

# Introduction

## A Changing Landscape for Teaching

It is no exaggeration to use the word “revolution” when talking about how our lives have changed over the past few decades – and so has the set of skills we need to participate fully in and benefit from our globalised, hyper-connected, and increasingly knowledge-based economies and societies. Because our environments are faster-paced and more unpredictable than ever before, there is increasing pressure for governments to provide the right skills to all citizens, through high-quality education systems, and to do so in effective and equitable ways.

Teachers are a crucial part of this process of building more successful education systems, as evidence has shown that beyond the influence of parents and other factors outside the school, teachers provide the most important influence on student learning. But it is important to recognise that the work of teachers is radically different today than it was just a few years ago. Teachers worldwide are facing new demands and challenges, forcing a re-evaluation of their role and an assessment of how the teaching profession can rise to the next level to meet these challenges.

Indeed, the working landscape of teachers is changing as they face increasingly diverse classrooms. Growing participation rates in education worldwide translate into much more diverse student populations in terms of socio-economic backgrounds, availability of parental support for homework, and ability levels within classrooms. At the same time, globalisation and decreasing transport costs, among other factors, have boosted migration flows across countries and continents, bringing greater ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity to schools. Education systems have also become more inclusive in recent years, and increasingly integrate students with special needs into mainstream schools and classrooms. These new realities are causing a shift in the role of teachers, from providers of uniform instruction and rote memorisation of knowledge to facilitators of active learning for diverse student audiences.

Meanwhile, rising inequality between and within countries, even in times of greater affluence, have brought issues of equity and social mobility to the forefront. Evidence shows that the most successful education systems are those that cater to the needs of all students, irrespective of personal circumstances or characteristics. Making globalisation work for all requires a new emphasis on social cohesion and education. As a result, the pressure is mounting on teachers to both cater and respond to the needs of diverse learners, and to provide more inclusive, targeted and individualised instruction to enable all learners to thrive, regardless of individual physical, educational or socio-economic disadvantage.

Technological and societal changes also bring about a new emphasis on students' well-being and the importance of forging partnerships with families. Improving individual well-being through the lifespan has become a key public policy goal throughout the OECD and beyond, as the modern world has created new stresses. Education is increasingly seen as having the responsibility to foster students' well-being, in addition to its traditional focus on cognitive outcomes. This requires schools and teachers to work more closely with parents to support students' academic and social progress more effectively. Indeed, as much as technology is transforming our lives for the better, it has also given rise to previously unknown risks and dangers such as hacking, cyber-bullying and identity theft, to name just a few emerging trends. As teenagers and children are frequent users of online services and social networks, schools and teachers are increasingly faced with the challenges of educating and guiding students through both the advantages and disadvantages of the virtual world, without always having the necessary skills to do so themselves.

Technological progress also provides educators with a much wider array of tools for instruction than in the past, but also challenges teachers to themselves learn how to best use technology to foster educational outcomes. The OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) revealed in 2014 that information and communication technology (ICT) skills for teaching were the second highest reported professional development need of teachers, with close to one in five teachers reporting a high level of need. And the pace of technological advancement seems to be constantly accelerating, thereby amplifying the challenge for the teaching profession to keep up with these changes, and maintain up-to-date skills for using technology in the classroom.

The nature of teaching itself is being challenged by rapid changes around the world. The advancement of technology, the transition towards more globalised and knowledge-based economies, the increase of migration and refugee flows, rising inequalities, and a surge in populism and radicalism, have produced profound changes in the labour market, democratic institutions and the very fabric of societies. In this context, educational systems have an imperative to provide the next generation with the skills and tools needed to navigate uncertainty and constant change. As such, there is increasing recognition that the outcomes of education need to extend beyond the traditional development of content knowledge and cognitive skills to also encompass new dimensions such as strategies for autonomous, lifelong learning, and character qualities that foster resilience, openness to other perspectives and an appreciation of the importance of inclusive, sustainable social progress. For teachers, this shift requires adapting their teaching strategies to meet the new demands of the 21st century.

## **The Qudwa Global Teachers' Forum**

These changes in the landscape and nature of teaching are paramount, and can be somewhat destabilising and daunting for individual teachers and for the profession of teaching as a whole. This is the backdrop for the creation of the Qudwa Global Teachers' Forum (Qudwa Forum, or Forum hereon), started in 2016 by His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme

Commander of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Armed Forces, with the twin goals of empowering teachers to think creatively and helping them teach for tomorrow.

The 2017 edition of the Qudwa Forum was comprised of more than 800 educators from over 80 countries worldwide. Participants were specially selected for the impact they have had on their students, schools and communities, and included the participation of teachers and alumni from the Teach for All<sup>1</sup> and Varkey Foundation Global Teacher Prize<sup>2</sup> networks. They join a global community of role models who, as leaders, have the capacity to influence the mindsets of others to achieve the Qudwa Forum's aim of improving the future of education.

The OECD contributed to the Qudwa Forum by developing a programme of interactive “Teacher Talk” sessions to discuss some of the key emerging trends and challenges that will impact tomorrow's teaching, with experts in the field, practitioners and other key stakeholders. The Qudwa Forum aspires to spread the word more broadly as well, and to carry the voices of this group of role models out to the worldwide teaching community. This is the backdrop for this practitioner- and action-focused report, which compiles the essence of the Qudwa Forum 2017 “Teacher Talk” sessions.

Chapter 1 explores how school systems can respond to every child, and help them achieve their potential regardless of personal or social disadvantages. The chapter discusses the role of teachers in ensuring excellence and equity in education and includes strategies that can be adopted to better integrate all students in classrooms and schools.

Chapter 2 discusses how schools and families can work together to help ensure the social and emotional well-being of children. It explores how parents and teachers can better communicate and collaborate to maximise student learning and well-being. It also examines how bullying can impact learning and identifies ways in which students, teachers and parents can work together to address it.

Chapter 3 examines the shifts in teaching strategies to equip students with the right mix of skills, knowledge, attitudes and competencies required to succeed in the workforce. The chapter discusses what quality teaching means in the 21st century and examines the benefits and challenges of incorporating active learning strategies in classrooms.

Chapter 4 examines the various ways in which technology is changing the learning environment. It explores how teachers can use technology to support their teaching. Building on this, the chapter turns to look at social media and gamified teaching approaches that are particularly useful in increasing student engagement.

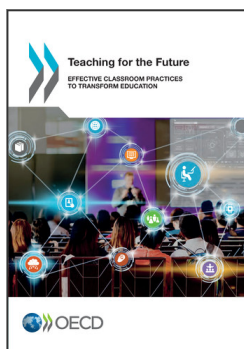
Finally, Chapter 5 discusses how best to foster innovation in teaching and learning to respond to the needs of 21st century learners. It explores issues around adopting and implementing innovative pedagogical approaches. To this end, the chapter also discusses the role of feedback in supporting teachers, and helping them innovate and develop as educators.

Each chapter focuses on two or three specific topics under the chapter's broader theme. The presentation of each topic begins with an overview from research, including empirical evidence from OECD studies, followed by a summary of the corresponding Qudwa Global Teachers Forum “Teacher Talk” discussion, highlighting lessons learned and key action points.

For policy makers, teacher educators, practitioners and others interested in education, we hope that this publication is an inspiring resource that informs many thoughtful discussions about the future of teaching. We invite all readers to ask themselves: “What does all of this mean for my daily work?”

### Notes

1. Teach For All is a global network of 46 independent, locally led and funded partner organisations whose shared mission is to expand educational opportunity by increasing and accelerating the impact of social enterprises that are cultivating the leadership necessary for change.
2. The Varkey Foundation Global Teacher Prize is an award of USD 1 million, presented annually to an exceptional teacher who has made an outstanding contribution to their profession. The Global Teacher Prize is awarded by the Varkey Foundation under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai.



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