

Guest editorial

William T. “Toby” Holmes

The 21st century is 20 per cent complete and ripe with concerns that impact the remaining 80 per cent, such as global warming, plastic-filled oceans, hunger, geopolitical tensions, nuclear proliferation, the digital divide, immigration, trade, vanishing species, and many others. Along with these concerns are the 20th-century images and visions of the 21st century that have gone unrealized and uncaptured in this current day and age. For example, think how now in 2020, as a global society we are unable to put a person back on the Moon. Yet, the answer to many, if not all, of societies' issues and problems are found in education. Thus, the purpose and goal of this special issue are best found in these three considerations:

- A student who graduates from college in the year 2020 will potentially work to the year 2050 and beyond – what innovations and best practices in education have prepared the student to excel in the world of organizations?
- A three-year-old student who enters education in the year 2020 will potentially graduate with a college degree around the year 2042 and could work well beyond the year 2070 – what innovations and best practices in education will prepare that student to succeed well into the later part of the 21st century?
- What are innovations and best practices in education that have the potential to impact the development and learning of organizations today?

As the guest editor of this special issue, I believe in the power of education. I have witnessed the importance of education on a personal level many times in life beginning with my grandfather who was able to graduate from college at age 55 and taught kindergarten thanks to my grandmother who saved money from garage sales to send him to college; to my mother who at age 81 still works as a substitute teacher at an educational and career technical training school for at-risk youth; and to my youngest son who was labeled a discipline problem in high school until he was diagnosed with a learning disability and is now succeeding in community college. Education is not only the great equalizer; it is the gateway to the future.

For education to have an impact in the mid-21st century, we have to realize some truths about education:

1. Children [and adults] cannot learn if they are hungry, unsafe, and/or sick,
2. We get out of education what we put into education, and if education is not our top priority we will not receive its full benefits:
 - For example, if education does not attract and retain top talent then students will learn from teachers who are potentially second-tier talent,
 - For example, if education is not our top priority and is funded and maintained at lower levels and in substandard places and spaces we cannot expect higher and higher standards of performance – we get what we pay for, and
3. For a 21st-century student to be a successful 21st-century employee, teachers and educators cannot embrace and utilize 20th-century models and modes of instruction.

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Therefore, this special issue brings forth ideas, issues, and innovations occurring in education today that have the potential to impact students, society, and organizational systems well into the mid-21st century.

Ian Cunningham begins the special issue with a challenging Viewpoint that education is largely unchanged from the 19th century to now and we all must expect something different, that we all must become involved, and we all must insist on a new educational paradigm for the 21st century.

William Sterrett *et al.*, through the power of professional development focuses on two 21st century critical areas:

1. international relations and communications; and
2. improving educator's capacity to affect climate change.

Smitu Malhotra and Venugopal Pingali look at the benefits of a rural immersion program within an Indian business school as a method for students in an urban setting to better understand the issues and problems of rural India. This article is a potent example of the modernization and transformation of rural areas in the 21st century that is occurring globally.

Silvia Olivares *et al.*, share the development and implementation process of a medical app coupled with increased formative assessments as well as improved timely and specific feedback as a vehicle for improving the clinical competence of medical students who are desperately needed in the 21st century.

During this period of intense scrutiny and concern with immigration and international border issues, Luana Ferreira-Lopes and Ingrid Van Rompay-Bartels examine the benefits of intercultural virtual collaboration across global boundaries in order to develop intercultural competence among future business professionals.

Nimitha Aboobaker and K.A. Zakkariya discuss the power of higher education students' orientations towards digital learning and future attitudes towards workplace change and innovation in the 21st century.

David Starr-Glass highlights the significance of undergraduate capstone experiences as a highly engaging activity for students to unify their undergraduate learning experiences into a deep learning problem of practice that propels these students into 21st century workforce readiness.

Tiffany Hunt *et al.*, shed light on the emerging trend in education known as microcredentialing. They highlight the benefits for professional growth and development for educators in a 21st century "just in time" learning environment geared to the needs of adult learners. Implications for impact across many disciplines and work environments outside of education are featured.

Annie Hale, Leanna Archambault, and Lukas Wenrick examine the transformation of higher education to meet the needs of the 21st century through the sharing of a framework and key categories to guide institutional conversations.

Miguel Gonzales and Maria Roberts share insights and successes of K-12 principals engaged in the franchised school model where their leadership and impact is spread across multiple schools/locations much in the same manner as CEOs who lead more than one company at the same time.

Reed Scull, Cliff Harbour and Keonghee Han discuss the importance of leading community colleges (and all organizations) through a greater emphasis and focus on employees' well-being, care, and consideration through a human resources frame and organizational mindset moving away from the 20th century bureaucratic leadership model.

Jessica Blum-deStafano and Eleanor Drago-Severson discuss critical strategies for leaders to enhance their growth and internal capacity in order to become more effective leaders and meet and adapt to the ever evolving needs of the mid-21st century.

The special issue ends with a conversation between Dr. Rose Luckin, Dr. Teresa Wasonga, Dr. Liz Hollingworth, and Dr. Scott Imig on:

- the positive impact of education on three year old students entering education today and graduating and working in the mid 21st century,
- concerns with education today and its ability to prepare students for the future,
- how education impacts the world of work, and
- what does the world of education look like in the year 2050.

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Finally, to me, as the guest editor of this special issue, reviewer, and published author in DLO, I see development and learning in organizations as education, as supporting learning, as teaching regardless of the field. And, it is through that lens and that

intentionality that I hope you will find the content of this special issue useful and helpful to you and your organization.

Sincerely,

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