lifelong learning skills – to drive continuous improvement at the classroom and school level.

Considering that teachers claim that one of the biggest challenges their schools are facing is disengagement of children, the role of agency is paramount. For students to have true learner agency, however, teachers also need it, and schools need to foster agency as something that is embedded within and across the learning environments.

Teacher agency varies in response to the school and the environment. There are opportunities to involve teachers in the design and delivery of more innovative teaching and learning methods, and empowering them to take ownership of this process as they discover and learn about what works.

Differentiation in how the instruction of learning happens, or how knowledge is transferred, can mean a learner's individuality, interests and needs can be celebrated and more easily met.

This leads to more successful engagement in learning, particularly around creativity and problem solving, where teachers with agency describe higher degrees of creative development – in themselves and their students.

Esther Wojcicki, founder of the Palo Alto High School Media Arts Programme, directly links creativity in students to autonomous learning. She advocates '20% time' to introduce self-directed learning into the schedule. This should be 'innovation or 'moon-shot' time where students are given freedom to come up with their own idea of what they want to do, what they want to study, and how they want to do it. This can excite and empower teachers and reinvigorate their interest in the rest of their instruction.

(Economist Impact, 2020)

Learner agency, when fused with teacher agency (co-agency), has the potential to deliver on the many aspects of learning that are not always recognised or easily assessed. This includes creativity as well as critical thinking and collaboration.

> *Hawker School in Cleveland, Ohio created a new way to assess students' skills through the Mastery Transcript. Instead of using letter grades, students are evaluated on the skills and competencies they've demonstrated through learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom. Transcripts are learner-centric, allowing students to upload their work as evidence of progress on specific competencies; the work is reviewed and approved by school staff before being included on the student's official record that is sent to colleges and employers. Though the idea started in Ohio, over 370 schools around the world are now part of the Mastery Transcript Consortium.*

(NCEE, 2024)

When we think about learner and teacher co-agency in relation to the new role of the education workforce and the different settings where learning takes place, we can see that it is much easier to cultivate. Many of the existing barriers to including learner agency become obsolete because the conditions for it to flourish emerge when classes move out of their traditional classrooms. When teaching interacts with real-world experiences or incorporates the use of hybrid learning and supportive technologies, agency is strengthened.

> *The A Lab schools, with only limited resources, are trying to remake the patterns of learning, to improve outcomes for all students, across a wide range of measures. They are redrawing the boundaries around and within the school, to allow teachers and students to find different ways of learning. There is more real-world learning, breaking the boundaries of the school.*

(Leadbeater, 2022)

The relationship between agency and power is interesting because it can sound threatening to those who have deep experience and expertise. However, with power shifts, most educators are not describing the notion that they have lost power, or that students have power over them or others. The power shift is more about the nature of the relationship between students and educators, where young people are not merely remembering facts and figures, but discovering how they can become part of a solution to the world's challenges while owning more of their learning journey.

Student agency is a recipe for students to become more powerful across several dimensions of power.

They develop the capability and power to initiate, lead and direct learning (where once they might only have been able to exercise the power to withdraw).

(Leadbeater, 2022)

In the UK, 14 secondary schools are now operating as flexi schools where students attend school for part of the week while for the remainder of the week they are schooled from home.

In Victoria, Australia, the Alice Miller School operates from 10:00 am to 4:30 pm, times designed to coincide more effectively with the sleep/work patterns of teenagers. However, the school and its facilities can be accessed by students from 9 am each weekday. This enables many students to practise music, work on art pieces, do homework, play chess, and continue with projects or assignments. Agency in this sense has a direct link to health and wellbeing. Good sleep and healthy food are part of the school's ethos and they have adjusted their program to make it possible for students to have options.

Teachers as coaches, curators and community organisers

Funded by the Stuart Foundation, and led by a research team from University of South Carolina and UCLA, the case study of Surrey Schools and Anaheim Union High School District profiles how teachers act as learners, innovators and designers for whole-child education systems. The study shows how school leaders enable teachers to create the learning environments and experiences that support students' holistic wellbeing and prepare them for our rapidly changing world. It explores the conditions and practices across each district – the established drivers and the promising accelerants – that support teachers as learners, innovators and designers. The study comes at the time when policy leaders and educators are looking to rethink the job of teaching to address teacher shortages, while also accelerating new models of teaching and learning, in the third decade of the 21st century.

Teachers in both districts created new academic courses that fuel interdisciplinary learning and student leadership; others spurred the development of virtual academies that spread learning opportunities to any student anytime, anywhere.

2

Elevating teachers

Many countries demonstrated a shift toward more authentic and intentional collaboration on policy, practice, and professional learning. One way in which the United States is supporting, recruiting, retaining and diversifying its teaching profession is by creating teacher apprenticeships and investing in teacher pipelines.

Sweden is establishing more accessible pathways to teaching, creating better working conditions in schools, and building a national, continuous professional development program with an aligned merit system.

Lithuania is co-creating a competency-based teacher career web, with both horizontal and vertical career paths, to support opportunities for teachers to advance professionally.

Canada is providing teachers with the skills to strengthen Indigenous education, in connection to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and promoting policies to address teachers' wellbeing in schools.

3

Empowering learners

This empowerment extends not only to teachers, but also to learners themselves.

Finland is equipping students with global competencies to empower them to address complex global challenges and opportunities.

Singapore is continuing its commitment to strengthening students' global awareness, collaborative skills, cross-cultural literacy and civic engagement, to develop active and responsible citizens.

The Czech Republic is investing in targeted supports to ensure all students, including Ukrainian refugees, have access to a high-quality education.

Switzerland is removing barriers for young people with disabilities to increase accessibility and participation in learning.

(For further information on these and other international examples of elevating teachers and empowering learners, see OECD, 2024).

The emerging role of employers and the community

Engaging parents, community members and business leaders in conversations about the purposes of learning and assessment not only engages them as part of the school community but also ensures students are learning skills that prepare them to be part of collaborative work environments and vibrant communities.

(NCEE, 2024)

The importance of collaboration between multiple actors, from parents and community members to teachers and school leaders, is intensifying. The recent Brookings publication, *Collaborating to Transform and Improve Education Systems: A Playbook for Family-School Engagement* (Winthrop et al, 2021), focuses on ways to connect families with schools for long-term collaboration.

The playbook highlights the need for this partnership to go beyond improving student attendance and completion, through the learning and development of students, to the opportunity to redefine the purpose of school for learners and the purpose of school for society.

The importance of collaboration with employers is similarly intensifying.

More than ever before, employers are engaging with the skills and capabilities, qualities and attributes that they know they need to identify when they recruit young people. Beyond that, knowing they may not always be able to find the skills they need, they are building learning environments in the workplace to enable young people to thrive at work in a way that also meets their productivity requirements (see Box 1).

Many examples are appearing globally where partnerships between groups are being formalised to support student learning. These partnerships include families and communities, higher

Box 1. Extracted from the Youth meaningful work survey website

Across the globe, there is a completely new and different world of work evolving.

A 15-year-old can expect to have 17 jobs across 5 different industries.

As technology evolves, jobs, people, communication, problem solving, and collaboration skills are more important and sought after in workplaces.

20 per cent of all jobs are already remote jobs, creating flexible and hybrid work, with more diverse employees being able to access work.

Young people are becoming job creators, not just job seekers, with entrepreneurship on the rise.

Lifelong learning including reskilling, upskilling and learning on the job are the 'new normal.'

ymcansw.org.au/news-and-media/news/global-meaningful-work-survey/

education providers, cultural organisations and businesses in different sectors. This networked approach to linking a school to the world of work and community makes education more relevant to students and provides a broader and deeper range of skills and knowledge to support career pathways.

INJAZ, in Jordan, partners with volunteers from private-sector companies to provide lessons on business skills, including financial literacy, ethical leadership, teamwork, creative thinking, communication and interpersonal skills. About 23,000 volunteers have been trained. Private-sector companies also adopt schools, share information and data and provide employment and internship opportunities to graduates, creating better links between school and work. An internal study found that INJAZ graduates had an unemployment rate of 19 per cent compared to the national rate of 32 per cent (INJAZ, 2024).

In many instances, there is a growing understanding of the term 'the education workforce', to include both compensated and volunteer roles, and even communities and families. The term is now more expansive, to describe not only teachers, but all people who work directly to support the provision of education to students in education systems (Education Commission, 2019).

> *These future educator roles reflect much greater specialisation of human capital than exists in the education system today. The roles themselves are more specialised, and the settings in which people holding them are employed are more diverse and fluid.*
>
> (Knowledgeworks, 2015)

The global firm Deloitte describes this from a workforce perspective, but there are overlaps between the realities faced by our education workforce and the broader workforce drawn from other non-education sectors.

> *Globally, organisations are beginning to shift their attention away from an employee's 'job', focusing instead on the skills their workforce can provide. While many companies are seeing the benefits of this skills-based approach, the rapid shifts in technology (particularly with AI) are accelerating the skill requirements of the modern workforce.*
>
> (Deloitte, 2022)

While workplaces themselves are becoming learning environments and providing new choices and pathways for young people as they transition from school to work, this will only make it even more important for the educator workforce to continue to stretch across all levels of our learning system – from the school, into the workplace and beyond.

This inevitably leads to what many describe as the life-cycle of a teacher as being an important story. From the moment a teacher is recruited to how they are able to develop their profession, and right through to how they are valued, supported and motivated to continue to do their job, the journey of a teacher is one that is changing.

> *Rapidly changing societies require versatile teachers to equip their students with a dynamic array of tools to face a dynamic world.*
>
> *Teacher professional development must take into account this need, ensuring that the pre-service education programs align with professional standards, are goal-oriented, and include holistic, integrated and innovative projects.*
>
> (Varkey Education Foundation, 2016)

By developing alternative routes to invite and include people from different backgrounds into teaching roles, it is becoming possible to address many of the challenges facing the education workforce and possibly even the broader workforce.

> *A new discussion paper from RCHM (Reinventing Australian Schools) suggests shifting the purpose of school from a narrow focus on academic achievement, to learning success, wellbeing and health for optimised whole-child development. The paper identifies the chance we have to re-envisage what schools could be in Australia. It presents a number of leading examples that indicate what this could look like in practice. For example, at Templestowe College the school enables all students to*

flexibly co-create their school and learning experiences. 'Yes' is the default policy and every student follows an individualised plan. This approach has been shown to improve student engagement, wellbeing and achievement.

(Sahlberg, Goldfeld et al, 2023)

Roles beyond the classroom and traditional teaching practice are being developed in countries where the idea of a learner guide or a community education worker has a role to play to support children with learning difficulties or health issues that may inhibit their ability to attend school in person.

(Education Commission, 2019)

In some instances, this different role scaffolds the classroom teacher providing support through the home, liaising with others as needed. With these ideas, a continuum of roles can form part of a learning team that a student can draw from as their needs and progress change over time.

This continuum can include specialised teachers, experienced teachers, beginners, learning support staff and welfare support staff, as one idea of how to consider the range of roles. However, enabling teachers to have access to knowledge and understanding around mental health and wellbeing is core to building confidence and addressing increasingly complex situations.

Open Dialogue is an approach to mental health and wellbeing that originated in Finland in the 1980s. There are examples in Australia of schools that are incorporating the approach into how mental healthcare and wellbeing is thought about in a school environment. The approach enables family, teachers and community members to part of a person's mental health and wellbeing plan. Mental health and wellbeing professionals are trained in the Open Dialogue approach and become facilitators of a supportive network (Open Dialogue Centre, 2024). See boxes 2 and 3 for case examples of Open dialogue and schools and Whole school, whole community.

Box 2. Open dialogue and schools

Today, at Korowal school, network meetings are held regularly and can be instigated by the child, teacher, parent or carer. A network meeting can be held quickly and easily, without needing to wait for external support when there are long waiting lists for access to a service or clinic. The school facilitates approximately 150 network meetings a year. The beneficiaries look to be the child or young person, their families and carers, as well as the school itself. Local health service providers also stand to benefit from reductions in admissions and emergency department presentations (Open Dialogue Centre, 2024).

Box 3. Whole school, whole community

The US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and prevention promotes the whole-school, whole-community, whole-child model as a framework that Healthy Schools in the US are implementing. The model is student-centred and emphasises the role of the community in supporting the school, the connections between health and academic achievement and the importance of evidence-based school policies and practices. The model meets the need for greater emphasis on both the psychosocial and physical environment, as well as the increasing roles that community agencies and families play in improving childhood health behaviours and development. The model also addresses the need to engage students as active participants in their learning and health (CDC, 2023).

Change is already happening

National education reforms since the mid-2000s have been designed to address many persistent system issues yet, despite hard-fought political battles and reforms, and the daily efforts of system leaders, teachers, parents and students, we continue to replicate a system in which key indicators of impact and equity are stagnating or going backwards.

Current data is telling us that our system is not equitable, with Australia ranked the equal fourth-most socially segregated school system in the OECD. However, we are unlikely to find improvements in our progress towards equity, productivity, health and wellbeing without making the connection between our learning systems and all the other systems that have an impact on our lives.

despite hard-fought political battles and reforms, and the daily efforts of system leaders, teachers, parents and students, we continue to replicate a system in which key indicators of impact and equity are stagnating or going backwards.

AI is enabling natural language learning guides to be available to students, providing live feedback with chat bots, unlocking rewarding and engaging literacy-tutoring methods, as well as tracking learners' progress to identify their strengths or where they need support. Many of these things are already part of many education platforms.

Digital education ecosystems are described by the OECD as consisting of three parts: digital tools for system and institutional management; digital tools for teaching, learning and assessing in the classroom; and – importantly – the human beings that make these tools alive and meaningful.

While many teachers may baulk at the time investment involved in the stewardship of personalised learning opportunities, the process could be well-supported by technology. Student interests can now be captured and detected, and factors such as self-regulation, motivation and effort can be surfaced by diagnostic tools. The human hand in lesson planning is likely to remain important, and yet teachers will increasingly rely on digital forms of feedback – enabling them to learn and evolve their practice in real time, and in response to what students are truly engaged by.

Change is inevitable. Our systems demand it … and it is already happening. The way in which we value and support teachers is one such change that is occurring.

In December 2022, Australian Education Ministers agreed on a National Teacher Workforce Action Plan, which sets out a clear pathway to addressing the national issue of teacher workforce shortages. It is the first step of an ongoing strategy to attract more people to the profession and retain more teachers in the workforce. One action is the *Be That Teacher* campaign. It is a joint Australian, state and territory government initiative, which aims to showcase the value and importance of teachers and encourage Australians to consider a career in teaching.

However, based on a horizon scan of the forces that are both impacting and shifting the role of the teacher, it is how teachers work together that could really shift the dial on workforce shortages, by enabling teacher autonomy and a renewed purpose or vision for teaching that is informed by evidence of what we know is needed.

The current OECD/CERI work on teachers and new professionalism (CERI, 2023-24), identified collaboration, or 'connective professionalism' (Noordegraaf, 2020) as a main topic. Collaboration is associated with greater job satisfaction (OECD, 2020). It is also necessary to work together to anticipate future opportunities and challenges facing education systems (Mazza, 2022). Additionally, the future will mean involving other professionals to bring knowledge and expertise to benefit teaching and learning (CERI, 2023). With this change, the opportunity remains powerful to think about the kind of society our learning systems can help to build.

Fundamentally, learning and wellbeing in modern times can never be furthered by top-down solutions. Today, teachers are confronted with the daily reality that they are mostly alone in their work, overseen by many layers of authority. We need to restructure schools to establish time for teachers and students to work together while reculturing schools to use their time productively.

(Fullan and Rizzotto, 2023; also see 2022)

For our learning workforce to be working well, and for our learners to be ready for the world ahead, our learning system will need to present a more coordinated and strategic story about the future.

References

Burns, T (2022) What schools for tomorrow? Futures thinking and leading for uncertainty, CSE Leading Education Series Paper 08, Centre for Strategic Education, Melbourne, April. all-learning.org.au/app/uploads/2022/05/traceyburnsCSE-Leading-Education-Series8-04-2022-copy.pdf

CDC (2023) Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child. www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/wscc/index.htm

CERI (2023-24) *New Professionalism and the Future of Teaching*. www.oecd.org/en/about/projects/new-professionalism-and-the-future-of-teaching.html

Deloitte (2022) *The Skills-Based Organization: A New Operating Model for work and the Workforce.* www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/talent/organizational-skill-based-hiring.html

Economist Impact (2020) *Staff of 2030: Future-Ready Teaching.* impact.economist.com/perspectives/technology-innovation/staff-2030-future-ready-teaching

Education Commission (2019) *Transforming the Education Workforce: Learning Teams for a Learning Generation.* educationcommission.org/wpcontent/uploads/2019/09/Transforming-the-Education-Workforce-Full-Report.pdf

Fullan, M and Rizzotto, J (2022) 'When it comes to the teacher shortage, who's abandoning whom? *Education Week*, 15 August. www.edweek.org/leadership/opinion-when-it-comes-to-the-teacher-shortage-whos-abandoning-whom/2022/08

Fullan, M and Rizzotto, J (2023) 'Teacher Power Can Be the Force for Education. What Would That Look Like?', *Education Week*, 22 September. www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-teacher-powercan-be-the-force-for-education-what-would-that-look-like/2023/09

Harte, H and Howarth, S (2022) *Renegotiating learning in a hybrid world*, CSE Leading Education Series Paper 11, Centre for Strategic Education, Melbourne, July. alllearning.org.au/app/uploads/2022/08/CSE-Leading-Education-Series-11_Renegotiatinglearning-in-a-hybrid-world.pdf

INJAZ (2024) *About Us: Overview.* injaz.org.jo/overview/

Knowledgeworks (2015) Exploring the Future Education Workforce: New Roles for an Expanding Learning Ecosystem. thequohaslostitsstatus.weebly.com/uploads/5/4/2/3/54231535/future-ed-workforceroles-learning-ecosystem-2.pdf

Leadbeater (2022) *Learning on Purpose: Ten Lessons in Placing Student Agency at the Heart of Schools.* static1.squarespace.com/static/6098eb1bb86d9454e6f1a0e6/t/62569081136c17791592e7e0/1649840258658/CSE%2BLeading%2BEducation%2BSeries%2361%2B%281%29.pdf

Masters, G (2023) *Building a World-Class Learning System: Insights from Some Top-Performing school Systems.* research.acer.edu.au/tll_misc/43/

Mezza, A (2022) *Reinforcing and Innovating Teacher Professionalism.* www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/reinforcing-and-innovating-teacher-professionalism_117a675c-en

NCEE (2024) *Reimagining Assessment.* ncee.org/whitepaper/reimaginingassessment/

Noordegraaf, M (2020) *Protective or Connective Professionalism? How Connected Professionals Can (Still) Act as Autonomous and Authoritative Experts.* doi.org/10.1093/jpo/joaa011

OECD (2020) *TALIS 2018 Results (Volume II): Teachers and School Leaders as Valued Professionals.* doi.org/10.1787/19cf08df-en

OECD (2023a) OECD *Digital Education Outlook 2023: Towards an Effective Digital Education Ecosystem.* www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/oecd-digital-educationoutlook-2023_c74f03de-en

OECD (2023b) *The Impact of AI on the Workplace: Main Findings from the OECD AI Surveys of Employers and Workers.* www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/theimpact-of-ai-on-the-workplace-main-findings-from-the-oecd-ai-surveys-of-employers-andworkers_ea0a0fe1-en

OECD (2024) *Future of Education and Skills 2030.* www.oecd.org/en/about/projects/future-of-education-and-skills-2030.html

Open Dialogue Centre (2024) *School Symposium.* opendialoguecentre.org.au/schoolsymposium/

Sahlberg, P, Goldfeld, S, Quach, J, Senior, C and Sinclair, C (2023) 'Reinventing Australian schools to enhance wellbeing, learning and happiness', *Teacher*, 23 June. www.teachermagazine.com/au_en/articles/reinventing-australian-schools-to-enhance-wellbeing-learning-and-happiness#:~:text=The%20paper%20–%20authored%20by%20Professor,educational%20leadership%20at%20the%20MGSE.

Schools Plus (2024) *Every Child, Every Opportunity.* www.flipsnack.com/757CBFBBDC9/schools-plus_-every-child-report_digital/fullview.html

UNESCO (2016) *The World Needs Almost 69 million New Teachers to Reach the 2030 Education Goals.* uis.unesco.org/en/files/fs39-world-needs-almost-69-million-new-teachers-reach-2030-education-goals-2016-en-pdf

Winthrop, R, Barton, A, Ershadi, M and Ziegler, L (2021) *Collaborating to Transform and Improve Education Systems: A Playbook for Family-School Engagement*, Center for Universal Education at Brookings, The Brookings Institution, Washington, DC. www.Brookings.edu/familyengagement

Youth Meaningful Work (2024) Youth Meaningful Work Survey. youthmeaningfulwork.com/

Varkey Education Foundation (2016) Connecting the dots to build the future teaching and learning. www.researchgate.net/publication/314878979_Connecting_the_dots_to_build_the_future_teaching_and_learning

Additional reading

Although not cited explicitly in the text, the following were consulted in preparing this paper and may be of interest to the reader.

Barrett, T and Harte, C (2023) *Towards a digitally enabled ecosystem,* CSE Leading Education Series Paper 21, Centre for Strategic Education, September.

CERI (2023) *Introduction to Ambition Loops.* web-archive.oecd.org/2023-03-10/652975-Introduction-to-the-multi-national-stakeholder-study.pdf

Hannon, V (2024) *Towards an education workforce dedicated to human flourishing: What professional development do our leaders and teachers need?* CSE Leading Education Series Paper 23, Centre for Strategic Education, Melbourne, March.

SACE Board (2024) *Strategic plan.* www.sace.sa.edu.au/about/what-we-do/strategicplan

Recent Releases

United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession (March 2024) *Recommendations and summary of deliberations. Transforming the Teaching Profession.* www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2024/02/teaching-profession-recommendationsteaching-profession-recommendations/

KnowledgeWorks (September 2024) *Envisioning Educator Roles for Transformation.* knowledgeworks.org/resources/envisioning-responsive-educator-roles-transformation/

About this paper

This discussion paper was developed by representatives of Centre for Strategic Education (CSE), Learning Creates Australia and Educators Australia. The writers invite readers to provide feedback and insights, which are highly valued.