20 Ways Education Will Improve by 2020

October 15, 2015

Things are changing fast. By 2020 the majority of US children will be of color with a wide range of childhood experiences from neglected to coddled. Young adults can be distracted but are tolerant, enterprising and hyphenated.
Over the next five years we'll see big changes in learners and learning environments. With nearly ubiquitous mobile access, most young people in OECD countries have access to an array of free and open learning opportunities. Degree-based programs are becoming more learner-centered. Educators are benefiting from better working conditions and career opportunities.
Following are 20 ways that learning (K-20) will change over the next five (or 10) years.

Learning

1. Broader aims. K-12 institutions are moving past a narrow focus on reading, writing and math to a broader set of career-ready outcomes including dispositions and success skills. Parents in El Paso said they want their children to be critical and creative thinkers, informed problem solvers, bilingual communicators, productive citizens, and socially intelligent individuals.
A diverse group of leaders shaped a vision of Education Reimagined. They embraced broader aims shared below as knowledge, skills, and dispositions adapted from the work of the Council of Chief State School Officers.

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	DISPOSITIONS
The theoretical or practical understanding of someone or something.	**The capacities and strategies that enable learners to apply knowledge to novel situations, engage in higher order thinking, problem solve, collaborate, communicate effectively, and plan for the future.**	**The behaviors and ways of being that contribute to learners fulfilling their full potential.**
• World class standards • Career and technical education • Other content areas and essential literacies • Global competence • Applied knowledge	• Learning how to learn • Time/goal management • Critical thinking • Problem solving • Working collaboratively • Communicating effectively • Metacognition • Self/social awareness and empathy • Creativity & innovation	• Agency (self-efficacy) • Curiosity • Initiative • Resilience • Adaptability • Persistence • Leadership • Ethical behavior and civic responsibility • Self-control

With more states and communities embracing broader aims, more young people will be enrolling in college with a stronger executive function resulting in more focus and persistence.

2. Learner experience (LX). K-12 schools will incorporate more authentic, engaging, and applied learning experiences with the goal of boosting retention,

achievement, and completion rates. Students will engage in project-based learning that is both interest-based and meaningful and will be encouraged to design and "make" solutions in a variety of subjects.
Tech savvy high school grads will arrive on college campuses more demanding of engaging and personalized learning.

- See 21 LX questions, 10 Powerful Project-Based-Learning Engagement Strategies
- See The Maker Movement: What it Looks Like, Mindsets and Motivation
- See Must Know Buck Institute Project Based Learning Resources

3. Informal learning. Perhaps the most important trend is the explosion of free and inexpensive informal learning (outside of degree granting institutions). It could be more accurately called personal learning (for me rather than for degree). It includes but isn't limited to professional (career-oriented) learning. (See 36 ways to learn almost anything.)

- K12: Khan Academy, Gooru, PowerMyLearning, Big History Project, LearnZillion
- Postsec: Saylor, Udemy, Lynda, iTunes U

4. CareerEd. A new generation of blended applied and accelerated career education creates pathways to lucrative careers. Examples include Career Path High School in Utah, GPS Education Partners, and Ptech in NY, IL, and ID.
Next-gen postsecondary career schools, particularly coding bootcamps, are an alternative to traditional HigherEd in dynamic job categories.

- For individuals: General Assembly, Flatiron, Bloc, Udacity
- For organizations: NovoEd, Udemy.

5. Blended. While there will continue to be steady growth in part and fulltime online learning K-20, the larger trend is toward blending the best of face-to-face and online learning into new learning environments and sequences.

- Next Generation Learning Challenges has supported innovative secondary and postsecondary learning environments nationally and through regional funds

6. Guidance systems. By 2020, many students will have a personal learning plan articulating who they are, where they're headed and how they'll get there as part of their learner profile (see #16). There will be personalized counseling and guidance systems including virtual mentoring and informed postsecondary decision support connected to youth and family services.

- See Personalizing and Guiding College & Career Readiness
- Next-gen systems will combine components of Naviance + College Bound + Roadtrip Nation + CampusLogic + Communities in Schools

7. Adaptive. Most learners K-14 will benefit from adaptive learning and automated

feedback systems in reading, writing, and math.

- ALEKS, DreamBox Learning, i-Ready, Knewton, Reasoning Mind, Realizit, Fishtree

Organizational/Business Model

8. Free. The explosion of informal learning is driven by free and open education resources (OER). Secondary and postsecondary institutions are moving away from premium content and adopting free content and OER.

- CK12, Lumen Learning, OpenEd, SAS Curriculum Pathways

MOOCs and other low cost models will continue to pressure second and third tier HigherEd as, as John Danner said, "mass education is going to be free."

- Coursera, EdX, Saylor

Most EdApps are launched as free with hopes of building surface area; premium services monetize network effects. By 2020, several versions of the freemium strategy will be demonstrated pathways to scale and sustainability.

- Edmodo, MasteryConnect, OpenEd

9. Low cost. Also pressuring third tier players is a new crop of low cost GenEd options.

- GenEd: StraighterLine, Propero, DreamDegree

Lost cost private K-12 schools are spreading access to quality in Africa and India.

- Bridge International Academies, SPARK Schools

10. Competency. Long term trends from time to learning, from attendance to demonstration (see discussion from CompetencyWorks). Students will show what they know through meaningful and comprehensive projects that serve as learning opportunities as well as an ongoing effort to showcase work through portfolios that can transition into powerful resumes. Several New England states have adopted proficiency based high school diplomas and they are recognized by state universities.

Professional competence is increasingly codified by a badge or micro-credential, a portfolio of artifacts, and a list of references. Education may be one of the first professions to move to competency-based preparation with a clear map of educators need to know and be able to do, multiple ways to learn, and options for demonstrating mastery, no more random courses for continuing credits, just highly relevant job-linked learning.

- See Preparing Leaders For Deeper Learning

In dynamic job categories alternative market signaling profiles, portfolios, and references will become more important than degrees

- LinkedIn, Degreed, Pearson

11. Differentiated staffing. K-20 institutions will increasingly utilize distributed and differentiated staffing. Teacher leaders will support grade span teams, new

teachers, and impact. Specialists at a distance will expand student options and improve service delivery. Teacher career pathways will be more varied and attractive.

- See OpportunityCuture and Improving Conditions & Careers: How Blended Learning Can Improve the Teaching Profession
- More personalized and transformative professional development options for teachers, educators

Policy

12. Personalization. The last 20 years of K-12 debate was framed by federal accountability legislation. The next 20 years will be framed not by legislation but an emerging learner-centered vision (driven by many factors on this list). By 2020, several states will have scaled back standardized testing and will make better use of the continuous feedback environments that most students benefit from.

13. Performance contracting. By 2020, several states will use performance contracting, charter schools and energy management being current examples, to authorize and manage the relationship with all schools, universities, and education providers.

14. Performance funding. Replacing compliance and input-driven systems, several states will adopt incentives for completion and achievement. This will open doors to new models of teaching and learning, while avoiding unintended consequences common in current funding models.

- See Funding Students, Options and Achievement

15. Weighted and portable funding. By 2020, a dozen states will have made their funding systems more equitable and a dozen states will have introduced education savings accounts.

- See Nevada ESA

16. Learner profiles. Parent-managed K-12 learner profiles and learner-managed profiles in postsecondary will drive personalization and manage security. Parents (and guardians and mentors) will be play roles as curators of powerful learning experiences.

- See Smart Parents: Parenting for Powerful Learning

IT Stack

17. Full stack. The most innovative organizations combine next generation learning environments and new learning platforms. Michael Horn called them breakthrough models.

- Summit, Brooklyn Lab, Altschool, College for America

18. Platform-centric networks. By 2020, most K-12 districts and HigherEd

institutions will have adopted a learning platform (or app ecosystem) and there will be a dozen scaled platform-centric networks.

- New Tech Network, Altschool

Technological advances will continue to support this shift to Next-Gen Learning Platforms, like Buzz from Agilix and learning management systems, like Canvas will become more and more student-centered.

19. Mobile. Almost all young adults are learning and communicating on mobile devices. By 2020 nearly every educational institution will be optimized for mobile.

- DreamDegree, Canvas, Edmodo

20. Smart engines. Machine learning is increasingly behind everything interesting in K-20 and every big topic of study (e.g., health, climate change, social sciences). Machine learning is powering adaptive learning, recommendation engines, writing feedback, dynamic scheduling, staffing models, and lunch menus.

It's getting easier to learn anything anywhere. It's getting easier to create learning environments that work better for teachers and students. What else would you add to the list of things likely to be better by 2020? Leave a comment or Tweet us, @Getting_Smart.

For more check out:

- Smart List: 50 People Shaping the Future of K-12 Education
- Micro-Credentials: The Future of Professional Learning
- The Context-Driven Future of Learning

Udemy, LearnZillion, BLOC, General Assembly, Coursera, MasteryConnect, Edmodo, and DreamDegree are Learn Capital Companies where Tom is a partner. GPS Education Partners, DreamBox Learning, Curriculum Associates, SAS Curriculum Pathways, Pearson, Canvas and Agilix are Getting Smart Advocacy Partners.

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