



Eduverse

NEWSLETTER

SPECIAL FOCUS

NEO-MINDSETS

FOR TOMORROW'S EDUCATION

FOR THE BETTERMENT OF ALL



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offering creative solutions
to educational needs

**"Education is the most powerful
weapon which you can use to change
the world."**

Inspired and guided by the words of the world-famous iconic Nelson Mandela, Pro.Ed was borne of the belief that high quality educational expertise can transform a society for the better. We are obsessed with providing cutting edge educational services for our clients with the idea that they will bring out the best in their learners.

At Pro.Ed, we also believe that high-quality education is for everyone, not only for the privileged. Pro.Ed CSR activities offer frequent free of charge opportunities for all people to access the latest and most practical educational expertise to promote education equity and a culture of learning in society.

By providing a deep reservoir of educational expertise and experience, we aim **for the betterment of all.**

*Edu*verse
PD NETWORK

**Welcome to EduVerse PD Network,
an initiative by Pro.Ed Education Solutions!**

In this dynamic era of learning, staying ahead requires a constant thirst for knowledge and an openness to exploring new frontiers. That's why we created EduVerse PD Network, committed to offering valuable professional development resources for educators globally, our platform aids teachers in exploring educational trends, advancements, EdTech insights, and practical teaching tips—all at no cost.

With a dedicated focus on the needs and aspirations of educators, we curate a diverse range of best practices to support your teaching journey. From cutting-edge pedagogical strategies to engaging classroom activities, we are here to equip you with the tools and inspiration you need to ignite curiosity, foster creativity, and cultivate lifelong learners.



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Explore EduVerse



Dear Esteemed EduVerse Readers,

As we navigate the dynamic shifts in education, we find ourselves at a pivotal moment in shaping the future of learning. With great anticipation, we present this special edition of the EduVerse Newsletter, dedicated to the theme of **Neo-Mindsets for Tomorrow's Education**.

In this issue, we explore the transformative mindsets required for educators, students, and communities to thrive in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. The concept of "neo-mindsets" encapsulates the new ways of thinking, teaching, and learning that are essential to meet the challenges of the 21st century. From embracing adaptive learning approaches to cultivating resilience and empathy, we explore how education must evolve to foster critical skills in the leaders of tomorrow.

Throughout this special issue, our invited educators share their expertise on the innovative practices and strategies that are reshaping education. They offer fresh perspectives on curriculum design, the integration of technology and AI, and the importance of fostering a mindset that embraces change and diversity. Through their insights, we hope to inspire educators and learners alike to adopt new approaches that reflect the rapidly evolving demands of the global landscape.

At EduVerse, we are committed to creating a space where the future of education is not just envisioned but actively built. This edition aims to equip you with the knowledge and tools necessary to cultivate innovative mindsets—helping learners adapt, innovate, and thrive in an ever-changing world.

We are deeply grateful to our contributors for sharing their wisdom and to you, our dedicated readers, for your unwavering support. It is your commitment to shaping the future of education that fuels our mission to promote equity, innovation, and excellence across the globe.

Thank you for joining us in this vital conversation on how we can collectively foster a mindset that prepares us all for the future of education.

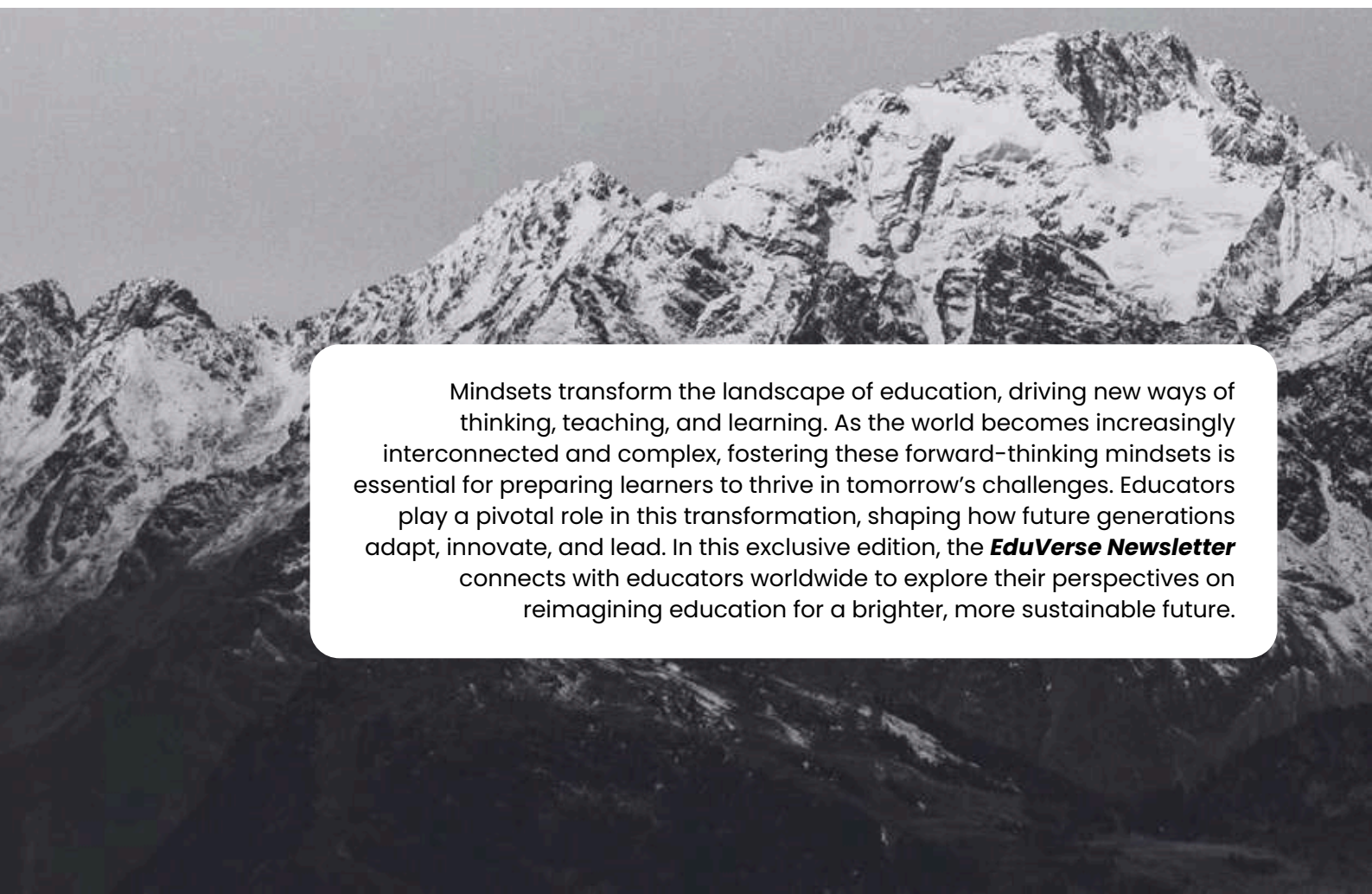
Editorial Board,
EduVerse Newsletter

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GLOBAL VOICES

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Mindsets transform the landscape of education, driving new ways of thinking, teaching, and learning. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected and complex, fostering these forward-thinking mindsets is essential for preparing learners to thrive in tomorrow's challenges. Educators play a pivotal role in this transformation, shaping how future generations adapt, innovate, and lead. In this exclusive edition, the **EduVerse Newsletter** connects with educators worldwide to explore their perspectives on reimagining education for a brighter, more sustainable future.

1 What do you see as the biggest challenges for educators in preparing students for the future, and how are you addressing them?



Teresa Bestwick
The TEFL Development Hub
Spain

I feel that critical thinking is an area which learners need more support in developing. Although on the one hand we're seeing a generation who are more aware of the wider world and the issues within it, at the same time it feels like there's a need for them to be more critical of the huge amount of content they have access to. A lot can be done on developing digital literacy skills, such as identifying fake news or AI-generated content.



Debomita Dutta
Special Educator
India

One of the biggest challenges for educators today is preparing students for a rapidly changing world where the skills needed tomorrow may differ drastically from those valued today.



Aiman Qamar
Bahria University
Pakistan

One of the biggest challenges for educators is fostering creativity in students to prepare them for a rapidly changing future. Many traditional educational systems prioritize memorization over innovative thinking, which limits students ability to problem-solve and adapt. To address this, I focus on creating lesson plans that encourage exploration, critical thinking, and open-ended projects.



Benkaïdia Khoulood Seghira
École Supérieure Nationale
de Constantine
Algeria

In my own country, learners at different levels struggle a lot with learning. The main challenge here is to adapt modern approaches to large-size classes. Technology integration is not really common here. To prepare students for the future, it is inevitable to use technology. My way of addressing this is to teach small groups online.



Desmond Paul Young
UEF/VUS/talkfirst
Vietnam

I see the disconnect between education and the real world job market. some old fashioned skills with pen and paper are being replaced by google searches. it's not only on an academic level but also a behavioural level that students need to be prepared of a brutally harsh job market.



** Summarized response*
Nour Negm
Private Business
Egypt

One challenge is preparing learners for an unstable job market due to technological changes that render some skills obsolete while creating demand for others. Learners must continuously improve and expand their skill sets. They should understand that their value comes from their skills, not their job title or employer, as outdated skills may lead to being replaced regardless of loyalty or tenure.

MINDSET: THE HEARTBEAT OF THE FUTURE IN EDUCATION

Manjula Devi Pillai

In today's rapidly changing world, education is no longer just about teaching facts or following traditional methods. The fast pace of technological advancements, shifting societal priorities, and dynamic economic landscapes demand more than just adapting new tools or systems—they require a transformation from within. And at the center of this evolution lies mindset, the invisible yet powerful force shaping how we teach, learn, and grow.

Are we ready to embrace a more inclusive, forward-thinking approach to teaching that prepares our students for tomorrow's world? Let us take a closer look at some of the emerging mindsets in education. These mindsets are not just trends; they are guiding principles that can help prepare both educators and students for tomorrow's opportunities and challenges.

"The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled."

—Plutarch

WHY MINDSETS MATTER

“A shift in mindset sparks the flame, where growth and change become the aim.”

- Manjula

Why does our mindset matter so much? As educators, our mindset shapes the classroom environment and how we approach teaching. With technology advancing and societal needs shifting, it is not just about imparting knowledge anymore—it **IS** about teaching students to be adaptable, curious, and resilient.

It starts with **US**—if we want to prepare students for tomorrow, we first have to shift our own mindset.

FROM FIXED TO GROWTH MINDSET

Have you ever thought about how your mindset influences your students? A powerful shift in education is moving from a fixed mindset, where intelligence is seen as something static, to a growth mindset, which believes that abilities can be developed.

When students understand that effort, curiosity, and resilience are what lead to success, they approach challenges with more optimism and determination. For teachers, this means creating a classroom that celebrates effort, values perseverance, and sees mistakes as learning opportunities.

Teachers' modeling a growth mindset not only improves academic results but also equips students with skills that will serve them beyond the classroom.

“Growth thrives in effort, where challenges are seeds, and persistence blooms with every need.”

- Manjula

CULTIVATING A GROWTH MINDSET IN CLASSROOMS

Have you ever wondered how a change in perspective could shape a student's entire learning experience? When students believe that intelligence and skills can grow with effort, something remarkable happens. They start to embrace challenges, view mistakes as learning opportunities, and persist in the face of difficulties.

By embracing a growth mindset ourselves, we become role models for our students, showing them that persistence and effort lead to progress. This mindset can significantly boost not just academic achievement but also personal development.

EMPOWER, ADAPT, INSPIRE

- Try out new teaching tools to keep the learning experience fresh.
- Encourage students to take charge of their learning through student-led activities.
- Demonstrate adaptability by being open to new methods and approaches.



EMBRACING CHANGE: WHY IT IS MORE THAN JUST TECHNOLOGY

“Change is the wind that shapes the mind, where skills and growth are redefined ”

- Manjula

As educators, we often find ourselves thinking about how to best prepare our students for the future. Digital tools are reshaping how we teach, but have we considered how we can prepare our students for the challenges ahead in ways that go beyond just technology?

It is easy to get caught up in the excitement of new tech in the classroom, but is that all we should focus on? Preparing students for tomorrow's world is not just about using the latest gadgets or apps. It is about equipping them with the skills they will need to navigate a rapidly changing world.

Skills like critical thinking, creativity, and emotional intelligence will empower them to adapt and thrive no matter what the future holds. The world is constantly evolving, and we need to ensure our students are ready to evolve with it.

FROM KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION TO SKILL DEVELOPMENT

How often do we think about the value of skills over information? With so much knowledge readily available at our fingertips, the role of educators is shifting. It is no longer just about transferring information to students, but about helping them develop the skills they need to apply that knowledge effectively.

This shift challenges us to rethink how we teach. Rather than just focusing on what students need to know, we should be guiding them to build competencies that will help them in the real world.

ENGAGE, INNOVATE, CREATE

- Encourage project-based learning
- Bring real-world problems into the classroom
- Use technology in ways that enhance creativity

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING: EXPANDING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

“Learning together, we thrive and rise, with shared knowledge as our prize.”

- Manjula

In our connected world, learning in isolation just does not cut it anymore. We need to create classrooms that are buzzing with collaboration, where students share ideas, learn from each other, and build essential communication skills. After all, the future will require students to work together, think from diverse perspectives, and navigate dynamic team environments.

FROM INDIVIDUALISM TO COLLABORATION

In an increasingly globalized world, the ability to work well with others is a key skill. Employers now value team dynamics, different perspectives, and the ability to solve problems together. By fostering a collaborative learning environment, we are giving students the chance to develop these skills early on. Think of it as preparing them for the workforce, where they will be expected to work with people from all walks of life.

For us as educators, this means stepping away from the traditional lecture-based teaching and embracing hands-on, interactive learning.

ASK YOURSELF

- *Why not use group projects to help students experience teamwork firsthand?*
- *Have you tried encouraging peer teaching? It can be a great way for students to learn from each other.*
- *Why not celebrate the diversity of thought within our classrooms? It is a skill they will carry into their future careers.*

RETHINKING ASSESSMENT: MOVING TOWARDS HOLISTIC EVALUATION

“In a world beyond the test, let students’ true skills manifest.” - Manjula

When we think about student assessments, what is the first thing that comes to mind? For many, it is the traditional exam. But is that really the best way to understand what a student can do? There is growing recognition that exams only show part of the picture. Moving towards a more holistic evaluation, where skills like creativity, problem-solving, and teamwork are valued, offers a fuller snapshot of a student's potential.

FROM STANDARDIZED TESTING TO HOLISTIC ASSESSMENT

Traditional exams focus on a narrow range of knowledge and may overlook key abilities, like emotional intelligence or collaboration that are vital in today's world. Holistic assessment, on the other hand, aims to capture a broader view of a student's capabilities. This approach includes portfolios, group projects, peer reviews, and even self-assessments. It is not just about grades, but about recognizing the growth, skills, and learning that happens beyond the classroom.

REFLECT, SHOWCASE, DIVERSIFY

- Encourage the use of portfolios to showcase a variety of work
- Introduce peer and self-assessments to foster reflection
- Diversify assessment methods to recognize a wider range of skills

The idea is to create assessments that reflect how students think, collaborate, and apply what they have learned in real-world situations. With holistic assessment, we not only get a more accurate picture of a student's strengths, but we also empower students to take ownership of their learning journey.

BUILDING EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE: A MUST FOR BOTH EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

*“In the classroom, where mind and heart are intertwined.
Building resilience, together we find.”*

- Manjula

As we face new challenges in education, it is not just about academic growth—emotional resilience has become just as essential for both educators and students. When we nurture our emotional well-being through practices like mindfulness, self-care, and social-emotional learning (SEL), we are better equipped to manage stress and support our students through theirs.

FROM STRESSFUL LEARNING TO WELLBEING-CENTERED EDUCATION

Education is so much more than just tests and grades. It is about helping students grow emotionally and socially, too. With mental health becoming a central focus in society, it is time to move towards a wellbeing-centered approach to education. An environment that supports mental health can help learners thrive—not just academically, but also emotionally.

CALM, CONNECT, CULTIVATE

- Integrate mindfulness exercises to calm and refocus the mind
- Focus on social-emotional learning (SEL) to strengthen emotional intelligence
- Build a safe space where students feel comfortable sharing and growing

SHIFTING TO A STUDENT-CENTERED APPROACH

Are we ready to step back and let students take the lead? In the fast-evolving education, moving away from the traditional teacher-led model toward a more student-centered approach will empower students, making them active participants in their learning and become more independent and engaged.

“Learning comes alive when students take the wheel, guiding their journey with curiosity and zeal.”

- Manjula

FROM TEACHER-LED TO STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING

What if teachers became guides rather than directors? The “sage on the stage” approach is giving way to a “guide on the side” philosophy, where students play a central role in their educational journeys. By giving students more autonomy and encouraging them to set their own goals, we foster self-motivation, independence, and a deeper love for learning.

As educators, this does not mean we step away completely; our role is crucial in providing structure and support. When students are given the space to explore, ask questions, and create their own learning paths, teachers can guide them with constructive feedback.

BUILDING CONFIDENCE THROUGH GUIDANCE

- Help students set achievable goals to give direction to their learning.
- Encourage curiosity by letting students explore and investigate topics of interest.
- Allow time for students to reflect on what they have learned, helping them understand their progress and areas for growth.

CREATING A BRIGHTER FUTURE TOGETHER

Imagine a future where students are not just ready for the world—they are inspired and equipped to transform it. This future begins with a shift in how we teach and think, with mindset as the vital pulse guiding us forward.

In my school, teachers and students embraced a fresh way of learning for a future full of surprises. One of my primary-years educators, Mr. Baron Reddy, a passionate teacher, knew that just filling minds with facts was not enough; he wanted his students to think, adapt, and collaborate.

He introduced project-based learning, where students faced real-world problems, like tackling environmental issues in their neighborhood in Taunggyi, Shan State, Myanmar. They grew to see mistakes as part of learning, celebrated each other's strengths, and built emotional resilience together. Teacher Baron saw his students not only learn but flourish—prepared not just for exams, but for future, ready to make a difference.

This shows fostering a mindset rooted in growth, adaptability, and empathy. It is not only about preparing the learners for tomorrow's challenges; it is about inspiring them to shape the future with purpose.

Embracing new mindsets in education is not just about using the latest tools or methods. It is about making a meaningful connection with our students and with the core purpose of our teaching. Let us, as educators, keep the heart of education beating strong. Let's nurture the growth, empathy, and resilience that will prepare our students not just for the future but to create it.

Education is, after all, a collective journey. And just as every heartbeat sustains life, every shift in mindset sustains progress.

Thank you for being part of this evolution in education. Let's come together; let's continue to empower and prepare our learners to create a brighter future for themselves—and for all of us.



Manjula Devi Pillai, a passionate educationist with over 20 years of leadership experience, currently heads academics at an IB World & Cambridge International School in Myanmar. Renowned for implementing student-centered curricula, she drives academic achievement and professional growth, equipping educators, leaders and students to thrive in today's dynamic educational landscape. she has led impactful school wide initiatives and community development programs.

Illustrations by **Vignesh Pazhani**, Wonkrew Satz Ventures Pvt Ltd

*"As we embrace change, together we stand,
Shaping the future with a guiding hand.
With growth and empathy, we'll light the way,
Empowering learners to brighten each day."*

- Manjula





BE A GUIDING
STAR
FOR LEARNERS' SUCCESS

Dr. Le Dinh Bao Quoc

In the swirling chaos of our fast-changing world, where information is abundant and distractions are endless, one thing remains certain: the need for a teacher who can guide—not just teach. In this new age of education, teachers are no longer expected to be the sole keepers of knowledge. Instead, they have a much more powerful role: they are the guiding stars who light the way for students navigating through the complexities of life and learning.

We are living in a time where technology and artificial intelligence can offer quick answers and countless resources, but the human touch—the compassion, the inspiration, the motivation—these are the qualities that cannot be replaced. It's time for us, as educators, to step into the true essence of what it means to guide—to light the path for our students not just to academic success, but to personal growth, resilience, and the courage to follow their dreams.

The Call TO SHINE BRIGHTER

Imagine, for a moment, that you are the guiding star in a child's life. You are the one who inspires them, lifts them when they are down, and helps them see beyond their struggles. You help them believe in their potential. As educators, we have always played a pivotal role in shaping the lives of our students, but today, more than ever, that role is critical. The future of our students depends on it.

In a world where information is easily accessible, students need something beyond just facts—they need guidance, they need inspiration, they need someone to help them connect the dots, to help them understand their place in the world. As Darren McCormick, an educator from Dubai, United Arab Emirates, beautifully puts it, *"I want children to not only love learning but love discovering, love curiosity, love creating, and to bring their world or ideas together."*

This is the essence of what we, as educators, are meant to do. Our role is not just to teach subjects; it is to ignite that fire in students—the fire that will burn brightly through all the challenges they face in life.

The Changing Role OF TEACHERS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

For many years, teachers were seen as the main source of knowledge. The classroom was a place where students came to absorb information from the teacher. But the times have changed. Today, students can access any piece of information at the touch of a button. They can learn anywhere, anytime, from countless online platforms. So where do teachers fit in?

Rather than being the primary source of knowledge, we have evolved into **facilitators**, **guides**, and **mentors**—individuals who help students navigate through the overwhelming sea of information. As Khouloud Seghira Benkaidia, an educator from Constantine, Algeria, points out, *"Teachers have to manage the abundant content available, guide learners towards being digitally responsible, and help them harness AI-tools without over-dependence."*

The role of the teacher has evolved from being a passive transmitter of knowledge to an active guide who helps students navigate through the overwhelming noise of the digital age. In a world where students are constantly bombarded with information, it's not just about helping them think critically about what they consume, but also about supporting their emotional well-being. Teachers must guide students in questioning the validity and relevance of the information they encounter, while also addressing the emotional impact of information overload. We need to help students balance their digital consumption, using technology in ways that enrich their lives, empower their learning, and ensure they don't feel overwhelmed or distracted from their goals. It's about fostering not only intellectual growth but emotional resilience in an increasingly complex world.

BECOMING THE Guiding Star

Becoming a guiding star is like building Rome—it wasn't built in a day. It's a journey that requires patience, persistence, and a deep commitment to growth. This path is shaped by continuous self-reflection, thoughtful action, and a relentless pursuit of knowledge. Each day offers us the opportunity to learn, to connect with our students on a deeper level, and to become the kind of educators who inspire, empower, and guide them toward a brighter future. The journey to becoming a guiding star is not easy, but it is one of the most rewarding paths we can take, for it's through our dedication that we can light the way for others to follow. Here's how you can begin to embrace this powerful role in your classroom:

STEP 1 Recognize your impact

First, understand that as a teacher, you have an incredible influence on your students' lives. You are shaping the leaders, innovators, and change-makers of tomorrow. Reflect on the teachers who had a profound impact on you. What was it about them that inspired you? Was it their belief in you? Their encouragement when you thought you couldn't go on? That's the power you have—to shape lives.

Whether you are teaching children or adults, the role of a guide is ever more critical. Our students need us to believe in them, to help them believe in themselves. I recall a conversation between a student and his teacher from Devin Carberry's book ***The Future Will Not Be Taught***.

"Hey, A., what are you learning?"
"Osmosis."
"That's how I learned trigonometry."
"Huh?"
"Nothing. So, how interesting is osmosis to you right now?"
"Right now, not very. I know I need to learn about it for my project, but I can't get into it."
"Is it okay if I ask you some questions about that? My aim is not to convince you to learn about osmosis. I'm more interested in helping you explore what motivates you and how you learn."
"Sure."
"When you say, 'you can't get into it,' there can be a few reasons for that: the material is difficult to understand, something else has a stronger pull on your attention, or you've lost interest in your project. Do any of these ring true for you?"

Recognizing the impact you have as a teacher means understanding that your belief in your students can be the spark that ignites their curiosity, passion, and confidence, guiding them not just through lessons, but through life's challenges.

Explore the book ***The Future Will Not Be Taught*** and an interview with its author in ***EduVerse Newsletter, issue 15***, dedicated to NextGen Learners (published in September 2024).



Click or scan

STEP 2

Cultivate your inner light

To be the guiding star for others, you must first nurture your own sense of purpose. Take time for self-reflection, to examine your teaching practices, and to recognize your strengths and areas for growth. Engage in professional development, connect with like-minded educators, and share your ideas. You are not alone in this journey—together, we can shine brighter.

One inspiring educator I'm fortunate to know is Phillip Alcock, the visionary behind AIXPBL, a project that integrates AI into project-based learning. Through his work, he has connected with hundreds of educators worldwide, fostering a collaborative environment to reflect on AI's role in teaching and exploring how it can enhance PBL projects in classrooms.

Phillip and his colleagues encourage students to explore and connect their learning with their passions and the world around them—like amazingly linking science with soccer in innovative ways. His journey of becoming a guiding star, like many other educators, is about reflecting on one's purpose and finding creative ways to engage students in meaningful ways. It's about creating an environment where curiosity thrives and the potential for discovery is limitless.

Read more about Phillip and his work on page...



STEP 3

Lead with empathy and compassion

As a teacher, your greatest strength lies in your ability to connect with your students as human beings, not just as learners. In a world that often feels fragmented and impersonal, your empathy becomes a rare and invaluable gift. Students need to know that you genuinely care about them—not only for their academic success but for who they are as individuals.

When you take the time to listen, offer encouragement, and recognize their potential, you are guiding them on a journey that reaches far beyond textbooks and tests. You are teaching them how to believe in themselves, how to persevere through challenges, and how to embrace their own growth.

This role requires more than just delivering content—it's about fostering an environment where students feel valued and understood. It's the human connection—the trust, the relationship—that transforms you into a true guide. When students feel seen and heard, they are more likely to engage in their learning, take risks, and open themselves to new experiences. They develop the confidence to question, explore, and pursue knowledge with curiosity and passion. But this connection goes beyond the classroom; it's about acknowledging their unique experiences, emotions, and aspirations. In this way, the role of the teacher goes far beyond instruction—it becomes a partnership in discovery, growth, and transformation.

Balancing

TECHNOLOGY WITH HUMANITY

As we embrace the role of guiding stars, we must also acknowledge the role of technology in education. AI, digital platforms, and online resources have become integral to our classrooms, but they are not replacements for the human element of teaching. Technology can support and enrich the learning process, but it cannot replace the profound impact of a teacher who truly connects with their students. A computer cannot offer a kind word when a student is struggling, nor can it recognize the potential in a student when they doubt themselves. These are the moments that define great teaching—the moments when we, as human beings, show students that we care, that we believe in them, and that we are committed to their success. Technology should never replace the warmth of a teacher’s encouragement, the patience of a mentor, or the wisdom of a guide. These are human qualities that can’t be replicated by algorithms.

As Khouloud Seghira Benkaidia insightfully points out, our role is not to resist technology, but to help students use it wisely. It’s not a question of if technology should be used, but how we can use it responsibly and ethically. Teachers are the ones who guide students in navigating the digital world—teaching them to evaluate digital content critically, to harness the power of AI for learning without becoming overdependent, and to apply technology in ways that enrich their lives and align with their values.

The key lies in finding the balance: we must embrace technology to enhance learning and expand opportunities, but we must also stay grounded in the essential human qualities that make us great educators. The heart of education lies in our ability to connect with our students on a personal level, to understand their needs, and to offer guidance that is rooted in empathy and care.

The Ripple Effect


YOUR INFLUENCE BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

The impact of being a guiding star doesn’t stop at the end of the school day. It extends far beyond the classroom, into the lives of your students and their communities. When you light the way for your students, you are not just teaching them academic content—you are shaping their futures.

I once heard an educator say, *“Teaching is not about preparing students for exams; it’s about preparing them for life.”* The lessons we teach in the classroom—whether about math, history, or literature—are secondary to the life lessons we impart through empathy, resilience, and a passion for learning. When you help students navigate their own journey, you are equipping them to face the world with confidence, to create change, and to find their own light.

Your influence will ripple outward, touching not only the students you teach but also the families and communities they belong to. The values you instill, such as curiosity, perseverance, and kindness, will shape the way they approach their own futures, and in turn, they will pass these qualities on to others. As a teacher, your impact is never limited to the classroom—it reverberates throughout society, creating a cycle of growth and transformation that can last a lifetime.





Technology should never replace the warmth of a teacher's encouragement, the patience of a mentor, or the wisdom of a guide.

Call to Action

ILLUMINATE THE FUTURE

The time to embrace your role as a guiding star is now. The world is calling for teachers who are ready to step forward with courage, passion, and an unwavering commitment to shaping a brighter future. Our students are depending on us to be the mentors, motivators, and role models they need. The journey to becoming a guiding star is not just a personal growth opportunity; it is a chance to create lasting change in the lives of those you teach. Here's how to embark on this journey.

1

Reflect on your impact: Take a moment to envision the impact you want to have on your students. What kind of difference do you want to make? What kind of guiding star do you want to be? As a guiding star, you are more than a teacher—you are a beacon of hope and inspiration.

2

Embrace lifelong learning: Growth never stops. As educators, we must continuously evolve alongside our students. Stay informed about the latest teaching strategies, emerging technologies, and educational trends. Attend workshops, read books, and actively engage in professional development.

3


Collaborate and share: You don't have to do this alone. The world of education is filled with passionate and like-minded professionals who are eager to collaborate and share their insights that benefit every student we teach.

4

Lead with empathy: The heart of teaching lies in connection. Show your students that you care about them as individuals—beyond their grades or test scores. Lead with empathy by building trust, offering encouragement, and creating a classroom environment where every student feels seen and heard.

5

Think beyond the classroom: Every interaction you have or action you do with a student is an opportunity to shape their future. Approach your teaching with this perspective in mind.



Always think beyond, for in your thoughts lies the future of your students.

THE POWER OF YOUR LIGHT

As teachers, you are more than educators—you are the guiding stars of your students' lives. You have the power to inspire curiosity, ignite passions, and instill hope. In a sky full of possibilities, your light can guide them to discover their unique paths.

Now is the time to shine brightly, to embrace your role as a mentor, motivator, and source of inspiration. **Because when you light the way, you are not just shaping the minds of today's students—you are illuminating the path to a better future for all of us.**



Le Dinh Bao Quoc, Ed.D., with a Doctorate in Education, boasts 20+ years in ELT. He founded Pro.Ed Education Solutions, offering school consultancies. Author of "The Art and Science of ChatGPT in Education," he highlights EdTech's role in enriching teaching, learning, and educational practices. Research spans EdTech's impact, teacher growth, and educational management and leadership. Dr. Quoc is acknowledged by LinkedIn as a Top Educational Leadership Voice in 2024.



APPLYING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN BROADER EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

LESSONS FROM HIGHER EDUCATION

— Dr. Ingrid H Lee —



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In my recent article on emotional intelligence (EI) in higher education, I explored the critical role EI plays in fostering collaboration and building trust within academic institutions. Based on my research findings from chapters 7 and 8 of my PhD thesis available here, emotional intelligence—defined by empathy, reciprocity, and the careful navigation of relationships—serves as a foundational element in successful collaboration in academia. But how can these findings be applied beyond higher education into broader educational contexts, such as primary and secondary schools, vocational training programs, and community-based learning environments?



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In this article, I will discuss how the principles of emotional intelligence, which are essential in higher education, can be adapted and applied in various other educational settings. By understanding the nuances of collaboration, communication, and emotional dynamics in diverse learning environments, we can foster more meaningful connections between educators and students, leading to enhanced learning outcomes. Including quotes from participants in my research adds authenticity and provides real-world perspectives, allowing readers to connect with the lived experiences and insights of those directly involved in the study.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN SCHOOL SETTINGS: EMPATHY AS A CORNERSTONE

While emotional intelligence is a crucial element for collaboration among academic staff in higher education, it is just as significant when considering teacher–student interactions in school environments. At the core of emotional intelligence lies empathy—the ability to recognize and respond to the emotions of others. In primary and secondary schools, educators with strong emotional intelligence are better equipped to understand their students' needs, fears, and frustrations.

As my research shows, empathy plays a fundamental role in creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment. In schools, teachers who demonstrate empathy can better navigate the emotional complexities that come with teaching diverse student populations. This approach ensures that students feel heard and valued, which in turn fosters a sense of belonging and engagement.

One participant from my research, Deborah, emphasised this, saying, “You need to take care of people. You need to be careful about what you're asking them to do and how they're going to do it. Careful of their emotional needs for trust and those sorts of things. So, it's not something you can just bowl into a room and start doing a collaborative exercise” (Deborah, L 54–58). In schools, this translates to teachers ensuring their students' emotional needs are considered, helping to build trust and enhance collaboration in learning environments.

“In primary and secondary schools, educators with strong emotional intelligence are better equipped to understand their students' needs, fears, and frustrations.”

RECIPROCITY: BALANCING COLLABORATION IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

Reciprocity, or the balance of give and take in relationships, is another critical element of emotional intelligence that can enhance collaboration in schools. My research in higher education highlights how academics must balance their contributions with those of their colleagues, ensuring that collaboration remains equitable and mutually beneficial.

In the context of schools, reciprocity can be applied to the relationships between teachers and students, as well as among educators themselves. Teachers who foster reciprocal relationships with their students create an environment where students feel empowered to contribute their ideas and thoughts. This collaborative approach encourages student agency, allowing students to take ownership of their learning.

Deborah, reflecting on this dynamic, stated, “It's give and take...sometimes you need to talk, sometimes you need to listen, sometimes you need to be doing some work, sometimes you need to be resting from that” (Deborah, L 22–26). In educational settings, this back-and-forth exchange of ideas can manifest through reciprocal teaching techniques, where students and teachers share the responsibility for instruction and learning.

Reciprocity can also extend to professional relationships among educators. Teachers who support one another, share resources, and collaborate on lesson planning are more likely to create a cohesive and supportive educational environment. In this way, emotional intelligence fosters a culture of collaboration not only between students and teachers but also among teaching staff.

Teachers who foster reciprocal relationships with their students create an environment where students feel empowered to contribute their ideas and thoughts.



NAVIGATING RELATIONSHIPS AND POWER DYNAMICS IN SCHOOLS

In higher education, my research shows that emotional intelligence is crucial in navigating complex relationships, especially when power dynamics are at play. Academics must carefully balance their emotions and responses to hierarchical structures within institutions. This same dynamic exists in schools, where teachers and administrators must work within structured hierarchies while maintaining positive, open lines of communication.

Mark, another academic participant, highlighted the presence of power imbalances, stating, "Power imbalances were always present, and academics needed to be attentive to hierarchical structures and power" (Mark, L 73-77). In schools, emotional intelligence is critical for teachers to navigate their relationships with school leaders, support staff, and parents while maintaining a positive classroom environment. Teachers with strong emotional intelligence can communicate openly with colleagues and school leaders, advocating for student needs without escalating conflict.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FOR STUDENT WELL-BEING IN VOCATIONAL AND COMMUNITY LEARNING SETTINGS

Beyond schools, emotional intelligence plays a vital role in vocational training programs and community-based learning environments. In these settings, where students may come from diverse backgrounds with varying levels of prior education, emotional intelligence becomes a key factor in fostering inclusive learning environments.

In my research, Kelly, a senior leader, described how her approach to leadership through emotional intelligence supported her team: "I delegate as much as I can, but with the view that it's not about getting them to do the job... It's actually about teaching them, supporting them, mentoring them to understand that this is a practice of part of what it is to be an academic leader" (Kelly, L 545-549). This leadership style, grounded in empathy and reciprocity, can be replicated in vocational and community settings, where instructors guide students through complex learning experiences while providing mentorship and emotional support.

Emotional intelligence also supports the well-being of students in community-based learning programs. Many students in these settings face personal challenges outside the classroom, such as financial struggles or social inequalities. Teachers who demonstrate empathy and emotional intelligence can better understand these challenges and provide the necessary support, creating a learning environment where students feel valued and motivated to succeed.

APPLYING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN EDUCATION

As educators, fostering emotional intelligence is not only crucial for student success but also for professional growth. My research underscores the importance of emotional intelligence in leadership, particularly in supporting the professional development of colleagues. In schools and other learning settings, educators who develop their emotional intelligence can enhance their leadership skills, contribute to collaborative cultures, and support the growth of their colleagues.

Kelly's example of delegating with a focus on mentoring highlights the role of emotional intelligence in professional development. Professional learning communities (PLCs) or Communities of Practice (CoPs), where teachers share experiences, reflect on practices, and provide feedback, mirror this approach. Emotional intelligence helps educators communicate openly, provide constructive feedback, and foster a culture of support and growth within PLCs.

CONCLUSION: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS A CATALYST FOR COLLABORATION IN BROADER EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

In conclusion, the lessons learned from emotional intelligence in higher education are equally applicable in broader educational settings, including schools, vocational training programs, and community-based learning environments. By focusing on empathy, reciprocity, and the careful navigation of relationships, educators at all levels can create collaborative, inclusive, and supportive learning environments.

As the education landscape continues to evolve, emotional intelligence will remain a critical factor in fostering student success and ensuring that educators can collaborate effectively, navigate power dynamics, and support one another's growth. Embedding emotional intelligence into the fabric of education, we can create learning spaces where collaboration, creativity, and innovation thrive.

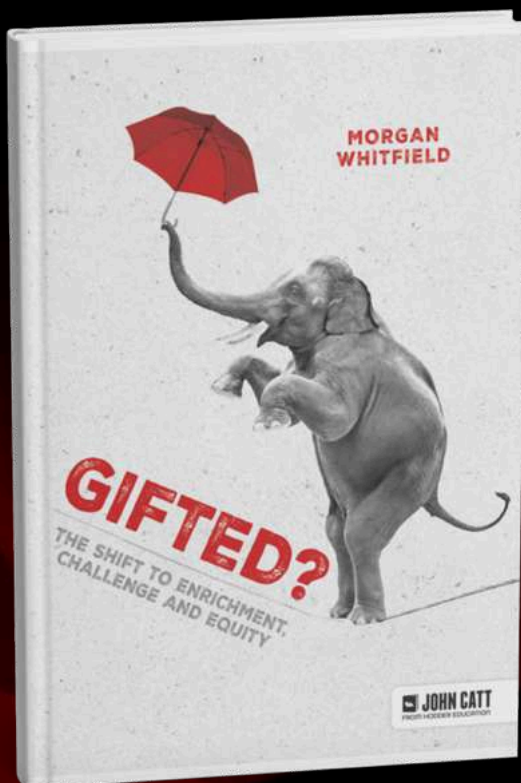


Dr. Ingrid H Lee is an education strategist and consultant with nearly 30 years of experience in curriculum innovation, teacher development, and educational transformation. Holding a PhD in Education, she has held leadership roles in schools, higher education, and advisory positions across various sectors globally. Ingrid specializes in designing strategies for impactful teaching, fostering academic excellence, and driving innovation in education through research-driven practices. Her collaborative approach makes her a sought-after consultant for institutions seeking transformative solutions.

GIFTED?

THE SHIFT TO ENRICHMENT, CHALLENGE AND EQUITY

Written by Morgan Whitfield



The concept of 'gifted and talented' is outdated, with new labels like 'more able' or 'high-aptitude learners' failing to foster new thinking. The educational system still reflects biases linked to social status, race, and gender, perpetuating inequities. Instead of focusing on differentiation for select students, this book advocates for rigorous challenges for all students. It promotes inclusive teaching strategies such as project-based learning, adaptive instruction, and a commitment to equity, ensuring every student is welcomed and equipped to achieve mastery. The aim is to create an environment where every student feels they belong.

Morgan Whitfield, the author, hails from a vibrant family of educators and is proud to carry on this legacy. Her background in establishing enrichment programs and her dedication to equity greatly influence her writing. Having worked across three continents, she has spent the majority of her career in British curriculum schools, where she has held various positions including Director of Teaching and Learning, Head of Sixth Form, Head of Humanities, and Head of Scholars. She enjoys presenting to her fellow educators and is a fervent supporter of providing challenges for all students.

The EduVerse Newsletter is excited to feature an intensive interview with Morgan Whitfield, the acclaimed author of *Gifted? The Shift to Enrichment, Challenge and Equity*. Explore her motivations for writing the book, gain valuable insights, and uncover her vision of giftedness in the future of education.

Order the book here



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ASK

THE EXPERTS

Welcome to **Ask the Experts**, the ultimate column dedicated to professional development in the field of education. In this dynamic and ever-evolving field, continuous growth and learning are paramount. In each issue, we explore the most commonly asked topic by interviewing invited experts for their insights, experiences, and strategies.

EXCLUSIVE

RETHINKING GIFTEDNESS CHALLENGE FOR ALL

with **Morgan Whitfield**

EduVerse: Welcome to our exclusive interview series, "Ask the Experts." We are honored to have **Morgan Whitfield**, an innovative educator and author, join us to discuss the thought-provoking ideas behind her book, *Gifted? The Shift to Enrichment, Challenge and Equity*. In her work, Morgan boldly challenges the entrenched concept of "giftedness," questioning its meaning and how educational systems can be reimagined to serve all learners equitably. Her insights shed light on how our perceptions of talent are shaped by social contexts and resources, urging educators to redefine what it means to challenge every student inclusively.



Morgan Whitfield is an author and senior leader, her book *Gifted? The Shift to Enrichment, Challenge and Equity* came out summer 2024. The book focuses on inclusive pedagogy, curriculum and mindset by reinventing traditional conceptions of 'high ability' students. She has worked most of her career in outstanding British curriculum schools and has taken on such roles as Director of Teaching and Learning, Assistant Head, Head of Sixth Form, Head of Humanities and Head of Scholars. Morgan hails from Canada but has worked in the UK and Middle East before moving to Vietnam to work at the British International School Ho Chi Minh City. She holds an NQPSL and degrees from Queen's University and the University of Guelph, where she was a President's Scholar. Her website is www.challengeforall.com.

PART I: RETHINKING "GIFTEDNESS"

1 Morgan, in *Gifted?* you describe "gifted and talented" as a kind of "zombie" concept—outdated but still influencing schools everywhere. What inspired you to take on this idea, and what do you think are the biggest misunderstandings about what it means to be "gifted"?

I remember having dinner with enthusiastic teacher whose school had recently decided to create an initiative for their 'high-aptitude pupils'. The plan was an after-school programme with a heavy STEAM emphasis. Then students would work with science teachers and an architecture firm to design a new, environmentally sustainable cafeteria for the school. The project sounded amazing, and to enhance, I suggested a pivot towards student choice, as students might prefer going beyond a science and engineering focus. We leapt into project based learning and how students are motivated when they can choose their speciality as opposed to being heavily directed. We bounced ideas off each other for some time. Then I caught myself mid-conversation. To start at the very beginning, the programme should be open to all students, not just the high-ability ones. The teacher asked, 'Why?' The whole purpose was to have a special programme for their top students. Theory and history washed over me, but my immediate response was, 'Why not?'

The whole purpose was to have a special programme for their top students. Theory and history washed over me, but my immediate response was, 'Why not?'

Morgan Whitfield



'Gifted and talented' (G&T) is a zombie. It is dead, but still walking around. There are even new labels to stratify students – 'more able', 'high ability', 'high end learners'. New labels do not equal new thinking. The concept of 'gifted' is still stubbornly embedded in our educational structures. Semantics can take over the debate as the term 'G&T' is slowly being removed from registers and seating plans across the world, but a pedagogical focus still revolves around a classification.

'More able' is not only a measure of academics, but often reflect access to resources – students can be 'more able' when they have more financial resources, more access, more visibility, more support or more cultural acceptance. The shift to whole-school enrichment and equity-focused programs is about dismantling those barriers.

2 You make a compelling point that labels like "gifted" or "high-aptitude" often reflect privilege rather than ability. Could you explain how social and economic factors influence these classifications and how they create barriers to equitable education?

Certainly! Education holds up a mirror to our larger societal systems, and gifted education has magnified the inequities. We must design our enrichment with this in mind, as we are building on a polluted site. Gifted programmes have been systemically racist and have marginalised groups who were already disenfranchised. To truly address these inequities, challenge-for-all teaching in the classroom and enrichment has the responsibility to put these communities at the centre.

We need to carefully rethink our systems to avoid perpetuating inequality. We can also seek shields to protect our students from the structural harm of systemic inequality. 'Ability', 'more-able' and gifted thinking exists within a larger, broken system characterized by significant disparities, such as: access to quality early childhood education (the preparation gap); unequal differences in school funding (the allocation gap); differences in how much support affluent parents can provide to their children compared to lower-income parents (the parent gap); the mindset and relations between teachers and students, which may be influenced by lower expectations and bias (the teacher-student gap); and the significant imbalance between the composition of the teaching force and student population (the culture gap).

It's not enough to have good intentions. Policies and programs must be designed to address the needs of equity-seeking groups deliberately. Even when enrichment opportunities seem open to everyone, they often fail to address the practical and emotional barriers faced by students from marginalized backgrounds. These barriers can stem from various factors, including neurodiversity, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language barriers, race, ethnicity, religion, and physical differences.

For instance, even in non-selective programs, students might face financial hurdles, such as being unable to afford trips or extracurricular activities. They may lack the time to participate due to part-time jobs, or their involvement might be derailed by bullying or stereotype threats, such as the myth that girls are less capable in STEM fields. Moreover, a school might lack programs like Model UN due to insufficient funding or staff expertise, denying students the chance to develop critical skills.

Access to programmes and guidance from experts is key. Students benefit from exposure to new activities, mentorship from adults, exploration outside the curriculum, opportunities to practise new skills and roles, and develop independence. We can see the inequity this creates and confront it.

3 That's such an important perspective. Let's talk about your personal journey in education. Has your own journey in education influenced your views on "giftedness" and led you toward this inclusive idea of enrichment for everyone? Was there a specific moment that really made you rethink the traditional approach?

Absolutely. There was an epiphany moment I had during a learning walk in a lower primary school. The pedagogy was one of learning through play with continuous provision – every room was an environment of exploration. The purpose of continuous provision is to encourage children to be active learners, creatively interacting with learning materials. Children moved from area to area interacting with different stations of resources. Each station had resource sheets, cards, exemplars, keywords, scaffolded tasks and prompts for them to use, as well as a 'challenge' task that required all the skills.

I asked our head of primary how many students complete the challenge element and she looked at me with a smile and said, 'Oh they all do the challenge first! You can't hold them back – it's the fun part. They figure out everything else to succeed in that challenge.'

That moment stuck with me: the experience for students was 'challenge first'. They would jump to the most difficult and complicated assignment, and then use resources to meet and go beyond any assumed expectations. For instance, children would go straight to the challenge of designing a motte-and-bailey castle, seeing what worked and didn't work, using pictures to depict it realistically, categorising types, taking the initiative to label the features, and then fetching a dictionary to be more specific. The model would have a realism and historical accuracy that I typically expected of my Year 7s. Yet these children were in Year 2!



PART 2: THE SHIFT TO ENRICHMENT AND EQUITY

4 Morgan, in *Gifted?* you describe "gifted and talented" as a kind of "zombie" concept—outdated but still influencing schools everywhere. What inspired you to take on this idea, and what do you think are the biggest misunderstandings about what it means to be "gifted"?

All students should be challenged as high-level challenge is integral to progress. I drew from the evidence and my book debunks traditional methods, like ability grouping, special gifted classes, acceleration (chosen students skipping ahead or moving into new year groups), targeting then 'pulling out' students for special programs, are largely ineffective when it comes to impacting student outcomes, especially for the most vulnerable and marginalised groups.

Instead, teachers should have fun exploring pedagogical approaches such as adaptive teaching, oracy, debate-centered argumentation, the **roundtable Harkness Discussion Method**, project-based or problem-based learning with real-world applications, etc. Encouraging students to express their thoughts through round table discussion and debate can unlock their potential to think critically and articulate ideas. Imagine a classroom alive with energy as students delve into complex issues, argue diverse perspectives, and collaboratively construct meaning. These moments not only strengthen their reasoning but also prepare them for the collaborative, dialogue-driven environments they will encounter in the future.



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In a Harkness class, learning occurs through discussions centered around a circular "Harkness Table." At this table, every member of the class is encouraged to ask questions, share contributions, and reflect in order to foster learning and achieve success.

I suggest that teachers embrace the joy of experimenting with dynamic and engaging approaches. For instance, adapting lessons to the needs of individual students can transform the classroom into a more inclusive space, where every learner feels both supported and challenged. Similarly, discussion-based methods, where students lead conversations and explore ideas together, shift the traditional dynamics of teaching. Students take charge of their learning, building confidence as they navigate theory, challenge each other's viewpoints, and refine their own. The result is a classroom that thrives on mutual respect, shared discovery and an interrogation of knowledge.

At the same time, a classroom that values diversity and embraces multiple perspectives fosters a richer understanding of the world. Teaching materials and discussions that reflect a wide range of voices and histories can transform learning into a more personal and meaningful journey for students. For example, exploring global literature encourages students to connect their own experiences to broader human stories.

I explore these strategies in more depth in my book, where I explore how they can be implemented effectively. Writing about these practices was a truly joyful experience, as they offer such powerful pathways to not only engage students but also prepare them to be thoughtful, confident, and capable contributors to the world.

5 It's eye-opening to hear that traditional "gifted" programs can actually deepen social inequalities. How can schools start breaking down these barriers to create an inclusive learning environment where every student has a chance to succeed?

'Gifted and talented' is a loaded phrase that many educators have recoiled from. 'Gifted' lists in schools are often kept confidential for a reason; parents and students would be upset thinking that they are less-than. The term is discrediting because, historically, giftedness has excluded entire communities. For many educators, there's discomfort around using that term because it can imply that some students are intellectually superior, which can be alienating. Whether we use these labels to target students in the classroom, for setting or for special programmes, there is an implied 'chosenness' that is dismissive of those who don't make the cut.

What's more, the idea of identifying a few "gifted" students often overlooks the potential in others. We spend a lot of time searching for those 'gifted' needles in haystacks when we could be spinning straw into gold. My argument is that we should know our students, understand different aptitudes and at the same time confront the assumptions that reinforce an elitist system.

6 I like the analogy of the “gifted” needles in haystacks. Instead of looking for the needles, what about all the straws? However, shifting to this model of universal challenge and enrichment sounds powerful, but it’s also a big change. What kind of support do schools and teachers need to make this shift successful?

The shift to a “challenge-for-all” approach requires support in three main areas: curriculum (what we teach), pedagogy (how we teach it) and mindset (who we are including). Transforming our teaching practice begins with examining our presuppositions and then evaluating what impactful challenge for all looks like in action. There is fantastic literature on powerful knowledge, teaching to the top and personalised responsive teaching. All students should be given an overarching challenge to reach.

In terms of mindset, educators are shifting- we don’t teach high ability pupils, we teach high-achieving behaviours. We enrich our provision by opening up opportunities by inviting all students and not imposing selective criteria. We enrich our pedagogy by being challenge-first. Have universally high expectations, keep the degree of difficulty: we should not differentiate by learning objective or outcome. This strategy can unintentionally send the message that ‘challenge’ is designed for select students. For instance, it is tempting to rewrite a text, paraphrase it and remove the subtlety—this strips the layers of complexity. We do a disservice to students if we strip layers of complexity. Keep the degree of difficulty.

Education needs to stop referring to levels of ability and put emphasis on capacity. A student’s capacity can grow with motivation, self-regulation, metacognitive skills, equal access to opportunities, and a strong belief in their own potential. Rather than sorting students into rigid categories, we should focus on helping them develop the behaviors, skills, and strategies they need to succeed.

The purpose of identifying ‘high ability’ students was to challenge those who would otherwise go underchallenged. So let’s



We spend a lot of time searching for those ‘gifted’ needles in haystacks when we could be spinning straw into gold.

Morgan Whitfield

7 So, stop referring to levels of ability, but to capacity instead. That perfectly leads to the next question. You talk about “teaching to the top” instead of the usual “differentiation” methods. How does this look day-to-day in a classroom, and what makes it effective for a mix of learners?

That’s right, and I think this is where things get really interesting. While the common terms of high, middle and low ability students tend to be pervasive in education, I would like to reiterate that the framing is dangerous. It implies a fixed category and preconceived cap on a student’s overall potential. Our job is to help them progress from where they are. We can have learners at different stages of attainment, not different abilities.

Differentiation and ‘ability thinking’ can put a cap on learning and progress. As one of my colleagues Hayley Mason recently stated: “We don’t use the term ‘ability’ in our school, we use ‘attainment.’ We look at where a child is—whether they are high attaining in this topic, or low attaining, we don’t use a limiting language about abilities.” What educators typically refer to as ability is actually a student’s current level of attainment at that point.



TEACHING TO THE TOP

To integrate stretch, challenge, and adaptive instruction into everyday teaching, we must move away from focusing on differentiated learning outcomes in the classroom.

- Keep in mind that 'unfinished learning' does not need to hold students back – instead, focus on conceptual understanding, application and procedural fluency. For example, lessons can begin with a practical scenario in which students can explore how the lesson connects to real world situations. They can then name the concept to be learned.
- Plan by continuously and formatively assessing pupils' existing knowledge and coach those who need support in order to access the same ambitious curriculum and high expectations.
- Scaffold 'up' instead of 'down'. Scaffolding down means simplifying activities, bringing content down to what students currently do, which limits progress. Scaffolding up focuses on having students master key practices, principles and concepts that enable learner autonomy. In responsive teaching, this could mean live modelling in small groups, think-alouds, peer coaching or open-ended questions to activate prior knowledge.
- Scaffolding is gradually removed to ensure that students are working towards independence. Teachers can identify pupils who need new steps further broken down or information chunked, but all students deserve exposure to high-level content. We can balance the input of new content so that pupils master important concepts.
- New AI adaptive learning platforms are amazing! It would not be hyperbole to state that adaptive teaching software that can give specific, actionable, immediate feedback to students is a game-changer. This is real-time personalised assessment that enables students to track their progress and teachers to adjust learning strategies.
- Keep the degree of difficulty. Teachers don't need to create multiple versions of a resource. If we simplify it, we remove the depth and complexity.
- Group pupils effectively and apply high expectations to all groups. Change group compositions regularly; this develops collaboration skills and also sends the message that there is no entrenched or permanent setting in the classroom.
- Teach the learning behaviour – the metacognitive strategy is not obvious but always important. If there is any peer tutoring, gear it towards modelling – have students explain the process of how, not give the answer away.
- The product and outcome should be available from the start. Hinge questions at the very beginning can allow students to move forward to the larger challenge immediately.

Teaching to the top and adaptive teaching does not insist that teachers artificially create distinct tasks for different groups of pupils or set lower expectations for some pupils. We can meet individual needs – and provide opportunities for all students to experience success – while maintaining high expectations for everyone. One overarching learning intention, instead of a 'all', 'most' some' learning objectives that expect less from 'low- ability' pupils. We can tailor our teaching methods – adaptive teaching allows us to adjust and guide all students.

PART 3: THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION

8 Looking ahead, how do you think moving away from traditional labels like “high-ability” and “gifted” to embracing a “challenge-for-all” mindset will shape education in the long run? How does it prepare students for life beyond school?

As I said earlier, education can stop referring to levels of ability and put emphasis on levels of performance. Underlying all this is the idea that it is our job to ‘discover’ giftedness and latent high ability. Students aren’t born playing concertos on the piano, they start with scales and then build skills over time, layer by layer, through practice and exposure. Extension shouldn’t be reserved for the so-called “gifted.” A challenge-for-all approach makes those opportunities accessible to everyone, raising the potential of each student.

Challenge-first environments make extension visible and accessible to all – and raise the roof on achievement. A challenge-for-all approach within the classroom, and enrichment programming outside of it, is purposely inclusive. This is also the fun part – enrichment and universal challenge strategies can shake off the shackles of ‘giftedness’.

9 Do you think this shift could have a broader impact on educational policy? Are there certain changes you’d like to see that could help make this more inclusive approach the standard?

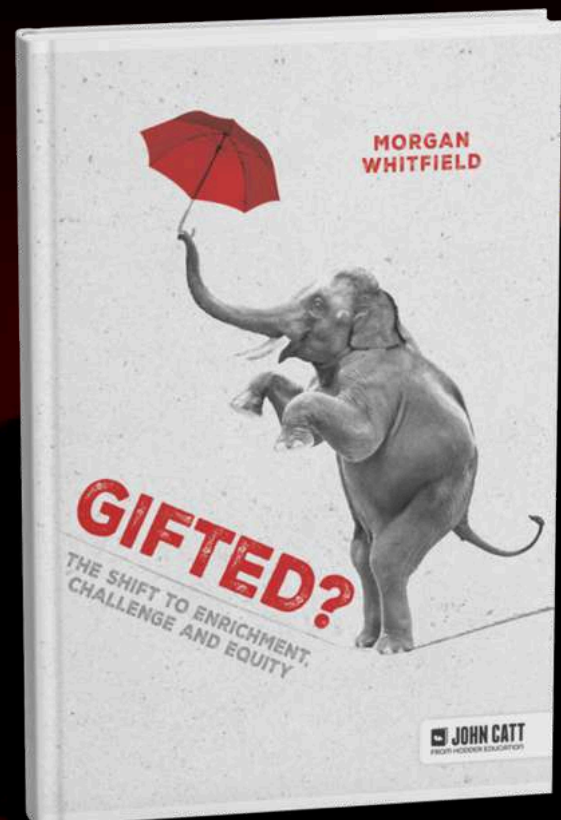
Absolutely. The move towards inclusion has the potential to redefine what we value in education. Giftedness, as a label, is laden with historical and social baggage, but the concept of challenging all students is not. Schools are already beginning to recognize that the old models of gifted education often perpetuate inequity and fail to address structural barriers that prevent certain groups from accessing opportunities.

Equity, diversity and belonging are the broader goals. Educators want to construct barrier-free environments for enrichment programming to flourish. I would recommend a change in process and procedures – this sounds prosaic but involves a lot of creative problem solving. This is codifying equity, empathy and kindness. Codifying is the keyword. Equity is a key value at many schools, with leadership and staff who truly wish to embrace this ethos. The trick is embedding these intentions in policy, language, structures and systems. Real change begins with organisational shifts as opposed to tokenistic superficial gestures. This requires the real work of policy audits, equitable hiring practices and updated terms of reference. All school leaders should be wearing a new lens and promoting a holistic change in procedures, ethos and values.

Order the book here



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10

Your book paints a vision of an education system where every student is challenged and feels they belong. What do you hope this book will inspire in educators, and what's one change you'd love to see in the future of education?

I truly believe that diversity, equity, and inclusion are the future of education. These values form the foundation of providing enrichment and challenge for every student, no matter where they start. When we design with this perspective in mind, we can uplift students from all backgrounds and create opportunities for everyone to thrive. This book explores how teaching and learning practices are closely tied to equity, showing that when whole-school policies and leadership actively address structural barriers and student needs, they can empower staff and bring equity to underrepresented groups.

Culturally responsive instruction fosters high levels of learning, but this requires diverse leadership, ongoing professional development, and a staff that's committed to reflection. Traditionally, gifted programs have been about selection and elitism, but I want to see a shift toward safe, inclusive learning spaces for all students. Enrichment thrives when there is a diversity of voices and expanded methods for feedback.

To me, enrichment is about enhancing, deepening, and elevating student learning. It's not just something students benefit from in the classroom—it has lasting effects that carry over into life. A holistic approach to enrichment includes strategies that extend learning within the classroom, while also supporting enrichment throughout the entire school environment.

FINAL THOUGHTS

As we wrap up, what advice would you give to teachers and parents who want to start embracing this “challenge for all” approach?

For me, diversity, equity, and inclusion are the core of creating challenges for everyone. If we truly want to increase joy, close achievement gaps, and break cycles of social immobility, then inviting and empowering all students and stakeholders is the silver bullet.

Morgan Whitfield

Morgan and Dr. Quoc from EduVerse had a meet-up prior to the interview. It was a great time!



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **The concept of "giftedness" is outdated:** Morgan argues that labels like "gifted" or "high-aptitude" are remnants of a past system that continues to influence education despite being outmoded. These labels do not equate to new thinking and often mask deeper societal issues.
- **Inequality is ingrained in gifted education:** Gifted programs often reflect systemic inequalities, such as disparities in early childhood education, school funding, parental support, and teacher expectations. These gaps prevent equitable access to opportunities.
- **Equity in education requires inclusive programs:** True change means focusing on inclusivity and designing enrichment programs that address the barriers faced by marginalized groups.
- **A shift towards universal challenge:** Morgan advocates for giving all students the opportunity to be challenged, not just those labeled "gifted." This means moving away from ability grouping and creating classrooms where high-level challenges are accessible to everyone.
- **Support for the shift to inclusive enrichment:** To make the transition to a more inclusive, "challenge-for-all" approach, schools need support in three key areas: curriculum design, pedagogy, and mindset.
- **Capacity over ability:** Instead of categorizing students by their abilities, Morgan emphasizes the importance of focusing on their capacity for growth. All students can improve with the right support, motivation, and opportunities to develop metacognitive skills.
- **Teaching to the top:** Rather than differentiating based on perceived abilities, teaching to the top challenges all students and encourages them to reach their full potential. This approach fosters progress without limiting students to pre-defined categories of ability.



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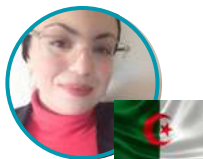
What role do you believe teachers should play in building a future-ready education?



Judy-Ann Green
The United Kingdom

I believe that in 10-15 years, teachers will play a crucial role as facilitators of personalized, lifelong learning, guiding students to become adaptable, resilient, and self-directed learners. With technology handling more routine tasks, our role as educators will focus on fostering critical thinking, creativity, and social-emotional skills tailored to each student's needs. Hence, our role will shift from content deliverers to mentors who equip students with the skills and mindsets necessary to thrive in an ever-changing world.

Teachers will always be important for the advance of education, but their traditional role will no longer function. Teachers no longer possess all knowledge. They are just moderators and as I like to call them managers.



Benkaïdia KhouLOUD Seghira
École Supérieure Nationale
de Constantine
Algeria

As a teacher, they should model lifelong learning behaviors themselves. They should stay updated on the latest developments in their subject areas, education research, and technologies. There by enabling them to provide relevant, high-quality instruction and guidance.



Princess Nnenna Joy
University of Porthacourt
Nigeria

Teachers shape future-ready education by fostering creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving, helping students adapt to change, and continuously updating their skills.



Pham Thi Doan Trang
Dream Foreign
Language Center
Vietnam

Teachers will act more as facilitators/guiders in a world of mass information exchange. Their ability to keep up with tech and global developments is the key.



Björn Robertson
Royal International
Bilingual School
Vietnam

Teachers play a pivotal role in building a future-ready education by acting not only as knowledge facilitators but also as mentors who guide students in developing essential skills for a rapidly evolving world



Debomita Dutta
Special Educator
India

TRANSFORMATIVE TEACHING THROUGH **TRANSDISCIPLINARY METHODS** WILDNESS, BEAUTY, IMAGINATION

Dawn Wink, PhD

Sun poured in through the windows of the large room as a group of educators and I gathered to explore translanguaging, wildness, beauty, and imagination in teaching in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Educators spanned the United States and, educational contexts, and several countries. What drew us together was our common threads of interest in innovative and transformative teaching approaches. The famed bright blue sky of Santa Fe, New Mexico provided a backdrop outside the windows. Nestled at the foot of the Sangre de Cristo mountains in the high desert southwest of the United States, Santa Fe is known for its deep history, natural beauty, and cultural creativity—a perfect place to explore these transdisciplinary ideas and approaches.

“What brought you to this session?” I asked. This was not a more traditionally titled session about specific pedagogical methods.

The answers ranged from “Curiosity,” to “My brain is on overload from highly technical sessions,” to “I need some wildness, beauty, and imagination in my life and teaching.”

“What does that actually mean?” several asked.

We find ourselves in a global and educational era where many of us seek transformative methods in education. Changes in the educational landscape, reflective of the changes happening in the world, keep educators seeking innovative ways to connect with students in meaningful and authentic ways. AI creates an ever-changing educational ecosystem. These realities are what draw me to transdisciplinary approaches in teaching. How do we meaningfully connect with students amidst all these dynamics and their constant draw into digital worlds?

TRANSDISCIPLINARY TEACHING

Transdisciplinary teaching can help students understand topics more deeply and see connections between different subjects. Transdisciplinary work is a collaborative effort that involves multiple disciplines working together to create new ideas and solutions that go beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries. Transdisciplinarity crosses and transcends supposed separations of distinct subjects in teaching and learning within the context of a greater whole.

Transdisciplinary teaching is “increasingly important is that the scale, degree, and novelty, as well as dynamic interactions, of global social and environmental change and crises today require us to move beyond isolated analyses to a richer perspective... only a thoroughly transdisciplinarity perspective can navigate such issues, which are at once technological, cultural, ethical, political, economic, and ecological” (Wells, 2013, pp. 126–127). That pretty much describes our work and our world. What does this look like in teaching and learning? To teach through the transdisciplinary lenses of wildness, beauty, and imagination supports educators and students in drawing from their full life experiences.

WILDNESS

Wildness is understood through the lens of *creativity* and *connection*. Terry Tempest Williams (2019) expresses wildness when “fear is replaced by awe. We recognize wildness as creativity in the extreme” (p. 42). This is what we want for our students. One of the greatest factors for learning is that people of all ages need to feel safe. We invite creativity into the classroom through transdisciplinary methods based on students’ and educators’ lived experiences, cultures, languages, identity, and contexts. Transdisciplinary methods enfold creative expressions into the class to support content. This includes intertwining the teacher’s own creative expressions and energies. Energy is contagious. When the teacher is excited and engaged, this energy fills the classroom. When teachers are bored, focused on memorization and regurgitation, the energy of the room feels flat, single dimensional.

- What are your creative passions? How can these be woven into the classroom to texturize the content?
- What are the students’ passions? What do you notice they engage in, and lose sense of time?
- How can these be included in the classroom to open new ways of connection and learning for students?

Example:

I work with educators that reflect the contexts, cultures, and languages around the world. Often, the ideas that we work with are presented in abstract academic language. I spontaneously grabbed my watercolor paints off the shelf years ago to convey these concepts visually. I am not an artist. It was not so much about the supposed quality of the painting as in conveying ideas in multiple ways. Amazingly, it worked! How can you invite open, safe creativity into the content? What wildness could be included that will bring the content and connections to life?

BEAUTY

Beauty in the classroom is understood as the deep and holistic lens through an indigenous worldview and expressed in Diné as *hózhó*, meaning *peace*, *balance*, and *harmony*. How can we integrate these concepts within teaching and learning? Beauty of learning expand exponentially; they take on a momentum and energy of their own. What can beauty look like? Beauty may be expressed through the caring heart of a teacher, through genuine listening, through taking time for deep learning. It takes on average seven encounters with content and vocabulary for new concepts, information, and vocabulary to become absorbed, known. In another session with teachers, this point was brought up and one of the teachers there said, "Seven times? I don't have time for that!" to which I responded, "That's right! Enough of this learning, I have content that I have to 'cover' and plow on ahead." Joking aside, deep learning takes time and often occurs most effectively in an environment of peace and the ideas are presented in harmony and wholeness, rather than discrete and unrelated parts. What if we approached teaching focusing on creating beauty in learning, rather than 'covering the material?'

- Think of your content with a focus on *peace*, *balance*, and *harmony*. How could the content be conveyed and experienced by students to create a sense of wholeness, of peace?
- As educators bring our full selves into the classroom, what ways can you create *peace*, *balance*, and *harmony* in your own life?
- How can students' full selves be embraced within the educational context, their identity affirmed and welcomed?

Example:

Peace, balance, and harmony in my life depends on my sacred hours of solitude and sanctuary in early morning hours of every day. We exude our inner selves in the classroom, whether we want to admit it or not. My ability to bring my best self to all else is highly dependent upon this time. Thus, I set my alarm clock every evening to rise hours before the sun for that time. This is one of my most effective strategies for creating beauty in my own educational landscape.

IMAGINATION

Imagination is our call to action, to bring visions to life. Imagination presents "us with the possible, potential realities that it is our job to actualize. It also presents us with a world that would not be complete without our help" (Lachman, 2010, p. 30). Teaching devoid of imaginative energy feels flat, rot, and dull. When the content and curriculum bore teachers, that energy comes through. What a miserable experience for all involved. To bring imagination into teaching is to throw open the doors and windows to new opportunities for learning, for experiencing, and for new discoveries and connections.

- What is your vision for your teaching and your students' learning?
- What educational ecosystem excites you? What does that look like?
- What specific actions need to take place to bring this vision into reality?
- How can you invite students' own visions and imagination into the educational context to deepen learning?

Example:

For years, I kept two of my professional spheres separate, as that was my understanding of what I was supposed to do. I had my teaching/academic world and my creative writing world. When I was in my teaching/academic world, I did not talk about my creative writing life. And, when immersed in my creative writing world, I did not refer to teaching or academia. What I came to realize is that by keeping these separate, I was weakening not only myself, but also what I brought into each of these contexts. The decision to live a *transdisciplinary* life and bring all my contexts into one intertwined whole transformed my life and my teaching. What I came to learn is that this decision and the actions that came from it allowed my students to bring *their* full selves into the space to create truly transformative educational experiences.

The sun rose higher in the windows of the ballroom in Santa Fe, where educators and I explored these ideas together, each person bringing their own lived experiences and educational context. The room hummed with conversation and energy of partner and small group conversations, as people made new connections with these ideas and with each other. Educators shared their ideas about how to incorporate beauty, wildness, and imagination into their context.

"What might this look like for you?" I posed to the group.

"Encouraging students to speak their mother tongues to make meaning," one teacher called from the back of the ballroom. "Yes!" I called back.

"Creating multiple ways for students to encounter and engage with the content creatively," another said. "Yes!" I sang back.

"Teaching in ways that excite me, so the energy comes through to the students," came a voice from the front. "Yes, yes, and yes," I replied.

Transdisciplinary teaching and learning open *creative* pathways of *connection* with the content in real and authentic ways, the essence of *wildness*, in which educators create climates in which students of all ages replace fear with wonder. By threading content with greater holistic context to create *balance* and *harmony*, we create *beauty* for our students, ourselves, and our world. *Imagination*, ours and our students, creates new possibilities and brings *new realities* to life. Imagination is our call to *action*.

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Dawn Wink, PhD, is an educator whose work explores teaching, language, wildness, beauty, and imagination. Wink's publications include "Teaching Passionately," "Meadowlark" and "Language, Culture, and Land: Lenses of Lilies." Wink is Academic Director of the Department of Teacher Education at Santa Fe Community College and works with teachers around the world, and lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA.





THE FUTURE OF LEARNING

WHY SKILLS MATTER MORE THAN EVER

Shaun Gear

As we come to the end of National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) examinations, many parents—and increasingly, employers—are questioning the traditional pathways young people take when entering the workforce.

Traditional pathways once offered a one-size-fits-all route to stability and prosperity, but the landscape is shifting. The future demands a new approach—one that focuses on agility, adaptability, and real-world skills. The idea of “skills-first” is gaining traction, and it’s time we explored what this means for our young people.



Shaun Gear is an educational innovator and expert in Work Integrated Learning based in Aotearoa New Zealand. With over 15 years of experience, he specializes in building strategic partnerships between education and industry, shaping the future of learning, and preparing the next generation for workforce readiness.

THE NEW LANGUAGE OF SKILLS

Employers today are increasingly prioritising practical, demonstrable skills over formal qualifications.

This isn't about devaluing education—I currently contract with three of Aotearoa's largest tertiary institutions. It's about recognising that what someone can do often holds more weight than what's printed on a certificate.

Here's the distinction:

- **Skills** are about what you *can do*.
- **Qualifications** signify what you *know*.
- **Competencies** blend skills, knowledge, and behaviours, enabling effective performance in a specific context.

This is where the concept of "skills-first" organisations comes into play. These companies place greater emphasis on the competencies a person brings rather than the qualifications they hold.

People often tell me, "But competencies are developed through studying." My response? Yes—and no. While studying builds knowledge and requires certain competencies, these aren't always the ones employers value.



For example, completing a degree might show perseverance and theoretical understanding, but employers often look for problem-solving, collaboration, and adaptability—qualities that can be developed through diverse experiences, not just traditional study.

For parents helping their young person make decisions about their future, and for school leavers wondering which path to take, understanding the language of skills and what skills-first organisations value is vital.

RETHINKING LONG-TERM QUALIFICATIONS

Long-term degrees have their place, but they come with significant risks:

- High tuition fees.
- Large debts.
- A long-term commitment to a path that may not align with future job markets.

Before committing to a multi-year degree, it's crucial to ask:

- **What skills will this qualification help me build?**
- **Are these skills valued in today's and tomorrow's job markets?**
- **Could I gain them in a more flexible, targeted way?**

For many young people, starting with shorter, targeted learning opportunities—such as micro-credentials, short courses, or certifications—offers more flexibility. These approaches allow them to test different fields, discover what excites them, and stack credentials over time, building a unique portfolio of skills without the burden of heavy debt.

STACKING SKILLS, NOT JUST DEGREES

Think of bite-sized credentials as building blocks. Instead of one large, unwieldy degree, imagine a series of smaller, more specific pieces that stack together over time. This approach creates a skills portfolio that is both comprehensive and flexible.

Each micro-credential or certification adds value, proving to potential employers that you are committed to lifelong learning and that you can adapt to different roles and challenges.

Many industries are evolving so quickly that the skills needed today might be obsolete in five years. Stacking skills offers the flexibility to stay relevant, while also enabling young people to specialise as they gain more insight into their interests and strengths.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR PARENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

If you're a parent guiding your young person, or a young person considering your next steps, here are some important factors to consider:

1. Industry demand: Research growing industries and the skills they value. Targeted courses often align more closely with employer needs than traditional degrees.

2. Experiment first: Try a short course, internship, or micro-credential to test your interests without committing to years of study.

3. Seek skills-first employers: Many progressive companies prioritise competencies over degrees. Look for organisations that partner with educational providers or support micro-credentialing.

4. Be financially savvy: Consider the financial burden of traditional education. Sometimes, smaller investments upfront make more sense, especially if they avoid significant debt and keep options open.

WHAT DOES "SKILLS-FIRST" MEAN FOR EDUCATORS?

The growing shift toward a "skills-first" mindset is reshaping the role of education. It's both a challenge and an opportunity for educators to rethink how they prepare students for an unpredictable and dynamic future.

Here's how we can adapt:

1. EMBEDDING SKILLS INTO THE CURRICULUM

Gone are the days when delivering content alone was enough. Students need to build critical competencies like problem-solving, collaboration, and creative thinking. Approaches like project-based learning, real-world experiences, and interdisciplinary teaching help bridge the gap between theory and practice, ensuring students are ready to apply their learning in meaningful ways.

2. ENCOURAGING LIFELONG LEARNING

Our role as educators isn't just to teach but to foster a mindset of curiosity and adaptability. A strong growth mindset will prepare students for lifelong learning through avenues like micro-credentials, certifications, and other flexible learning pathways that align with evolving career landscapes.

3. PARTNERING WITH INDUSTRY

We can't work in isolation. By collaborating with industry leaders, we can align what we teach with the skills businesses actually need. Whether it's co-designing curriculum or offering work-integrated learning opportunities, these partnerships ensure students are workforce-ready from day one.

4. ELEVATING SOFT SKILLS

While technical abilities are crucial, interpersonal skills—such as communication, resilience, and empathy—are equally valuable. These can be nurtured through a supportive classroom culture, role-modelling, and intentional activities that prioritise emotional intelligence alongside academic achievement.

5. PERSONALISING LEARNING PATHWAYS

A "one-size-fits-all" model no longer meets the needs of today's diverse learners. By embracing personalised learning—whether through technology, differentiated instruction, or tailored opportunities—we can help students explore their strengths and passions while preparing them for future career opportunities.

SHAPING A SKILLS-READY GENERATION

As educators, we have a unique role in empowering students to thrive in this ever-changing world. By teaching agility, adaptability, and a balance of technical and interpersonal skills, we're equipping a generation to succeed in a skills-focused, global economy.

The way forward lies in collaboration, innovation, and a shared vision for education that not only meets today's needs but also anticipates the possibilities of tomorrow. Together, we can transform education into a launchpad for future success.

A FUTURE BUILT ON SKILLS

The future of work is about flexibility and growth—not rigid pathways or hefty qualifications. Skills-first organisations are leading this change, seeking individuals with adaptability, creativity, and a passion for lifelong learning. These qualities are often developed through diverse experiences, rather than traditional degrees alone.

Parents, as your school leaver stands at the crossroads, help them consider their options carefully. Think about how they can build a toolkit that will serve them not just today, but in an ever-changing future.

Start small. Stack skills. Remember—the path doesn't have to be traditional to lead to success.

The world is changing, and the way we learn must change with it. We need to embrace a future where skills—not titles—are the true measure of potential.



EMBRACING SHADOWS:

A PERSONAL LETTER TO EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

Michelle H S Quick

“My shadow has gone mad. He takes himself for a man, and - imagine it! he takes me for his shadow.”

Do you know that feeling when someone just *won't stop talking*, and you feel your patience slowly evaporating? Or what about those people who are always late—like, **always**? And don't get me started on the ones who ask a million questions! Does any of that sound familiar? Or maybe you're shaking your head because—wait for it—you're *one of them*! (Don't worry, I'm just teasing. Maybe.)

The truth is, we've all been there. We've all felt that spark of irritation, whether it's toward others or even ourselves. But here's the thing: those little frustrations, those reactions, aren't just random. They're messages—opportunities for growth if we're willing to listen.



▶▶ THE CLASSROOM AS A MIRROR

Imagine a classroom where every part of who you are is welcomed—the parts you're proud of and the ones you'd rather hide. What if, instead of brushing off irritation, self-doubt, or even anger, we saw them as invitations? Invitations to understand ourselves better, to connect more deeply, and to teach with greater authenticity.

Shadow work—this journey of embracing the parts of ourselves we'd rather ignore—offers a path to not only self-awareness but also a richer, more connected way of teaching and learning. It's about seeing our emotions, thoughts, and patterns not as flaws to be fixed but as clues to understanding the whole of who we are. Because here's the secret: we can't truly teach others to embrace their full potential if we're not doing the same for ourselves.

▶▶ WHAT IS SHADOW WORK?

Shadow work is about meeting the parts of ourselves that linger in the background—the fears, frustrations, or impulses we might not want to admit are there. Carl Jung described the shadow as the hidden side of our psyche, a space where we store the traits and emotions we've learned to suppress. But it's not just a storage space for weakness; it also holds untapped strengths and forgotten gifts.

Think of it like H.C. Andersen's tale of the shadow—it's not just a reflection; it's an integral part of who we are. By shining a light on it, we don't erase it; we transform it. And in doing so, we find balance.

”
Shadow work is about meeting the parts of ourselves that linger in the background—the fears, frustrations, or impulses we might not want to admit are there.

HOW SHADOW WORK TRANSFORMS LEARNING

In education, the shadow shows up everywhere. It's in the teacher who struggles with perfectionism, the student who explodes in frustration, the parent who projects their own fears onto their child. By becoming aware of these dynamics, we can shift from reacting to responding.

For instance, when you feel frustration bubbling up toward a student, pause and ask yourself: *Why is this bothering me so much?* Maybe their behavior mirrors something you once struggled with—or something you're still working on. That moment of self-reflection can turn irritation into insight, deepening your connection with them and with yourself.

▶▶ HOW TO RECOGNIZE YOUR SHADOW

1. Reflection in others

Often, what irritates or frustrates us in others reflects something hidden within ourselves. For example, if someone's stubbornness drives you crazy, it could be pointing to your own struggle with inflexibility—or perhaps a fear of standing firm.

2. Emotional triggers

Intense reactions to minor situations often point to unresolved emotional wounds. For example, if a small critique feels overwhelming, it could be a sign of an unhealed part of you that deeply needs validation.

3. Looking back

Think about your childhood. What parts of you were judged, dismissed, or not accepted? These moments often mark the starting point of your shadow.

HOW TO WORK WITH YOUR SHADOW ◀◀

1. Observe without judgment

Start by noticing when the shadow surfaces—whether through anger, fear, or jealousy. Instead of criticizing yourself, approach these feelings with curiosity. Imagine them as a message from within, asking for your attention.

2. Accept what arises

Instead of pushing uncomfortable emotions away, let them be. Picture your emotions as guests knocking on your door. Open the door and let them in. When you give them space, they often reveal their purpose.

3. Ask the deeper questions

When a shadow aspect appears, ask yourself: "What is this really about?" For example, beneath your frustration, is there a fear of being misunderstood? Beneath your anxiety, is there a need for safety? Understanding the roots helps you release old patterns.

4. Rediscover hidden strengths

The shadow isn't just a storehouse for pain; it also hides untapped gifts. Ask yourself: "If fear weren't holding me back, what would I do?" The answer might lead you to rediscover forgotten passions or strengths waiting to shine.

FINDING BALANCE: ◀◀ LESSONS FROM YIN AND YANG

This work isn't about fixing yourself. You're not broken. It's about embracing the natural duality within all of us—the light and the shadow, the yin and the yang. Just as the day needs the night to feel complete, we need to acknowledge both sides of ourselves to grow.

Here's what I've learned: The parts of us that irritate or challenge others often hold the key to our most profound strengths. And the parts of others that challenge us often teach us the most about ourselves. The dance of opposites—of light and shadow—isn't something to fight. It's something to flow with, to embrace, and ultimately, to learn from.

We live in a world that worships the light—the accomplishments, the accolades, the curated image of perfection. But here’s the truth: without darkness, light loses its meaning.

◆ WHY SHADOWS MATTER

We live in a world that worships the light—the accomplishments, the accolades, the curated image of perfection. But here’s the truth: without darkness, light loses its meaning. Without pause, motion becomes exhaustion. Without acknowledging shadows, we hand them the keys to our lives, letting them steer into silent sabotage—unseen, but all too real.

Imagine a student drowning in doubt, told to “stay positive,” their pain ignored. Or an educator masking struggles, teaching shadows instead of authenticity. Shadows don’t make us weak; they reveal our depth. Struggle isn’t failure—it’s the soil where resilience grows.

Shadows are not barriers—they’re invitations. Challenges don’t block growth; they plant the seeds for it. Like winter nurturing the earth for spring, your struggles prepare you for transformation.

Don’t fear the shadow. It’s not your enemy. It’s the part of you that whispers, “There’s more here to discover.” Listen to it, and you’ll find the strength you didn’t know you had.

◆ PRACTICAL STEPS TOWARD WHOLENESS

So how do we embrace our shadows and find balance? Here are a few steps that have helped me, and I hope they’ll resonate with you too:

1. *Observe without judgment*

Start by noticing your recurring emotions or patterns. Frustration, fear, or even irritation can be clues. Instead of labeling them as “good” or “bad,” view them as invitations to explore what’s beneath the surface. Ask yourself: Why does this bother me? What is this trying to tell me?

2. *Appreciate the contrasts*

Life’s ups and downs, its quiet moments and its chaos, all serve a purpose. Reflecting on these contrasts helps us cultivate gratitude and resilience, even in difficult times.

3. *Balance doing with being*

Life, much like learning, requires both effort and rest. Push when you need to, but don’t forget to pause. Growth happens in the stillness as much as in the action.

4. *Reframe challenges as opportunities*

When setbacks arise, try asking: What can I learn from this? How can this help me grow? This perspective shift can turn even the hardest moments into stepping stones.

5. *Rediscover hidden strengths*

The shadow isn’t just a place for pain; it’s where forgotten gifts lie waiting. Ask yourself: If fear weren’t holding me back, what would I do? The answer might surprise you.



▶▶ THE DAY MY SHADOW TRIED TO HIJACK MY SPEECH

Let me set the scene: a room full of new mothers, juggling babies who were all competing to see who could scream the loudest. My task? To inspire these women on how to rekindle love in their marriages post-baby. Easy, right? Yeah, no.

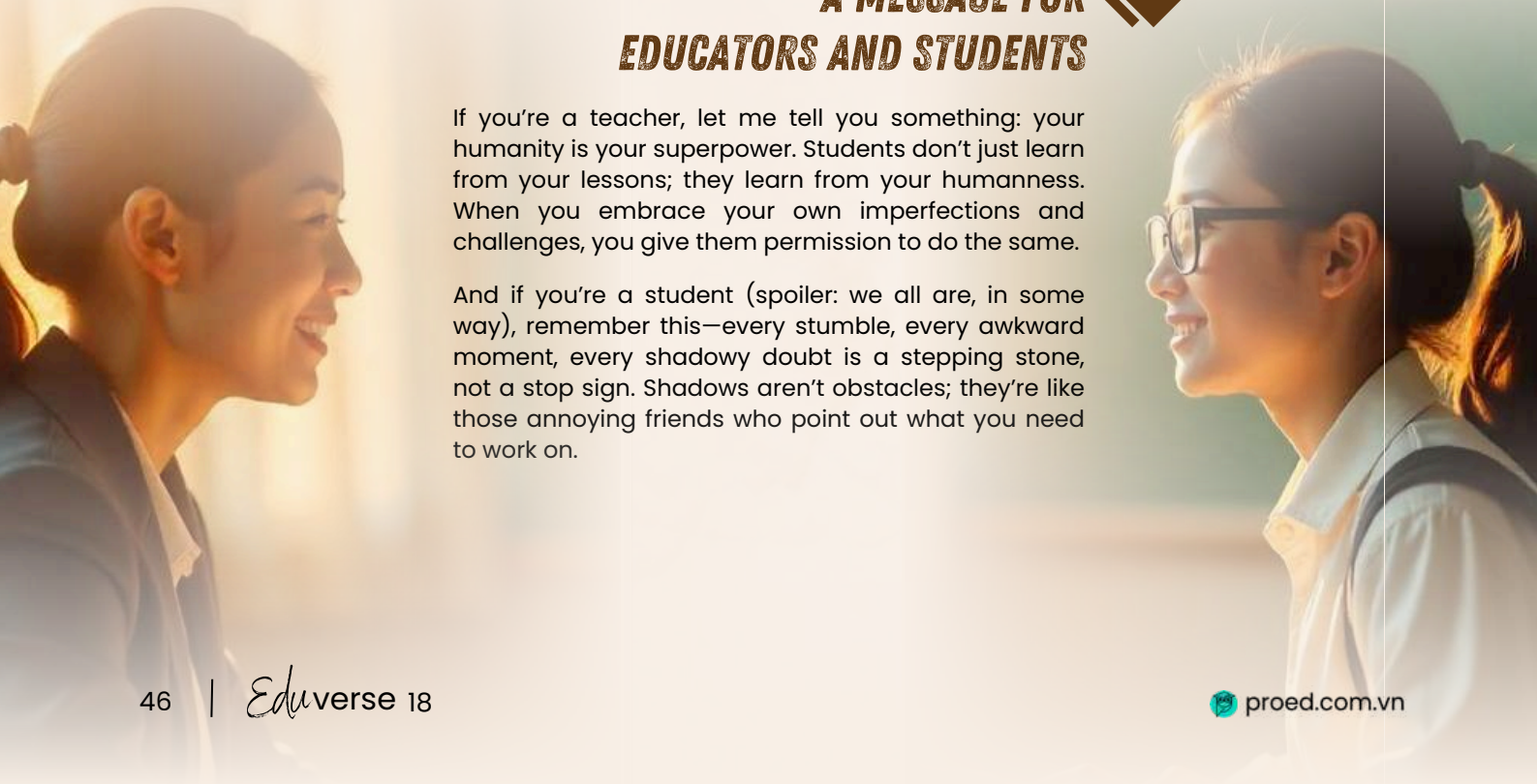
There I stood, clutching the microphone like it was a lifeline, my heart pounding so loudly it could've joined the baby chorus. My shadow wasn't just whispering doubts—it was shouting. *"They think you're a fraud! They can see you've never done this before! You're going to bomb so hard that even the babies will boo you!"*

And then it struck where it hurt the most. *"Get off the stage, you clueless idiot!"* It didn't just talk; it practically had me halfway down the steps, ready to bolt.

But here's the thing about shadows—they're like that overly dramatic friend who's always making a scene. You don't have to kick them out, but you also don't let them call the shots. So, I took a deep breath (okay, maybe ten), acknowledged my shadow with a mental, *"Thanks for sharing,"* and kindly told it to wait its turn.

I finished my speech. The moms clapped (yes, over the baby wails), and I left the stage knowing that while my shadow had tried to steal the show, I had the final say. And honestly? That moment taught me that letting the shadow have its voice doesn't mean letting it drive.

A MESSAGE FOR EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS ◀◀



If you're a teacher, let me tell you something: your humanity is your superpower. Students don't just learn from your lessons; they learn from your humanness. When you embrace your own imperfections and challenges, you give them permission to do the same.

And if you're a student (spoiler: we all are, in some way), remember this—every stumble, every awkward moment, every shadowy doubt is a stepping stone, not a stop sign. Shadows aren't obstacles; they're like those annoying friends who point out what you need to work on.

▶▶ A CALL TO REFLECT

Maybe you're standing in front of a classroom, questioning if you're good enough. Maybe you're staring at a pile of work, feeling like you'll never measure up. Maybe you're a parent trying to juggle a million things while secretly wondering if you're doing any of them right.

Here's the truth: everyone has those moments. Frustration, doubt, even a full-on shadow meltdown—they're part of the deal. But when they show up, don't push them away. Instead, pause. Breathe. Ask yourself: What is this trying to teach me?

Sometimes, those moments of discomfort are like hidden treasure maps. They might lead you to a truth you've been avoiding, a strength you forgot you had, or even just a good laugh at how seriously you take yourself sometimes.

So, here's my invitation to you: Embrace the messy, the awkward, the imperfect. Let your shadow chatter away in the background if it must, but remember—you're the one holding the mic. And I promise, you've got this.

As you walk this path—whether in a classroom, a conversation, or simply in your own thoughts—know that you are not alone. Every part of you is needed, and every part of you has a place. Let's create spaces where we all can thrive, where the full spectrum of who we are is not just accepted but celebrated.

Life isn't about being perfect. It's about being whole. It's about embracing all the parts of yourself—the light and the shadow, the strength and the vulnerability. When you do this, you're not fixing yourself; you're reclaiming what was always there.

To teach is to learn, and to learn is to grow. And growth doesn't happen in the light alone but in the embrace of both light and shadow. Together, let's move forward—curious, compassionate, and open to the wisdom each moment holds.

As Lao Tzu wrote, *"When yin and yang energies join, when hard and soft unite, then substance is attained."* When we embrace all parts of ourselves, we become not just stronger but truly alive. And in that wholeness lies the wisdom to live with grace, the courage to face challenges, and the joy of being fully, beautifully human.



Michelle H S Quick is a coach, author, and speaker dedicated to empowering individuals to unlock their true potential. With a transformative approach blending mindset coaching, shadow work, and resilience building, Michelle guides high achievers and visionaries toward authentic growth and fulfillment. Drawing from her own journey of overcoming life's challenges, she is passionate about breaking stigmas, fostering self-discovery, and helping others embrace their full spectrum of strengths. Through customized courses, keynotes, and one-on-one coaching, Michelle inspires leaders and individuals to act with purpose, compassion, and courage.

WELCOME TO YOUR JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY!

This worksheet is here to guide you through embracing the light and shadow within you. Remember, every part of who you are matters. Let's embark on this transformative journey together, one step at a time.

This worksheet is designed to help you explore the concept of 'shadow work' and its relevance in personal and educational contexts. Through reflective questions and exercises, you'll discover opportunities for growth, balance, and connection.

Exercise 1: Recognizing your shadow

Think of a recent situation where you felt irritated or frustrated by someone else. Write down:

- What specifically bothered you?
- How did you react?

Now, reflect:

- Could this behavior mirror something within yourself?
- How does this realization make you feel?

Exercise 2: Embracing emotions

Close your eyes and think about an emotion you've been avoiding (e.g., fear, anger, or self-doubt). Imagine this emotion as a guest knocking at your door. Write down:

- What would this guest say?
- How can you welcome and understand it without judgment?

Use this exercise to embrace emotions as messages, not obstacles.

Exercise 3: Shadow strengths

Think about a quality you've suppressed or a part of yourself you feel hesitant to show. Ask yourself:

- What if this part of me holds a hidden strength?
- How could I use this strength positively in my life?

Write about ways to rediscover and celebrate this strength.

Reflection and Balance

Remember, every part of you is important. The light and shadow within you create balance. Take a moment to appreciate this duality, knowing it makes you whole.

Use this worksheet to guide your journey of self-discovery and growth.



THE HIDDEN FORCE BEHIND INNOVATION HOW RELATIONSHIPS SPARK CREATIVITY

Judy-Ann Green

Innovation is often thought of as the result of individual brilliance or advanced technology, but what many overlook is the essential role that relationships play in fostering progress. Whether through collaboration, mentorship, or the social networks that shape our lives, human connections are at the core of many great innovations. On a personal level, I have come to understand how deeply relationships have shaped my work and creativity, especially in the context of technology, education, and personal growth. I believe innovation's essence lies not in solitary invention but in the way we connect, inspire, and influence one another.

One evening, as dusk turned into night and the sky was painted in hues of deep blue, the first stars began to twinkle, mingling with what we Xaymacans call 'Peenie Wallies,' and the rest of the world knows as 'fireflies.' My father and I sat on the porch, enveloped in the quiet beauty of the moment, as the world around us seemed to slow down and invite reflection. Surrounded by lush vegetation, the crisp Caribbean night air refreshed and rejuvenated us, this tranquility has left an indelible mark on my mind. The shared quietness of the space was idyllic. The peaceful stillness of the moment felt utopic, and to make it even more special, we sipped on rich chocolate tea. This was not the commercialised chocolate we are accustomed to today, but a more authentic version—a drink made from beans harvested directly from the tree, plucked, dried, roasted, and ground in a mortar. The process was long but full of care, just like how he had lived his life. The simplicity of this ritual allowed for deep reflection, and our conversation veered toward the influence of social media on innovation and the role relationships play in this process.

Dad was well-read, so our conversations veered from neighbourhood gossip to politics, and then to his favourite - inventions in space. We discussed Hazza Al Mansoori's recent venture into space on September 25th, 2019, and how his resilience and dedication shone a spotlight on space travel and inspired a generation to dream the impossible dream. As we discussed UAE's collaborative efforts to train and prepare Hazza Al Mansoori for his ground-breaking journey, we both agreed that innovation is rarely achieved in isolation. The most groundbreaking ideas are often born through the interaction and collaboration of diverse individuals and systems. Social networks, both digital and physical, create the environment necessary for ideas to flow, evolve, and take shape. The cross-pollination of perspectives, experiences, and skills within these networks is the real power behind innovation.

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS IN INNOVATION

The role of relationships in fostering innovation is well-documented across various fields. For example, in the book *Hidden Figures*, Margot Lee Shetterly explores the untold story of African American women mathematicians who worked at NASA and were instrumental in the success of the space program. These women were often overlooked and underappreciated for their contributions, yet they thrived because of the relationships they built, both within their community and across racial and gender boundaries. Their ability to innovate was deeply tied to their interactions and support systems, and not just their individual intellect.

One key lesson that resonates deeply from the book is the need “to get to the peak together.” The characters “Needed to be able to work together,” as they, “Could not have done it alone.” This philosophy encapsulates the essence of collaborative innovation. It underscores how partnerships, collaboration, and a supportive environment foster breakthroughs that would be impossible in isolation.



Similarly, NASA’s Apollo program was the product of collaboration between scientists, engineers, and mathematicians from various backgrounds and expertise. It was only through the intersection of their skills and knowledge that humans were able to reach the moon. Without the relationships among these experts, their combined talents would not have produced the innovations that shaped space exploration.

Reflection:

1. How would you describe your current relationships? What could you start/stop doing to invest in your relationships?
2. Is there someone from your past with whom you shared a strong connection and made a meaningful impact, whom you could potentially reconnect with now or shortly?

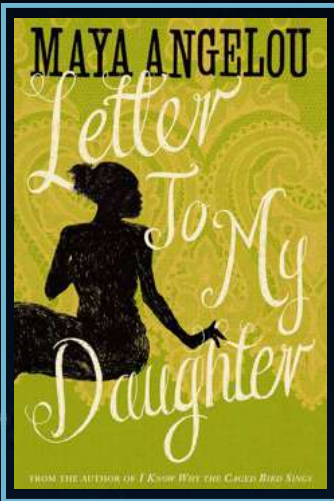
INNOVATION AND THE POWER OF VULNERABILITY: BRENE BROWN'S INSIGHT

Brene Brown speaks extensively about the importance of vulnerability. She eloquently writes, “Vulnerability is not winning or losing; it’s having the courage to show up and be seen when we have no control over the outcome.” This idea is pivotal to the process of innovation. To innovate, one must often take risks, challenge the status quo, and step into the unknown. In an environment that encourages openness, vulnerability, and trust—elements that are cultivated through strong relationships—innovative ideas can flourish.

In the context of technology and business, many of the most successful ventures have been born out of collaborative spaces where people are encouraged to share, fail, and try again. Companies like Google, for instance, emphasize the importance of collaboration and open communication in their work culture. It is no accident that some of the most innovative products, from Gmail to Google Maps, were developed in an environment where relationships and openness to vulnerability were valued above individual achievement.

Brene Brown’s insight into vulnerability highlights that innovation is not just about creating something new; it’s about creating something that has the potential to be tested, challenged, and refined. And these ideas can only be honed in environments where people feel comfortable being authentic and open.

MAYA ANGELOU AND THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY



We recently helped our daughter settle into university, and to adjust to the feeling of a semi-empty nest, I have been reading “Letter to My Daughter” by Dr Maya Angelou and I have harnessed so many gems from this text. I admire Dr Maya Angelou, a renowned poet, author, singer, dancer, and scholar, who understood the power of community and relationships in shaping both personal and collective innovation.

Throughout the book, Dr Maya Angelou emphasizes the significance of cultivating friendships and the profound effect they had on her art and creative process. She reflected on how two friends, whom she met by chance, influenced her life and her brother’s. She shares the lesson she learned from that experience, “A friend may be waiting behind a stranger’s face.”

This reference speaks to the importance of diverse relationships in fostering innovation. Whether in business, education, technology, socially, or personally, progress often comes from the convergence of different perspectives. When diverse voices come together, they enrich the solutions we create, offering insights that would not have been possible if everyone thought the same way.

As I reflected on Dr Angelou’s words, it is a reminder that relationships in their many forms, whether personal or professional, are crucial to our sense of belonging and purpose. The sense of community that she spoke of is essential to the innovation process because it creates an environment where individuals feel valued and empowered to contribute their ideas. A sense of belonging does ignite creativity and motivates individuals to take risks and share their innovative solutions.

THE SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE: CONNECTING PEOPLE TO FOSTER INNOVATION

In today’s world, social media plays a significant role in connecting people across vast distances and fostering innovative thinking. Platforms like Reddit, LinkedIn, and Instagram allow individuals to engage with others who share their interests, collaborate across industries, and spark conversations that lead to innovative ideas. Social media has broken down geographical and cultural barriers, creating a virtual space where relationships can thrive and where innovation can spread like wildfire.

One notable example is the rise of crowdsourcing, where social media platforms enable people from all over the world to come together to solve problems. Whether it is funding a project or developing a new software tool through open-source collaboration, social media networks have revolutionized the way people innovate and create. These platforms provide a virtual space where relationships flourish, knowledge is shared, and ideas are nurtured.

The influence of social media on innovation is particularly evident in the tech world, where ideas can go viral, and startup cultures are built on networking and collaboration. The impact of social media has also been felt in social movements, where grassroots organizers have used platforms to unite people for change, sparking innovative solutions to longstanding problems.

While it is undeniable that social media can contribute to isolation (a topic that could spark days of discussion), let us focus on its potential as a force for good, as emphasized during the Global Media Congress 2024 in Abu Dhabi. The key takeaway was the importance of practicing responsibility in media use and harnessing its power for positive impact.

A PERSONAL REFLECTION: INNOVATION THROUGH RELATIONSHIP

As I reflect on the ways relationships have shaped my own approach to innovation, I cannot help but think about the role my father played in nurturing the relationships that mattered most in my life. On November 26, of this year, I would have celebrated his birthday, but he transitioned on November 15, 2020, leaving behind a legacy of wisdom, love, and the importance of community. My dad taught me the value of human connection and the power of surrounding oneself with people who inspire and support you. He taught me the importance of 'Relationship Currency.' Yes, he taught me to 'invest,' in people.

Much like the chocolate tea we shared on February 16th, 2020, (our last time together) the innovations in my life have been built on relationships—whether it's through the mentorship of others, the support of my family, or the collaboration with colleagues and friends. I spend most of my days writing, reflecting, and connecting with others through my work. I am who I am today because I have had the privilege of being part of a solid community—people who have challenged, encouraged and loved me. In that space, innovation happens. It happens when we come together to share, to inspire, and to push each other beyond what we thought was possible.

Innovation happens when individuals come together. It happens when we form relationships that allow us to grow, share, and create something bigger than ourselves. My dad showed me that, and as I continue to honor his memory, I strive to live by the lessons he taught me.

The renowned inventor Larry Smoot, recognised as Disney's most prolific inventor with over 100 patents and credited with numerous technological innovations across the company, once said, "My path was paved by people who believed in me." Today, I too can say I write because of the foundation "Paved," by my dad. Our relationships built the groundwork for innovative ideas and breakthroughs, showing that innovation is often the result of collective effort.

"My path was paved by people who believed in me."

Judy-Ann Green

Reflection:

1. How can you intentionally invest in your relationships to build stronger connections, productivity, and create mutual support?
2. Is there someone with whom you could reach out today to strengthen your relationship and foster a deeper sense of trust and collaboration?

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Judy-Ann Green is an award-winning educator and leader whose impact spans across three continents. Recognized globally for her exceptional contributions to education, she has been honored with prestigious accolades such as Teacher of the Year, Outstanding Educator, and the Race to the Top Award for Outstanding Educator. As a distinguished speaker, writer, literacy coach, school visitor, author, curriculum designer, and professional development expert, Judy-Ann Green has proven herself to be a formidable force in education. Her innovative approach and unwavering dedication make her a prominent figure and a driving force in shaping the future of learning on a global scale.

HONORING MY DAD: A LETTER TO THE FATHER I WILL ALWAYS CARRY

Judy-Ann Green

February 2020 was the last face-to-face celebration I had with my dad. I can still recall where we sat, what we ate, what we drank, our belly laughter echoing in the night, and our deep admiration for each other.

In honor of my dad, I would like to share a small excerpt from my collection *Letters to My Father*. These letters reflect the meaningful conversations we shared, as Dad had a deep appreciation for books and all forms of media. Most of these letters were written to him on Father's Day or his birthday, capturing cultural insights, the lessons he taught me, the wisdom he imparted, or just my admiration and gratitude for a superhuman dad. This particular letter is the last one I read to him, on June 21st, 2020, because Dad transitioned before his birthday on November 26th, 2020.

Dearest Dad,

Did you know that "Polaris, or the **North Star**, sits almost directly above the **North Pole**; therefore, it is a reliable gauge of **North** if you find yourself lost or without a compass."

Dad, you are truly my North Star.

I originally thought that you were from another galaxy stranded here on Earth

*Because of-
Your Kind Heart:*

Your custom was to leave bananas, plantains, yams, and more at the gate for passersby. You sponsored several families with support for school fees, lunch, or health bills.

Your patience:

You normally waited weeks to open a letter even though you knew money was in it. Not to mention that you would sit for hours with the elderly to hear their story and alleviate loneliness.

Your brain:

I have always relished in your brilliance. You are the only person I know who reads the newspaper from cover to cover and completes the crosswords from memory. You were the head boy/head of Edwin Allen's Student Council, and so I felt proud to be the head girl as I knew you would too.

Your resounding support:

I can remember you supporting me in all my little endeavors and projects- I will not bore you but, I am confident that you can conjure up a few. Can you recall our 'Community Sick & Shut-in project?'

Your culinary skills:

I still dream of your rice and peas, porridge, oxtail, curry chicken, and the list goes on.

Your unwavering belief in me:

Thanks for telling me that I was going to be great one day- I can still hear those words echoing in my head, inspiring me, motivating me, reshaping me. Thanks for coming to my primary school with a book in hand, guiding me through homework nights, or walking me to prayer meetings.

I wish every girl in the world could have a dad like you to guide them.

I love you Polaris Kel

Happy Father's Day

The Global Scale of English

Reflections on 10 years of innovation

Aligned with our theme, **Neo-Mindsets for Tomorrow's Education**, the **EduVerse Newsletter** proudly presents a reflective piece on a decade of innovation and growth behind Pearson's Global Scale of English (GSE).

The GSE serves as both a proficiency scale and a comprehensive language framework, offering a nuanced understanding of learners' English abilities. Built on extensive global research, it surpasses traditional tools like the CEFR by providing deeper insights into learners' skills.

What began with 100 GSE Learning Objectives has grown into an expansive library of nearly 4,000 objectives, supporting learners at all stages—from pre-primary to adult learners preparing for academic or professional success. The GSE ecosystem now includes robust grammar and vocabulary resources, cutting-edge text analysis tools, and job-specific applications, all aligned to accelerate learning outcomes.

In this reflection article, Mike Mayor, Senior Director of the Global Scale of English at Pearson, reflects on the vision that shaped the GSE and explores the innovative tools and resources developed to embed best practices in teaching and assessment throughout Pearson's English learning journey.



The **EduVerse Newsletter** is honored to feature Mike Mayor's article, *Building Learner Confidence with the Global Scale of English*, written exclusively for our community. In this insightful piece, Mike presents how the GSE can empower educators to foster motivation, inspire growth, and help students express their authentic selves in English.



The Global Scale of English represents the most significant advance in performance-based approaches to language learning, teaching and assessment since the development of the Common European Framework of Reference.

*David Nunan PhD
Professor Emeritus of Applied Linguistics,
University of Hong Kong*



BUILDING LEARNER CONFIDENCE

with the Global Scale of English

Mike Mayor

In a recent survey carried out by Pearson, only 25% of speakers of English as a second or additional language reported that they felt confident in using all four language skills (listening, reading, speaking, writing) at work^[1]. They felt least confident in speaking and writing (the productive skills) and over half (56%) put this down to the fact that too much time was spent in the classroom focusing on grammar and vocabulary.

Over 20 years ago, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) was published to address this very issue, and our own Global Scale of English (GSE) has just celebrated its 10th anniversary. Both of these standards are aimed at shifting the focus of language learning, teaching and assessment away from the rules of grammar and knowledge of vocabulary to the ability of learners to use the language. There is clearly still more to be done to change the ways in which English is being taught around the world. One of our goals when developing the GSE was to provide educators with resources needed to build confidence in their students. In this article, I outline ways in which the GSE can be used in the classroom to motivate students and help them to truly be themselves in English.

The concept of building confidence sounds like a rather nebulous objective – a great idea that few would disagree with but difficult to actually achieve. Confidence often feels like a trait that some people have and others don't. Whilst there is no denying that some learners are more extrovert and outgoing than others, there are a number of concrete steps that educators can take to build confidence in all learners and the GSE is there to support these steps:

- 1. Placing learners accurately at the start of a course of study**
- 2. Targeting teaching and learning to provide the right level of challenge**
- 3. Setting SMART objectives for every lesson**
- 4. Allowing students to experience success on a regular basis**

By following each of these steps, educators can work at building “growth mindsets” in their students. A growth mindset is one in which a learner believes that they can achieve their goals – even if these goals require a lot of hard work. The opposite is a “fixed mindset” in which the learner believes that they do not have the ability to achieve their goals because a person is either born with or without that ability. Given that most people speak at least one language, we are clearly born with an ability to learn languages – so the ability to learn a second or additional language should not be the preserve of certain individuals and not others.

Let's take a closer look at each of these steps and see how the GSE can support educators in the classroom.

1 Place learners accurately at the start of a course of study

In order to plan the learning journey, we need to know the starting point as well as the destination. Research shows that correct placement of learners has a significant impact on achieving course objectives^[2]. There are a number of published placement tests available to help educators do this, including digital tests that are able to measure spoken and written use of the language^[3]. If your goal is to teach students to use English (and let's be clear, this should be your goal!) then in an ideal world you would use a placement test that assesses language skills rather than one that tests knowledge of grammar or vocabulary.

To support assessment – be that Placement, Progress or End of Course assessment – we have created the GSE Assessment Frameworks – one for Young Learners^[4] and one for Adults^[5]. These frameworks support educators, most of whom are not assessment experts, to standardize testing of the four language skills. These frameworks identify the key features of language skills at different CEFR levels and GSE ranges – and how these features change from one level or range to another.

For example, what are the criteria to look for that will help distinguish between high A2 (GSE 36-42) and low B1 (GSE 43-50)? The table below lists the different features you might consider and describes what performance looks like at the different levels. Someone at the low B1 level is more likely to initiate interaction, to use stress and intonation to support the meaning of what they are saying, and to be able to reformulate what they have said if communication breaks down. The descriptions are all indicators of what performance looks like. Learners may not demonstrate every single criterion but by looking at the two sets of descriptions, it should support assessment and the placement of learners at the start of their journey.

	GSE 36-42/A2+	GSE 43-50/B1
PRODUCTION AND FLUENCY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent of contribution Cohesion Pausing and hesitation Intelligibility 	Constructs utterances consisting of several simple sentences. Uses the most common connectors to link a series of simple clauses or sentences to show time, reason or contrast. May hesitate, pause and repair speech. Is generally intelligible but this may break down in longer utterances.	Communicates with a series of simple connected clauses and sentences. Maintains a straightforward description or narration using linking words and devices. May hesitate when searching for the appropriate expression(s) and may pause in places. Pausing and repair can interrupt the flow especially in longer contributions. Is generally intelligible and uses basic stress and intonation to support meaning.
SPOKEN INTERACTION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to maintain or develop interaction Coherence Appropriacy 	Participates comfortably in exchanges on familiar topics but may be less confident when initiating the exchange. Maintains coherence across turns but may struggle to keep interaction going. Shows awareness of appropriacy in a variety of familiar situations.	Initiates interaction and offers extended contributions. Participates in spontaneous interactions on familiar topics connected to the wider world. Reformulates simple responses or asks for clarification if communication breaks down.
LANGUAGE RANGE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicative functions Grammar and vocabulary 	Performs a limited range of functions (e.g. agreeing/ disagreeing, responding to suggestions). Has an appropriate range of words, structures, some basic collocations and functional language for familiar topics. May be repetitive and have imprecise vocabulary.	Uses functional language to deal with less familiar everyday topics but has very limited range of complex language. Uses a range of words, structures and simple collocations.
ACCURACY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure and vocabulary 	Communicates using longer stretches of connected clauses and functional language (e.g. compare/ contrast; reason/explanation).	Has good control of basic structures and functions but errors occur when expressing more complex ideas or dealing with unfamiliar situations. Generally uses vocabulary appropriately for the topic.

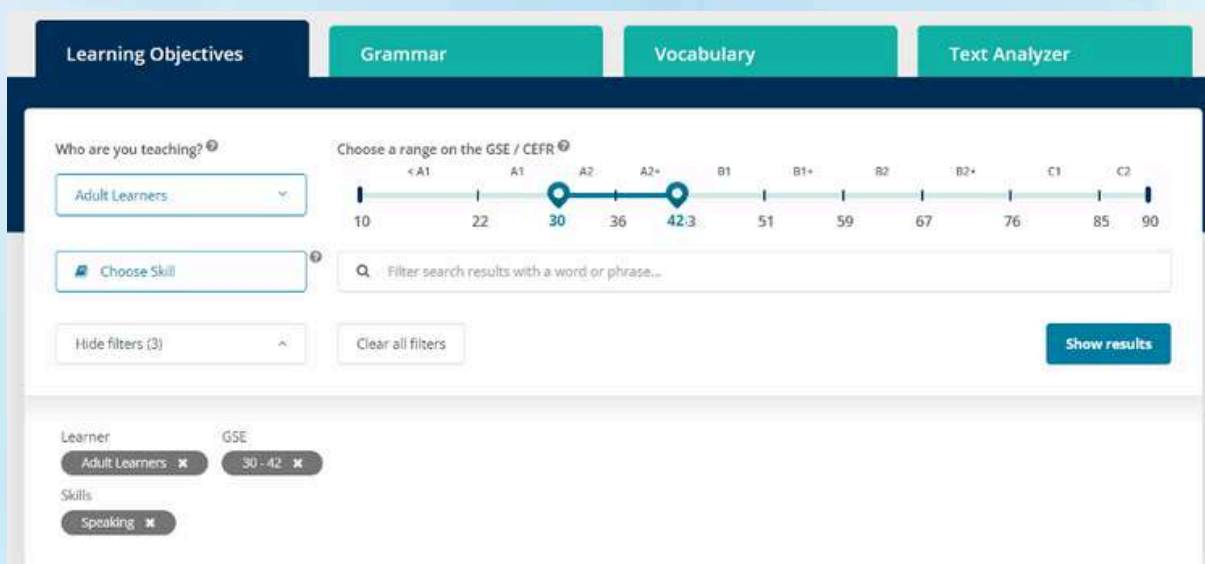
If you are creating your own Placement test using the GSE learning Objectives (see below for more on these), the GSE Assessment Frameworks will support you in grouping students with similar skills levels.

2 Target teaching and learning to provide the right level of challenge

Once you know the starting level of your students, you can start to plan your lessons and curriculum using the GSE Learning Objectives. We have created 5 sets of GSE Learning Objectives to target the needs of different types of learner: Pre-Primary^[6], Young^[7], Adult General^[8], Academic^[9] and Professional^[10] – all of which are available free online as PDFs or as part of the GSE Toolkit^[11].

The learning journey needs to be paced at the right level of challenge (also often referred to as the “zone of proximal development”) – not too difficult, because students will constantly fail and develop a “fixed mindset”, and not too easy because no progress will be made. The right level of challenge refers to language functions and activities that the learner can master, initially with support from the teacher and then independently. By using the GSE Toolkit, it is easy to identify language functions that are at the right level of challenge.

Let’s take a group of Adult learners who have been placed at a low A2 level (GSE 30–35). I want to get them to a high A2 (GSE 42) by the end of the course. The course focuses on spoken language. I go into the GSE Toolkit, select the Adult set of GSE Learning Objectives, select the skill “Speaking” and set the proficiency range at 30–42.



The screenshot shows the GSE Toolkit interface. At the top, there are four tabs: 'Learning Objectives' (selected), 'Grammar', 'Vocabulary', and 'Text Analyzer'. Below the tabs, there are several filter sections. The first section is 'Who are you teaching?' with a dropdown menu set to 'Adult Learners'. The second section is 'Choose a range on the GSE / CEFR' with a horizontal scale from 10 to 90. The scale is divided into levels: <A1, A1, A2, A2+, B1, B1+, B2, B2+, C1, and C2. The range 30-42 is selected, with markers at 30 and 42.3. Below the scale is a search bar with the text 'Filter search results with a word or phrase...'. There are also buttons for 'Hide filters (3)', 'Clear all filters', and 'Show results'. At the bottom, there are three filter tags: 'Learner: Adult Learners', 'GSE: 30-42', and 'Skills: Speaking'.

I am shown a list of 170 learning objectives that are at an appropriate level for my class. I will not be able to cover all 170 in my course, but equally, not all 170 will be appropriate, useful or of interest to my particular group of learners. For example, they may already be able to do some of the lower-level objectives. The GSE Toolkit is your starting point for selecting the most relevant learning objectives for your learners – knowing that the level of challenge is appropriate.

3 Set SMART objectives for every lesson

Once you have your set of GSE Learning Objectives, these will form the SMART objectives needed to plan a course of study. The GSE Learning Objectives have been developed to be detailed lesson-level objectives that are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound. Educators can use these objectives to monitor progress on a regular basis – and then remediate/repair if necessary. In my experience, too many teachers are driven by the coursebook – and their key objective is to cover the coursebook by the end of the academic year. This makes little pedagogical sense if learners are being moved on before mastering a particular function. The result is that learners start failing more and more – which leads them to believe that they are “just no good at learning English”. They develop the fixed mindset that we are looking to avoid.

Many GSE Learning Objectives include “scaffolding” – support that is provided on the way to full mastery of a particular learning objective. For example, compare these two GSE Learning Objectives related to talking about daily routines:

- Can answer simple questions about their daily activities or routines, given a model. (GSE 28 – high A1)
- Can ask and answer questions about habits and routines. (GSE 38 – high A2)

Providing learners with a model is the first step in them being able to master the skill independently. By having learning objectives which include scaffolding, we are able to credit learners with mastery of a learning objective before they can do it without support. This provides more opportunities for recognizing success, an important factor in building confidence and a growth mindset.

4 Allow students to experience success on a regular basis

Many ministries of education around the world set achievement targets on the CEFR, which leads educators to measure annual progress on the same CEFR scale. The key issue with using this scale is that the levels, especially the B1 and B2 levels, take many hundreds of hours to master. Each year the student takes a test, and each year they are apparently at the same CEFR level. This is demotivating – and does not give the complete picture of the learning that is taking place.

The GSE scale is a numerical scale (from 10–90), aligned to the CEFR levels. By using the GSE proficiency scale, educators are able to demonstrate tangible progress to learners on a more regular basis. The learner may well be at the same CEFR level, but the GSE level indicates progress: 43 (B1), 47 (B1), 50 (B1), etc.

As with Placement, there are digital assessments that report on the GSE [12, 13] – but the free resources can also be used to get an indication of progress and proficiency. When measuring proficiency in a language, we need to look at how MANY things the learner can do (as indicated by the GSE Learning Objectives) and how WELL they can do them (as outlined in the GSE Assessment Frameworks). By using both of these free resources, educators can demonstrate progress to their learners on a regular basis.

A very simple activity is to share the learning objectives that you are planning to cover in your course of study with the students at the start of the course. Ask them to self-assess for how confident they feel about doing each of the objectives on the list. Create a table like the one below in which 5 = very confident and 1 = not confident.

I can	5	4	3	2	1
Talk about my family					
Talk about my hobbies					
Understand classroom instructions					
Understand a simple story					
Write about my holidays					
Write a WhatsApp message to my friends					

Collect and keep their answers. At the end of the term or course, give them the same list of objectives and ask them the same question. Then give each student back the original set of answers and let them see how their confidence has grown.



At Pearson, the Global Scale of English underpins all products and services created by the English Language Learning division, from courseware to assessments and the Mondly by Pearson app. By linking learning and teaching materials with assessments, all underpinned by the same frameworks and scale, we are able to deliver best-practice learning, teaching and assessment in a coherent solution – the Pearson English Journey. Using the Global Scale of English resources outlined in this article, educators can do the same.



Mike Mayor is Senior Director, Global Scale of English at Pearson. On leaving university, Mike worked as a teacher of English in France before entering the world of publishing. He joined Pearson in 2003. Mike has a BA in French and a Masters in English and Applied Linguistics from Cambridge University.

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Welcome to **In the Verse**, your go-to column for curated education articles and news from across the internet. We'll sift through the digital realm to bring you concise summaries, keeping you informed and inspired. Join us as we navigate the vast sea of online resources and uncover the latest in educational innovation.

* Scan the QR codes or click on the titles to read more.



Teaching and learning vocabulary with AI

In this blog, we'll look at how to use AI to help with vocabulary learning and teaching. So much of language learning is about learning vocabulary. Regardless of your students' level, well-formed sentences mean nothing without the right words to fill them.



Teaching by doing: The art of meaningful learning

"Tell me, and I forget. Teach me, and I remember. Involve me, and I learn." Inspired by Franklin's quote, this article shares tips for creating impactful, purpose-driven learning through action and reflection.



What does it mean to be a reflective teacher?

Reflection is a fundamental aspect of learning and, by extension, a crucial part of teaching. Read this article to explore reflective practice as a pathway to continuous professional growth and enriched student learning experiences.



Building better reading communities for young learners in your ELT classroom

Encouraging younger students to read can be exciting, but it's also challenging in today's digital age. With many distractions, teachers must capture their attention to foster a love for reading. Read the article to discover some effective strategies!



Classroom management in the tech era

New edtech tools, from virtual simulations to AI-powered assistants, are constantly emerging, offering fresh ways to engage students. Here's how educators can lay the groundwork for successful tech integration before planning any lessons.





5 ways to help kids practice gratitude

Gratitude is more than just saying “thank you!” It’s a powerful practice that helps children develop a positive mindset, improve their emotional well-being, and build stronger relationships. Here are some fun activities to practice gratitude.



Top strategies to implement collaborative learning for better student outcomes

Collaborative learning is more than just a buzzword in education. Explore its effectiveness and strategies for successfully incorporating it into your routine!



Emotional intelligence in higher education: The key to successful collaboration

How can trust and collaboration thrive in higher education? By fostering emotional intelligence, empathy, and care. Explore how these qualities strengthen teamwork and well-being in academic settings.



Students and teachers share advice for having conversations across divides

Over a thousand students and dozens of educators offered ideas for how to have meaningful discussions about difficult topics. Here are some practical ideas – for use in or out of school.



From theory to practice: Effective social emotional learning tips for more impactful teaching

Academic skills are vital, but social and emotional skills are equally crucial for student success. This article explores SEL and shares practical ways to integrate it into daily teaching for a supportive, confident classroom.



3

What are the biggest changes you foresee in the field of education over the next 10 years?



Dennis A. De Jesus
Liceo De Pulilan Colleges Inc.
Philippines

The future of education will be shaped by:

** Summarized response*

- AI-driven personalization, providing tailored learning paths and real-time assessments to enhance engagement and allow teachers to focus on mentorship.
- Permanent hybrid learning models that combine in-person and online education, accommodating diverse learning styles while ensuring essential face-to-face interactions.

The next decade will bring transformative changes to education, driven by technology and societal shifts. Humanoid instructors and AI-powered systems may replace human professionals, using advanced algorithms to personalize learning and provide real-time feedback. Blockchain technology will help develop critical soft skills like problem-solving and emotional intelligence. Global interconnectedness will further foster cross-cultural education through multilingual programs, international collaborations, and virtual classrooms, making these innovations central to the learning experience.



Dr. Mohammad Haseen Ahmed
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Tom Braley
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Obviously, the biggest changes we will see in the next ten years are going to have to do with artificial intelligence. How AI will alter education – and if it will be for the better – is too early to say. But it's obvious AI is here to stay and it's already part of our lives. Which teacher isn't already using it every day to help them with their work? Technology, in general, is also going to continue to evolve and – for better or worse – change the way we teach and students learn.



Nour Negm
Private Business
Egypt

I can see methodology will need to develop to be more efficient on goal achievement due to the opportunities opening up out of AI and technology. The more resources are provided for reasonable prices, the higher the expectations that learners achieve their learning goals. Teachers will have to include as many tools as possible to reach the highest achievement percentage. Also, technology can facilitate understanding the complex ideas and can provide teaching examples that were deemed impossible or unaffordable before.

In the next decade, education will likely undergo transformative changes driven by technology, shifting societal needs, and a deeper understanding of effective learning strategies.



Debomita Dutta
Special Educator
India



NEO-MINDSETS
FOR EMBRACING
TECHNOLGY AND AI



TECHNOLOGY FOR ALL BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IN AN AI-DRIVEN WORLD

Clara Hawking

The digital divide is one of the most pressing challenges of our time. The term is used to describe a gap that separates those with access to technology and the opportunities it provides from those without. The divide arises not only from a question about whether you own a computer or have access to the internet; it's also about the opportunities you have to learn, grow, and thrive in an increasingly digital world. For instance, in order to understand and interact with a Large Language Model, a person needs to be able to write or read. **Yet, alarmingly, two-thirds of 10-year-olds globally cannot read and comprehend a basic text, according to UNICEF.** These same children are often the ones left furthest behind digitally, unable to access advanced AI tools or even basic online resources, further deepening the divide.

Read more about
UNICEF warns of alarmingly
low learning levels



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WHAT IS THE DIGITAL DIVIDE, AND HOW DOES IT HAPPEN?

The digital divide also often refers specifically to the disparity in access to digital technology, including internet connectivity, computers, and other essential tools. It is driven by a complex interplay of socio-economic factors such as income, infrastructure, and education. For example, in countries like Laos, large portions of the population lack access to reliable electricity, let alone the internet. This leaves children in rural areas completely disconnected from the opportunities that technology can provide.

Contrast this with neighboring Vietnam, where significant strides have been made to expand internet access and digital literacy. Still, even in countries with growing technological infrastructure, rural and underserved communities often remain on the “wrong side” of the divide. The problem is not isolated to any one region; it is a global challenge that demands a multi-faceted approach.

A GLOBAL CRISIS, EMPOWERING LOCAL SOLUTIONS

The divide exists even within communities in thriving economies. For instance, private schools often have the resources to invest in cutting-edge technology and provide professional development for teachers. Students at these schools benefit from fast internet, AI-driven tools, and connected homes, giving them a significant advantage. Yet, neighboring public schools may lack basic Wi-Fi or functioning computers, leaving their students with far fewer opportunities. These inequities perpetuate systemic barriers, even locally, disproportionately affecting public school students and widening the gap between those who have and those who do not.

In many countries, current education budgets are not sufficient to address these challenges. Governments often prioritize other areas, leaving schools to struggle with outdated tools and minimal infrastructure. This imbalance creates a cycle of inequality where underfunded schools and underserved communities are perpetually left behind.

What can we do? It starts with advocacy. Governments need to make room in national budgets for increased investments in education and connectivity. From expanding access to affordable broadband to ensuring every child has access to devices, to investing in professional development for educators, national strategies must address this divide head-on.




ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF SPECIAL LEARNERS

The digital divide has a particularly profound impact on children with disabilities, a group for whom technology often serves as more than a tool; it can be a lifeline. For these students, access to AI-driven assistive technologies such as speech-to-text tools, text-to-speech readers, and adaptive learning platforms can transform how they interact with the world around them. These tools enable students with visual, auditory, cognitive, or physical impairments to participate more fully in education, fostering independence and confidence. However, their transformative potential remains unrealized for many due to high costs and insufficient support.

Consider a child with dyslexia in a school without access to text-to-speech software. This child may struggle to read materials at the same pace as their peers, leading to frustration and a widening educational gap. Similarly, a student with a hearing impairment may be unable to fully participate in a classroom discussion without AI-enabled transcription tools. Beyond immediate classroom challenges, the lack of access to such technologies can stifle long-term opportunities, making it harder for these children to integrate into the workforce or pursue higher education.

The barriers are not just financial; they are also infrastructural and systemic. Many schools lack the expertise to implement AI-driven tools effectively. Teachers often receive little to no training in using these technologies, leaving them ill-equipped to incorporate them into the classroom. Furthermore, limited awareness of these solutions exacerbates their underutilization. For children with disabilities, this absence of technology can significantly hinder their potential, leaving them at a disadvantage not only in school but in life.

We must advocate for inclusive AI adoption as a pathway to equity. This includes working with governments to subsidize assistive technology, providing teacher training on the effective use of AI tools, and ensuring that schools serving special learners are prioritized in funding initiatives. By investing in these measures, we can empower children with disabilities to reach their full potential, ensuring that no child is excluded from the opportunities that technology can provide.



“The barriers are not just financial; they are also infrastructural and systemic. Many schools lack the expertise to implement AI-driven tools effectively.”



A CALL TO REIMAGINE EDUCATION

To bridge the digital divide, we must go beyond acknowledging the problem to implementing actionable solutions. Digital and AI literacy should not merely be supplementary subjects; they must become foundational. Integrating AI literacy into curricula requires a systemic overhaul, starting with redefining educational priorities to reflect the demands of a technology-driven world. For example, schools can introduce AI and digital literacy through interdisciplinary projects, such as using AI tools to analyze environmental data in science classes or creating digital portfolios in art.

Adopting adaptive technologies requires a thoughtful approach. Schools can begin by conducting assessments to identify the specific needs of their student populations. For instance, schools serving multilingual communities might prioritize translation AI tools, while those with a high number of students with learning disabilities might focus on adaptive learning platforms. Partnerships with ed-tech companies can facilitate pilot programs to test and refine these technologies before broader implementation.

Public-private partnerships are essential in this endeavor. Technology firms can play a pivotal role by providing devices, offering technical support, and creating customized educational tools. Governments can incentivize such collaborations through grants or tax benefits, fostering a shared commitment to educational equity. Additionally, community digital hubs staffed by trained mentors can provide vital support in underserved areas. These hubs could double as after-school learning centers where students can access high-speed internet, borrow devices, and receive guidance on using AI tools effectively.

Transforming AI literacy into a core subject also demands teacher training and curriculum redesign. Professional development programs should equip educators with the knowledge and skills to teach AI concepts and integrate digital tools into everyday learning. National education strategies must outline clear frameworks for AI and digital education, with milestones to track progress. By reimagining education in this way, we can equip all students, not just a privileged few, with the skills needed to thrive in an AI-driven future. The solutions are within our reach; the challenge lies in the commitment to act.

TECHNOLOGY AS A HUMAN RIGHT

When the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in 1948, the world could not have imagined a near future shaped by AI and digital connectivity. Today, access to technology is as vital as access to education, healthcare, and information. It is not just a tool for learning but a gateway to opportunity, inclusion, and empowerment. We must advocate for policies that recognize digital connectivity as a fundamental human right. Marginalized groups, from rural communities to those with disabilities, cannot afford to be left behind in this rapidly evolving landscape. The cost of inaction is too high – not just for individuals but for the human global society as a whole.

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

Closing the digital divide is not a challenge any single entity can solve. It requires collective action from governments, educators, tech companies, and communities. By working together, we can create a more equitable world where every child has the tools they need to succeed in an AI-driven future. We cannot allow a generation of learners to be left behind. The time to act is now.



Clara Hawking is an AI governance, Rights, and AI education specialist, Co-Founder of Kompass Education, and the Founder and Owner of IQQEdge, a global consulting firm dedicated to the responsible and ethical use of AI, particularly in education and child-focused organizations. A sought-after speaker, writer, and advocate, Clara is passionate about ensuring that AI technology is used safely and inclusively to empower communities and bridge the digital divide. Her work focuses on providing practical solutions to foster equity, compliance, and innovation in an AI-driven world.



SHAPING EDUCATION'S FUTURE THROUGH SINGULARITY TECHNOLOGIES

NEW MINDSETS AND SKILLS WITH PATHWAYS TO HUMAN 2.0

Prof. Serap Sisman-Ugur

The global education landscape is undergoing profound change as technology emerges as a major force in reshaping teaching and learning. As educators and students adapt to these changes, the demand for innovative mindsets and skills is becoming increasingly evident. As humanity approaches the technological singularity, advanced technologies such as robotics, blockchain, artificial intelligence, and transhumanism are redefining not only how we learn, but also the nature of learning itself. These innovations promise to transform education into a dynamic, evolving process by merging human cognition with technology. This article examines how these cutting-edge advances are revolutionizing education and highlights the skills and perspectives needed to meet tomorrow's challenges. It envisions a future where singularity technologies are driving the evolution of learning, preparing humanity for an era defined by constant innovation, adaptation, and redefining what it means to be human in an age of transhumanism.

TRANSFORMATIVE TEACHING APPROACHES WITH ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES

Technology has revolutionized education by equipping educators with tools such as virtual classrooms and AI-powered systems to deliver personalized, adaptable learning experiences. Platforms that use gamification (Deterding et al., 2011; Uğur and Şahin, 2020) that incorporate video game elements into education make learning engaging, encouraging critical thinking and adaptability. Flipped classrooms further optimize classroom time for collaborative, interactive activities, deepening student engagement. These approaches require educators to embrace lifelong learning and continually develop their skills. Robotics and AI are driving further transformations by enabling personalized instructional practices. AI-powered platforms increase learning efficiency by providing real-time feedback and customized guidance, and robots in STEM education encourage hands-on learning, problem solving, and collaboration. These innovations enrich learning experiences and prepare students for technology-driven workplaces.



SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES OF THE FUTURE

In a rapidly evolving world, traditional curricula must be adapted to develop future-ready skills. The World Economic Forum highlights critical thinking, creativity, and digital literacy as key competencies for the workforce (WEF, 2016). Emerging technologies such as Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), and Mixed Reality (MR) enable students to develop collaboration, communication, and problem-solving skills by simulating real-world scenarios in safe, controlled environments. For example, VR allows students to tackle complex, real-life challenges without taking risks, while online platforms facilitate cross-geographic teamwork that reflects modern workplace dynamics. By integrating these tools, educators can prepare students with both technical expertise and essential soft skills.

In a rapidly evolving world, traditional curricula must be adapted to develop future-ready skills.

INNOVATIVE ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

Assessment is a critical element of education, but traditional methods often fail to reflect the full scope of a student's abilities. Technology offers innovative, multifaceted alternatives. AI-powered assessments assess not only response accuracy but also underlying cognitive processes, while digital portfolios in Portfolio-Based Assessment emphasize diverse projects, focusing on growth rather than standardized metrics. These approaches promote equity and inclusion, ensuring that students are assessed based on their unique strengths and potential.



EMPOWERING STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Technology empowers students and teachers by encouraging agency and ownership in the learning process. For students, this can mean:

- Personalized learning paths that address individual strengths and weaknesses.
- Opportunities to create and innovate using tools like coding platforms or digital design software.

For teachers, technology acts as a partner that automates repetitive tasks and frees up time for more meaningful interactions. Curriculum focused on digital pedagogy is essential to building educators' confidence and competence.

THE NEW LEARNING ECOSYSTEM

Robotics and blockchain have evolved from futuristic concepts to practical tools with transformative potential in education. AI-powered robots like SoftBank's Pepper serve as teachers, assistants, and friends, providing personalized learning experiences and emotional support. Blockchain, a secure and decentralized system, enables seamless learning journeys in a hyperconnected world by providing tamper-proof, portable lifelong learning records (Bhaskar, Tiwari, & Joshi, 2021).

As the cornerstone of secure and transparent learning ecosystems, blockchain fosters trust and collaboration among global institutions (Grech & Camilleri, 2017; Steiu, 2020).

Decentralized networks enable continuous learning by facilitating collaborative contributions to knowledge. Emerging innovations such as Human-Blockchain Interfaces (HumanChains) enable the shared development of skills, knowledge, and cognitive advances by embedding human data in blockchain frameworks (Kurubacak, Sisman-Ugur, & Sharma, 2022). These technologies indicate a paradigm shift in which technology is no longer a complementary tool of education but has become an integral part of it.

5G TECHNOLOGY AND THE FUTURE OF CONNECTIVITY

The proliferation of 5G technology is revolutionizing education through faster and more reliable connectivity. It enables students in remote areas to access high-quality online education with minimal latency and facilitates seamless video conferencing and global collaboration. Additionally, 5G enhances interactive learning experiences by supporting the integration of IoT devices such as smart boards and connected labs (Wang, 2022). 5G is bridging the digital divide, promoting greater inclusivity in education for underserved communities.



VIRTUAL REALITY, AUGMENTED REALITY, MIXED REALITY AND METAVERSE IN EDUCATION

Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), and Mixed Reality (MR) bridge the physical and digital worlds, transforming learning experiences (Ugur & Kuş, 2024). VR tools like Oculus Rift immerse students in environments where they can explore historical sites, conduct experiments, or understand abstract concepts. AR embeds interactive information into the real world, turning resources like textbooks into 3D explorations. MR combines VR and AR, enabling interaction with both real and virtual objects, fostering collaborative, hands-on learning in fields such as design and architecture. These multi-sensory technologies make abstract concepts tangible and memorable.

The metaverse expands these possibilities by creating shared, immersive virtual environments for education (Lin et al., 2022). Virtual campuses and classrooms facilitate global collaboration, allowing students to interact and learn in 3D spaces. Complex skills, like surgery or engineering, can be practiced safely in simulations, while real-time interactions enhance multicultural perspectives. However, as the metaverse grows, ensuring accessibility and prioritizing digital well-being are critical.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND PERSONAL ASSISTANTS IN EDUCATION

Voice-activated personal assistants such as Alexa, Google Assistant, and Siri are becoming increasingly valuable in education by acting as AI-powered learning tools. Students can use voice commands to ask questions, set reminders, and access resources, while IoT-enabled devices are integrating these assistants into smart classrooms, automating tasks such as controlling lighting, playing videos, or setting activity timers (Sisman-Uğur, 2025). Additionally, voice assistants enhance language learning by providing real-time pronunciation feedback and vocabulary exercises, seamlessly integrating technology into daily routines to make education more accessible and efficient.



GENERATIVE AI AND TRANSFORMATIVE SYNERGIES

Generative AI (GenAI) tools like ChatGPT and DALL-E are revolutionizing content creation and consumption in education. These tools enable students to explore creativity through AI-generated art, music, or stories, while generating personalized lesson plans, materials, and assessments tailored to individual needs. GenAI-powered platforms can act as on-demand tutors, providing instant feedback and explanations. By integrating GenAI, educators can increase engagement and creativity across learning styles. The convergence of technologies further enriches educational environments. For example, a GenAI-powered assistant in the metaverse could guide students through virtual science experiments, blending the adaptability of AI with the immersive experiences of VR. 5G-enabled AR headsets offer real-time translations during virtual exchange programs, while mixed reality labs integrate physical and digital learning for inclusive and innovative education.

TECHNOLOGICAL SINGULARITY AND SUPERINTELLIGENT AI

Technological singularity encompasses AI's evolution alongside other integrated technologies, marking a future where machines may surpass human intelligence (Uğur, 2023; Yampolskiy, 2015). Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) refers to AI capable of mimicking human cognitive processes across diverse tasks (Strelkova, 2017), while Artificial Superintelligence (ASI) surpasses human capabilities, reshaping education. ASI offers transformative possibilities, such as self-improving systems that design personalized curricula aligned with societal and individual needs. Collaborative platforms can merge human creativity with AI's computational power, fostering co-evolutionary learning. In this context, educators must shift roles, becoming facilitators of ethical reasoning and creativity rather than mere providers of knowledge. Ethical considerations—ensuring equity, inclusivity, and responsible use of ASI—are central to mitigating potential inequalities.

BRAIN-COMPUTER INTERFACES (BCIS) AND NEURAL ADVANCEMENTS

Brain-Computer Interfaces (BCIs) represent a breakthrough in human-computer interaction by enabling direct communication between the brain and external devices (Wegemer, 2019). BCIs promise transformative educational applications, such as instantaneous knowledge acquisition, where students “load” information into memory instead of traditional learning methods (Sisman-Ugur & Kurubacak, 2020). Neural implants, such as Elon Musk's Neuralink, aim to enhance brain function by improving focus and retention during learning (Uğur, 2023). BCIs also provide real-time cognitive feedback, allowing students to optimize their performance. However, these developments raise important ethical questions regarding cognitive autonomy, data privacy, and equal access. Addressing these concerns is crucial to ensuring that BCIs contribute to education in an inclusive way.

TRANSHUMANISM AND THE EVOLUTION OF LEARNING

Transhumanism is a movement that has developed and spread to a great extent, especially in the last decades (Bostrom, 2003). In his book, Huxley (1957) states that man can go beyond himself, that he can surpass himself as an individual in his own integrity, and if this belief reaches enough people, he says that humanity will be on the threshold of a new existence, will consciously realize its destiny, and he uses the term transhumanism for this expression. As technology enhances human capabilities, transhuman learners emerge—individuals augmented with cognitive implants, biological enhancements, and other advances. These advances present new possibilities.

BRAIN CHIPS AND THE FUTURE OF KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION

Brain chips, or neural implants, have the potential to revolutionize information acquisition and processing in education. These devices, capable of interfacing with neural networks, could enable students to instantly "upload" textbooks, professionals to rapidly gain new skills, or individuals to expand memory capacity (Sisman-Ugur & Kurubacak, 2020). Brain chips may also facilitate accelerated language learning by embedding linguistic structures directly into the brain or collaborating with AI systems to create hyper-personalized learning environments tailored to students' unique cognitive needs.

However, the integration of brain chips into education necessitates careful examination of their long-term effects on mental health, ethical concerns, and broader societal implications.

What does it mean to "learn" if knowledge can be transferred instantly? How can individuality be preserved and how can the misuse of such technologies be prevented?

GENETIC RESEARCH AND MEMORY TRANSFER

Advances in genetic research have opened up new possibilities for understanding and manipulating memory storage and transfer. Studies in epigenetics and memory-related genes suggest the potential to enhance or suppress memory formation and improve retention. Emerging neuroscience experiments suggest that memories can be synthetically encoded and transferred between individuals, allowing experiences or knowledge to be shared (Şişman-Uğur and Kurubacak, 2020). Future genetic interventions could revolutionize learning by facilitating rapid skill acquisition, targeted memory enhancement, and treatment of cognitive disorders through genetic reprogramming. However, these developments raise deep ethical and philosophical concerns. What does it mean to "learn" if knowledge can be transferred instantly? How can individuality be preserved and how can the misuse of such technologies be prevented?

To address these questions, educators must adapt traditional pedagogy, encouraging critical and ethical engagement with the expanding possibilities of advanced cognition.

PREPARING TODAY FOR TOMORROW'S LEARNING STRUCTURES

To adapt to the demands of a technology-driven future, education systems must take proactive measures. Key actions include:

- 1. Building technology infrastructure:** Schools and universities must upgrade to support 5G connectivity, IoT devices, AR/VR tools, and real-time collaboration. Develop integrated LMS systems with AI personalization, blockchain credentials, and mixed reality capabilities, while ensuring robust cybersecurity to protect sensitive data.
- 2. Redefining curriculum:** Integrate STEM with the humanities to address technological and ethical challenges. Prioritize critical thinking, adaptability, digital literacy, emotional intelligence, and ethical problem solving for technologies like AI and genetic engineering.
- 3. Developing educators:** Provide ongoing training in VR, AI, and blockchain. Empower teachers to create engaging, inclusive online learning experiences and leverage AI tools for grading and adaptive instruction.
- 4. Adopt flexible learning models:** Blend physical and virtual classrooms for scalable, accessible learning. Implement systems for lifelong learning and deliver applications in short, focused modules via VR or AI instructors.
- 5. Foster global collaboration:** Create shared virtual campuses in the Metaverse, repositories of multilingual educational content, and programs that promote cultural understanding and global problem solving.
- 6. Closing the digital divide:** Ensure access to devices, internet connectivity, and affordable advanced technologies for disadvantaged students. Establish VR labs and local hubs with 5G access for underserved communities.
- 7. Encourage research and innovation:** Partner with technology companies to test educational innovations. Develop "learning labs" to experiment with VR, AR, BCIs, and AI, and use AI-driven insights to improve teaching and learning practices.
- 8. Develop ethics and policy frameworks:** Establish guidelines for data protection, address the impact of automation on education, and ensure that technologies meet diverse learning needs, including for students with disabilities.
- 9. Promoting technological literacy:** Coding, robotics, and AI should be introduced early in education. Educate parents on emerging technologies and hold public workshops to demystify tools like blockchain, GenAI, and neural enhancements.

ETHICAL AND EQUITABLE EDUCATION FOR THE FUTURE

As technologies transform education, addressing equity and ethical concerns is essential. Policymakers and educators must collaborate to establish frameworks that ensure inclusivity, equitable access to advanced learning tools, and protection of individual agency in augmented environments. The adoption of BCIs, brain chips, and genetic memory technologies necessitates robust ethical guidelines. Key issues include data ownership, informed consent, and the impact of these innovations on identity. Prioritizing equitable access is crucial to prevent a widening divide between enhanced and non-enhanced learners.

Critical questions arise: How can equitable access to transformative technologies be guaranteed? What safeguards can prevent the misuse of human augmentation tools? How can individual identity and creativity be preserved in hyperconnected, collaborative learning spaces?

Future educational systems must champion inclusion, ensuring that technological advancements benefit all learners, not just the privileged few.

The integration of technology into education is no longer a choice, it is a necessity. Its success depends on educators and students adopting mindsets focused on adaptability, resilience, and lifelong learning. As robotics, blockchain, AI, and transhumanism converge, education is being redefined, offering unprecedented opportunities to reshape not only how we learn, but who we are as learners.

Emerging technologies such as GenAI, the metaverse, VR, AR, mixed reality, 5G, and personal assistants are enabling students with new dimensions of discovery, global collaboration, and personalized learning. These innovations promise transformational impacts, from instantaneous knowledge acquisition to addressing cognitive disabilities, but their potential must be realized through ethical foresight and innovation. The education systems of the future must remain human-centered, equitable, and visionary. To achieve this, careful planning, investment in infrastructure, curriculum reform, and ongoing educator development will be necessary. Addressing ethical concerns and promoting inclusivity can help ensure that education remains accessible and effective. Preparing today will enable students to thrive in a world where technology and humanity co-evolve seamlessly.

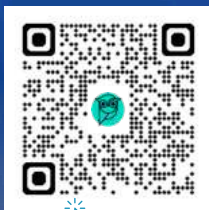
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This comprehensive article includes a thorough list of references, which can be downloaded [HERE](#).



Dr. Uğur is internationally recognised for her expertise in technological singularity and transhumanism. She is interested in e-Learning, instructional design and content types, digital storytelling, game-based learning, gamification, VR, AR, MR and metaverse, brain-computer interaction, AI, AGI, ASI and LLM. She was also selected as the only woman from Turkey in the 'futurist' category in the special issue of Career Beacon magazine's 'The elite 50 exemplary women' in 2021.





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Transform Your Teaching With AI is available through Gumroad on a pay-what-you-can basis, including a free option.

In a world where Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming education, this book offers a rare glimpse into the journeys of over 200 educators across six continents who have embraced the challenge of integrating AI into their classrooms. Born from countless Zoom calls, late-night LinkedIn messages, and real-world classroom experiences, the stories within highlight the authentic struggles, breakthroughs, and triumphs of teachers navigating this uncharted territory.

With a focus on practical, proven strategies, the author shares a systematic approach to AI integration, developed through hands-on collaboration with educators in diverse settings—from primary schools in Mexico City to university lecture halls in the UK. The author Phillip Alcock is the Director of Innovation at Alayna and founder of AlxPBL, helping educators harness AI while preserving human-centered learning. He made this book a testament to the bravery and dedication of educators who dared to ask, “How do I make AI work for my students?”

Published as pay-what-you-can resource, *Transform Your Teaching with AI* is widely available to ensure greater accessibility and inclusivity in learning and teaching. Embrace this transformative journey and reimagine what learning can be with AI.

The EduVerse Newsletter is excited to feature an intensive interview with Phillip Alcock, the author of *Transform Your Teaching with AI*. Discover his inspirations for writing the book, gain valuable insights, and unveil his vision for the role of AI in the future of education within your classroom.



TRANSFORM YOUR TEACHING WITH AI

BY PHILLIP ALCOCK

ASK

THE EXPERTS

Welcome to **Ask the Experts**, the ultimate column dedicated to professional development in the field of education. In this dynamic and ever-evolving field, continuous growth and learning are paramount. In each issue, we explore the most commonly asked topic by interviewing invited experts for their insights, experiences, and strategies.

AIx HUMAN INTELLIGENCE

THE UNIQUE INTERSECTION IN EDUCATION

EXCLUSIVELY WITH **PHILLIP ALCOCK**

EduVerse: Welcome to our exclusive interview series, "Ask the Experts." Today, we're honored to be joined by Phillip Alcock, an innovative force in education and the founder of AIxPBL. Known for his groundbreaking work combining artificial intelligence (AI) with Project-Based Learning (PBL), Phillip has been at the forefront of creating transformative learning experiences. With his diverse experience working across Australia, Vietnam, and Mexico, he offers a unique perspective on the intersection of AI and education, focusing not just on innovation, but on maintaining the human essence of learning.

In this conversation, we'll explore Phillip's journey with AIxPBL, his mission through the Human Intelligence Movement to develop crucial human skills in an AI-driven world, and insights from his new book, *Transform Your Teaching with AI*. Phillip's thoughtful approach, grounded in real-world experience, provides valuable insights on how AI can empower educators to navigate the evolving challenges of education today and tomorrow.

As Director of Innovation at Alayna and founder of AIxPBL, **Phillip Alcock** helps educators harness AI while preserving human-centered learning. His work, shaped by experiences across Australia, Vietnam, and Mexico, combines AI integration with Project-Based Learning. He has authored *Transform Your Teaching With AI* and contributed to several leading educational publications.



PART 1 ABOUT AIxPBL

1 Phillip, it's great to have you here! Let's start with your journey. Can you share how your passion for AI began, and what initially drew you to the field?

My journey into AI began in a way that I think resonates with many educators – through a simple but eye-opening experience. A friend demonstrated how he used ChatGPT to craft a reference letter, and that seemingly straightforward use case revealed to me the transformative potential of AI in ways I hadn't previously considered.

This initial exposure led me to invest in ChatGPT's professional version, and what followed was a period of intense exploration and discovery. Over the next two years, I analysed more than 6 million words through AI interactions – a volume of text that would have been impossible to process through traditional reading methods. This experience fundamentally shifted my perspective on what was possible with AI assistance.

What began as a personal curiosity quickly evolved into professional expertise. Educators and leaders across the world began seeking my insights on AI integration, and gradually, every aspect of my professional work became intertwined with AI. It's fascinating to reflect on how that single demonstration of a practical AI use case set me on a path that would completely transform my career trajectory.

This personal journey has given me a unique perspective on AI adoption – I understand firsthand how a simple introduction to AI's practical applications can lead to profound professional transformation.

2 That's such an inspiring journey! From a simple demonstration to global connections, it sounds like AI quickly became a central part of your work. How did this spark lead to the creation of AIxPBL, and what inspired you to blend AI with Project-Based Learning?

The birth of AIxPBL came from my hands-on experience as a fifth-grade teacher at San Roberto International School in Monterrey, Mexico, where I discovered a powerful way to transform traditional project-based learning through AI personalisation.

What made this approach transformative was the ability to tailor projects to each student's or group's individual interests and motivations – both extrinsic and intrinsic. I broke down traditional subject barriers in ways that deeply resonated with students. By using clever AI prompts, I created interdisciplinary connections that might have seemed unconventional but proved incredibly effective: integrating mathematics with art, connecting science with soccer, and even linking hospitality concepts with language arts.

The results were remarkable. We achieved something that every educator dreams of – 100% student engagement. But what was even more compelling was that this engagement translated into measurable academic improvement. Students weren't just more interested in learning; they were performing significantly better across their subjects.

This success in my classroom became the foundation for AIxPBL. It demonstrated that when we use AI to personalise project-based learning, we can expect incredible results. The experience showed that by aligning educational content with students' personal interests and motivations, we could create learning experiences that were both more engaging and more impactful.



3

That's fascinating! I love the way you combine subjects unconventionally like science with soccer. But as you mentioned, moving from traditional methods to AI-powered PBL can be a significant shift. What challenges have institutions faced when adopting AI through PBL, and how has AIXPBL helped them overcome these hurdles?

The adoption of AI through Project-Based Learning presents several interconnected challenges for institutions. One of the primary hurdles is the inherent complexity of implementing two significant changes simultaneously - integrating AI technology while shifting to project-based methodologies. Many institutional leaders find this dual transformation overwhelming.

Through my work with AIXPBL, I've discovered that a focused, grassroots approach is more effective than attempting broad institutional changes. Rather than pushing for school-wide adoption immediately, I work with small, motivated groups of teachers who can experiment, adapt, and demonstrate success in their classrooms. This creates organic growth opportunities as other educators can directly observe and engage with working projects, seeing both the challenges and benefits firsthand.

This 'show, don't tell' approach has proven particularly effective because it allows the integration to develop naturally, with teachers learning from their peers' practical experiences rather than through top-down mandates. Success stories and tangible results from these smaller implementations often inspire other teachers to explore similar approaches, creating a more sustainable and authentic adoption pathway.

The beauty of this method is that it transforms what initially seems like an overwhelming institutional challenge into a series of manageable, teacher-led innovations that can gradually scale up as comfort and confidence grow within the school community.



PART 2

HUMAN INTELLIGENCE

It's great to hear about the thoughtful approach you've taken to help educators adapt. Beyond integrating AI, your work with the Human Intelligence Movement highlights the importance of human skills in an AI-driven world. Building on your experiences, what "human intelligence" skills do you believe are most crucial for students today?

4

In today's rapidly evolving AI landscape, the most crucial 'human intelligence' skills are fundamentally tied to what we know as 21st-century competencies. These skills become even more vital as AI handles increasingly complex computational and routine tasks.

Critical thinking and problem-solving remain at the core - but with a new emphasis on understanding how to collaborate with AI while maintaining human judgment and ethical decision-making. Students need to develop strong creative thinking abilities, not just to generate ideas, but to synthesize information and see connections that AI might miss.

Communication and collaboration skills are becoming increasingly important, but with a new dimension: students need to learn how to effectively work not just with other humans, but also with AI tools. This includes understanding both the capabilities and limitations of AI systems.

Perhaps most crucially, adaptability and learning agility have become essential. In a world where technology evolves rapidly, students need to develop a strong growth mindset and the ability to continuously learn and unlearn. This includes digital literacy, but goes beyond mere technical skills to encompass critical evaluation of information and technology.

Finally, emotional intelligence and empathy - uniquely human traits - are becoming increasingly valuable as AI handles more routine tasks. The ability to understand nuanced human emotions, navigate

5

Absolutely—those are skills that will be increasingly indispensable. You mentioned the importance of students learning to collaborate with AI effectively. How do you see AI specifically helping students develop these human skills and enhancing their learning rather than replacing human intelligence?

What's fascinating about AI's role in developing human intelligence is how it creates a unique mirror for self-reflection through our interactions with it. When we engage in prompt engineering and analyse our thought processes while working with AI, we're actually developing a deeper understanding of our own cognitive patterns and decision-making processes.

This is particularly powerful because as we craft and refine prompts, we're forced to explicitly break down our thinking, articulate our goals, and examine our problem-solving strategies in ways we rarely do otherwise. It's like having a cognitive microscope that allows us to study our own thought processes in real-time. When a prompt doesn't yield the desired results, we don't just revise the prompt - we're forced to analyse our own thinking patterns and assumptions.

This meta-cognitive aspect of working with AI actually enhances our human intelligence rather than replacing it. We're not just using AI as a tool; we're developing a more sophisticated understanding of our own thought processes through our interactions with it. This self-reflective capability is uniquely human, and AI becomes the catalyst for developing it further.

So rather than diminishing human intelligence, AI is actually helping us become more aware of and intentional about our cognitive processes - a skill that's becoming increasingly valuable in our complex world.



What's fascinating about AI's role in developing human intelligence is how it creates a unique mirror for self-reflection through our interactions with it.

Phillip Alcock

6

You made an amazing point on how AI can act as a tool for self-reflection and growth. Back to your project Human Intelligence Movement, how has it been received by educators and students? Are there any success stories or breakthroughs that you can share?

One of the most remarkable manifestations of the Human Intelligence Movement's impact was our groundbreaking conference that brought together students and district leaders at the same roundtable – something that rarely happens in educational discussions. This unique format proved transformative in ways we hadn't fully anticipated. And what made this conference truly outstanding was how it dismantled traditional hierarchies in educational decision-making. Having students directly engage with district leaders in substantive discussions about AI and human intelligence created an unprecedented dynamic.

The roundtable format fostered authentic dialogue about human intelligence in an AI age, with students articulating their hopes and concerns about the future, while district leaders shared their perspectives on preparing schools for this transformation. This direct interaction led to several 'aha moments' on both sides – students gained a deeper understanding of educational policy challenges, while administrators gained invaluable insights into students' real experiences and needs.

This conference became a powerful demonstration of the Human Intelligence Movement's core principle: that meaningful educational transformation requires bringing all voices to the table, especially those of the learners themselves. It showed that when we create spaces for genuine dialogue across traditional boundaries, we unlock new possibilities for understanding how human intelligence can thrive alongside AI.

PART 3

TRANSFORM YOUR TEACHING WITH AI

And congratulations on your first book *Transform Your Teaching with AI*. Could you tell us what inspired you to develop this book?

7

The journey to writing *Transform Your Teaching with AI* began in a wonderfully organic way. Initially, my goal was to distill highlights from 200 meaningful conversations with educators into a simple blog post. However, as I dove deeper, it became evident that these stories held a richness and depth that deserved a more substantial platform.

As I began collecting and organising these conversations, patterns and insights emerged that couldn't be contained in a single post. Each conversation had contributed unique perspectives and practical applications that deserved deeper exploration. The richness of these educators' experiences and innovations with AI naturally organised themselves into distinct themes and chapters.

What's particularly meaningful about this evolution from blog post to book is that it mirrors the very nature of AI integration in education - it often starts with a simple idea that grows and transforms as we discover new possibilities. These 200 conversations weren't just data points; they were stories of transformation, challenge, and innovation that needed to be shared with the broader educational community.

The book became a natural culmination of these collective experiences and insights, growing not from a predetermined outline but from the authentic experiences of educators in the field. It's a testament to how powerful collaborative learning and shared experiences can be in advancing our understanding of AI's role in education.

8

It's fascinating how the book organically evolved from your interactions with educators. So, out of over 200 stories from educators worldwide, was there a transformative story that has stayed with you?

Certainly! The story that has left the most profound impact on me is actually from the very first chapter of the book, featuring an educator named Jay.

Prior to working with Jay, my AI experiments were primarily technical - developing chatbots and creating lesson plans. However, this initial project pushed me far beyond those boundaries. What began as a straightforward implementation evolved into something much more significant as I found myself deeply engaged in the broader aspects of learning design and assessment.

This experience fundamentally shifted my professional identity. I moved from being someone who simply created educational tools to becoming deeply invested in how these tools shape and enhance learning experiences. The project helped me realise that effective AI integration in education isn't just about the technology - it's about understanding how to design meaningful learning experiences that leverage these tools effectively.

This transformation from a technical implementer to a learning experience designer has informed every project since, and it continues to influence how I approach AI integration in education. Jay's story represents not just a successful project, but the beginning of a new understanding of what's possible when we thoughtfully blend AI with educational practice.

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It is truly transformational, right? Speaking of those conversations, what are some of the key challenges educators faced when they first attempted to integrate AI in their teaching, and how did they overcome these?

In my experience, one of the fundamental challenges educators face when first integrating AI into their teaching isn't necessarily technical - it's psychological. There's often an expectation for instant mastery and immediate results, which conflicts with the reality of any meaningful educational innovation.

This 'instant solution' mindset presents a particular irony, as many of these same educators teach their students about growth mindset and the 'power of yet,' but struggle to apply these principles to their own learning journey with AI. When the integration isn't seamless from day one, there's a tendency to either abandon the effort entirely or retreat to more familiar teaching methods.

What I've observed is that educators who successfully integrate AI are those who approach it with the same growth mindset they encourage in their students. They understand that becoming proficient with AI tools is a journey that involves experimentation, occasional setbacks, and gradual improvement. These educators treat initial challenges not as failures but as learning opportunities - embodying the 'not yet' philosophy they teach their students.

This realisation has shaped how I approach AI integration support, emphasising the importance of celebrating small wins, normalising the learning curve, and helping educators reframe their expectations from immediate perfection to continuous growth.



In my experience, one of the fundamental challenges educators face when first integrating AI into their teaching isn't necessarily technical - it's psychological.

Phillip Alcock

10

That's such a relatable insight for many teachers. Your book emphasizes practical, tested methods. Could you share an example of a technique that proved especially effective in classrooms?

One of the most successful techniques from the book, which I detail in Chapter 6, centers around a carefully structured AI prompt that has consistently helped teachers manage one of their biggest challenges: building meaningful reflection time into lessons without running over.

The prompt's effectiveness lies in its detailed structure, like this.



To illustrate its impact, let me share the story of Harry, a tenth-grade English teacher who exemplifies the common struggle many educators face. Harry was known for creating engaging lessons but consistently ran out of time for meaningful reflection. Like many teachers, he would either rush through reflection time or skip it entirely, compromising a crucial element of student learning.

What makes this prompt particularly effective is that it doesn't just help with planning - it fundamentally reshapes how teachers think about lesson timing. The built-in reflection checkpoints and backup plans force educators to proactively consider time management, rather than treating reflection as an optional add-on if time permits.

The real-world success of this technique has been remarkable, with teachers reporting significantly improved ability to complete lessons as planned while maintaining meaningful reflection time. It's a perfect example of how practical, tested solutions can address common classroom challenges.

'I need help designing a [SUBJECT] lesson about [TOPIC] for [GRADE LEVEL] that runs [X] minutes. Please help me:

- *Create a precise timeline breaking down each section of the lesson*
- *Include 3-4 "reflection checkpoints" that take 2-3 minutes each*
- *Design a clear closing activity that takes exactly 5 minutes*
- *Suggest backup activities I can skip if time runs short*
- *Include timing signals I should watch for'*

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Wonderful! So when you wrote this book, what surprised you most about the global perspectives on AI in education? Did educators in different countries approach it differently?

What surprised me most was discovering that regardless of geographical location or technological infrastructure, educators worldwide share remarkably similar hopes and concerns about AI in education. However, the ways they approach implementation vary significantly based on their cultural and institutional contexts.

For example, some educators in regions with limited technology access demonstrated incredible creativity in maximising the impact of even basic AI tools. Rather than viewing limited resources as a barrier, they often developed innovative hybrid approaches that combined AI capabilities with existing teaching methods.

Another fascinating observation was how cultural attitudes toward technology influenced adoption patterns. In some countries, educators approached AI integration very systematically and collectively, while others favoured more individualised, experimental approaches. Yet despite these differences in implementation, the core goals remained consistent: enhancing student learning and preparing them for an AI-influenced future.

Perhaps the most valuable insight was seeing how these diverse perspectives enriched the overall conversation about AI in education. Each region's unique approach contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of how AI can be adapted to serve different educational contexts while maintaining pedagogical effectiveness.

FINAL THOUGHTS

As we wrap up, what are your final thoughts on the role of AI in education? How do you believe AI can address some of the most pressing challenges facing the future of education?

What's fascinating about AI in education is how it mirrors the ancient art of questioning and discovery.

The most profound realisation I've had is that AI isn't just solving problems; it's helping us understand the very nature of learning itself. It's showing us that education isn't about memorising facts or following rigid structures - it's about the joy of discovery and the power of guided exploration.

To me, AI is about amplifying what makes us human: our curiosity, creativity, and desire to understand. AI excels at deconstructing complex academic requirements and weaving them into engaging Project-Based Learning experiences, therefore, changing what school is, and what it means for the World.

Just as ancient wisdom teaches us that true knowledge comes from acknowledging what we don't know, AI helps us embrace both our limitations and our unlimited growth potential.

Phillip Alcock

Transform Your Teaching With AI is available through Gumroad on a pay-what-you-can basis, including a free option



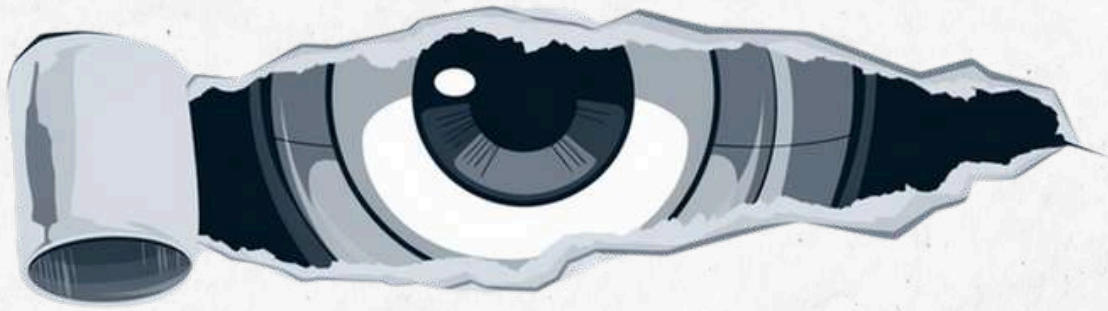
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KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Blending disciplines:** By using AI to create interdisciplinary projects (e.g., linking science with soccer), Phillip saw firsthand how personalized and creative learning designs could break down traditional subject barriers and enhance student engagement.
- **Challenges in AI adoption:** Integrating AI and Project-Based Learning simultaneously presents challenges for institutions. A grassroots approach with motivated teacher groups can ease the process.
- **Organic growth approach:** Rather than top-down mandates, Phillip encourages small-scale, teacher-led implementations of AI in classrooms, which naturally grow as teachers share success stories and inspire their peers.
- **Crucial human skills in an AI world:** Students must develop critical thinking, creative problem-solving, communication, collaboration, adaptability, emotional intelligence, and empathy—skills that AI cannot replicate.
- **AI as a mirror for self-reflection:** AI can aid students in reflecting on their cognitive processes. Interacting with AI tools helps students refine their thinking, enhancing self-awareness and decision-making skills, ultimately improving their human intelligence.
- **Human Intelligence Movement's impact:** The movement emphasizes the importance of engaging all voices in educational transformation, notably students, and advocates for genuine dialogue to explore the intersection of AI and human intelligence.
- **From blog to book:** Phillip's book, *Transform Your Teaching with AI*, evolved from over 200 meaningful conversations with educators, showcasing their transformative experiences with AI.
- **Challenges and growth mindset:** A key challenge for educators in AI adoption is psychological—facing the expectation for instant mastery. Those who succeed with AI approach it with a growth mindset and embracing setbacks as learning opportunities.





REIGNITING YOUR PASSION TO TEACH

Phillip Alcock

*This excerpt is from Chapter 1 of the book **Transform Your Teaching with AI** by Phillip Alcock. We express our gratitude to Phillip for granting us the special privilege to republish this section in EduVerse Newsletter 18, the special edition focused on Neo-Mindsets: For Tomorrow's Education.*

The only person who is educated is the one
who has learned how to learn ...and change.

- Carl Rogers -

It was a humid July morning in Acapulco, Mexico, in 2023 when I received an email from Jay, a Year 5 teacher at an international school in Mexico.

Like many educators I work with as an AI Integration and Project-Based Learning consultant, he was facing a challenge that felt both unique and universal: how to reignite reading engagement in his classroom.

His initial idea was to create an AI-powered reading comprehension chatbot, but what unfolded over the next few months taught us both valuable lessons about the intersection of technology and teaching.

I'm sharing this story because it exemplifies the journey many of us take when integrating AI into our teaching practice. As someone who has spent the last 10+ years in classrooms and the past eighteen months helping teachers integrate AI effectively, I've learned that the most powerful transformations often start with the smallest, most thoughtful steps.

The Reality of Teaching Today

Let's begin where Jay began. His classroom of 28 students showed declining interest in reading, a pattern reflected across his school. The traditional approaches weren't working: reading logs went unfilled, reading the most books to win a prize competitions felt pushed, comprehension worksheets felt mechanical, and even normally eager students were disengaged. Sound familiar?

When we first met virtually, Jay shared his vision of using AI to create interactive reading experiences. His enthusiasm was palpable, but so was his uncertainty. "I know AI could help," he told me, "but I don't want to just throw technology at the problem."

This is where many of us start – recognising potential but unsure how to harness it effectively. Through our work together, we discovered that the key isn't in the technology itself, but in how we use it to enhance our understanding of our students and our teaching practice.

The Journey Begins: Our First AI Conversation

Let me walk you through our first practical step. Instead of jumping straight to creating interactive content, we started by using AI to help us think more deeply about the challenge.

Here's the exact prompt I used with Jay:

Context: I'm working with a Year 5 class where reading engagement has declined.

Before suggesting solutions, please help me:

- 1. Generate questions to better understand individual student reading preferences*
- 2. Create a framework for documenting reading engagement patterns*
- 3. Identify potential non-technological factors affecting reading motivation*

The response we received opened up new avenues of thinking:

Here's the key part of what the AI suggested:

Questions for Understanding Students:

- What was the last book you couldn't put down? What made it special?*
- When do you find yourself most enjoying reading? (Time, place, type of book)*
- What makes you choose to read something outside of school?*
- How do you like to share books you've enjoyed with others?*
- What's different about the reading you choose to do versus what's assigned?*

This seemingly simple exchange led to our first insight:

Before we could enhance reading engagement with AI, we needed to understand the individual stories behind the disengagement.

The Power of Iterative Prompting

We then refined our approach. Here's how we improved the prompt to get more specific insights:

Based on these student responses [insert specific observations], help me:

- 1. Identify patterns in reading preferences across the class*
- 2. Suggest 3 differentiated approaches for different reader profiles*
- 3. Create a framework for measuring engagement that goes beyond completion*

Include specific examples for each suggestion.

This iterative approach taught us something important: AI works best when we're specific and build upon previous insights. It's not about getting the perfect answer immediately, but about engaging in a dialogue that deepens our understanding.

The Implementation Framework

Through my work with Jay's class and dozens of other teachers, I've developed a four-phase framework for enhancing teaching with AI. Let me break it down with real examples from our journey.

Phase 1 **Deep Understanding (2-3 days)**

Instead of rushing to solutions, we spent time gathering insights. Jay used the questions generated by AI to have meaningful conversations with his students. He discovered that many students were actually reading extensively – just not what was assigned. They were reading comics, manga, science books, online stories, and game-related content.

Try This Now: Use this prompt to start your investigation:

Help me create a student interest inventory that:

- 1. Uncovers hidden reading habits*
- 2. Identifies preferred storytelling formats*
- 3. Reveals subject matter interests*

Frame questions conversationally for [your grade level]

Phase 2 **Strategic Planning (1-2 Days)**

With our new understanding, we used AI to help design targeted interventions. Here's the prompt that proved most valuable:

Using these student interests [list 3-4 key findings], help me:

- 1. Design a reading activity that bridges current interests with curriculum goals*
- 2. Create scaffolding options for different reading levels*
- 3. Develop engagement indicators beyond traditional metrics*

Focus on activities that can be implemented within existing class structures.

The AI helped us generate ideas that connected manga-style storytelling with traditional literature, creating a bridge between students' interests and curriculum requirements.



Phase 3 Pilot Implementation (1 Week)

We started small. Jay chose one class period and one activity to test our approach. We used AI to help us design a clear observation framework:

Help me create an observation checklist for a 45-minute reading activity that:
Tracks visible engagement indicators
Notes specific moments of high/low engagement
Captures unexpected student responses

Include space for teacher reflections.



Phase 4 Strategic Planning (1-2 Days)

This phase proved critical. We used AI to help us analyse our observations and plan adjustments:

Based on these classroom observations [insert specific notes], help me:
1. Identify what worked well and why
2. Suggest specific refinements for next time
3. Create questions for student feedback

Focus on actionable insights we can implement tomorrow.

A Real Classroom Transformation

Let me share how this played out in Jay's classroom over three months. Before our intervention, his reading block followed a traditional format:

- 15 minutes of silent reading with a small group disrupting the silent aspect.
- Comprehension worksheets that were levelled with F&P levels
- Weekly reading logs
- Monthly book reports

Student engagement was low, with only 30–40% of students completing reading assignments consistently.

Through our AI-enhanced planning process, we created a new approach. First, we used AI to help us design reading circles that connected to students' interests:

The AI helped us design a flexible format where students could choose how to engage with texts:

- Visual summaries inspired by manga panels
- Character analysis through game-style attribute cards
- Story mapping using sports play diagrams


Results after three months:

- Reading completion rates increased to 100%
- Students initiated book discussions during free time
- Parents reported increased reading at home
- Several students started their own lunch break book club

Based on these student interest patterns [comics, science, manga, gaming, sports], help me:
1. Create reading circle formats that incorporate visual storytelling
2. Design discussion prompts that connect to students' lives
3. Develop creative response options beyond written reports

The key wasn't the technology – it was using AI to help me think more deeply about how to connect with my students' interests and reading habits.

(Jay's reflection)



Quick Start Guide

Ready to enhance your teaching with AI? Here's how to begin:



1 Start with understanding

Use this template:

Help me create questions to understand my students:

- 1. [Subject] interests outside of school*
- 2. Preferred learning styles*
- 3. Challenges with current [subject] activities*

Grade level: [your grade]

Subject area: [your subject]



2 Plan one small change

Choose one activity to enhance. Use this template:

Help me redesign this [specific activity] to:

- 1. Include more student choice*
- 2. Connect with student interests*
- 3. Provide multiple ways to demonstrate learning*

Current activity: [describe your activity]

Student interests: [list 2-3 key interests]



3 Observe and reflect

After trying your enhanced activity, use this prompt:

Help me analyse these classroom observations:

- 1. What worked well: [your observations]*
- 2. Challenges faced: [your observations]*
- 3. Student responses: [your observations]*

Suggest specific refinements for next time.

Success Indicators: Look for:

- Increased student participation*
- Spontaneous subject-related discussions*
- Students making connections to their interests*
- Requests for similar activities*
- Positive student feedback*



TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS

If AI responses are too generic, add more specific details about your students and context.

If suggested activities feel too ambitious, ask AI to break them down into smaller steps.

Looking Forward

As I continue working with teachers like Jay, I'm consistently amazed by how small, thoughtful changes can lead to significant improvements in student engagement. The key is to approach AI as a planning partner that helps us think more deeply about our teaching, rather than as a solution in itself.

Remember, you bring the most important element to this process: your understanding of your students and your commitment to their learning.

AI is simply a tool to help you enhance what you already do well.

In my next consultation with Jay, scheduled for November 2024, we'll be exploring how to scale these successful strategies across his grade level team. But that's a story for another book

YOUR NEXT STEP

Start small. Choose one activity you'd like to enhance. Use the prompts provided to help you think it through differently.

Your expertise, combined with AI's ability to help us think differently about challenges, creates powerful opportunities for enhanced teaching and learning.

**The journey begins with a single question:
How can you create space for your own
intellectual and creative growth within the
demands of teaching?**



Click or scan



4

If you could implement one change to help shape the future of education, what would it be?

To integrate multiple subjects and disciplines into their learning experience. It will enable students develop a deeper understanding of real-world applications and connections.



Princess Nnenna Joy
University of Porthacourt
Nigeria

If I could implement one change to shape the future of education, it would be to prioritize personalized learning that adapts to each student's strengths, needs, and interests. This approach would embrace diverse learning styles and give students the opportunity to progress at their own pace, making learning more engaging and relevant.



Aiman Qamar
Bahria University
Pakistan

Be sure that teachers are strictly apolitical and present facts without bias or political rhetoric.



Björn Robertson
Royal International
Bilingual School
Vietnam

The proposed algorithm focuses on prioritizing emotional and psychological well-being in education through technology. By analyzing behavioral patterns, engagement levels, and language in assignments or discussions, it can identify students who feel unsafe, unheard, or demotivated. This proactive approach enables teachers and counselors to intervene early, offering targeted support to create a more supportive and responsive learning environment where every student can thrive.



Judy-Ann Green
The United Kingdom

* Summarized response

If given the choice, I would raise parents' awareness about the importance of education. This is because, in the area where I live, parents do not fully understand the essence of this.



Pham Thi Doan Trang
Dream Foreign
Language Center
Vietnam

The proposed change is to prioritize critical thinking and problem-solving in curricula over rote memorization. Integrating these skills across all subjects would equip students to tackle complex problems, analyze information critically, and think creatively. This approach prepares students for an evolving job market that values adaptability, innovation, and analytical thinking, while fostering lifelong learning, curiosity, resilience, and effective challenge navigation.



Teresa Bestwick
The TEFL Development Hub
Spain

* Summarized response



TEACHER-AI SYMBIOSIS

Redefining Educator Roles in an AI-Enhanced Classroom

Nick McIntosh

Imagine walking into your classroom where AI helps plan your lessons, grades assignments, and tracks student progress—all while you focus on what matters most: connecting with your students.

This isn't science fiction. It's happening now.

This is no longer the future; tools like Anthropic's Claude Computer Use Beta are here. If ChatGPT brought AI into the education conversation, advanced models like Claude are completely rewriting that conversation. We're potentially witnessing education's next major transformation, one that could fundamentally reshape how we teach and learn.

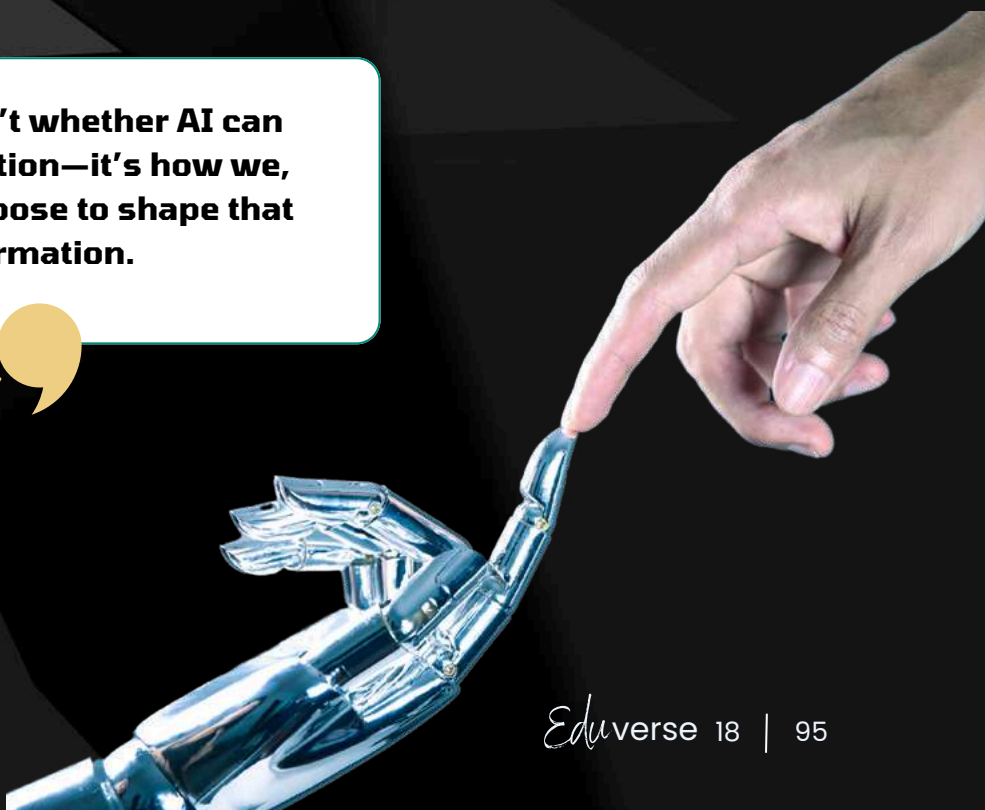
As Google's Eric Schmidt predicts, AI is on the cusp of transforming the world at an unprecedented scale. In 2023, Sal Khan called it "the biggest positive transformation that education has ever seen". After two years at the forefront of this transformation—leading RMIT's AI Community of Practice, speaking at international conferences, delivering keynotes and sector-wide training to everyone from educators to executives, and authoring white papers on AI integration—I've seen both perspectives play out.

While Khan's enthusiasm reflects AI's tremendous potential, his evolving perspective reminds us of the need to balance optimism with practicality. Indeed, Gartner's concept of the "**trough of disillusionment**" also serves as a reminder that the path forward isn't always smooth. For every leap forward, there's a challenge to figure out how we integrate these tools meaningfully into what we do. The question isn't whether AI can transform education—it's how we, as educators, choose to shape that transformation.

This is where the teaching evolves. We're becoming what Carlo Iacono (Charles Sturt University) calls "**cognitive orchestrators**" or "**cognitive choreographers**" guiding both human and machine intelligence to serve our students, not overwhelm them. It's not about replacement—it's about amplifying what makes teaching profoundly human.



The question isn't whether AI can transform education—it's how we, as educators, choose to shape that transformation.





THE NEW REALITY OF AI IN EDUCATION



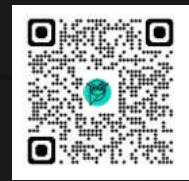
AI has evolved beyond simple chatbots into systems capable of acting independently on complex educational tasks. Wharton's Ethan Mollick calls this **"a huge shift in AI use"** to semi-agentic AI—systems that can accomplish user-defined goals like creating visualisations, operating software, and compiling lesson plans.

But as Mollick notes, these AI "agents" are like clumsy interns requiring guidance. For educators, this means orchestrating AI effectively, using its strengths while navigating its limitations. The challenge

Real impact in real classrooms

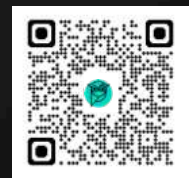
Real-world trials are already showcasing AI's potential in education. In Australia, the **NSWEduChat** pilot has shown how AI tools encourage critical thinking, helping students develop deeper understanding while reducing teacher workloads. Early results point to improved learning outcomes, increased student confidence, and more time for teaching.

A Harvard study on AI tutors found that students using AI learned twice as much content in half the time compared to active learning classrooms, with higher engagement and motivation. These examples highlight AI's ability to enhance traditional teaching through personalised, scalable support—amplifying, not replacing, the human connection in education.



Rethinking assessment

While these early results are promising, the shift becomes more complex as AI tools begin to influence assessment itself. The idea of "non-AI" assessments is fading fast in a world where AI can be both a tool for students and a system for grading. **Leon Furze (Deakin)'s experiment** on AI grading biases underscores the challenges this creates. By submitting identical essays under different names—like "Ash Jones" and "Fei-fei Quifan"—Furze revealed significant discrepancies in the grades awarded, driven purely by perceived identity. AI is reshaping assessments, making "non-AI" approaches obsolete.



The critical shift

For teachers, these advancements aren't just about new tools; they're about rethinking fundamental approaches to education. Dylan William (UCL) highlights a critical shift: if AI can match students' abilities in writing essays or solving problems, education must pivot to teaching skills like critical thinking and ethical reasoning—areas where AI cannot compete.

AI puts education at a crossroads, forcing us to rethink what and how we teach.



THE EMERGING EDUCATOR–AI PARTNERSHIP

AI tools like NSWeduChat and frameworks such as the Australian National AI Centre's Impact Navigator are transforming education through automation of routine tasks. The Navigator's "Plan, Act, Adapt" cycle ensures these initiatives deliver tangible outcomes while protecting student rights and academic integrity. This iterative approach allows institutions to experiment thoughtfully, learn from implementation, and adjust their strategies based on real outcomes.

Yet AI cannot replace the human essence of teaching. As Jason Lodge (University of Queensland) notes, while students rely on AI for "cognitive heavy lifting," they turn to teachers for emotional support and contextual understanding. These interpersonal connections remain irreplaceable. Teachers provide the empathy, creativity, and ethical grounding that no machine can replicate, ensuring fairness and accountability in how AI tools are applied.



FROM TOOLS TO SYSTEMATIC CHANGE

Beth McMurtie (the Chronicle of Higher Education)'s observation of educators either "riding the wave or drowning" in AI highlights a critical challenge: how do we move from individual tools to systemic transformation? Danny Liu (the University of Sydney)'s CRAFT framework—Culture, Rules, Access, Familiarity, Trust—provides a fantastic roadmap. By fostering supportive culture, establishing clear rules, and ensuring equitable access, CRAFT creates the conditions for sustainable AI integration that enhances rather than disrupts existing practices.

Real-world success stories show this framework in action. The RMIT AI Community of Practice, with over 500 members across disciplines, drives shared learning through showcases and workshops. Monash University's 10-minute Generative AI chats provide a low-pressure model for faculty engagement. Both initiatives mirror CRAFT principles by promoting familiarity and cultivating openness. The Oxford AI Maturity Index reinforces this approach, highlighting how "AI champions" within organisations drive innovation while mentoring colleagues.

AI-enhanced systemic approaches

Integrating AI into education isn't just about adding new tools—it's about fostering systemic change that ensures AI is integrated thoughtfully, equitably, and effectively. The CRAFT framework provides a roadmap for systemic AI adoption in education. Fostering a supportive culture, establishing clear rules, and ensuring equitable access, CRAFT aligns with Fullan's principles of institutional change, creating the conditions needed for sustainable integration of AI technologies.

By framing AI adoption as a systemic transformation, CRAFT goes beyond task-oriented workflows to address the deeper structural and cultural shifts required for sustainable integration. It equips institutions to balance innovation with responsibility, ensuring that AI enhances, rather than disrupts, existing educational practices.

This systemic approach to upskilling goes beyond technical training—it reaffirms the educator's central role. Combining CRAFT with professional development and collaborative communities helps institutions create an ecosystem where AI complements teaching without compromising integrity. The result? Enhanced impact for educators and enriched experiences for students.

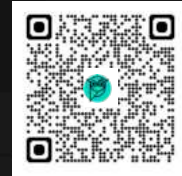


PREPARING FOR TOMORROW'S CHALLENGES

As AI continues to evolve, the demands on educators are shifting. Preparing for tomorrow's challenges isn't just about adopting new technologies—it's about equipping both educators and students with the skills and mindsets needed to thrive in an AI-enhanced world.

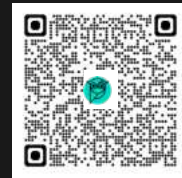
Key skills for educators

Educators must develop AI literacy to confidently integrate tools like ChatGPT into their workflows and critically evaluate frameworks such as the AI Impact Navigator. This means understanding not just how to use AI tools, but when and why to use them. By building **"AI-first habits"** (Allie K Miller - Amazon) questioning AI outputs critically, and assessing technologies for alignment with educational goals, teachers can ensure responsible and effective adoption.



Supporting students in an AI world

Danny Liu's triad—**Stuff, Skills, Soul**—highlights the need to balance technical proficiency with deeper human qualities. The 'Stuff' represents technical knowledge, 'Skills' encompass critical thinking and digital literacy, while 'Soul' captures the human elements like curiosity and compassion. While AI can handle technical tasks, fostering these uniquely human attributes prepares students to navigate an AI-driven future with confidence and purpose.



Educators play a pivotal role in fostering these qualities. By designing learning experiences that challenge students to think critically, reflect deeply, and engage ethically with technology, teachers prepare them for the complexities of an AI-driven future. Whether it's discussing the ethical implications of AI or encouraging creativity in problem-solving, these approaches ensure that students are not only prepared for the jobs of tomorrow but are also equipped to navigate the broader challenges of an AI-enhanced world.



The future of education lies in a symbiotic relationship between teachers and AI. Rather than replacing educators, AI tools act as powerful cognitive amplifiers, a term coined by Carlo Jacono to describe the transformative potential of humans and AI working together. Initiatives like NSWeduChat demonstrate how this partnership can amplify teaching impact, improving learning outcomes while reducing workloads. These examples show that when AI is used thoughtfully, it enhances the human elements of education—creativity, empathy, and ethical guidance—rather than diminishing them.

The transformation of education through AI isn't a question of if, but when and how. This presents three immediate opportunities for educators:

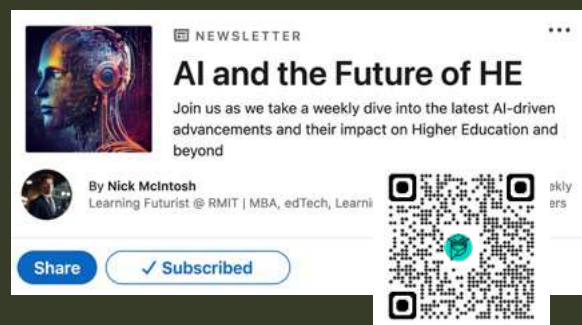
- **Start Small:** Choose one routine task – lesson planning, assessment feedback, or progress tracking – and experiment with AI assistance.
- **Build Community:** Connect with colleagues exploring AI. Whether through structured communities like RMIT's AI CoP or informal discussions, shared learning accelerates innovation.
- **Shape the Future:** Document your experiences, share your insights, and actively participate in your institution's AI policy discussions. Your voice matters in determining how these tools serve education.



The wave of AI transformation is here. We can either ride it or be swept along by it. The choice - and the opportunity - is ours to seize.



Nick McIntosh is the Learning Futurist at RMIT University Vietnam and author of the **"AI and the Future of HE" newsletter**. Exploring cutting-edge Higher Education technology – from AI and Learning Analytics to extended realities. Track record of scaling innovative learning solutions that boost student engagement. Skilled at implementing emerging technologies through pilots and staff development programmes. Current focus on immersive learning experiences and shaping human-centric education futures.



Shaping the Future of Learning: The Role of AI in Education 4.0

The advent of Education 4.0, driven by rapid technological advancements, presents both immense opportunities and critical challenges for global education systems. Amidst these shifts, artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force with the potential to benefit educators, students, and administrators alike.

The World Economic Forum's report *Shaping the Future of Learning: The Role of AI in Education 4.0* explores how AI can reshape education by personalizing learning experiences, automating routine administrative tasks, and embedding itself into curricula to enhance educational outcomes.

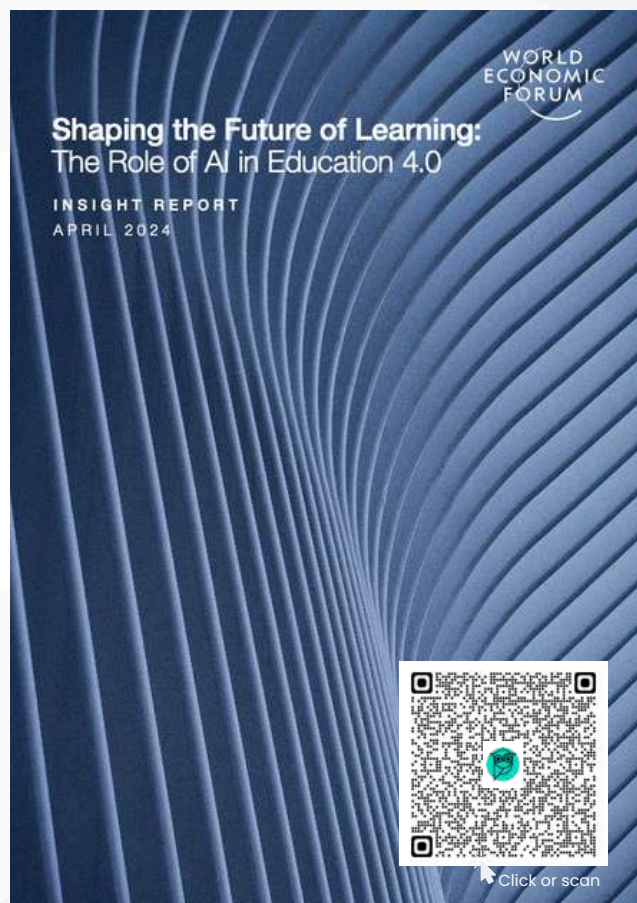
The report also underscores the need to address pressing concerns around data privacy, ethical deployment, and equitable access to ensure no learner or educator is left behind.

Structured into three key sections

- Global education systems at a crossroads
- Potential of AI in enabling Education 4.0
- Emerging examples of how AI is advancing Education 4.0

this report serves as a call to action for all stakeholders to harness AI's potential responsibly and collaboratively, ensuring its integration into education systems fosters innovation, inclusivity, and improved outcomes for future generations.

In this special edition of the **EduVerse Newsletter**, focused on *Neo-Mindsets for Tomorrow's Education*, we are excited to present the World Economic Forum's enlightening report, *Shaping the Future of Learning: The Role of AI in Education 4.0*. We hope this will inspire you to prepare both yourself and your students for the future of teaching and learning.



If deployed well, AI
can help unlock
solutions for
improving global
education systems.

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Welcome to our monthly **Classroom Techniques** column, where you can find practical teaching techniques that can be implemented in your classroom right away. Whether you're a seasoned professional or a new teacher full of enthusiasm, this column is designed to supply you with new ideas every month to improve your classroom performance.

Low-Prep ESL Holiday Activities for the classroom

The holiday season is upon us, and it's time to spread some cheer! Why not bring the festive spirit into your classroom? Whether you're celebrating Christmas, Lunar New Year, or any other holiday, these low-prep and engaging activities will transform your classroom into a holiday wonderland.

1 DRAW AN IDIOM

Skills



Give students a holiday-related idiom and have them draw a picture of it. Then, have them share their drawings and elicit possible meanings. Finish by giving them the actual meaning and several example sentences to write in their notebooks. Alternatively, you can have each student draw a different idiom.

deck the halls

Eat, drink, and be merry

Good things come in small packages

2 RUNNING DICTATION

Skills



Prepare a conversation, poem, or song, and write each sentence on separate strips of paper. Place the papers around the classroom. Divide students into pairs: one is the reader, the other the writer. The reader walks to a paper, reads it, and tells the writer, who writes it down. The reader can go back to a single paper as many times as required. Continue until they've collected all the sentences. Then, they put the sentences in the correct order, and the teacher checks for accuracy.

3 ONLY 1 QUESTION

Skills



Give students a topic and have each pair make one interesting question about it. Give them examples of interesting versus boring questions. Circulate around the class to prevent duplicate questions. Each pair talks to 10+ students, using the same question. They quickly write down answers with 1-2 words. Students tabulate the results and report them to another pair (or the entire class if fewer than 10 students).

4

120-90-60 FLUENCY ACTIVITY

Skills  

Favourite and least favourite thing about Christmas

Their perfect Thanksgiving dinner.

Give students a holiday topic they know well and some time to prepare a short speech. Pair them up and have each student give a two-minute speech. The listener should ask a follow-up question. Switch roles. In the next round, reduce the speech time to 90 seconds, then 60 seconds.

5

INNER-OUTER CIRCLE HOLIDAY SHARING

Skills  

Begin by sharing a fact about yourself. For example, "I like to dress up for Halloween." Any student in the class who also enjoys dressing up should stand (or raise their hands) and say, "Me, too!" Form students into two concentric circles, with one circle larger than the other. Have students in the inner circle face outward, towards the students in the outer circle. Have each student in the inner circle share one fact about themselves. Then, have students in both circles move one position to the left or right to talk to a new partner.

6

LAST PERSON STANDING

Skills  

Have the students stand up in a circle. Clap your hands in a 1-2-3 rhythm and say a word related to the holiday. Continue the 1-2-3 rhythm and have the next person in the circle say a different word related to the topic. If a student repeats a word or can't think of one, they must sit down. The game continues with the remaining players until only one person is standing. This game is suitable for small classes or for quick reviews or lead-ins.

7

2 TRUTHS AND A LIE CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

Skills   

A fun way to talk about Christmas traditions around the world is to assign each pair or small group a different country. They can use their phones to do a bit of research about Christmas traditions in that country. Then, they have to write down three traditions. 2 are true and they can make up a false one. The goal is to fool their classmates! Go around the class and each group can share their three statements, while the other students guess which one is false.

8

FESTIVE STORY STARTERS

Skills   

Divide the class into pairs and provide a simple story starter, such as "On the night before the holiday, something magical happened..." Each pair will take turns continuing the story within a set time limit. After their time is up, they pass their paper to the next pair, who will continue the narrative. Repeat until all pairs have contributed, creating a collaborative and imaginative story!



FUTURE-READY LEARNERS

BRIDGING LANGUAGE, LITERACY, AND LIFE COMPETENCIES

Format

In the format of an education camp, ELT Camp 2024 centers around 1 specific theme of Future-Ready Learners, starting with a keynote about the theme, followed by 2 camps with 2 specific topics related to the theme.

1



Keynote speech

2



Camps

2



1:1 Talks with experts



On **November 30, 2024**, ELT.Camp lit up vibrant Ho Chi Minh City in collaboration with Scholastic and EduVerse! After our journey to Can Tho City, this year's camp united educators to champion inclusivity and equity in education.

ELT.Camp 2024 highlighted the power of integrating language and literacy with life skills like communication, collaboration, resilience, and emotional intelligence—equipping English learners for success in today's dynamic world. Here's to fostering well-rounded learners!

NOVEMBER
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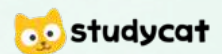


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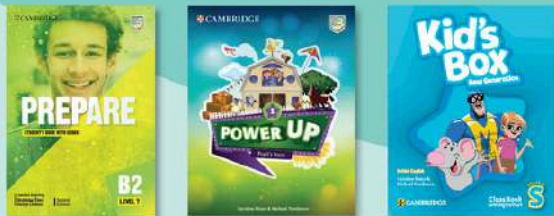
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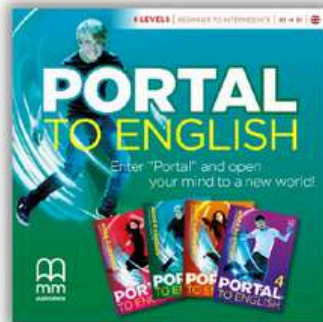
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MS. MANJULA DEVI PILLAI

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Manjula Devi Pillai is an esteemed educator and ardent trainer, renowned for her transformative contributions in India and Myanmar, now ambitiously extending her influence across Asia. Celebrated with prestigious accolades such as the Best Teacher and Best Leader awards, her commitment and impact are evident. With over two decades of multifaceted experience encompassing NBFCs, Banks, Corporate, and the educational sector, she has excelled as a national leader. Her decade-long tenure in educational leadership is distinguished by pioneering methodologies and successful reforms. She is dedicated to enriching educational experiences and cultivating environments where both students and educators flourish. Her work seamlessly integrates pragmatic insights from her corporate background, ensuring a comprehensive educational approach. As she broadens her initiatives throughout Asia, she is focused on crafting global opportunities and fostering future leaders.

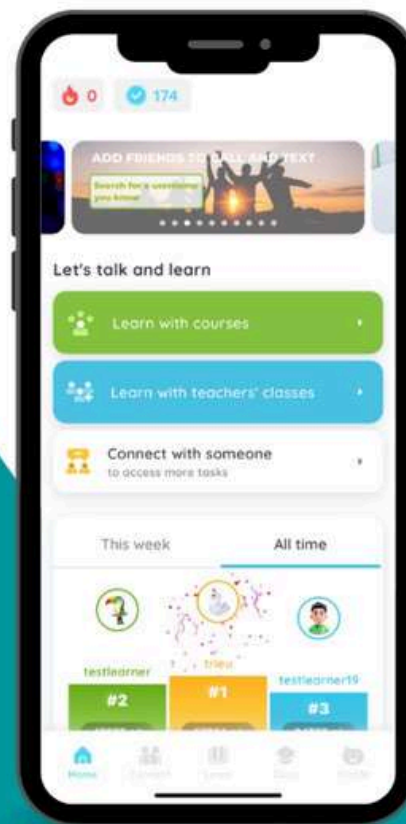
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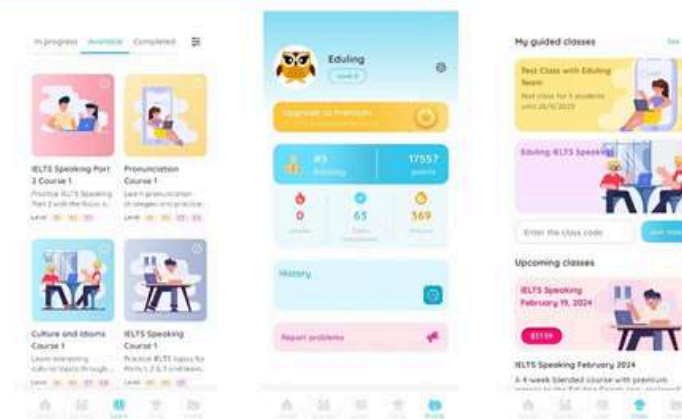
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