

2023 / 2024

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GLOBAL SIGNALS & THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION



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EDUFUTURISTS TRENDS 2024

GLOBAL SIGNALS & THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION

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WHAT'S INSIDE?

Education's on a knife-edge. One wrong move and the whole thing could go off the rails. It is on a different trajectory now than ever before. The Edufuturists Wolfpack are busting their balls to build new tracks and make connections as quickly as we can, without throwing out what actually works. We're diving into the wildest ideas out there and giving the status quo a serious kick. There are weak signals we can't ignore - some of them not so weak. Let's look at some of the key trends that have emerged around four key ideas: Holistic Education, Culture AND Strategy, Lifelong Learning and Enabling Technology.

We are led to believe that the education system will continually evolve to meet the needs of learners and society. It has not. We must do more. This is a step towards more.

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HOLISTIC EDUCATION

Supercharging Humans in the AI Age

Newsflash: robots are acing our old-school tests. To survive, let alone thrive, we need to wake up to what makes us human. We need to embrace holistic education - where we're not just remembering facts, we're raising kick-ass humans ready for anything. But it's not crop cultivation that we need; it's rainforest learning.

Forget subject silos - they're as useful as a chocolate teapot in this AI age. We're talking about a learning jungle where subjects intertwine like vines, creating a canopy of knowledge that'd make even the smartest bot short-circuit. Critical thinking? Check. Netflix-worthy storytelling? You bet. Empathy that could melt the hardest heart? Absolutely.

When AI can memorise entire libraries, we're focusing on what makes us gloriously, messily human. We're not just aiming for straight A's; we're cultivating minds that swing from maths to music, from science to storytelling, spotting connections that'd make AI's head spin (if it had one).

This isn't your grandma's education, despite what the ivory towers might demand. It's a turbo-charged, bio-diverse approach that's part book-smarts, part street-smarts, and full life-smarts. We're equipping learners to surf the tsunami of change, not doggy-paddle in the kiddie pool of outdated facts.

Let's ditch the factory farming of minds and embrace the wild, wonderful world of ecosystem education. It's time to grow humans who don't just pass tests, but pass life with flying colours. Welcome to the jungle, baby.



WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

More often than not the problems we are facing are open-ended. School is spoon-feeding information and leading them blindly and then saying, "Thanks, you've asked a question but enough out of you now." What we want and need to do is create free thinking mavericks that are ready to change the world

Edufuturists #242 with Inventor Club

"It is time we pause and re-evaluate our educational priorities. We must cultivate learners who not only possess a firm grasp of facts but also demonstrate the ability to recall, understand, and apply that knowledge in meaningful ways. A solid foundation of facts remains essential for discerning truth from fiction in an era of information overload. However, we must extend beyond mere memorisation.

The World Economic Forum has consistently emphasised that uniquely human skills like critical thinking and creativity are the most prized in today's world. It's time for our educational systems to reflect this reality. By prioritising these skills, we empower our students to become innovative thinkers, problem-solvers, and active contributors to society, rather than passive consumers of information."

**Matthew Wemyss, Assistant School Director,
Cambridge School of Bucharest**



“A holistic approach to education necessarily requires educators to meet students where they are, rather than dragging them down an unfamiliar learning path. One of our most effective engagement strategies is leveraging content native to TikTok to reach students where they are. We create short, engaging videos that translate abstract academic concepts into relatable or funny scenarios. For instance, explaining friction by getting two G-Wagons to rip apart a Yellow Pages, or breaking down the Pythagorean theorem by asking how far can the Eye of Sauron see.

Our approach has captivated students and makes learning fun and memorable - and it's not just us! #Edutok is one of the most viewed hashtags with almost half a trillion views, and young educators like Big Manny are bringing the love of learning to young people - is this the future of teaching? While the educational elite ban mobile phone use and demonise tech, this approach takes an interest in preparing students for the world of tomorrow, seeks to make technology safer, and uses it to develop lifelong learners.

Engagement is more than just making learning fun and addictive - it's about making learning relevant and meaningful. Making technology taboo is to ignore the world we live in and sweep the problem under the carpet.

Using AI as a mentor that serves up pre-recorded content and activities personalised to a student's learning style, level and interests is a vision I believe in for the future of education. This approach keeps educators in the loop and opens up a world of opportunities for them to become creators specialised in engaging student-specific niches. Meanwhile, students interact with AI which learns how they learn and serves up the best content for them. This model allows educators to focus on what they love—creating learning experiences—while providing personalisation for students at scale.

By focusing on holistic education, fostering a culture of engagement, and leveraging technology as an enabler, we can create a future where education is accessible, relevant, and engaging for all learners.”

Carl Morris
Founder of The Online School





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CULTURE & STRATEGY

Culture AND Strategy - in that order

Let's face it: culture eats strategy for breakfast, lunch, and dinner (to bastardise Peter Drucker's quote). It's time we stopped paying lip service to "school culture" and started living it. By putting culture first, we're not just rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic - we're building a whole new ship.

Think about it: when was the last time a top-down mandate actually changed anything? Exactly. But a shared ethos of innovation, trust, and continuous improvement? That's the rocket fuel for real change. We're talking about creating environments where wild ideas are welcomed, failure is seen as a stepping stone, and every voice - from the head teacher to the newest student - matters.

And here's the kicker: once you've got that cultural foundation, your strategies actually stick. They're not just fancy PowerPoint presentations gathering dust in the staff room. They're living, breathing initiatives that everyone buys into because they align with the values they live every day. You build an ecosystem rather than a patchwork quilt.

This isn't just for the lucky few. We're dreaming big - a world where transformative educational cultures aren't limited by postcodes or bank balances. Online platforms are showing us the way, proving that a powerful learning culture can spread like wildfire, igniting minds across the globe.

When culture and strategy join forces, that's when the real magic happens. We need to set the education world on fire - in a good way, of course.

“

A quote we love at Springhouse School is from Rudolf Bahro: "When the forms of an old culture are dying, the new culture is created by a few people who are not afraid to be insecure."

Jenny Finn, Springhouse School, USA”

“

I think education is at an absolutely pivotal point in history with regards to our relationship with technology. The pandemic was not enough to reshape how we approach our students' engagement with the online world, but A.I. is forcing a paradigm shift. There is a real disparity between those institutions who understand the urgency and are adapting their mindset accordingly, and those who are determined to treat this latest evolution as a temporary fad. The teaching of digital character for both students and staff and the development of supportive and adaptive guardrails that allow room for innovation while also protecting the user, need to become an urgent priority.

Emma Darcy
Director of Technology for Learning
Denbigh High School”

“

For decades, we have witnessed a slow death of organisational confidence in our schools. Decisions are increasingly outsourced to policymakers, consultants, and businesses. How can schools create a culture ready for innovation? We believe that this change in culture requires an inside-out approach, one that honours and values the contributions of students, teachers, parents, and school leaders alike.

Efraim Lerner
Work Collaborative Co-Founder”

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING



“

Happiness is not as deep and as far as most people think. It's based on the narrative that you have about happiness that stops you from being happy because the 'getting' starts from the 'being'. The being is where you get the energy from, the ideas from. I always work with 3Gs. Gratitude: what am I grateful for and why. I list every night one thing, the next night read the previous night and then write another one. Growth: what area have I improved in? Measuring your growth really makes you feel good, Goals: what do I want to achieve? Growth you can measure every day and so to get to your goals, you need to go through gratitude, growth, then your goals but most people ignore gratitude and growth and they're focusing on the goal. Remember your why; fill your cup.

Episode #239
with Action Jackson

”

“

What if work was good for your health, not just something you have to recover from later? If you are part of the tribe and you're doing exactly what and behaving and producing exactly in the way that we want, then we will reward you but as soon as you feel the brunt of this system that is oppressive and is going to affect you, you are at fault. That's probably the biggest one that I see.

To have the full scope of authenticity, both internally and then externally, that's where the magic happens. If you can live this stuff externally as well as internally then you're truly living your values, which is tough to do and it takes discussion and space and modelling behaviour so I think culture needs to be top down and grassroots.

Episode #238
with Petra Velzeboer

“

Schools all over the world are failing, but not failing in the traditional sense in that they're not achieving test scores. Schools are failing because we are striving to achieve test scores as our measure of success instead of thinking that our job as educators is to develop our students as powerful learners and thinkers.

When we create schools that are cultures of thinking, they're going to do better on standardised tests as well too."

Dr Ron Ritchhart from Harvard University
on Toddle - Your Teaching Partner School
Leaders Project podcast

LIFELONG LEARNING

Levelling up without Gove

A cheeky two-fingers up to a system where we 'need' a Levelling Up Secretary. Like, what the actual hell?

Gone are the days of jobs for life.
Welcome to the era of constant reinvention.

With the pace of the world we find ourselves in, learning never stops. Microcredentials are the new currency, helping us to stay relevant in a job market that shifts like quicksand. They're flexible, stackable, and tailored to real-world needs.

But this isn't just about staying employable. It's about keeping our minds sharp and our curiosity alive. It's about embracing the joy of discovery at any age.

We need a learning ecosystem that's as dynamic as our changing world. One that turns "I don't know" into "Let's find out."

In this new game, the real winners are those who never stop growing. And let's call it out: it's not just about the community college and bog-standard night classes; technology is allowing this any place, any time model of learning. We demand on-demand.

We're not talking about dusty textbooks and monotonous lectures. We're talking about immersive experiences, peer-to-peer knowledge exchanges, and skills that actually matter in the real world. It's about hacking our own education, creating personalised learning paths that zigzag across disciplines. Let's ditch the outdated notion of 'graduating' and instead, let's commit to a lifetime of levelling up. After all, our greatest asset isn't a cap & gown photo —it's our ability to adapt, create, and reimagine ourselves. Success isn't measured by framed degrees on a wall, but by the degrees to which we can reframe our thinking.

"The illiterate of the future are not those who can't read or write but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn." Alvin Toffler



WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

“

Learning is key to life. We can learn in so many different ways, and I think a formal education of some sort is invaluable to set you up, But only if it teaches you to constantly assess and weigh up information so you can challenge, and think for yourself

Episode #238

with Petra Velzeboer

“

There's a link to be made between lifelong learning and neuroplasticity, in our ability to learn, adapt, and maintain our quality of life. As technology changes ever faster, we need not only to be able to navigate the delta, but to position ourselves as experienced captains.

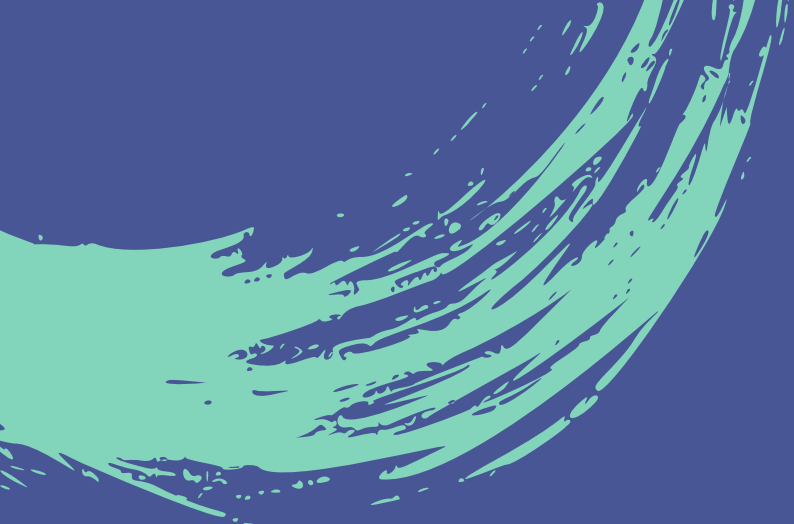
Gabriella Walshaw
Product Manager
The Tribal Group

“

In a world where technology changes rapidly, being tech-curious and embracing lifelong learning are essential qualities for navigating the increasingly non-linear career paths of today. People should embrace learning as an opportunity to remain up to date with technology changes for use in their personal and work life, to stay productive, connected and current. There are now so many options and sources for learning that any individual or employer should be able to find a method which suits them and their commitments.

Louise Wood

Head of Disruptive Learning
UA92



“

An Institute of Student Employers poll in 2019 showed 86% of all graduate employers said they did not care what degree they studied.

Episode #241 with Carl Gombrich
Dean at The London Interdisciplinary School

”



“

Ever wonder what life, long, and learning truly mean, combined together? Imagine life as a tapestry woven from real experiences, each thread adding to the rich picture of who we truly are. Long signifies a never-ending journey, one of constant growth. Learning, then, becomes the inquisitive thread, fueled by purpose, curiosity, wonder, and imagination - driven by the skills we need to flourish in the world around us. This is the essence of education. But what about the rise of AI? Will machines render us passive learners? Not necessarily.

Consider Alan Turing, the "Godfather of AI," who drew inspiration from the concept of play (think "The Imitation Game"). Play is not a childish pursuit; it's how we've learned since infancy. And it will continue to be the wellspring of our future's most innovative creations. Lifelong learning must embrace collaborative play, for it is the cornerstone of creative leadership and human ingenuity.

Georgina Dean
Edufuturist of the Year 2021

”

“

Kids are stuck in the game of school, imitating their teachers. Instead of thinking for themselves, solving textbook problems instead of engaging real world problems, and where they can experience failure in a positive way

Episode #223
with Ana Fabrega

”

THE PODCAST

The podcast covers a wide range of topics, including artificial intelligence, leadership & culture, innovative education, and a different way to look at learning. It's about spotlighting global perspectives on various educational systems and challenges.

It's not just about staying in the silo of schools either; we listen to those in health, finance, business, design, performance, sport, marketing, engineering, retail, social care, sales - learning from everyone.

Launched in 2016, we have recorded over 300 podcasts, written 100+ articles and given out 60+ awards to those pushing the envelope for the future of education. We've chatted to pioneers from all around the world to gather insights and make a difference. We have listeners from 111 countries on every continent.





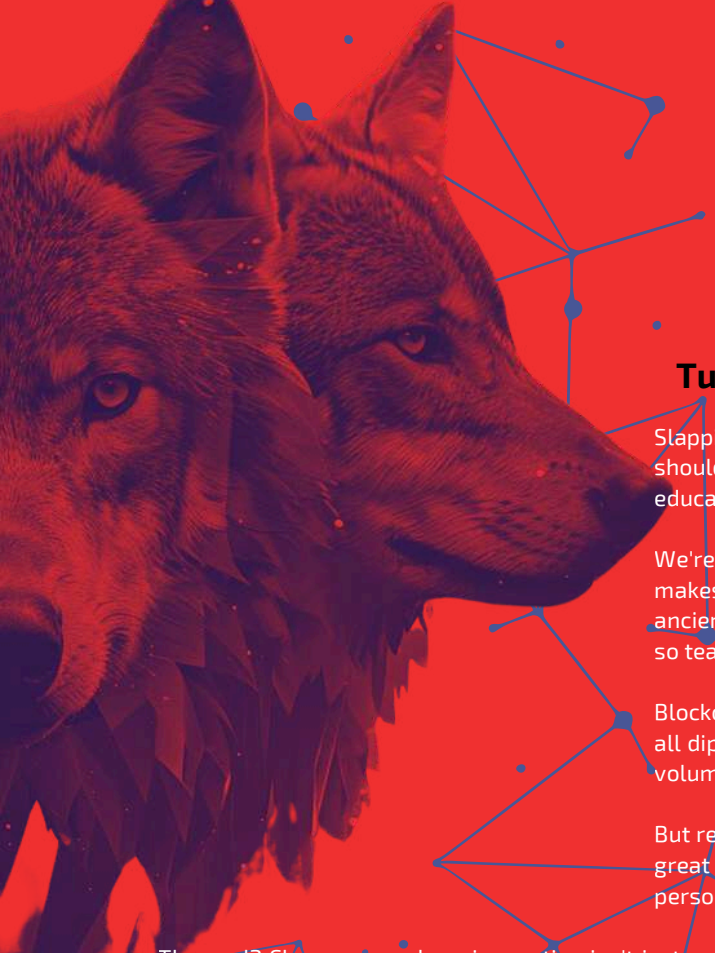
8+ Years
300+ Episodes
100+ Articles
60+ Awards



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**STO
PPR
ESS**



ENABLING TECHNOLOGY

Turbocharging Education, Not Just Digitising It

Slapping a smartboard in a classroom doesn't make it innovative. Tech should be a Tesla-esque super-catalyst for meaningful change in education, not a fancy distraction.

We're talking about tech that breaks down walls, ignites curiosity, and makes learning captivating. Virtual reality that lets you walk through ancient Rome or dive into a cell's nucleus. AI that handles the grunt work so teachers can focus on inspiring minds.

Blockchain is reshaping how we recognise learning. Forget one-size-fits-all diplomas. Think personalised, unbreakable records of skills that speak volumes.

But remember: tech is the sidekick, not the superhero. It's a tool to amplify great teaching, not replace it. Used effectively, it levels the playing field, personalises learning, and turns education into an adventure.

The goal? Classrooms where innovation isn't just an add-on - it's baked into the DNA of learning. That's when we'll see real change. Teachers' roles will definitely alter in the coming years, and they should, but we need to find out why we still need schools, because we think we do.

And here's the kicker: we're not just talking about tweaking the system, we're talking about blowing it wide open. A world where kids are actually pumped to learn, where they're solving real-world problems instead of just cramming for tests.

Education that thunderclaps while the old guard's still buffering on dialup.

We need to stop treating schools like knowledge factories and start seeing them as launchpads for curiosity. We ditch the conveyor and embrace the chaos. Classrooms become ideas labs, playgrounds for the mind where fail is just another word for feedback.

This isn't just about making learning 'fun'; it's about preparing kids for a world that's changing faster than a TikTok trend. We need education that's as adaptable as a chameleon on a disco floor, ready to pivot at a moment's notice. Ignore this wake-up call, and we're just mass-producing human floppy disks in a world running in quantum.

“

We are seeing a global shift from an EdTech to a PedTech approach to digital technology in education. The latter starts from an understanding of your Pedagogical Stance (your beliefs about how people learn) which informs your decisions about how to support learning (with or without digital technology). The EdTech approach has failed - the impact has not been proportional to the resources invested - in part because an EdTech approach tends to be a solution looking for a problem. Whilst we know that how you use digital technology is critical to its impact, the PedTech approach goes one step further and argues for the need for alignment between your pedagogical stance and your practice.

Peter Twining
Co-author of *From EdTech to PedTech: Changing the Way We Think about Digital Technology*

“

AI is a massive game-changer—it's the biggest opportunity we've had in education in a hundred years. It's our "iPhone moment". We're only just starting to see its real value. It fundamentally change everything in learning: how interactive content is, how much it costs to develop, how teachers and students interact, how students do self-guided learning, how a student gets formative feedback. The possible applications are endless. Education is about to undergo a massive change, and it's up to us to make sure it's for the better.

Gavin Cooney
CEO & Co-Founder, Learnosity



“

We all agree that students should get a lot of practice until they master a topic but practically in a classroom, providing a student hundreds of exercises until they master a particular topic is just not feasible, but technology can make that happen. They can go home and can do a number of exercises until they've mastered the topic and then kind of move on to the next step, which would be the ultimate goal in education - that everybody's achieving mastery. That's where you start to see the potential for technology: to actually get us where we want to be, but as humans alone we can't really get our students there.

Episode #240
with Priten Shah

“

A significant benefit of our strategic AI integration has been the considerable time savings for our staff. By embracing the AI tools we have carefully selected and supported through extensive CPD training, our educators have reclaimed an average of 5.18 hours each week. We want our staff to focus more on creative curriculum development, developing their craft, innovative teaching practices, and more student interaction.

We can only control what we can control in our own context with overwhelming emergent technologies, so helping our teachers understand how to use GenAI so they can then help our learners use this tech is where we are. We move forward with the aim to free up more time for nourishing and nurturing the human skills that AI can never replace while thoughtfully utilising its capability to enhance teachers lives. In doing so, we're helping learners to use it intentionally and deliberately with support and guardrails that protect and develop their digital literacy and wellbeing.

Scott Hayden
Head of Teaching, Learning and Digital,
Basingstoke College of Technology

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

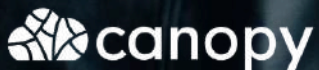
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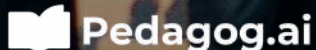
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WHY EDUFUTURISTS

We are sick of the status quo. **Dissatisfied doesn't really cut it.** It hits us in a visceral way. Deep down body thirst - NERD style.

Our mission, then, is to create a future-ready education system that empowers every learner to thrive. Through provocative content and events, we disrupt outdated norms and champion innovation. Spark transformative conversations. Showcase trailblazers from every facet of society. Push boundaries, doors, ceilings - whatever needs pushing.

STEVE HOPE

Former PE teacher.
EdTech CEO.
Dad of 2 young ones.
Runner, Leeds fan, speaker.
[@hope_steven](#)

We're here to shake up the status quo and revolutionise education for good.

BEN WHITAKER

Former RE &
Philosophy teacher.
Proud girl dad. An IDEAS Guy.
Coach, presenter, author.
[@itsbenwhitaker](#)

NEWSLETTER RELAUNCHED

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Not another set of drivel pronouncements written by AI and passed off as original content. Thoughtpieces, shoutouts, announcements, policy updates, tool reviews, stuff that's helping us and will hopefully help you too.

Semi-regular. Not too much to piss you off; not too little for you to forget about us. Just call it Goldilocks - but less bear, more wolf.

SCAN ME



"I don't read newsletters often... but this is a joy. Authentic, zero bullshit and digs deep."


NICI FOOTIE



We're seeking innovators who are reshaping education. Our ideal guests offer fresh perspectives on learning, tackle educational challenges in novel ways, and spark discussions about the future of education. We welcome both established experts and emerging voices who are reimagining learning for the 21st century - and they don't have to be educators; in fact, we welcome those who aren't!

We're after thought-provoking conversations, not sales pitches. Our listeners want bold ideas and people who give one about what happens to our kids.

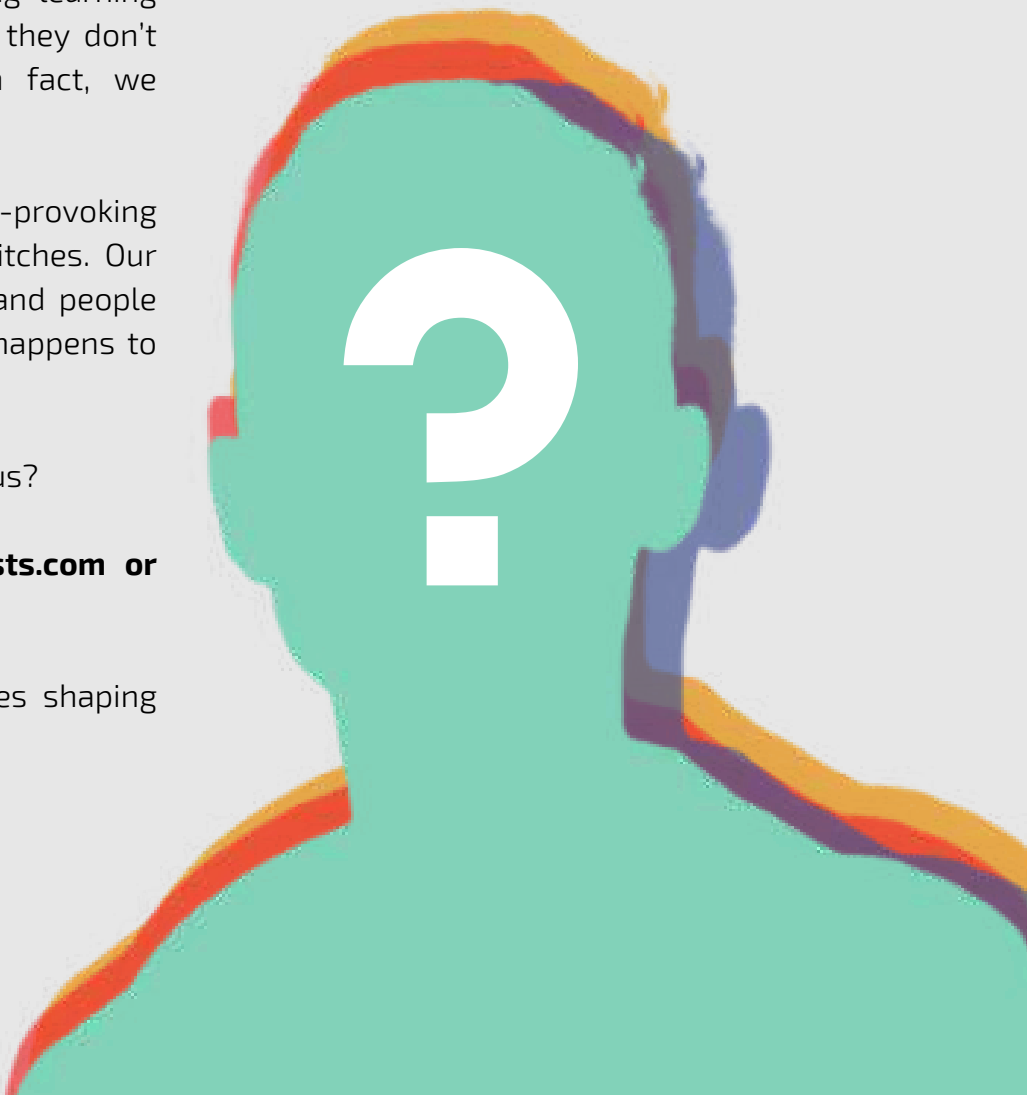
Know someone perfect for us?

Email podcast@edufuturists.com or DM us on social media

Help us spotlight the voices shaping tomorrow's education



SUGGEST A GUEST



OUR 2024 FINALISTS

EDUFUTURIST OF THE YEAR

DEB MILLAR
SCOTT HAYDEN
MELISSA MCBRIDE
SHONOGH PILGRIM

UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR

UA92
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL
LANCASHIRE
LONDON INTERDISCIPLINARY
SCHOOL
UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

COLLEGE OF THE YEAR

BASINGSTOKE COLLEGE OF
TECHNOLOGY
HULL COLLEGE
BRADFORD COLLEGE
FIRCROFT COLLEGE
BURNLEY COLLEGE

SECONDARY OF THE YEAR

MATTHEW MOSS HIGH SCHOOL
NEW RICKSTONES
HABERDASHIERS' KNIGHTS
ACADEMY
DOMINICAN COLLEGE

PRIMARY OF THE YEAR

CROSTHWAITHE PRIMARY SCHOOL
ELEMENTS PRIMARY SCHOOL
THAMES PRIMARY ACADEMY
CHEAM FIELDS PRIMARY ACADEMY

INDEPENDENT OF THE YEAR

BEDALES
RGS WORCESTER
SPRINGHOUSE
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE SCHOOL
HAZELWOOD SCHOOL

M.A.T. OF THE YEAR

ACADEMIES ENTERPRISE TRUST
OASIS COMMUNITY LEARNING
GIRLS' DAY SCHOOL TRUST
THE KEMNAL ACADEMIES TRUST

OUTSTANDING IT PROVIDER

ANDY EASTCRABBIE
NCG SERVICE DESK TEAM
JACK MARSHALL
JOSH MOORE

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT CHAMPION

GEMMA GWILLIAM
BODHINI PULWANSI
DAVID LEDGERWOOD & LIZZIE
PROSSER-HIGDON
JILL MATTERFACE

MOST INNOVATIVE PROJECT

COLLABORATION LABORATORY
CARDIFF AND VALE COLLEGE
APPS FOR GOOD
INVENTOR CLUB

EDUCATIONAL LEADER

CONRAD TAYLOR
DEBRA GRAY
WILL GOLDSMITH
CLARE SAINSBURY

EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

DR FUMIKO PESCOTT
MARIA GARRIGAN
JON PERRY
SIMON PARTON

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION CHAMPION

NICOLE PONSFORD
NAV AHMED
MARIA THORNE
DAVE CHURCH

AI PIONEER

MATTHEW WEMYSS
BRYONY EVETT-HACKFORTH
DARRIN COXON
GEMMA CLARK
MARTIN WHEATLEY

ACCESSIBILITY CHAMPION

ELAINE TOPHAM
HOLLY HUNT
LUIS HERNÁNDEZ
GEORGINA DURRANT

WELLBEING CHAMPION

HOLLY HUNT
KATIE CRIGHTON
CHARLIE BURLEY
CLAIRE TAMPLIN

OUR 2024 JUDGES

This year we had over **11,000 public votes**. We tally these bad boys up to determine a public vote winner, which then goes alongside the votes of our esteemed panel of judges. We have representation from across the education sector who are given an incredible amount of information to sift through to make their decisions. A huge thank you to these awesome folks for helping pick your winners!



GRACE KELLY



PADDY MCGRATH



BOB HARRISON



FIONA LAW



JO FLETCHER-SAXON



PUBLIC VOTE



CAROLINE HILLARIOUS



DAVE LEONARD



DAN FITZPATRICK



LAWRENCE TIJJANI



SJ WHITE



26th June 2025
53two, manchester
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DAVID PRICE OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

"We cannot solve new problems with old solutions." Sugata Mitra '22 Winner.

Our work as Edufuturists is the latest iteration in a long, long line of pioneers who have blazed a trail and paved a way. We are indebted to an incredible army of men and women who have fought long and hard to push the needle in education. It's why we started our Outstanding Achievement Award back in 2020.

"I've been toiling in this vineyard for decades and it's time we started to get our skates on." Valerie Hannon '21 Winner.

This year, we lost one of our heroes, David Price OBE. David had a profound impact on many of our lives and he will be sorely missed. He started a fire and we are committed to keeping it burning. With his wife Clare's blessing, we have renamed the award to **The David Price Outstanding Achievement Award**. He left us with insight and wisdom like few others.

"It's our responsibility as educators to help give them not just the tools and the knowledge but the experiences within which they can demonstrate the power of us."

To continue that legacy, it is our honour to announce the 2024 winner and recipient of the first David Price Outstanding Achievement Award in partnership with Learnosity: **Donald Clark**.

Don is a heavyweight in the EdTech world and is no flash in the pan - entrepreneur, CEO, investor, author, and speaker. He's been shaking up online learning for over 37 years, founding Epic Group plc and now leading AI learning company Wildfire. With multiple books under his belt, he's a go-to expert on AI, VR, and the future of learning. He's bagged numerous awards (but loves this one the most!). Don advises top organisations and drops knowledge bombs at global conferences. He is the real deal and super deserving of 2024's award.

"Our future is in their heads. Their future is in your hands. Don't fuck it up" Bob Harrison '23 Winner.

THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS
GETTING SOMEWHERE
IS TO DECIDE THAT
YOU'RE NOT GOING
TO STAY WHERE
YOU ARE

JP Morgan



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