EDUCATE TEASER REPORT

SHOCK TO THE SYSTEM

LESSONS FROM COVID-19

Part 1: DISCONNECTION

Like an ecosystem, the education community relies on strong connections between the groups within it to thrive. But all too often, these groups and their members exist in unconnected silos. The data and evidence that we analysed, a snippet of which we present here, illustrate the problems that occur when the education community is disconnected, and can become dysfunctional.

Cambridge University Press will publish the full report in February 2021.

The findings are presented from the perspective of the role of EdTech, which has provided a vital learning lifeline for many pupils. We highlight areas of the community that were compromised when the traditional face to face schooling system broke down, and had to rapidly reconfigure.

We report on the relationships and communication between key educational stakeholders, and on the integrity of those connections.

This is a story about disconnection and missed opportunities, of existing weaknesses leading to breakdowns. But it is also a story of impressive resilience, and how the future will present great opportunities for rapid improvement, building on foundations that have been strengthened during 2020.

- Professor Rose Luckin and the EDUCATE Team
Jan 2021
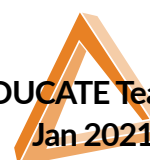
> "We have had **exams crises** before. We have had schemes to end the **digital divide** before. And yet, no attempt to **learn from history**, and instead, just **mountains of guidance** to add to headteacher workload. For most, teaching and learning came way down on the priority list because **compliance had to come first.**"
>
> *- Lord Jim Knight, TES Global*

Part 2: EFFECTIVE ONLINE LEARNING

THE EVIDENCE

USE OF EDTECH

From April 2020, it was reported that the most popular school activities were:

- Live (synchronous) lessons
- Digitally marked assignments
- Shared lesson recordings
- The provision of downloadable activities

FREE EDTECH

Our surveys found free EdTech on offer during lockdown was reported either used or recommended by:

- 100% educational leaders
- 50% parents
- 33% teachers

Approx. 66% of EdTech companies reported free EdTech on offer during lockdown

The World Economic Forum examination of the effects of Covid-19 concludes that it is necessary to combine the power of technology with the power of communities. There is "a fundamental need to belong, learn and share".

We need meaningful communities because they are force multipliers. They make learning fun and create a peer-to-peer accountability mechanism that shapes a culture of learning.

(WEF report by Amitabh, Aug 2020)
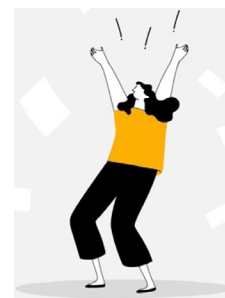
THE FUTURE OF EDTECH
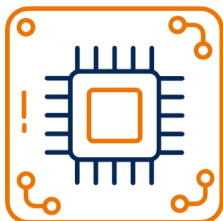
- London's Edtech ecosystem is the largest in Europe with an estimated value of $3.4bn, and it is the only city in Europe in the global Edtech top 10 by investment
- Researchers expect more blended learning may be implemented in schools, mixing classroom and online, to continue the fight to reduce the impact of Covid-19
- Schools and the wider EdTech sector pulled out all the stops to support learners at breakneck speed during the initial school closures. Schools and the EdTech industry now face the significant challenge of embedding these new practices over the longer-term' (Caroline Wright, Director General, BESA)

Touchpoints: *Rethinking Assessment*

> "Designing and implementing **high quality** assessment requires **clarity** about the principles, purposes, **use** and **possible consequences** of assessment, as well as understanding about **validity, reliability, ethics,** and other key concepts. The major task of changing high stakes summative assessment will take **years.**"
>
> *- Dr Sue Swaffield, Wolfson College Cambridge*

Touchpoints: *Rethinking Attendance*

> "For the cohort of children who face barriers to school attendance, lockdown provided **welcome relief** from the **daily pressure** of attendance, and the **threat** of parental fines and prosecution. It also demonstrated that **remote education is possible.** We need to build online provision as a **permanent complement** to mainstream education and one which could be synchronous, engaging, **therapeutic and effective.**"
>
> *- SquarePeg Team, teamsquarepeg.org*

THE ESSENTIALS

- Online courses are a **team effort**, with subject experts, instructional designers, students' representatives, and technology experts all working **together** systematically to design and deliver effective education

- **Engagement and presence,** including cognitive engagement, teacher-learner engagement, peer engagement and wider schools'/ecosystems' engagement become primary, over and above attendance

- **Combine synchronous and asynchronous modes of learning**, and a variety of media types, such as video, simulations, serious games, and augmented reality

- **Formative assessment** and regular **feedback** are key to success

- **Build the ability to learn** within learners - learners working remotely need to be more self-effective than when in school

- Smart and secure **online communities** are a key support

- **Inclusive infrastructure** is essential for everyone to participate in learning

- Recognise that the **stressors are different** and impact on different learners in different ways. Loneliness, fatigue, and overload can impact negatively on wellbeing. However, relief from **the stresses of school** can help some learners to blossom

UNDERSTANDING YOUR NEEDS

1. **Understand your own EdTech needs:**

- Look at the priorities in school/departmental development plan

- Involve teachers, other staff, parents, learners

- Identify gaps or issues in your school development plan or curriculum that could be addressed by technology

2. **Conduct an inventory:**

- What software is already deployed and used?

- How much does it cost you?

- What hardware do you have?

- What skills and skills gaps can you spot in your staff?

3. **Ask for evidence:**

- What evidence does a supplier have that their product actually achieves your required outcome?

- In what context was this evidence collected? Is this context similar to your school's context?

- How long do you have to use the EdTech in order to see the advertised outcomes?

4. **Try before you buy:**

- You may also want to pilot EdTech you already have that isn't being implemented by enough staff

- Make sure you ask exactly what data will be collected by the EdTech, where it's stored, who can access it, and for what purpose

5. **Learn from the data:**

- What does the EdTech provider do with the data collected from your deployment? / what do they do with the findings?

- Will you purchase the product?

- How can pilot data inform implementation across the school?

"**Learning cannot be remote**. But it can take place **online.** Like the best classroom teaching, it is the result of a **skilfully designed combination** of co-constructed content, context, creativity, collaboration, and communication in a **community,** supported by **caring, capable, confident** and **compassionate teachers.**"

- Bob Harrison, Northern College for Adults

FINDING YOUR PEOPLE

Not all members of the education community experienced and dealt with COVID-19 disruption to their teaching and learning in the same way.

Studying the differences in the support systems these members used, the educational opportunities they identified, and the concerns they reported, allowed us to identify 5 distinct personas, for whom different recommendations and support should be provided moving forward.

Can you spot yourself among them?

The Five Personas:

Fire Tamers

Fire Tamers are the largest group. They put their energy into tackling the challenges that get in the way of learning. Give them the right tools, support and resources and they will shine brightly!

This group has more state school than independent school members.

There are more secondary school members than primary school ones.

Space Seekers

Space Seekers are constantly looking for the right learning space for each child. They do their jobs well and once they've mastered the basics, will use technology to deliver effective learning for students.

Slightly more independent school stakeholders than state school.

Space seekers are mostly from primary schools.

Aeronauts

Aeronauts are ready to fly and relish trying new things and learning. They feel well-supported, optimistic and recognise the value of technology to help learners reach for the sky.

Aeronauts comprise slightly more of independent school than state school members.

There are slightly more secondary school than primary school members.

Water Pilots

Water Pilots smoothly sail through turbulent waters to steer around obstacles. When they land they are ready to dry off and get tech-savvy.

Water Pilots are mostly from independent schools.

More or less evenly spread between primary and secondary schools.

Earth Movers

Earth Movers are focused on the pedagogical grounding. They are keen to develop the infrastructure that supports schools, and are keen to promote well-being and communication.

There are more independent school than state school stakeholders in this group.

There are more primary school than secondary school Earth Movers.

Would you like to know more?

• Our full reports will be published **February 2021**. If you'd like to be notified, subscribe here

What you can do:

• Take part in our expert roundtable on **Technology in Education: 2020 and Beyond,** on Weds 6th January @ 2pm. You can book a seat here

• Sign up to the **EDUCATE Newsletter** here

• Download our **Buying the Right EdTech for Your School Guide** here

• Contribute to our ongoing **Question for the Week** EdTech survey here

Part 3: RECONNECTING

A joined up educational community will be key to moving beyond the disruption 2020 has endured. Our full reports contain recommendations and guidance on how this can be achieved. The work is unique in its synthesis of the multiple voices inside the ecosystem, and it will be pragmatic and future-facing, with an emphasis on progress and connection, not just repair, and return to the status quo.

All report extracts from
Shock to the System: Lessons from
Covid-19, Vols. 1-2 (EDUCATE, 2021)