



TRENDS

VOLUME III

GLOBAL SIGNALS
& THE FUTURE
OF EDUCATION

 edufuturists®

2024 / 2025



EDUFUTURISTS TRENDS 2025 GLOBAL SIGNALS & THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION

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WELCOME TO THE PACK



We want to get one thing straight from the off - you're not just reading another educational pamphlet. You're holding a manifesto for change, a battle cry for everyone who's had enough of education's broken promises and empty buzzwords.

Thank you for being here. Thank you for giving a damn when it would be easier to just tick boxes and keep your head down. Thank you for joining our Wolfpack - a community of educators, leaders, and rebels who refuse to accept that "this is just how things are."

We've spent countless hours researching, interviewing, and occasionally arguing about what the future of education really looks like. Not the sanitised version that looks good in policy documents, but the messy, brilliant, human reality of learning that actually transforms lives.

This booklet isn't just about trends - it's about revolution. It's about tearing down factory-model education and building something that actually prepares our kids for the world they're inheriting. It's about putting purpose back at the heart of everything we do.

We're about to challenge everything we thought we knew about education. Ready to run with the pack?

Let's make some freakin' noise.

Much love,

Ben & Steve

WHAT'S INSIDE

TRENDS / 04

The old education playbook's knackered, but we're not just moaning about it - we're rewriting the thing along with a powerful pack of pioneers who are brave enough to stand for something. Four seismic shifts have emerged as we doing this: **Considered Disruption** means using tech beyond the shiny new toy obsession. **Agency with Guardrails** is about handing over the reins without losing the plot. **Assessing Beyond Grades** ditches the numbers game for what actually matters. **Redefining Purpose** swaps monoculture thinking for rainforest diversity. These aren't trendy tokenistics - they're the foundation stones of education's future. The system isn't broken but it's not fit for purpose. It won't right itself. It's time to get our hands dirty and build something better.

If we're going to prepare young people to become learners and leaders in a digital world, we have to do more than teach them how to put their phones in a pouch. Becoming a healthy digital citizen isn't just about managing device access, but teaching digital habits that spark curiosity, create community and solve problems.

Richard Culatta
CEO, ISTE

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ASSESSING BEYOND GRADES - P11
AGENCY WITH GUARDRAILS - P18
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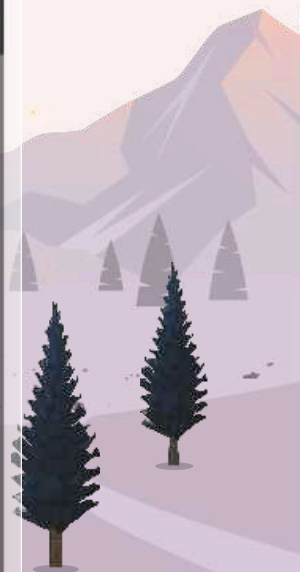
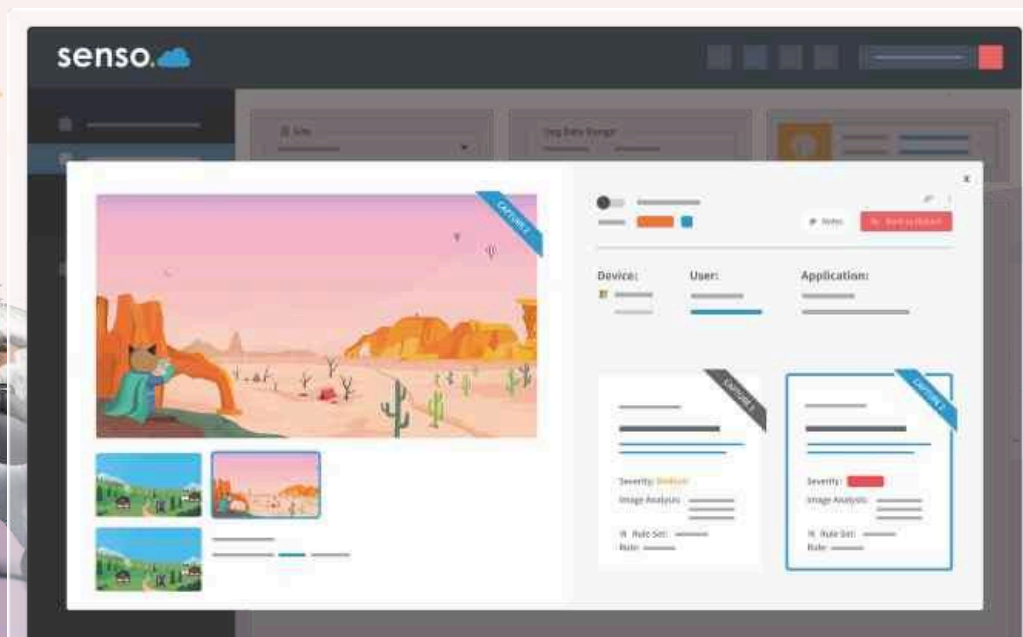


Support. Manage. Safeguard

Senso.cloud is Renato Software's comprehensive solution for classroom management, IT support, and safeguarding. While we provide essential tools to support teachers and tech teams, our primary mission is protecting student safety and wellbeing.

Our safeguarding software detects and reports **safeguarding risks** by monitoring students' keystrokes and alerting schools when children type keywords that signal potential harms (**relating to, for example, suicide, bullying, extremism, grooming**).

We're committed to providing the most linguistically accurate safeguarding solution available. Senso.cloud is designed to minimise missed risks and reduce false positives, saving schools time and helping to keep students as safe as possible.



Rewrite the Rules

OUR 2025 MANTRA

The rulebook for education was written by people who never had to live by it. Victorian values, industrial efficiency, and bureaucratic control - it's a greatest hits collection of outdated thinking. We've been following these rules so long we've forgotten they were made up by humans, which means humans can unmake them.

Most schools operate under the same tired assumptions. Learning happens in age-based groups. Knowledge comes in subject silos. Progress gets measured by test scores. Teachers deliver, students receive. Bells ring, bodies move. It's all so predictable, so mechanical, so mind-numbingly dull that we've convinced ourselves it's natural law.

But rules aren't physics. They're choices. And the choices we've made are strangling the life out of learning.

The current rules were designed for a world that doesn't exist anymore. They assume scarcity - limited books, limited teachers, limited information. They assume predictability - standardised jobs, linear careers, stable communities. They assume compliance - workers who follow orders, citizens who don't ask awkward questions.

None of that holds true today.

Information is infinite.

Careers are chaotic.

The future demands creative problem-solvers, not obedient rule-followers.



Yet we're still running schools like yonder year factories, churning out conformist widgets for an assembly line that was dismantled decades ago.

Rewriting the rules means questioning everything. Why do we group kids by birth year instead of interest or ability? Why do we pretend subjects exist in isolation when real problems are interdisciplinary? Why do we measure learning with tests that don't replicate what actually happens outside our echo chamber?

It means abandoning the fiction that one size fits all. Some students thrive in chaos; others need structure. Some learn by doing; others by reflecting. Some bloom early; others are late starters. The current rules flatten all this beautiful complexity into grey uniformity.

The new rules should be written by those who actually understand learning - teachers who see kids grow, students who experience the system daily, researchers who study how minds develop. Not politicians chasing headlines or bureaucrats protecting budgets.

Rules should enable, not constrain. They should create space for innovation, not strangle it. They should celebrate diversity, not enforce conformity. They should serve learning, not the other way around.

Technology has made information abundant. Globalisation has made the world interconnected. Social change has made diversity valuable. We can either cling to the crumbling pages or write something new.

Time to pick up the pen. The blank page is waiting, and the future won't write itself.



We are grateful to FutureSource Consulting for the partnership in helping provide research and statistics to support this publication and the continued work that Edufuturists are doing to push the envelope in education.

CONSIDERED DISRUPTION

The education technology industry has sold us a beautiful lie. They've convinced schools that digital transformation means buying more devices, installing more software, and digitising everything that moves. It's bollocks, and it's time we called it out. (Ok, maybe not the entire edtech industry...)

Walk into most 'digitally transformed' classrooms and what do you see? Kids staring at screens doing exactly what they used to do with pencils and paper. We've swapped worksheets for digital worksheets, textbooks for e-textbooks, and called it progress. It's like putting racing stripes on a horse and expecting it to win at Silverstone.

True considered disruption isn't about the technology at all. It's about fundamentally rethinking how learning happens when you have the most powerful tools in human history at your disposal. The question isn't "how do we use this iPad?" but "how does this change everything about what we thought was possible?"

Schools have become obsessed with the shiny. New interactive whiteboard? Revolutionary! Tablets for everyone? Transformational! Virtual reality headsets? Game-changing! But behind all the marketing glitter, we're still running the same tired show. Students still sit in rows, absorb information passively, and regurgitate it on command. The delivery method has changed; the fundamental approach hasn't budged an inch.

THERE ARE NO JOBS FOR LIFE ANYMORE. WE NEED TO PREPARE LEARNERS FOR A WORLD WHERE THEY'LL NEED TO KEEP LEARNING AND ADAPTING. THAT'S WHY LIFELONG LEARNING AND THINGS LIKE MICROCREDENTIALS ARE SO IMPORTANT.

EDUFUTURISTS #266
THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION
WEAK SIGNALS FOR
WHAT'S COMING

83% OF COMPANIES
CLAIM THAT AI IS A
TOP PRIORITY IN
THEIR BUSINESS
PLANS. (FORBES)



Meanwhile, the rest of the world has moved on. Netflix doesn't just put television shows on the internet; it completely reimagines how we consume entertainment. Uber didn't just digitise taxi booking; it revolutionised urban transport. Yet education technology companies seem content to create digital carbon copies of analogue failures.

Real disruption starts with admitting that our current model isn't fit for purpose. We're preparing students for a world that no longer exists using methods designed for a different century. The industrial model of education - batch processing, standardisation, efficiency over effectiveness - makes no sense in an age of personalisation and infinite possibility.

WHEN AI IS USED
THOUGHTFULLY, IT
BECOMES A SCAFFOLD
FOR INDEPENDENCE —
HELPING LEARNERS TAKE
OWNERSHIP OF THEIR
GROWTH WHILE
PROVIDING THE SAFETY
NET NEEDED TO EXPLORE,
FAIL, AND SUCCEED WITH
CONFIDENCE.

STEPHANIE HOLT
BELGRAVIA EDUCATION

THE PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS
WHO HAD USED GENERATIVE AI
INCREASED FROM 3 IN 10 (**31.0%**)
IN 2023 TO 1 IN 2 (**47.7%**) IN 2024.
MORE THAN TWICE AS MANY
SECONDARY AS PRIMARY TEACHERS
REPORTED USING IT IN 2024
(**56.8% VS 30.9%**). (NATIONAL LITERACY TRUST)

It's worth considering what technology actually enables. Adaptive learning systems that respond to individual student needs in real-time. Global collaboration projects that connect classrooms across continents. AI tutors available 24/7 to provide personalised support. Immersive experiences that let students walk through ancient Rome or manipulate molecular structures. These aren't futuristic fantasies; they're available right now.

But we're not all using them properly because we're trapped in old thinking. We take revolutionary tools and force them into yesterday's framework. It's like using a smartphone as a very expensive paperweight or just to do sums on the Calculator app.

DISRUPTION CONSIDERED

The problem runs deeper than just poor implementation. Most education leaders don't understand what digital transformation actually means. They think it's about having enough bandwidth and buying the right products. They measure success by device-to-student ratios and software licenses purchased.

Considered disruption demands we start with learning, not technology. What do students actually need to thrive in an unpredictable future? How can technology amplify human capabilities rather than replace them? What becomes possible when we stop trying to scale the industrial model and start creating something entirely new?

**86% OF UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS CLAIM TO USE
AI IN THEIR STUDIES
(CAMPUS)**

**THE GLOBAL AI IN
EDUCATION MARKET
IS ESTIMATED TO REACH
\$6 BILLION IN 2025
(HEPI)**

The answers aren't found in vendor presentations or education technology conferences. They're discovered in classrooms where teachers are brave enough to experiment, fail, learn, and try again. Where technology serves pedagogy, not the other way around.

This isn't about being anti-technology or pro-tradition. It's about being thoughtful. Every piece of technology should earn its place by making learning more engaging, more personal, more powerful. If it's just digitising the status quo, bin it.

The future of education won't be built by technology companies or policy-makers. It will be created by educators who understand that true disruption isn't about the tools we use, but how we use them to unlock human potential.

Stop buying gadgets. Start reimagining learning. The difference between the two will determine whether technology saves education or simply makes our failures more expensive.

**CONSIDERED DISRUPTION ISN'T
ABOUT TEARING IT ALL DOWN OR
WAITING FOR SOME PERFECT
FUTURE PLAN TO LAND FROM
ABOVE. IT'S ABOUT MAKING
INTENTIONAL CHOICES, RIGHT
NOW, THAT REFLECT THE
RESPONSIBILITY WE CARRY.**

**MATTHEW WEMYSS
CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL OF BUCHAREST**

**CONSIDERED
DISRUPTION**

ASSESSING BEYOND GRADES



Schools are now accounting firms. Everything that matters gets reduced to a number, a grade, a percentile. Students become data points. Teachers become score-producers. Schools become league table entries. It's madness masquerading as measurement.

A grade tells you precisely nothing about a student's ability to think critically, solve complex problems, or work collaboratively. It doesn't capture creativity, resilience, or emotional intelligence. It can't measure curiosity, empathy, or the spark of genuine understanding. Yet we've built an entire system around these arbitrary symbols as if they hold the secrets of human potential.

The current assessment model is broken beyond repair. We will say it louder for those in the back.

62% OF PARENTS SAY TRADITIONAL ASSESSMENTS NO LONGER REFLECT STUDENTS' TRUE ABILITIES. (GOSTUDENT)

WE NEED TO RETHINK ASSESSMENT METHODS SO THAT WE'RE NOT JUST REWARDING ROTE LEARNING OR EXAM TECHNIQUE, BUT ACTUALLY RECOGNISING THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE THAT WILL SERVE STUDENTS IN THE REAL WORLD.

**EDUFUTURISTS #290:
ASKING THE AWKWARD QUESTIONS
WITH AL KINGSLEY**

It rewards memorisation over understanding, speed over depth, conformity over originality. Students learn to game the system rather than engage with learning. They cram for tests, forget everything afterwards, and we call it education. We're measuring the wrong things in the wrong ways for the wrong reasons.

Real assessment should capture the full spectrum of human capability. Can a student wrestle with ambiguous problems? Do they ask probing questions? Can they synthesise information from multiple sources? Do they persist when faced with challenges? Can they communicate their thinking clearly? None of this fits neatly into a grade book.

Portfolio-based assessment shows learning as a journey, not a destination. Students collect evidence of their growth over time - drafts that evolve, projects that deepen, reflections that mature. It's messy, complex, and utterly human. Which is exactly why it works.

Peer assessment develops critical thinking and self-awareness. When students evaluate each other's work, they learn to articulate quality, recognise excellence, and understand standards from the inside out. They become partners in learning rather than passive recipients of judgement.

Self-assessment builds metacognition - the ability to think about thinking. Students who can honestly evaluate their own progress become independent learners. They develop the internal compass needed to navigate complexity without constant external validation.

Real-world assessment connects learning to life beyond school walls. Instead of artificial test conditions, students tackle genuine problems, work with community partners, and present to authentic audiences. The stakes are real, the learning is relevant, and the feedback is immediate.

WHEN WE'RE LOOKING AT DIGITAL EXAMS, WE'RE VERY AWARE THAT ACTUALLY STUDENTS ARE PROBABLY MUCH HAPPIER TYPING IN RESPONSES OR SPEAKING IN RESPONSES OR HAVING THEMSELVES RECORDED THAN THEY ARE SITTING AND HANDWRITING. AND IN TERMS OF BIAS OR MAKING SURE THAT THINGS ARE FITTING THEIR NEEDS, WE'RE VERY AWARE THAT THERE'S PROBABLY OTHER WAYS TO DO IT. SO, IT'S DEFINITELY SOMETHING THAT AGA IS LOOKING INTO.

**EDUFUTURISTS #268:
ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING
WITH LOUISE ATTWOOD**

The obsession with grades has corrupted learning itself. Students ask "will this be on the exam?" instead of "why does this matter?" Teachers teach to the test instead of teaching for understanding. Parents celebrate A-grades while ignoring whether their children can think independently.

Breaking free means having difficult conversations about what we really value. Do we want students who can tick boxes or solve problems? Do we prefer compliance or creativity? Are we preparing them for tests or for life?

Assessment should illuminate understanding, not obscure it. It should motivate learning, not kill curiosity. It should celebrate growth, not punish struggle. It should recognise that every learner brings unique strengths that can't be captured by a single metric.

The numbers game has had its day. Time to start measuring what matters and valuing what we measure. Real learning deserves better than grades.

IN 2025, THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN WITH SEND IN ENGLAND IS PROJECTED TO BE 18.4%, WITH 1,673,205 CHILDREN IDENTIFIED AS HAVING SOME KIND OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEED (NASEN)

175,898 PUPILS AGED 16 FAILED TO ACHIEVE A GRADE 4 GCSE MATHS IN SCHOOL THIS YEAR AND FOR ENGLISH, THE DATA SHOWS 181,682, WHICH IS c.40% OF ALL STUDENTS TAKING THE EXAMS (FE WEEK)

84% OF UK TEACHERS SUPPORT SIMULATION-BASED EXAMS (GOSTUDENT)

ARE THERE OTHER WAYS WE CAN MEASURE? CAN WE MEASURE MOTIVATION, ENGAGEMENT, OR PERSISTENCE? ARE STUDENTS PERSISTING? ARE THEY ENGAGING, CONTINUING TO ENGAGE? EVEN IF IT DOESN'T SHOW UP AS A GRADE LETTER CHANGE, IT'S REALLY SAYING STUDENTS ARE LEARNING AND THEY'RE MOTIVATED TO STAY. BY THE END OF IT, WHO'S LOOKING AT MY GRADES TODAY? IT'S REALLY THAT I AM APPLYING THOSE THINGS AND I'M BRINGING THAT MINDSET.

EDUFUTURISTS #282
EQUITY CENTRED DESIGN
WITH SL RAO

UPRISING

ACCESSIBILITY CHAMPION

Robert Bell
Sonia Blandford
Stephen Logan
Corianne Gjertsen

EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

Oli McVeigh
Kirsty Rogers
Poppy LeMar

MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST OF THE YEAR

Epping Forest Schools
Chiltern Learning Trust
Shireland Collegiate Academy
Woodland Academy Trust

UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR

University of York
Leeds University Business School
University of Oxford
University of Sheffield (AMRC)

SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPION

Preeti Mahajan
Richard Dunne
Dr Leigh Hoath
Carley Sefton

MOST INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL PROJECT

Design4SDGs
British Esports Federation
Recess
GM Colleges FE Innovation Programme

EDUCATIONAL LEADER OF THE YEAR

Cheri Ashby
Luke Ramsden
Hugh Viney
Rachel Tomlinson

AI PIONEER

Chris Goodall
Kirsty Ingleson
Danny Mirza

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL OF THE YEAR

Rossall School
Millfield School
RGS Worcester
Cottesmore School

edufuturists® WINNING '25

PRIMARY SCHOOL OF THE YEAR

St Paul's Catholic, Portsmouth
Stansfield Hall CofE, Rochdale
Whitefield Primary, Liverpool
St Peter's CE, Farnworth

SECONDARY SCHOOL OF THE YEAR

Minerva's Virtual Academy
Shireland CBSO Academy
Burnage Academy for Boys
XP School, Doncaster

COLLEGE OF THE YEAR

City of Portsmouth College
Barton Peveril Sixth Form
Bradford College
Nottingham College

WELLBEING CHAMPION

Claire Marie Tamplin
Kelly Hannaghan
Louisa Rose
Charley Burley

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION CHAMPION

Aaron Saxton
The Greenhouse Hyflex Curriculum
Andy Griffith & Matt Bromley
Sarah Wordlaw

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT CHAMPION

Sophie Kelleher
UA92 Disruptive Learning
Clare McGrath
Danny Mirza

ONLINE SCHOOL OF THE YEAR

Dreamtime Learning
Sophia High School
Kings Interhigh
Minerva's Virtual School

OUTSTANDING IT PROFESSIONAL

Ollie Barnes
Charlie Davis
Luke Vere
Gary Henderson

EDUFUTURIST OF THE YEAR

Melissa McBride
Scott Hayden
Fiona Aubrey-Smith
Chris Reddy



UPRISING JUDGES

THANK YOU TO THIS POWERHOUSE
PANEL WHO SPENT HOURS REVIEWING
EVERY ENTRY TO MAKE THE INCREDIBLY
TOUGH DECISIONS THIS YEAR.



**ALAN
TANG**



**BOB
HARRISON**



**CAROLYN
HILLARIOUS**



**DAN
FITZPATRICK**



**DAVE
LEONARD**



**LAWRENCE
TIJJANI**



**NAOMI
TOLAND**



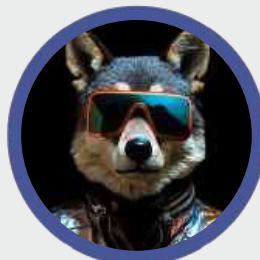
**PADDY
MCGRATH**



**SAMMY
WHITE**



**TARA
JONES**



PUBLIC VOTE

**A RECORD
30236
VOTES**

THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS



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xentra

Association of
Network Managers
in Education
anme

Six
Connections

SKOLON

Let's Thrive

canopy

Canva

STOP
PRESS

Teesside
University

AGENCY WITH GUARDRAILS



We've got this backwards. Education treats students like passengers on a bus when they should be learning to drive. We plan their route, control their speed, and tell them when to get off. Then we wonder why they can't navigate independently when they reach the real world.

The fear is understandable. Give students too much freedom and chaos ensues. Give teachers too much autonomy and standards slip. But the alternative - micromanaging every moment of learning - produces compliant robots, not independent thinkers. We need a third way: agency with guardrails.

It is like teaching someone to drive. You don't keep them in the passenger seat forever, but you don't chuck them the keys and wave goodbye either. You start with dual controls, clear boundaries, and gradually hand over responsibility as confidence builds. Education needs the same approach.

Students arrive at our schools with curiosity burning bright. They ask endless questions, experiment constantly, and learn at breakneck speed. Then we sit them in rows, tell them to be quiet, and wonder why that spark dims. We've confused structure with suffocation, guidance with control.

IN 2006 THE LATE SIR KEN ROBINSON ASKED IF SCHOOLS ARE KILLING CREATIVITY. TWO DECADES LATER AND THE QUESTION HAS BECOME MORE OF A FACTUAL STATEMENT. WE AREN'T JUST NIPPING IT IN THE BUD EITHER, WE ARE ACTIVELY SUPPRESSING IT AT THE YOUNGEST OF AGES, BEFORE EVENTUALLY THE SPARK DIES OUT AND THE LEARNER FALLS IN LINE WITH THE FACTORY MODEL.

TOM WEBB - SKOLON

Real agency means students have genuine choices about what they learn, how they learn it, and how they demonstrate their understanding. Not the fake choices we currently offer - "would you like to write about Shakespeare or Dickens?" - but meaningful decisions that reflect their interests, strengths, and goals.

But agency without guardrails isn't just abandonment. Students need frameworks, not freedom to flounder. They need clear expectations, regular feedback, and safety nets when they stumble. The guardrails aren't there to limit movement; they're there to prevent crashes while learners find their own path.

The same principle applies to teachers. We've professionalised teaching to death, drowning educators in policies, procedures, and prescribed practices. Every lesson must follow the approved format. Every innovation must pass through committees before seeing daylight.

77% OF PARENTS IMPOSE TIME RESTRICTIONS. NEARLY EVERY ONLINE ACTIVITY, WHETHER VIDEO VIEWING, SOCIAL MEDIA OR MESSAGING, IS MORE COMMONLY DONE WITHOUT ADULT OVERSIGHT. (FS)

GIVING STUDENTS AGENCY IS VITAL, BUT IT HAS TO COME WITH THE RIGHT SUPPORT STRUCTURES. WE NEED TO CREATE ENVIRONMENTS WHERE STUDENTS FEEL SAFE TO TAKE RISKS, TRY NEW THINGS, AND KNOW THAT THERE'S A SAFETY NET IF THEY NEED IT.

**EDUFUTURISTS #280
BETTER TOGETHER
WITH JULIA ADAMSON & MILES BERRY**

Yet we expect these same micromanaged teachers to develop independent, creative thinkers. It's like asking someone in handcuffs to teach juggling. You can't nurture agency in students while denying it to teachers.

Professional agency means trusting teachers to know their students, adapt their methods, and make decisions based on evidence and expertise. It means giving them permission to experiment, fail, and learn. But it also means providing the support structures they need to succeed.

Students need to practise making decisions before the stakes get high. They need to experience natural consequences in safe environments. They need to develop self-regulation, metacognition, and the confidence to take calculated risks. None of this happens when every choice is made for them.

The resistance comes from those who mistake compliance for competence. They see students asking questions as disruption rather than engagement. They interpret teacher adaptation as deviation rather than professionalism. They've confused uniformity with quality.

But the world doesn't want carbon copies; it wants original thinkers. Employers aren't seeking people who follow instructions blindly; they need problem-solvers who can navigate ambiguity. The future belongs to those who can think independently while working collaboratively.

Agency with guardrails means redesigning classrooms where students co-create their learning journey. Where teachers are trusted professionals, not delivery robots. Where mistakes are learning opportunities, not failures to be avoided.

Stop controlling every step. Start building the conditions where learners can thrive independently. Trust the process, support the journey, and watch as both students and teachers rediscover what education can be when human agency is unleashed.

19% OF CHILDREN SPEND MORE THAN SIX HOURS PER WEEK ON GAMING OR SOCIAL MEDIA (FS)

MORE THAN SIX TEACHING POSTS IN EVERY 1,000 WERE LEFT UNFILLED LAST YEAR (GUARDIAN)

IN THE PAST 10 YEARS, 60,000 TEACHERS QUIT IN THEIR FIRST THREE YEARS (NFER)

GIVING STUDENTS AGENCY MEANS LETTING THEM MAKE CHOICES ABOUT HOW THEY LEARN AND WHAT TOOLS THEY USE, BUT WE ALSO HAVE TO HELP THEM DEVELOP THE CRITICAL THINKING TO NAVIGATE DIGITAL SPACES SAFELY AND RESPONSIBLY.

**EDUFUTURISTS #284:
EMPOWERING STUDENTS THROUGH
TECHNOLOGY WITH TARA JONES**



JOIN THE GLOBAL REVOLUTION

PAW PRINTS NEWSLETTER

Everything ends up in our weekly Paw Prints newsletter - hitting over 3000 inboxes every Saturday morning. Straight talk about education reform without the corporate crap or bureaucratic bollocks. It's full of articles, community events, partner offers and is the first place to watch and listen to the podcast.

EDUFUTURISTS PODCAST

We are about to reach our 300th episode [emphasis] and now have listeners in 121 countries [emphasis]. Each episode digs into what's actually happening in education - the good, the bad and the downright ridiculous - and asks questions about what we can and should do differently. We talk to changemakers, challenge the system and explore what learning could look like if we binned the conveyor belt.



RETHINK PRINT



STO PPR ESS

REDEFINING PURPOSE

The system has lost its North Star. We've become so obsessed with the mechanics of schooling that we've forgotten to ask the fundamental question: what are we actually trying to achieve? Not just academically, but as human beings living together on this planet.

The answer matters more than we think. Every curriculum choice, every teaching method, every school policy flows from our understanding of purpose. Get the purpose wrong, and everything else becomes hollow performance. Get it right, and education transforms from dreary obligation into joyful discovery.

The current system operates on an industrial model - efficiency, standardisation, predictable outputs. It treats children as raw materials to be processed into economic units. Success means producing workers who fit existing systems, consumers who drive growth, and citizens who don't rock the boat.

But what if we reimaged education's purpose entirely? What if schools existed to help every child discover who they are and who they might become? What if the goal wasn't conformity but contribution - helping each person find their unique way of making the world better?



IT WILL BE COMPLICATED, WITH NO EASY ANSWERS OR SOLUTIONS TO GLOBAL CHALLENGES SUCH AS MISINFORMATION, CLIMATE CHANGE AND WHAT IT REALLY MEANS TO BE HUMAN, BUT THAT IS ALL THE MORE REASON TO GET STARTED NOW AND MAKE SURE NO-ONE IS LEFT BEHIND.

**EMMA DARCY
DENBIGH HIGH SCHOOL**

This isn't fluffy idealism; it's practical necessity. The challenges facing today's children - climate change, technological disruption, social fragmentation - won't be solved by people who learned to follow instructions. They need creative thinkers, empathetic collaborators, and courageous innovators who can imagine entirely new ways of living.

The rainforest model of education recognises that diversity creates strength. Different species thrive in different conditions, each playing a vital role in the ecosystem's health. Some children are analytical thinkers; others are intuitive feelers. Some are natural leaders; others are thoughtful followers. Some excel in structured environments; others need creative chaos.

LEARNING HAPPENS THROUGH CONVERSATION—BETWEEN STUDENTS, BETWEEN STUDENTS AND TEACHERS, AND INCREASINGLY NOW, BETWEEN STUDENTS AND AI. THE CHALLENGE IS TO MAKE THOSE CONVERSATIONS MEANINGFUL AND SUPPORTIVE OF DEEP LEARNING.

**EDUFUTURISTS #292
LEARNING AS CONVERSATION
WITH PROFESSOR MIKE SHARDLES**

Instead of forcing everyone into the same mould, rainforest education creates multiple pathways to flourishing. It asks not "are you smart?" but "how are you smart?" It celebrates the poet alongside the programmer, the entrepreneur alongside the environmentalist, the artist alongside the activist.

This means rethinking what we value. Kindness matters as much as cleverness. Wisdom trumps mere knowledge. Character development sits alongside cognitive growth. The goal isn't just to fill minds but to nourish souls.

Space over stuff.

20.0% OF PUPILS WERE PERSISTENTLY ABSENT IN 2023–24 (I.E. MISSED 10% OR MORE SESSIONS), A DECREASE COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS YEAR WHEN IT WAS 21.2%. IN 2018–19, 10.9% OF PUPILS WERE PERSISTENTLY ABSENT (GOV.UK)

ALMOST HALF (49%) OF YOUNG PEOPLE (AGED 17–23) BELIEVE THAT THEIR EDUCATION HAS NOT PREPARED THEM FOR THE WORLD OF WORK (CBI)

Real purpose in education is about preparing children for lives of meaning, not just careers of earning. It's about fostering citizens who care about their communities, not just consumers who buy products. It's about nurturing humans who ask "how can I help?" rather than just "what's in it for me?"

This vision demands courage from everyone involved. Teachers need permission to prioritise depth over coverage, connection over curriculum. Parents need to value their children's wellbeing over their grades. Society needs to celebrate multiple forms of success, not just narrow academic achievement.

The stakes couldn't be higher.

BUSINESSES FELT THAT 32% OF SCHOOL LEAVERS AND 55% OF GRADUATES AREN'T PREPARED FOR THE WORLD OF WORK (CIPD)

THREE-QUARTERS OF GEN ZS (74%) AND MILLENNIALS (77%) BELIEVE GENAI WILL IMPACT THE WAY THEY WORK WITHIN THE NEXT YEAR (DELOITTE)

Education with clear purpose becomes education with genuine power. When children understand that their learning has meaning beyond tests and grades, they engage differently. When teachers know they're nurturing human potential, they teach differently.

The monoculture model has had its day. Time to plant seeds of possibility and watch a thousand different flowers bloom.

TRYING TO GROW AND MEASURE EVERY MIND IN EXACTLY THE SAME WAY IS ABOUT AS NATURAL AS A SQUARE BANANA. WE'VE TREATED EDUCATION LIKE A MONOCULTURE FOR TOO LONG, AIMING FOR UNIFORM, PREDICTABLE OUTCOMES BECAUSE THIS MAKES FOR CONVENIENT DATA ANALYSIS. BUT TRYING TO GROW EVERY MIND IN THE SAME WAY IS UNNATURAL AND VULNERABLE. A RAINFOREST THRIVES ON DIVERSITY. EVERY PLANT AND CREATURE PLAYS A VITAL ROLE, CREATING A STRONG, INTERCONNECTED WEB.

**DAREN WHITE
LIFT SCHOOLS**

UPRISING 2026

THE FUTURE IS PICK 'N' MIX



TRENDS VOLUME III



2024 / 2025