

Education Futures Partnership (EFP)

Manchester, November 2019

INTRODUCTION

Technological change has defined Manchester and reminders of the industrial revolutions that have started here punctuate the urban landscape, from the statue of James Watt that sits in Piccadilly Gardens to the statue of Alan Turing in nearby Sackville Gardens. Technological change is closely linked to social change, and many pioneering social movements have roots in Manchester, including trade unions, co-operative societies and the suffragettes.

A new period of technological change now threatens disruptive social and educational transformations. The rapid development and spread of artificial intelligence, which has become a code-word for diverse yet interrelated computational developments, promises significant economic, political and cognitive disruption. The automatization of jobs will transform labour markets with implications for what we teach in schools. Growing technological unemployment may even break the compact between education and the economy, raising new questions about the broader social purposes of education. New platforms and digital infrastructures are intensifying the globalization of commerce, industry, and financial services, with impacts on employment and wealth distribution. Algorithms are reshaping new media platforms in ways that raise questions about fact and fiction, while big data analytics are creating new sources of value as well as concerns about privacy and security.

These questions will have a significant bearing on the next generation of education and they require new kinds of conversations. Manchester was an entirely appropriate place in which to host these conversations and eighteen people came together to explore ways in which unions and education researchers can partner to improve the quality of the responses unions, teachers, students and parents make to the challenge to public education around the world. It was an experienced group from both a research and union background (see Appendix 1).

The historical roots of this meeting included three annual 'Twin Peaks' gatherings of researchers and teacher organization leaders in Banff, Canada (2016, 2017 and 2018) that offered an opportunity to take a strategic long-term view of the global influences impacting public education. These deliberations inspired a summit meeting in Sydney,

Australia, hosted by the NSW Teachers Federation in March, 2019, of 22 invited academics and teacher unions focused on the theme of *Advancing the influence and impact of educational research in the public interest 2019-2022*. The proceedings of this meeting suggested that it is important for researchers and teacher organization leaders to move outside of their institutional boundaries to work collaboratively and strategically in concrete ways to address the influences shaping educational development.

The aims of coming together in Manchester were as follows:

- To bring together researchers and teacher organizations to help reconsider and produce new ways to engage global educational changes;
- To undertake an environmental scan (through Rich Picture Mapping) of our shared challenges and opportunities;
- To develop a draft roadmap including engagement strategies and key milestone events to facilitate collaborative research activities between the academy and teacher organizations.

SCANNING THE HORIZON– EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL (EI) AND THE OECD’S EDUCATION 2030 / PISA AGENDAS

[Martin Henry](#) (EI) and [Michael Stevenson](#) (OECD) spent time exploring the futures landscape from their own perspectives, providing different views on the big issues that confront teachers and students around the world. Both saw significant change and challenge ahead for teaching, learning and the future of schools.

From an EI perspective, four big challenges face teachers and their unions:

- **Changing Nature of Work and Platform Capitalism (Work 4.0)** – where new forms of work, the growth of the gig economy (already prevalent in higher education) and the attempts to corporatize and privatize education provide one challenge.
- **Identifying the Capabilities and Needs of the Future** – so as to identify what the focus for teaching and learning needs to be and how the knowledge and capabilities of students will be assessed. A part of this challenge is knowing what role technology will play in all of our lives.
- **Curriculum and Identity** – how we shape and determine curriculum (and who shapes it) will have a major impact on education, with many corporate interests “circling” in this space.
- **Professionalism and Professional Autonomy** – the erosion of the teacher’s role and muting of the voice of professional educators and teachers in system

decisions, curriculum and the pervasive role of technology in education is reshaping the profession. New roles, new standards and new assumptions about teaching require vigilance on the part of unions.

In response to these challenges, EI is pursuing its agenda through partnerships and alliances, both within the union movement, with like-minded organizations (such as the ILO) and with OECD and UNESCO. It uses research and is building coalitions to leverage evidence to defend the interests of member organizations and teachers around the world.

From an OECD perspective, while it has many current activities (like PISA), the focus is on the future of education – the systems of tomorrow. Working with some specific jurisdictions (British Columbia, Finland, Estonia, Hong Kong and Singapore), as well as through its world-wide collaborations, and focusing on both the medium term (to 2030) and the longer term (after 2030), the OECD is seeking to develop both instruments and curated intelligence to create better value for policy makers and educators.

The underlying theme of this work is equipping students with agency for wellbeing. This broad focus requires a broadening of our understanding of human intelligences (think Howard Gardener plus) so as to extend our understanding of both what students need to know and how they should engage with this knowledge.

While colleagues asked questions and challenged assumptions about these two views of the future – especially given that the 4th industrial revolution is a northern hemisphere view of the future which looks very different from the global south and from different viewpoints within the north (under-represented groups, rural communities, indigenous communities, communities in transition) – they did provide a powerful starting point for the design work which followed.

OPENING UP POSSIBILITIES FOR ALTERNATIVE FUTURES

Using the input from EI and the OECD as a starting point, Jean Stiles then helped the group explore different futures. Using a human-centered process of designing the future, the session became a workshop and a variety of futures were explored by three groups using a collaborative process.

All groups recognized that there was a marked absence of diversity in the room – while we did have colleagues from Australia, Mexico and Argentina, there were no colleagues from Africa or Asia. Nor were there students present. This we recognized

and acknowledged. It also became clear in our discussion that this lack of diverse perspectives can lead to misunderstandings. For example, the word “policy” was understood differently by our colleagues from Mexico and Argentina than our colleagues from the UK, Canada, US and Australia.

But many concerns expressed and explored were common across all three groups present, including:

- The professionalism, agency and autonomy of teachers and their professional organizations is being both challenged and eroded.
- Imagining future possibilities for public education (e.g. OECD Education 2030) has real implications for curriculum, assessment and pedagogy and is being undertaken by a few, but it will impact a great many. There is a need for a greater variety of voices and views in these conversations and decisions.
- Key terms are being used “as if” they held shared meaning, but they do not – e.g. “competencies”, “wellbeing” and “student agency or student voice”, “student engagement”.
- For a different future, there is a need to imagine a different set of practices for education – but getting there is a difficult journey.
- No one size fits all – each country (and region within a country) needs to own its educational systems and processes. There is no universal design, but there may be shared design principles.

There was also a shared understanding that the evidence base for many decisions and policies is lacking and, especially in a world where “alternative facts” provide an evidence base for the imposition of decisions on others, better evidence and better sharing of evidence is critical. Curating quality evidence is a challenge which this emerging network could focus on.

PROMISES ON THE HORIZON

Our conversations across the two days gave emphasis to the following possibilities for collaborative work:

- Creating strong, focused alliances for research and practice around key issues that could help us all – e.g. the impact of teacher turnover on wellbeing (teachers, students, systems, community), performance and the profession; the impact of accountability and assessment regimes on deep learning and wellbeing.

- Securing impact on public education, not just learning outcomes (test results, PISA results, etc.) but on social conditions, scientific development, health, democracy. This requires the mapping of the knowledge, skills and capabilities our students, teachers and school leaders are going to need.
- Rethinking how we assess and evaluate learning and school performance – what could succeed or complement PISA in helping us develop an understanding of effective practices and securing change at scale? For example, the *More Than Your Evidence* Iceland Summit is an example of engaging youth in this work.
- A great deal of research is small scale and has little impact on practice, yet contains gems and elements which need to be captured and built on – what can we learn from other fields (e.g. health research and the Cochrane Collaboration or research in physics or other fields of science) in terms of networks of collaboration?
- Rethinking assessment of and for learning – what are the challenges here and what are the opportunities and threats afforded by new approaches to assessment leveraging AI, video and other approaches? Is capability and competency assessment helping or hindering learning in terms of learning to be to do, to know and to work together?
- Understanding the status of the profession, the wellbeing of teachers and students and its components– just what does ‘wellbeing’ mean, especially given emerging scenarios for the future of work.
- Privatization and the future of schools, teachers and learning. This is a significant [project](#) already within EI, but it impacts different school systems in different ways. How can we track developments and look at the growing issue of precarious employment within our school systems?

There were many more suggestions, but the key point is that there are no shortage of challenges and opportunities for union / research collaboration aimed at securing significant impact on politics of education, policy and regulation (“the law”), the profession and professional practice.

GETTING TO ACTION 1: PRINCIPLES

Following some direct discussion, facilitated by Sam Sellar, we determined that these principles should apply to the future of this network:

1. The aim is to add to not duplicate the existing activities of unions and research networks – **additive**, not duplicative.

2. The aim is to secure **impact** – we do not want to add more “noise” but to move beyond reactive, episodic and short-term research activities.
3. The aim is not to build elaborate or complex new research infrastructures, but rather to **leverage** existing resources and activities to achieve impact.
4. The aim is to build capacity through collaboration – there must always be unions involved in the **codesign** of research challenges. The hope is that issues that become the focus for work are multi-jurisdictional issues that can attract researchers who want to make a contribution.
5. The aim is to work **across boundaries** created by our different institutions.
6. The kind of work we will undertake has to be **valuable** to the profession and in the public interest, both now and in the future. While a futures focus will be a component of the work we will undertake, the work has to create impact and value in the near term.
7. The work needs to be focused on providing **evidence** which can help the work of mobilizing teachers, students and parents as well as other stakeholders who want to advance public education.

GETTING TO ACTION 2: FOCAL POINTS

The group identified these focal points for action in the immediate future:

1. Building a clearinghouse for key evidence / resources around issues which would be identified by teacher organizations. For example – (a) teacher turnover and its impact on the profession, school systems, student performance, student and teacher wellbeing, or (b) relationships between poverty and achievement.
2. Tracking responses to PISA after December 3rd, especially focused on reactions around the world to the new indicator of Global Competence.
3. Focusing on the challenges and issues of assessment and the relationships between curriculum and assessment– questioning the next generation of assessment practices, including the introduction of machine learning approaches.
4. Teacher and student focus groups in different contexts and different parts of the world: what do teachers feel they can't do but wish they could do with regard to curriculum and pedagogy, given the shaping of their work by current assessment systems (for example, tracking the moral distress of teachers).
5. The possibility of contributing articles to the bilingual magazine, *Interchange of the Social Network for Public Education in the Americas*.

Individuals identified themselves as willing to undertake work on one or more of these tasks, though all may be asked to help (especially in relation to #2 above).

Overarching this work is a preoccupation with the future, not just with the “now” and “how we got here”. Offering an analysis of OECD Education 2030 and the learning compass may provide a backcloth to some or all of this work.

GETTING TO ACTION 3: NEXT STEPS

Rather than meeting independently of other activities of our respective organizations and institutions, the group determined that we should leverage existing meetings and structures (see principles 1 and 3 above). To this end, the following transition steps were identified:

1. An interim meeting of the Education Futures Partnership to be held at AERA in San Francisco, April 17-21, 2021. This would be an informal information and network opportunity for those who attended either the Sydney and Manchester meetings as well as inviting prospective new participants. An effort will be made to circulate notice of this gathering through the participant lists as well as through a session being offered at AERA describing the work of the partnership to date: Climbing the Walls We Build: Advancing the Influence and Impact of Educational Research in the Public Interest.
2. An invitation to attend the 14th Trinational Conference in Defense of Public Education, which will be held in Sacramento, California. May 2020.
3. A full meeting of the Education Futures Partnership to be held in Glasgow at the ECER Conference, 25-28 August, 2020.

Debriefings immediately following the meeting of the Manchester working group (host Sam Sellar along with J-C Couture, Jean Stiles, Roar Grøttvik, Stephen Murgatroyd) produced three further suggestions:

1. To facilitate follow-up on 'Getting to Action' and planning for both AERA and ECER in 2020, the summary report and supporting documents would be vetted and circulated to all those invited to both the Sydney and Manchester meetings with an invitation for feedback from participants.
2. The Manchester working group would continue to offer support and follow-up communications.

3. A tentative name for the emerging network was considered: The Education Futures Partnership (EFP). The intent here was to provide a frame for the work ahead that signals a collaboration among researchers and teacher organization leaders that is not 'owned' by any one group or entity and that permits participants to continue to work strategically both inside and outside of their institutional boundaries.

APPENDIX 1: BIOGRAPHIES OF PARTICIPANTS

Mariluz Arriaga, National Autonomous University of Mexico

Mariluz Arriaga is a normalist teacher, she did her undergraduate studies in Economics, she has a Master in Political Science and a PhD in Latin American Studies at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. She is a full-time professor at the School of Economics of the National Autonomous University of Mexico. Her research lines deal with processes of economic integration and public policies, especially educational policy and teacher unionism, on education as a social right and the struggles on its defense. She is the author of several publications on these topics in journals and books. She has participated and organized several forums, conferences and seminars in Mexico, the United States, Canada and Latin America. She is an academic committed to the processes of social transformation and a member of several Research Networks at a continental level. She is recognized as an activist defending human rights, in Mexico, North America and Latin America, work for which she has received some distinctions. She was a founder (1993) of the Trinational Coalition in defense of Public Education (Mexico, United States and Canada), and of the Social Network for Public Education in the Americas (IDEA Network 1999), in both organizations she maintains an active participation.

Nina Bascia, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

Nina Bascia is Professor and Chair of the Department of Leadership, Higher & Adult Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Recent books are *Teacher Unions in Public Education* and *Student Engagement in Alternative Schools*. She has been studying and researching for teacher organizations for 30 years and in 2016 completed a study for Education International (with Howard Stevenson) on organizing teaching in the current policy context.

J-C Couture, Manchester Metropolitan University and University of Alberta

J-C Couture is a Research Fellow, Manchester Metropolitan University and is an adjunct with the Faculty of Education, University of Alberta. Formerly with the Alberta's Teachers' Association, he coordinated the organization's research program and publications that linked professional learning, strategic foresight and educational leadership. He is currently a researcher-in-residence with Edmonton Public Schools and is collaborating on a number of research activities and graduate courses related to teacher leadership and educational governance in the Anthropocene. His most current publication is "Naming our Future - Education 2030 and the OECD 2019 Vancouver" in *Navigating Transformation* (British Columbia Teachers' Federation, 2019).

David Duffy, Teachers' Union of Ireland

David Duffy, Education/Research Officer, Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI). The 19,000 members of the TUI work as teachers and lecturers in the secondary, tertiary and further and adult education sectors of the Irish public education system. The TUI represents members in relation both to the terms and conditions of their employment and their professional interests. As a Union, we regard education as a public good - an intrinsic element of the social contract - that must be informed by the principles of equity and inclusion. In my role as Education/Research Officer, I co-ordinate the development and articulation of the Union's education policies and have overall responsibility in regard to our research activities.

Migel Duhalde, Teachers Union of Argentina

Dr. Migel Duhalde is Professor in Education and Master in Methodology of Scientific Research. He is currently a professor and researcher at the Autonomous University of Entre Ríos. I am Secretary of Education of the Teachers Union of Argentina (CTERA), member of the Education International. I coordinate the research project on standardized tests carried out by the SEPA Network, consisting of systematization of national reports from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Canada and the USA. My latest research was on trends in privatization of education in Argentina, under the supervision of Susana Robertson of the University of Cambridge and published by the International Education.

Denis Fitzgerald, New South Wales Teachers' Federation

Denis Fitzgerald is a writer and researcher for the New South Wales (NSW) Teachers Federation. He is on the board of the NSW Education and Standards Authority and is also Chair of the state's Curriculum Committee. He has established the Centre for Professional Learning and the Journal of Professional Learning for the union. He has written a history of education Teachers and Their Times (UNSW Press) and is currently engaged in policy development in Australia around curriculum and assessment matters. He is a former President of the NSW Teachers Federation and the Australian Education Union.

(Denis had to leave early, due to the bush fire situation near Sydney)

Andrée Gacoin, British Columbia Teachers' Federation

Dr. Andrée Gacoin is Director of the Division of Information, Research and International Solidarity at the British Columbia Teachers' Federation. She is currently leading a five-year research project that aims to develop a unique, in-depth and contextualized exploration of contemporary curriculum change in BC from the perspective of teachers. She has a wide range of experience leading educational research and program

activities in diverse communities, including work in Gabon and South Africa. Her work foregrounds research as advocacy to uphold and strengthen public education.

Roar Grøttvik, Union of Education Norway

Roar Grøttvik is a political adviser for the elected President and Vice-Presidents of Union of Education Norway, the dominating teachers' union with more than 182 000 members from Early Childhood Education to Higher Education. After serving as a teacher and an elected representative in a teacher union, Roar started to work full time for the union in 1987. In 1997 Roar became member of the Working Group on Education and Training in the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) to the OECD and has followed OECD's work on education and skills since then. Roar is also chairing the board of the Education International Research Institute.

Martin Henry, Education International

Martin Henry is a research coordinator at the headquarters of Education International (EI) Brussels. His work focuses on coordinating and commissioning research mandated by Congress across a number of priority areas, working with the EI Research Network and acting as secretariat to the EI Research Institute Board. He is currently leading projects on teacher identity, teacher union renewal, technical vocational education and training, curriculum breadth, refugee education and professional standards. Other duties include representing teachers and educators at the OECD, UNESCO, ILO and other international forums. Before joining EI in 2016, Mr Henry spent three years leading the professional issues work at the New Zealand secondary teachers' union PPTA. Prior to that he worked for 5 years as a Deputy Principal in a New Zealand high school and spent 3 years managing the professional learning infrastructure and working on the curriculum and across a range of academic subject standards for the New Zealand Ministry of Education. He earned a BA (hons.) from University College London, a Diploma of Teaching from Auckland College of Education and an M Lit (dist.) from Auckland University.

Stephen Murgatroyd, Futures Leadership for Change

Stephen Murgatroyd, PhD is President of Futures Leadership for Change – a non-profit dedicated to strategic foresight, leadership development with a strong focus on education. Formerly Professor of Applied Psychology and Management and Dean of the Faculty of Business at Athabasca University, Provost at the Canadian University of Dubai, Stephen has authored 40 books and some 300 papers, book chapters and journalistic pieces. A management consultant and entrepreneur, Stephen is working world-wide advising governments and organizations based on his work in strategic foresight. He is based in Edmonton, Alberta.

Stacey Pelika, National Education Association

Dr. Stacey Pelika is Director of Research at the National Education Association (NEA). Her role involves working with her colleagues in NEA's Center for Enterprise Strategy to use research and data to drive the association's strategic decision-making. To this end, she leads her department in: synthesizing scholarly research; conducting surveys and focus groups with NEA members; compiling and analyzing quantitative data about NEA members and the U.S. education system; developing predictive models and supporting their use by NEA affiliates; and carrying out mixed-method evaluations of NEA programs and initiatives.

Karen Pashby, Manchester Metropolitan University

Dr. Karen Pashby is Reader in Education Studies at Manchester Metropolitan University and co-lead of the Education and Global Futures research group, Docent at University of Helsinki, and Adjunct Professor at University of Alberta. A former secondary school teacher and teacher educator (Ontario, Alberta, Brazil, and Finland), her research focuses on critical approaches to global citizenship education. Her recent project on ethical global issues pedagogy co-produced a resource with teachers in England, Finland, and Sweden. She currently works with a team at Örebro University, examining global issues pedagogy in Swedish upper secondary classrooms. She is active in the Bridge 47 network driving European Action towards meeting SDG Target 4.7.

Adrian Prandle, National Education Union

Adrian Prandle is Director of Government Relations and Research for the National Education Union, managing political relationships and national negotiations and leading the organisation's research function. He regularly represents the organisation in print and broadcast media. Adrian works on issues relating to teacher workload, teacher supply, accountability, school funding and pay. The areas of education policy Adrian has worked on previously include school inspection, assessment, careers education and the 14-19 phase. Adrian authored ATL's publication A new vision for inspection in schools which sets out a radical proposal for a less burdensome, professional inspection system tailored to school improvement as well as accountability. Adrian contributed a chapter to the Unions 21 publication, Delivering for Young Workers, putting the case for valuing the concept of 'professionalism' – the experience, knowledge and capabilities that can be brought to a job – in both education and the union movement. He has personal research experience in young people's encounters with work-life impacts.

Edda Sant, Manchester Metropolitan University

Edda Sant is Senior Lecturer at Manchester Metropolitan University (UK). She is a former social science and citizenship education teacher, she has experience working as teacher educator and she presently lecturers at the BA Education Studies. Her research and interests focuses primarily on issues related to political and citizenship education and more generally in the areas of democratic education, history and social studies education. She has published in numerous journals including Review of Educational Research and her most recent work includes the co-editorship of the The Palgrave Handbook of Global Citizenship and Education and the co-authorship of the book Global citizenship education: a critical introduction to key concepts and debates.

Michael Stevenson, OECD

Michael Stevenson is Senior Advisor, Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) at the Organization for Economic Development and Co-operation in Paris. His responsibilities include innovation, strategy and support for governments. He is currently leading development of the long-term PISA roadmap and helping high performing countries develop tomorrow's education systems. From 2007-2013 Michael was Vice President, Global Education at Cisco Systems. During this time he founded the Global Education Leaders Program and was the first chair of ATC21S (the Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills). Michael began his career at the BBC, initially in television current affairs, later as BBC Secretary and Director of Education. He went on to lead strategy, communications and technology at the UK Department for Education in London.

Sam Sellar, Manchester Metropolitan University

Dr Sam Sellar is Reader in Education Studies at Manchester Metropolitan University. Sam's research focuses on education policy, educational theory, large-scale assessments and datafication. His current projects explore the introduction of AI into education policy making and the role of digital data in new modes of educational governance. Sam co-lead's the Education and Global Futures research group in the Education and Social Research Institute at MMU. Sam's most recent book is the World Yearbook of Education 2019: Comparative Methodology in an Era of Big Data and Global Networks (2019, Routledge), co-edited with Radhika Gorur and Gita Steiner-Khamsi.

Jean Stiles, Edmonton Public Schools

P. Jean Stiles is a principal with Edmonton Public Schools in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Jean has been an educator for 35 years with expertise as a teacher, consultant and principal. She has taught and led schools as a principal at all grade levels (1-12). Jean has an extensive background as a consultant working with both adult and student

students. She has a strong skillset for supporting and mentoring beginning teachers, department heads, assistant principals and principals, student leadership and developing authentic student voice. Jean previously led the largest school in western Canada, Jasper Place School, and was accountable for the staffing, strategic planning, and school achievement results for a \$20 million school budget. Presently Jean is the principal at an alternative school that supports online programming, home/parent directed education and the Caraway alternative programming that offers a multi-graded, project-based, and thematic approach to teaching and learning. Additionally, Jean is currently engaged in the process of designing and prototyping a Virtual School for the Edmonton Public School Board.

Jean recently defended her Dissertation to receive her PhD in Secondary Education at the University of Alberta. In her thesis "Disrupting School Leadership: A Leadership of Disruption", Jean engaged with the work of Deleuze and Guattari to imagine and experiment with education reform possibilities against the backdrop of the global neoliberal governance of schools. The work involved developing new leadership imaginaries through international networks of school leaders, teachers and students in a series of *thought-in-action/action-in-thought* experiments to consider how public education is organized and how it might be disrupted to produce more equitable possibilities in the field of education. In 2007, Jean received The Learning Partnership's award of Outstanding Principal. This award recognizes the unique and crucial contributions of principals in publicly funded schools. The National Selection Committee determines 30 Canada's Outstanding Principals Winners annually.

Terry Wrigley, Manchester Metropolitan University

Dr Terry Wrigley is Senior Lecturer in Education at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh. His research interests bring together school development, accountability, curriculum and the impact of poverty. He is a coordinator of the Reclaiming Schools network (reclaimingschools.org), established to provide reliable research knowledge for the education campaigns of the National Education Union and parents' groups in England. He is co-author of *Living on the Edge: Rethinking Poverty, Class and Schooling*, and co-editor of *Social Justice Re-Examined: Dilemmas and Solutions for the Classroom Teacher*.