

SMART MOVES

NOVEMBER 2020 EDUMAG



Imperfect Leadership

Steve Mundy's book, *Imperfect Leadership*, is worth reading. I love his concept of a leader being imperfect. Having taught for 10 years, led a school for 27 years and now running an education professional development business - I feel very soothed by the concept that there is hope for the imperfect leader.

So many of us fear making a mistake because it leads to judgement, a sense of failure which manifests in what I call, the silent and often, lingering, experience of low self-worth. But there is comfort in the term, "Imperfect".

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Leadership & Standards

The moral purpose of education leadership is to support and encourage teachers to better the outcomes of students. These can include a range of social, emotional, cultural or academic outcomes.

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Leading in a Time of Crisis

The impact of a global crisis and the lockdown that followed showed how important professions, like nursing and teaching, have been taken for granted.

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Scenarios for the Future of Schooling

New technologies are on the way which are referred to as "future-fit evaluations" which can be adapted to a diverse school population but still support high expectations while building a sense of self-worth and confidence

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Imperfect Leadership

Leaders need to develop their own style, or signature of leadership.

Whether we like it or not, most of us in education are leaders. Class teachers lead a class throughout a day for 200 school days a year with exceptionally high expectations and demanding requirements from parents, school leaders and education authorities. Grade Heads are required to lead professional peers, Phase Heads lead a number of grades, Subject Heads manage curriculum expectations, inclusion, assessments while desperately trying to be innovative within narrow guidelines presented by bureaucrats. Deputy Principals and Principals lead the team and all that goes with running a school.

Leadership is hard - and when it comes to essential services like teaching, leadership is almost impossible to define. Mundy puts it beautifully. "Leaders need to develop their own leadership style based on their beliefs and values, their expertise and skills, their personality and their

context. Much of this is fixed, but some of it changes so we need to change with it."

Encouragement for Imperfect Leaders:

1. **Surf the Sigmoid Curve.** I was introduced to the Sigmoid Curve early in my career and I often revisit these notes. So often we assess our ability to lead in a linear model, but the truth is that all of nature operates in a cyclical motion. In nature everything rises and falls, day and night, summer and winter, plant cycles etc. Somehow when it comes to leadership we tend to think in terms of a linear line of progression and target chasing. Notice, in the diagram on the next page, how the curve is determined on the y-axis by success and on the x-axis by time. There tends to be three phases. Phase 1 is the **Learning Phase**. This is often a very disturbing season because we often go down

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This is the season for persistence. If ever a leader needs GRIT, it is during the Learning Curve.

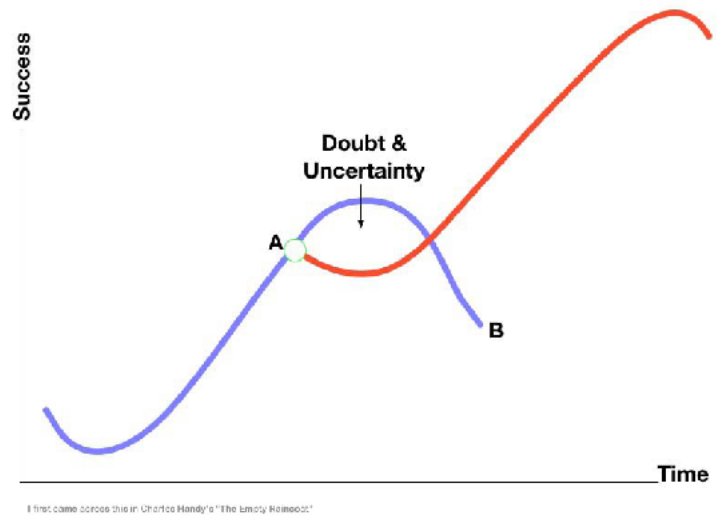
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before we start to rise. That initial drop can be very painful and many new leaders in education and business give up because of the lack of reward. It is so hard to invest so much energy and experience such poor results. It leads to deep frustration for the leader, but try to imagine the farmer who spends days ploughing the land, then sows his seed. Despite the continuing overhead costs, he literally has to wait for the crop to start growing. But here's the reality. Under the surface everything is growing. Surf this season to make the correct contacts, build relationships, get to know the people that matter and share your vision. This is the season for persistence. If ever a leader needs GRIT, it is during the Learning Curve.

The second section is the **Growth Phase**. Suddenly things seems to change and the hard work invested during the Learning Curve brings positive results. The

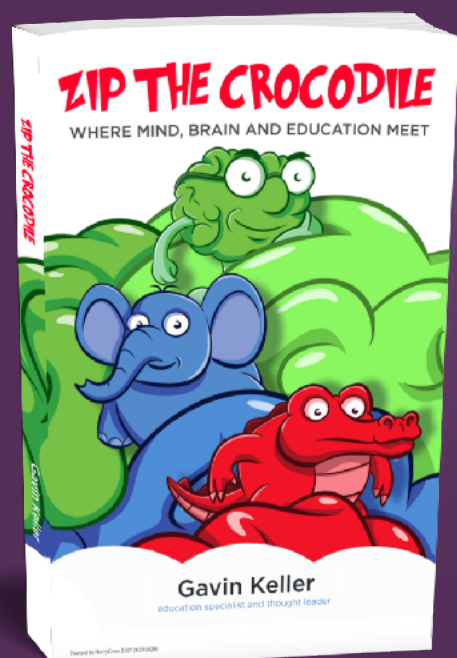
This is a book that every teacher and parent needs to have on their bedside table.

Author, Gavin Keller has carefully explained how the brain processes data and why the role of the parent and teacher is so essential in helping students self-regulate in order to THINK.



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organisation grows, revenue increases, new staff are employed and there is a high level of positivity and maturation.

The third section is the **Decline Phase**. During this season there is a massive energy dip and morale often drops. Internal bickering and staff unhappiness may spill out of the school staff lounge and infect the parent community. Hearsay brings new and creative rumours and WhatsApp groups light up with the"Have you heard...!"

The secret to surfing the Sigmoid Curve is to get off before the decline. Successful leaders need to be constantly on the lookout for the next wave to catch. This requires a leader and the leadership team to be regularly asking the self-reflecting question, "When is it time to jump off the current wave" The secret is to identify a pending decline and select a new approach. Some may apply for another leadership position, but many need to be inspired to re-start the cyclical s-curve again. This is hard because change is difficult and the learning curve phase is painful and exhausting, especially for an experienced leader. Our brain is designed to remember pain to ensure our survival so there is a natural inclination in leaders to avoid revisiting the Growth Phase. Successful leaders are constantly reinventing themselves. The message to leaders is clear, nothing grows forever in its current structure. Change is vital, change is good, but change is painful.



2. Focus on Leadership as Service. We have learnt a lot about Servant Leadership over the years. This ancient form of

leadership was revitalised by Robert Greenleaf in 1970. During my early leadership training as a teenager and later in my professional development as a young teacher the concept was developed by Ken Blanchard, Stephen Covey, Peter Senge, M. Scott Peck, Margaret Wheatley, Ann McGee-Cooper & Duane Trammell, Larry Spears, and Kent Keith. The basic message was very clear. We ask, "What kind of leader is wanted of me?", rather than "What kind of leader do I want to be? It has at the root - a desire to serve. You can often spot a servant leader serving coffee to her staff during long parent meetings, or preparing food at a staff function. The servant leader is not position focused, but strives to be the feet of change. Creating a signature for your leadership that includes being a servant brings a humility that often balances the determination and drive that you expect from a high performing team.

There doesn't seem to be a set of guidelines for servant leadership. It is a signature style. Steve Mundy believes that "Leaders need to develop their own leadership style based on their beliefs and values, their expertise and skills, their personality and their context. Much of this is fixed, but some of it changes, so we need to change with it."

Beware of the role bad habits play in leadership. Because the job is all encompassing, many of us learn bad habits. These fall-back behaviours often become instinctive when the going gets tough. Part of being a reflective leader is to take time out to literally "reflect" on some of your behaviours that you use instinctively and ask whether they are still useful in the current situation that you are leading.

Without a doubt all of us are in a new situation. Never before have we run schools, grades, phases, subjects or classes in a pandemic. Never before has the economy slumped to the Great Depression levels adding new and challenging pressures. If ever it is a time for leadership to change, it is now. The current and post pandemic leader is going to require a new set of skills and this may result in the need to surf the Growth Phase again.



3. Show up - Walk into the Storm. I am always impressed by my housekeeper, Ben. He is committed to his job and he shows up everyday. In order to get to work in the most cost effective method, he makes use of a bicycle that I bought for him. Winter or summer, he shows up 5 minutes before his time for arrival. Many days, as the wind lashes the peninsula in Cape Town, he cannot ride his bicycle into the wind, because it is simply too strong. On those days, he walks his bicycle into the wind. What is interesting, whether he walks or rides, he arrives 5 minutes before his expected time of arrival. As I pondered this action, it made me realise how important it is to prepare for the storm in leadership. Too many of us use the storm as an excuse - few decide to prepare to walk into the storm. Preparation for storms should be on every leaders competency card. Predicting possible storms and making suitable arrangements is what we do. Of course, we cannot predict every scenario, but having a mind that creatively considers possible events and strategises a response means that we are prepared for the storm and are prepared to put our feet on the ground. There is the beautiful Japanese proverb that says "Fall down seven times - get up eight times!" What the proverb doesn't say is that leaders don't just bounce back up when they fall, they get up. Imperfect leaders ask for help. The ability to seek support is an indication of good leadership. Somewhere along the line of recent leadership input, we came to understand that the weak leader asks for help.

Two very good examples of leaders who failed to walk into the storm have been documented. In a recent documentary I

watched the Queen of England recount in 2002, that her biggest regret in her reign was not going to Aberfan in 1966. On the 21 October 1966, the Aberfan colliery tip which has been created on the mountain above the town collapsed after heavy rains and the slurry slid down the mountain engulfing the Pantglas Junior School and other buildings, killing 116 children and 28 adults. This was a traumatic event, and the Queen made a decision not to go immediately as she didn't want the essential services looking after her and not looking for survivors. Eight days later she visited and was heartbroken by what she saw. It was reported that she even shed a tear at the sight. As she reflected, as all good leaders do, she acknowledged that the leader should have been present to show empathy and walk into the storm. The other example was President Bush and his response to the Katrina hurricane in 2005. This event in history had a huge effect on me as I had attended a Conference in New Orleans just a few months earlier and the news footage on television was just too real. 1000 people were killed and \$125 billion damage was caused. Having been on holiday on his ranch for 27 days prior to the hurricane striking New Orleans and the surrounding area, the President decided to make a detour on Air Force One on his way back to Washington DC, and fly over the devastated area. He allowed photographers to take photos of him looking out of the window of the plane. President Bush would later describe this event as a dark moment in his Presidency for it portrayed him as being distant and uncaring. His Presidency never survived this event.

We have to show up and walk into the wind - not avoid it.



4. Ask for help from a trusting team

Leaders need to work hard at creating a trusting team. And teams are different to families. The teams need to be fit and capable, sharp and at their best. Families on the other hand, we have to accept as they are.

Patrick Lencioni identifies the following characteristics of a trusting team:

- Admit weaknesses and mistakes
- Ask for help
- Accept questions and input about their areas of responsibility
- Take risks in offering feedback and assistance
- Appreciate and tap into one another's skills and experience
- Offer and accept apologies without hesitation

In difficult times we all need trusting teams around us and we have to have the freedom to put up our hands and ask for help.



5. Fail Forward

We don't always get it right. When that happens, the imperfect leader accepts responsibility and is willing to change course quickly. Sir David Bell, the CEO of University of Sunderland made this profound comment. "If we made a bad call at the beginning of the crisis, or we mis-stepped along the way, change course fast and don't make *sorry* the hardest word." Lewicki's research in 2016 on *Six elements of an effective apology, according to science*, says about apology, "the most important component is an acknowledgement of responsibility. Say it is

your fault, that you made a mistake." Pride often blurs our ability to take responsibility for the error and leaders rush to blame. Imperfect leaders take responsibility and accountability. They acknowledge the mistake and demonstrate the ability to correct the process. None of us are perfect and it is the imperfections in the Japanese art of Kintsugi that makes the vase so valuable. The broken vase is put together with melted gold, making a broken item whole, beautiful and highly valued.

We live in an era where age marks are removed with plastic surgery, new clothes replace old, new phones are required after 24 months, straight hair requires curls and curly hair needs to be straightened. It is an age where imperfections are regarded as bad. The Japanese philosophy of wabi-sabi is all about embracing the imperfections in life and finding the beauty in it.

One of my favourite songs is Leonard Cohen's, Anthem. This beautiful song captures our message of imperfect leaders.

**"Ring the bells (ring the bells) that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack in everything (there is a crack in everything)
That's how the light gets in."**



**“The standards
you walk past are
the standards we
accept!”**

Lieutenant General
David Morrison
Chief of the Australian Armed Forces

Leadership & Standards

The moral purpose of education leadership is to support and encourage teachers to better the outcomes of students

“The standards you walk past are the standards we accept!”

- Lieutenant General David Morrison. Chief of the Australian Armed Forces

The moral purpose of education leadership is to support and encourage teachers to better the outcomes of students. These can include a range of social, emotional, cultural or academic outcomes.

The challenge for leaders is to manage the pressure and distractions that happen.

Recently I was discussing leadership with a Principal. He looked at me and sighed. “All I have done since I arrived at school today is work through a pile of emails, circulars and

directives from the Education Department.” Emails and Circulars from the department are distractions.

I cannot believe that the Education Department is incapable of employing someone to provide a one page summary of key facts to send to school leaders once a week with references to specific detail if required, so that leaders can get on with their moral purpose - to improve the outcomes of students.

The client is the student.

The moral purpose of the leader is the education journey of the student. Leaders cannot and should not be distracted.

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15:30 - 16:10	Keynote: Rock Solid Foundation Gavin Keller - Keller Education The brain loves to take risks. The process of risk taking produces dopamine - an essential neurotransmitter required for long term memory. But how do we educate and raise kids safely while providing them space to take risks. The research is clear. It requires a ROCK SOLID foundation. The foundation has to be secure, but animate. Now that seems like a tall order! In this webinar, Gavin will share the role of teachers and parents in guiding students up the dangerous rock face. It requires a unique skill that that we all need to master.
16:10 - 16:20	Questions and Answers Jayd MacDonald & Gavin Keller
16:20 - 16:30	Closing Comments & Prizes Brad Keller

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SAVE THE DATE



Employee Survey during Covid-19

1 in 5 employees reported suffering from loneliness. (Australia Bureau of Standards)

1 in 5 reported suffering from loneliness.
(Australia Bureau of Standards)

80% said the crisis is materially affecting their work lives. (McKinsey & Co)

80% said health and wellbeing ranked as #2 in priority of employees (Wills Tower Watson)

64% said recognition and appreciation is more important during COVID (HR Executives)

With the above statistics in mind, school leaders need to consider new ways to support and encourage teachers.

Idea One: Boost Communication - Keep teachers informed, create chatrooms, use technology to keep the team together.

Idea Two: Seek an open environment - Never before have we needed an open space for dialogue. Transparency is essential. Opening lines of communication and knowing that the leader is listening is vital. Many teachers report

that the communication during the pandemic has declined.

Idea Three: Health and wellbeing must be a priority. The lock down resulted in a slow down. Sedentary behaviours became the norm. Design wellbeing events, even if they are virtual. Create opportunities where staff can laugh and engage safely.

Idea Four: Never cut the recognition budget. In fact, recognition costs nothing. Nothing is more powerful than a message of gratitude, a card of encouragement, a telephone call of thanks or an email of precise praise. Leaders should be busy sending these out to keep the Human Capital encouraged and supported.

Idea Five: Keep playing. The doom and gloom of the pandemic brings darkness. Lighten things with a game. Host a trivia session, hold an online scrabble competition or inter-grade Pictionary competitions. The more we laugh, the better we cope.

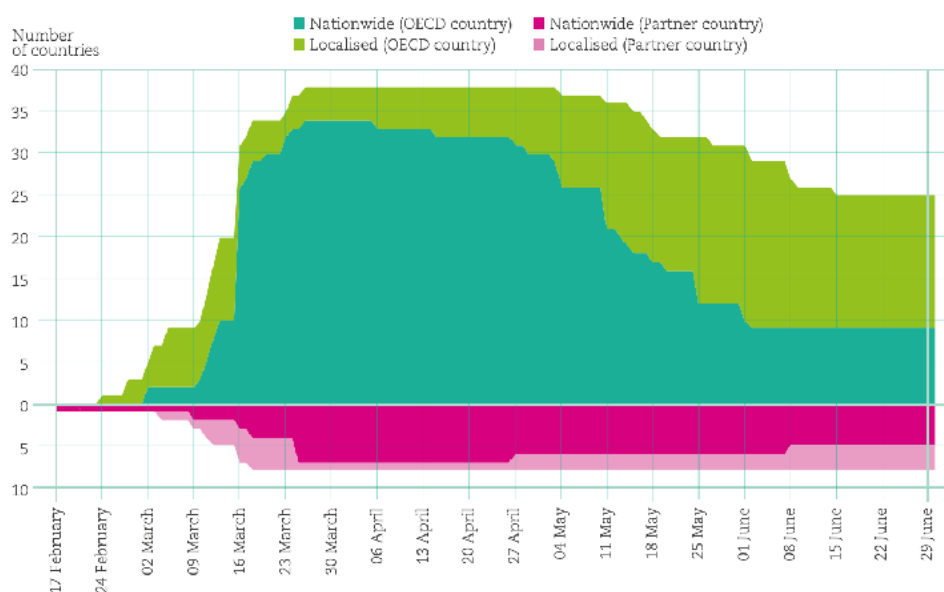


Leading in a time of crisis

The impact of a global crisis and the lockdown that followed showed how important professions, like nursing and teaching, have been taken for granted

Most schools operate for about 40 weeks of the year. By the end of June this year, schools across the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) had experienced some form of closure lasting an average of 14 weeks. We have lost in excess of a third of the academic year.

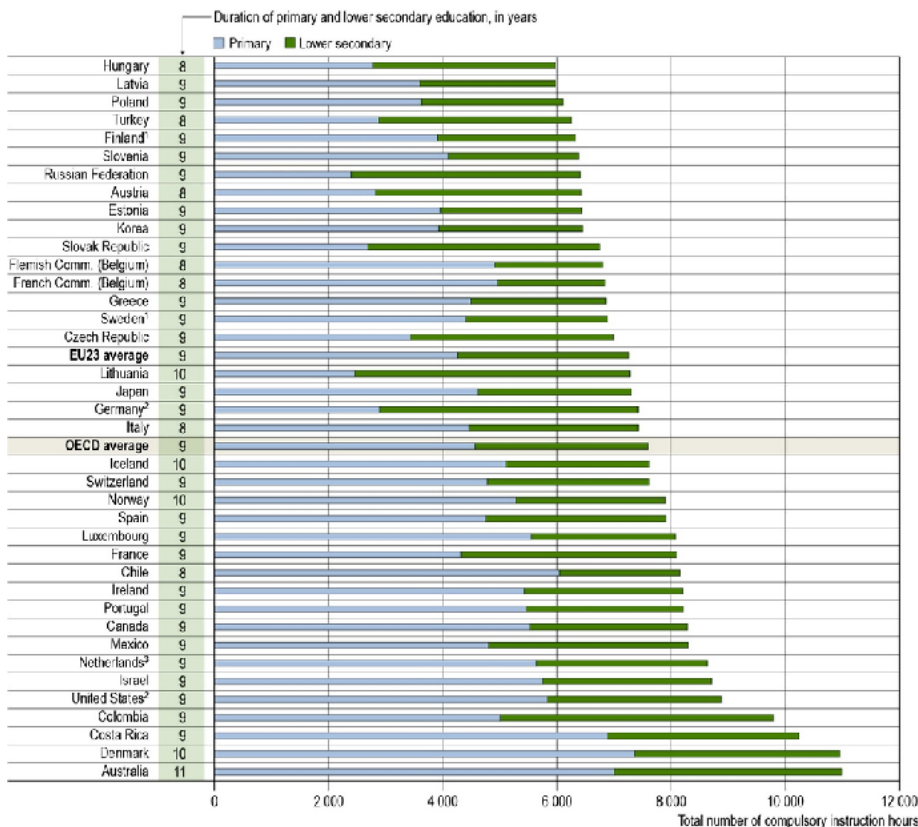
Figure 3. **Number of countries with school closures due to COVID-19**
Data covers the period between 17 February 2020 and 30 June 2020



Note: This figure covers educational institutions from early childhood education to tertiary education. Localised school closure refers to school closures of some levels of education only and/or for some subnational entities.
Source: UNESCO (2020), COVID-19 educational disruption and response, <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>; Education at a Glance 2020, Figure D1.4.

This is a first. We have nothing to compare it with. Education Departments are scrambling to design strategies to close knowledge gaps and where possible make up “lost time”.

The impact of a global crisis and the lockdown that followed showed how important professions, like nursing and teaching, have been taken for granted. It has certainly shown that teaching is an essential service and that sending children to school frees up parents to engage in economic activities, in peace. There is definitely a new respect for the work of the educator and there is greater respect for the educator less concerned with knowledge memory and deeply concerned about engaging in deep thinking. The ability to analyse, create and evaluate any given data far



1. Estimated number of hours by level of education based on the average number of hours per year, as for some subjects, the allocation of instruction time across multiple levels is flexible.

2. Year of reference 2018.

3. The number of grades in lower secondary education is three or four, depending on the track. The fourth year of pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO) was excluded from the calculation. Countries and economies are ranked in ascending order of the total number of compulsory instruction hours.

Source: OECD (2019), Table D1.1. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<https://doi.org/10.17977/BJ7980d-en>).

exceeds the ability to memorise and regurgitate it. Curriculae and school learning programmes that have as their cornerstones mastery and competence in; 1. Procedural knowledge (skills), 2. Declarative knowledge (concepts presented in various contexts) and, 3. Attitudes and Values are less perturbed by the reduced academic year. Time at school seems to be irrelevant.

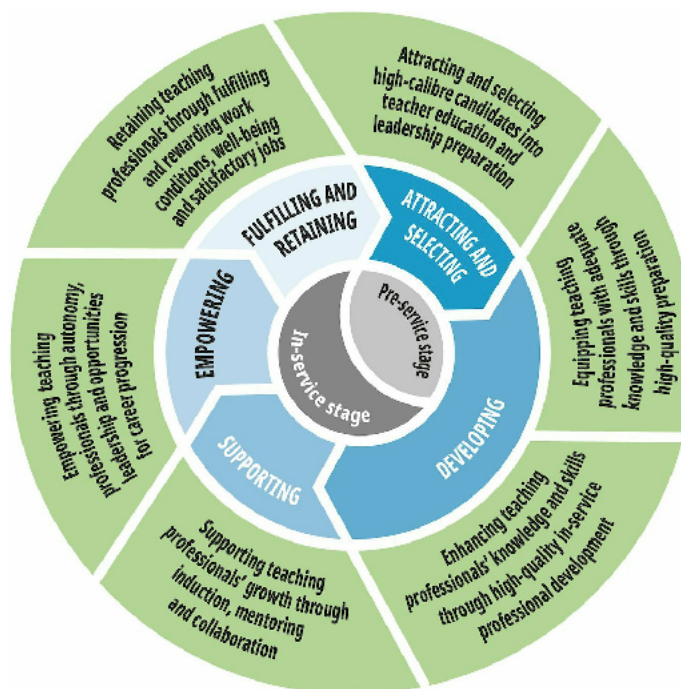
Finland is spending, on average about 700 hours at school per year or 6300 hours for the entire general education programme over 9 years. Australia on the other hand is spending 1000 hours per year, 11 000 hours over 11 years. Using a simple calculation over a 200 day school year, we can compare a school day in Finland to be

about 3,5 hours and in Australia to be 5 hours.

South Africa, which does not feature on the 2019 OECD table above requires students from Grade R to 12 to spend an average of 1200 hours per year over 13 years or 15 600 hours. Judging by the academic performance of South African students, it seems clear that the longer school day (more than double that of Finland) does not equate to higher levels of competence, academic success or improved employment rates.

What seems to make the difference is the capacity and ability of the education leader to provide exceptional pre-service tuition in teaching strategies in the form of hands-on application, so that teachers entering the workspace are fully trained, highly competent, passionate and capable to meet the rapidly changing demands of a fast moving, and fragile world.

It equally seems dependent on In-Service professional development where teachers are equipped to engage in deep thinking as part of their employment conditions.



Source: Adapted from OECD (2019[12]), A Flying Start: Improving

Now is the time for education leaders to put together a strategy for future disruptions. Keeping teachers as the focal point has become essential. Pre-service and In-service professional development cannot be an optional extra. It must be at the heart of all school leadership and needs to include:

1. Developing teachers using high quality professional development
2. Supporting using mentors and collaborative groups
3. Empowering teachers by providing an environment of autonomy and leadership opportunities
4. Fulfilling and retaining teaching professionals by creating rewarding conditions where wellbeing is the focus
5. Attracting and selecting high calibre candidates
6. Perhaps the most encouraging news when we begin to talk about In-service professional development is the OECD statistic that a high percentage of teachers are open to change

We tend to focus on the 20% who are not open to change and worry about their response instead of acknowledging that the 80:20 principles applies. Let's focus on the 80% and make the changes that are required.

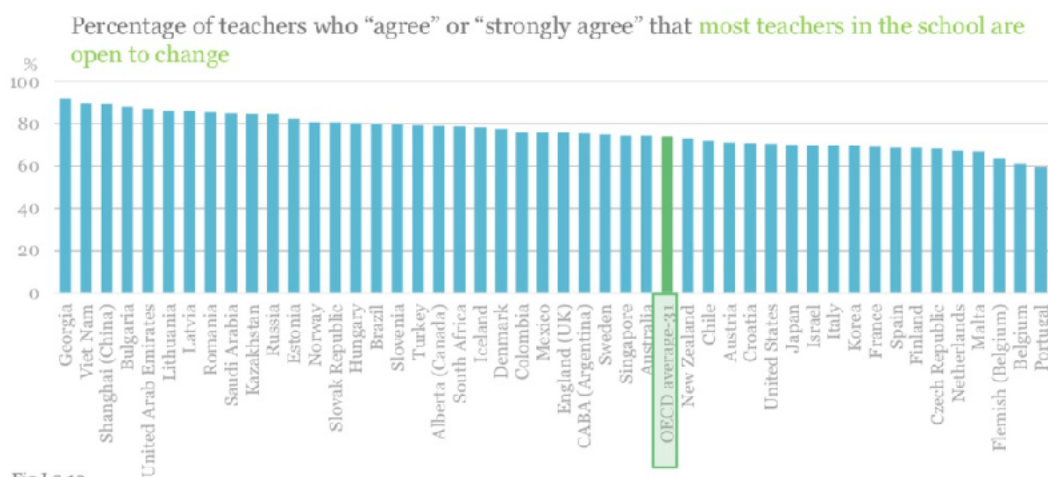


Fig 1.2.12



Scenarios for the future of schooling

The secret seems to be the **teacher**. If we are going to change education it is not going to come from politicians or corporates. Education change needs to be placed in the hands of the teacher.

Our current model of large schools emerged in the 18th and 19th century out of a need to equip children with knowledge for the industrial economy and to certify the individual student. During the 20th century, the decline of child labour and the entry of women into the market resulted in the need for child care. School seemed an obvious vehicle and values, culture and religion could be included.

As schools grew rapidly, little was known about the link between how the brain learned, how the mind developed at different key stages and how a variety of instructional strategies were needed to embed skills and concepts into long term memory. As a result, schools were based on what was currently cutting edge, ie. how industry worked. Schools were based on the factory model with standardised processes - year groups were even called Standards, rote-learning was required for certification purposes and short-term memorisation was essential. If you were skilled in these specific areas you were declared , “Bright and able!”

Today we understand the science behind how the Mind, Brain and Education interact. Everyday we learn more about the complexity of the human brain and how teachers can switch on or switch off the brain. We also now know about brain plasticity and the ability of the brain to find different pathways to achieve competence. Further, new research has

made it abundantly clear that social, emotional learning is an essential part of human education and of great benefit in the world of work. Schools are now inclusive, providing learning opportunities for all. Resilience is important, mindsets are taught, failure is seen as a step in the right direction and not punishable and different cognitive strategies are shared so that many can reach mastery.

The certification from the industrial era remains a stumbling block. Large school systems revert back to tried and tested individual testing which is often now digital to make the process efficient. This old world certification process is a massive stumbling block and does not align with modern thinking.

New technologies are on the way which are referred to as “future-fit evaluations” which can be adapted to a diverse school population, but still support high expectations while building a sense of self-worth and confidence.

Every leader in education needs to take time to think about the future of schooling following the COVID pandemic. Since the last pandemic 100 years ago, and despite major world wars, depression and economic collapses, we have never experienced anything like 2020. A great

deal of thinking has been done by **CERI**, the Centre for Education Research and Innovation.

It is a good time as schools prepare for 2021, for Leaders and their Leadership Teams to consider the future scenarios and the path their school needs to take.

Sadly, school-wide modernisation has been slow. Systems, controlled by the State and large listed enterprises were designed to demonstrate achievement in order to attract paying students.

The secret seems to be the TEACHER. If we are going to change education it is not going to come from politicians or corporates. Education change needs to be placed in the hands of the teacher. Nineteen years ago, the OECD report in 2001 pp 71-72 stated:

The more complex and uncertain the world in which we live, the more that alternative sources of knowledge and influence are available to students, the more open schools become to diverse clienteles, and the more varied the organisational and pedagogical strategies that teachers should deploy, the greater the levels of professional skill needed to meet them. There are growing expectations that they (teachers) can operate in new organisational structures, in collaboration with colleagues and through networks, and be able to foster individual student learning. These call for

demanding concepts of professionalism: the teacher as facilitator and knowledgeable, expert individual and networked team participant, oriented to individual needs and to the broader environment, engaged in teaching and in research and development.

Indeed, 20 years later, "Despite wide evidence on the key role that motivation and emotions play in teaching and learning, teacher education as well as entry, selection, certification and hiring criteria in many systems do not give proper consideration to teachers' affective and motivational capacities." (OECD, 2019).

As you consider the future scenarios, reflect on your own school. Does access to formal school mean access to employment and job security? Are developmental delays seen as barriers or simply roadblocks that need to be addressed with a detour? Is your school fit for the future or pasted in the past scrapbook? How has technology changed the way you taught in 2020 and what impact can it have on your school in the future?

Let's reflect!

Infographic 4.1. Overview: Four OECD Scenarios for the Future of Schooling

OECD Scenarios for the Future of Schooling	 Goals and functions	 Organisation and structures	 The teaching workforce	 Governance and geopolitics	 Challenges for public authorities
Scenario 1  Schooling extended	Schools are key actors in socialisation, qualification, care and credentialing.	Educational monopolies retain all traditional functions of schooling systems.	Teachers in monopolies, with potential new economies of scale and division of tasks.	Strong role for traditional administration and emphasis on international collaboration.	Accommodating diversity and ensuring quality across a common system. Potential trade-off between consensus and innovation.
Scenario 2  Education outsourced	Fragmentation of demand with self-reliant "clients" looking for flexible services.	Diversification of structures: multiple organisational forms available to individuals.	Diversity of roles and status operating within and outside of schools.	Schooling systems as players in a wider (local, national, global) education market.	Supporting access and quality, fixing "market failures". Competing with other providers and ensuring information flows.
Scenario 3  Schools as learning hubs	Flexible schooling arrangements permit greater personalisation and community involvement.	Schools as hubs function to organise multiple configurations of local-global resources.	Professional teachers as nodes of wider networks of flexible expertise.	Strong focus on local decisions. Self-organising units in diverse partnerships.	Diverse interests and power dynamics; potential conflict between local and systemic goals. Large variation in local capacity.
Scenario 4  Learn-as-you-go	Traditional goals and functions of schooling are overwritten by technology.	Dismantling of schooling as a social institution.	Open market of "prosumers" with a central role for communities of practice (local, national, global).	(Global) governance of data and digital technologies becomes key.	Potential for high interventionism (state, corporate) impacts democratic control and individual rights. Risk of high social fragmentation.

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