



Global Education Unconference vol. 1

Sat, 30 May, 12-5 pm EST | 6-11 pm Joburg time



Source: Google search of education political cartoons

Welcome to the 1st virtual education unconference, where we use our collective mind to collect, share, discuss, and document insights, reflections, opportunities, challenges from working in the education sector. COVID has made the failures of our system apparent, and we've got a moment to reconfigure it but only if we seize it. The people represented here have combined decades of experience, and range from school to systems leaders, entrepreneurs, technologists and more. The unifying aspect is that we are all values-driven, bring interesting perspectives, and agree education needs to be transformed.

The goal is to produce insights that we can develop further (possibly to produce something like [this](#)), centered around the following questions which we will have a synchronous facilitated session per question, with each attendee having the opportunity to attend two sessions:

1. What are the **skills** we aim to develop, and how do they connect to each other? A chance to dive deeper from the main session into **transformational learning experiences**? What makes them so and are there consistent principles to this? How might we explore what it means to create **online-first** transformational learning experiences?
2. How do we define **principles of an ed system that can evolve** and adapt great ideas? Are there incentives or mechanisms we can use besides profit motive to enable this? Or otherwise how can we shift equilibrium and get education to work like a value chain?
3. **COVID** - how might the world look 3 months, 3 years, 30 years from now, and what are the key levers that we think will be areas to prioritize inside and outside the system to transform it the way we want? What should we keep? Get rid of?
4. How **do ideas go viral in education**? Which ones have failed to do so and why? More broadly, how did the education system develop into what it is now? What are the functions education / school plays or should play? What works? What doesn't? *What are lessons from other comparable industries, situations, outcomes, etc?*

5. **ADDED:** A safe space to discuss the events of the week in the US (George Floyd, riots, etc)

To keep in mind: What are the **existing networks, orgs, credibility levers** to make change happen in ed: both grass-roots up+top down? What **geographies** might we focus on 1st? Why?

Overall Pre-read (12 pages): [Seymour Papert's Why School Reform Is Impossible, in response to Tyack and Cuban's Tinkering Towards Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform and O'Shea's and Koshmann's reviews of his book The Children's Machine.](#)

[Our tool for capturing artifacts, lessons areas for further exploration](#) MILANOTE

Agenda:

Session	Length	Description
Buffer	5 min	Install Milanote Chrome add-on
Welcome	15 min 6:05-6:20	welcome to community, framing of the day, norms for interaction and the community (aka values), questions
Introduction	20 min 6:20-6:40	enable introductions of all participants to each other, incl. powerful learning experience: • Name • Org + Role • Top 2 super powers • Value you most align with (borrowed from Transcend: play big, results for kids, diverse voices, perpetual beta, love, long-term) • What you hope to get out of today • Powerful learning experience
Powerful Learning Experience Teardown	60 min 6:40-7:40	Doing a tear down of a powerful learning experience -- analyzing what makes it so
Framing From Papert		quick highlights of what struck us from Papert

Clarification of Sessions		any questions people have before deciding sessions to join and to ensure we have ones every participant is excited to explore more deeply with fellow participants etc.
<i>Bathroom Break</i>	<i>10 min</i>	
Session One	60 min 7:50-8:50	each major question should have a moderator, time keeper and a note taker • Share Stories and Insights • Identify existing problems • Define theories of change and opportunities • Sketch and connect different ideas • Create a prototype or concept • Surface potential assumptions or questions for further research, development and testing
<i>Bathroom Break</i>	<i>10 min</i>	
Session Two (working meal)	60 min 9:00-10:00	rotate, people switch to the next question they're excited to jam on; same format as the first (would be great to have similar moderator go through same exercise with different people)
<i>Bathroom Break</i>	<i>10 min</i>	
Debrief	30 min 10:10-10:40	- Each moderator shares a overview - Debrief participants feelings, what they might take into their work and further areas for exploration - Next steps

[Feedback Form](#)

Session Topic + Facilitator	Session One	Session Two
Q1 Seth	Zac, Joe; Zineb, Loveness, Samson, Katherine, Nazli, Austin, Lucy (be a little late), Theodore	Sven, Yan, Amber
Q2 Nidhi		Zac, Aukeem, Jim,, Theodore, Josh, DavidB, Yusuf
Q3 Fu		Joe, Zineb, Loveness, Katherine, Nazli, Andrew, Irene

Q4 Fu (w Jim as backup 😊)	Aukeem, Jim, Sven, Yan, Natalie, Josh	
5 What's Going On (Alex)	Irene, Karn, Andrew	

Values People Most Identified With (borrowed from Transcend Education)

Love	IIII IIII
Play Big	II
Perpetual Beta	IIII
Long-term	III
Diverse Voices	II
Results for Kids	III

Attendees

YES	30
NOT YET	15

1. **YES** Alex Fallon (most recently w More Than Me in Liberia (part of LEAP) as Chief Academic Officer; cofounder blended learning platform; MIT Sloan MBA; Director of blended learning at FirstLine Schools in New Orleans)
2. **YES** Alvaro Sanmartin Cid (former engineer; founder of edu startup in Spain that went through 500 Startups; growth at Udacity & Skills Matter; PAZ.ai; launched his own consultancy and company to help individuals, companies and institutions design and implement meaningful and measurable learning experiences and spaces)
3. **YES** Amber Zhang (in DC, ex-teacher & founder of Ticket Youth Association, Measuring Success helping schools and nonprofits make sense of data; Global Development Incubator Analyst in Hong Kong;)
4. **YES** Andrew Sutherland (founder of Quizlet; been building this company for the last 15 years - one of most successful, direct to consumer edtech companies; raised Series A from USV, etc.; now working with US Digital response to COVID)
5. **YES** Austin Volz (Program Design Director at Avenues R&D / Author of The Elements of Education)
6. **YES** Claire Shorall (coding teacher, helped Oakland Unified launch teach coding across district; helped California author their standards for coding curriculum; left to join a VC and now starting her own company)
7. **YES** David Baptista (former teacher, Brazil, LALA co-founder and executive director)
8. **YES** David Fu (ex-banker, helped edu incubator scale from NOLA to NYC + 20 cities across the US, launched innovative school network Streetlight Schools in South Africa)
9. **YES** Jim Liu (head of product at Altitude Learning fka AltSchool, launching a direct to family virtual PBL product incubated inside company in response to COVID)
10. **YES** Joe Pucci - (was on a fellowship exploring edu all over the world last year; did Google's SIYLI program (emotional leadership))

11. **YES** Josh Schwartzman (started an edtech company; now at IDEO on Creative Diff team, measuring culture of innovation in orgs)
12. **YES** Irene Shao (Product at brightwheel, formerly at Khan Academy and VIPKID, founder at BEAM; HGSE grad)
13. **YES** Karen Sun (ex-engineering and research manager at Quizlet; started Bona Ikamva in South Africa - last mile edu and resource supports, teaching Llama school (website tba))
14. **YES** Katherine Liew (MIT graduate student, ex Nova Pioneer Schools, ex in-house product manager for Founders Factory Africa)
15. **YES** Kavi Pandan (interned w DC public schools one summer, us at Streetlight Schools one summer, Fulbright taught in Germany for one year)
16. **YES** Kwasi Adi-Dako (Moringa School Director of Learning (a coding school in Nairobi); ALU instructor, product, curriculum; ex banker)
17. **YES** Loveness Mutongoreya (teacher at the Dow Academy in Botswana)
18. **YES** Lucy Chen (Learning Experience Designer at Springboard; founding graduate @Minerva, HGSE)
19. **YES** Mikala Streeter (founding principal at The LIFE School, 21st century HS in Atlanta; MIT CS / Stanford GSE grad)
20. **YES** Natalie Chan - Founder and CEO of OWN Academy
21. **YES** Nazli Ece Usta (MIT Integrated Design & Management graduate student; currently working on human-centered design curriculum development for a secondary school; ex-IBM iX Consultant, specializing in customer experience strategy)
22. **YES** Nidhi Hebbar (Aspen Institute Tech Policy Fellow, ex-Global Product Lead at Apple in Education, LearnSprout (acquired by Apple))
23. **YES** Samson Peng (onboarding and learning at Google for new software devs)
24. **YES** [Seth Trudeau](#) (former teacher / US ed reform, ALX's VP of Product / Curriculum, Stanford LDT Master's) On Twitter @MrTrudeau, writing from time to time at [Substack](#)
25. **YES** Sven Glietenberg (Teaching Teachers in the Department of Childhood Education, University of Johannesburg, Soweto Campus; former high and middle school English Teacher)
26. **YES** Theodore Sutherland (former head of college ALU; currently head of ALX's manager training programs)
27. **YES** Yan Chen (interdisciplinary designer @ Studio I61:3; Creator of DSI; women's health startup founder; Masters in Design Engineering at Royal College of Art & Imperial College London; taught in two high schools in France, education consulting in China)
28. **YES** Yusuf Ahmad (worked at African Leadership University, ALU - currently a Research fellow at MIT Media Lab in the Lifelong Kindergarten, looking at tools for collaborative project-based learning curriculum design)
29. **YES** Zac Hill (The Future Project; also a game designer who came from Magic The Gathering)
30. **YES** Zineb Mouhyi (policy director at Qatar Foundation / WISE Summit; now Weaving Lab)

31. **NOT YET** Aukeem Ballard (former teacher, Portland, OR Public Schools, then Summit Public Schools curriculum + diversity & equity work; at UC Berkeley GSE earning his PhD)
32. **NOT YET** Brandon Huang (small biz founder and owner in college; Deloitte strategy consulting; HealthCare.com Chief of Staff; Penn MBA Wharton admit; community builder - NYC Ops Directors & basketball)
33. **NOT YET** Caroline Hill (trained as a chemical engineer; HGSE, DJ, founding principal for E L Haynes high school in DC, Citybridge, Founder of 228 Accelerator, design x ed x equity)
34. **NOT YET** David Gaynor (built and sold learn coding platform to Andela; worked at Andela - learning to code and talent outsourcing firm for devs)
35. **NOT YET** Gabrielle Santa-Donato (ex Future Project; helped build ecosystem around design thinking in Chile; curriculum designer and facilitator with Design Your Life Lab at Stanford)
36. **NOT YET** Gordon Swaby (started a test prep and one of most successful edtech companies in Jamaica / the Caribbean)
37. **NOT YET** Hassan Hassan (former ed startup founder, CEO of 4.0 Schools, the edu incubator I used to work for)
38. **NOT YET** Jocelyn Logan-Friend (teacher, special edu policy at US DoEd, regional manager for Spark Schools in South Africa)
39. Joseph Stunzi
40. **NOT YET** Mdudzi Gama (self made entrepreneur from South Africa, sold a tech company and building his next one)
41. **NOT YET** Michael Raspuzzi (Masters at Harvard; taught entrepreneurship, design and more; The Knowledge Society Boston Director)
42. **NOT YET** Naledi Maphorisa - The Dow Academy in Botswana
43. **NOT YET** Shalin Jyotishi (Assistant Director for Economic Development and Community Engagement at the Association for Public and Land-grant Universities, North America's presidents-led research, policy, and advocacy organization for 244 public research universities in the USA, Canada, and Mexico)
44. **NOT YET** Tyler Thigpen (Harvard EdLD, founder of Forest School, an Acton Academy; part of Transcend network)
45. **NOT YET** Thulaganyo Matlhoko (Social Studies teacher at the American International School of Johannesburg (AISJ); taught entrepreneurship at Streetlight Schools; taught Economics at the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls (OWLAG))

PS: Original Optional pre-reads (still think these are fascinating, but not necessary to read)

- Andy Matuschak: [tools of thought](#) is amazing but admittedly long
- Dan Wang: Optimism + Imagination as Human Capital to drive Innovation [part 1](#), [part 2](#)
- Seth Godin: [Soft Skills](#)

: curiosity - no judgement, feel presence with people; play big

Theodore: help people; building - get into chaos and build; Long-term - systemic issues

Nidhi: education is a team support - need different perspectives; ask critical questions - curious person; Diverse-voices -ask in the group

	Superpower 1	Superpower 2	Value
Jim		Aspirational -Humidity- learn from others	perpetual beta
Austin	Finding things	dig deep into things	play big
Andrew	programming	Curious - learning about people, reading books	Long-term
Joe Pucci			
Claire			love
Yan	connecting ideas to come up with something new		
Alex	high level ideas and get things done	aspirational super power: how to not let personal thinking to think about things	love

Samson			love
Natalie		Do whatever it takes to get things done - fearless	Perpetual beta
Katherine	putting different pieces together	empathy	
Sven Giletenberg	a teacher, understand what is working, what is not working for students		love, result for kids
Seth Trudeau	Convince people to do stupid things	Finding the silver lining	Ordering out of menu
David Baptista			Love
Karen Sun	People gather	fearlessss	Perpetual beta and love - More so to results for kids
Irene Shao	User empathy	"Stra-tactical"	Results for kids
Nessmutongreya	Being the voice for voiceless		Love
Lucy Chen	diverse perspectives		love - kindness, rationality
Mikala Streeter	Design projects for teenagers		perpetual beta
Zineb Mouhyi	Generalist		Love and perpetual beta
Zac Hill	make sense of super complex situation	management	

Nazli Usta	Design research; understand people's needs	Positive person - help with teamwork	Love
Yusuf Ahamd	Make the best chai	Make awkward faces	Fun
Alvaro Sanmartin	Come up with innovative solutions	Keep calm	Long-term

Harvest

Who	Harvest
Nidhi	Working with Aspen Institute to help schools create more iterative design culture to prepare for the fall post covid Gratitude
Austin	Ability to come together and discuss this without specific focus-- want to try to create this space in the future, focus on what people have to offer
Lucy	New school models with an eye towards what is happening in the world
Andrew	Potentially changing roles of teachers, the recognition of how much non-content based responsibility they have to take on, the unbundling of teacher roles
Kavi	Energized How often conversations bring up older topics and conversations
Josh	Collective and transparent decision making process that Fu facilitated. Great leadership can be very inclusive and involve all people in a human way
Karen	Humbled Leaning into async vs sync teaching. Generational differences in perspective and awareness, whether can leverage that

Alex	Restored Courage to
Yusuf	Diverse perspectives, the anonymity and focusing on what someone was saying Experiment with these ideas along these two arcs, we have ambitious ideas, what can we do next
Samson	Inspired, energized Wants to maintain work life balance :P Appreciative for the reminder that even though we're in tough times, there is a community full of caring thoughtful people who create solutions and care about their students, whether new or old. Intellectual humility wrt the cycle of insight. Challenging of assumptions.
Yan	Excited for the future of education Thinking laterally about other topics, unbundling teaching roles, MVC, sync vs async, how do they apply in other areas.
Amber	Been thinking about the terms education and employment, education and classroom are constructs, everything boils down to learning, when we start to hone in on learning, we start to think out of the box Impactful digital experiences don't need to be very unique or new, but everyday or normal experiences can be important
Sven	Been grading students, at the end have been asking a question at the end So involved with doing the work, don't necessarily stop to think about what it does in the world-- IF THIS GENERATION IS CREATING LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR THE NEXT GENERATION, IMAGINE WHAT THE NEXT GENERATION IS GOING TO DESIGN FOR THE NEXT ONE!!!! EXPONENTIAL LOVE
David B	Saturdays are inherently valuable. It's so beautiful to see everyone investing this kind of time. Cross pollinating of journeys. Collectively learning. Remote, synchronous, digital. Building insight together. Deep gratitude for the space.
Zineb	Super grateful. Inspiring to hear and see so many people thinking and caring about the same things.
Nazil	Inspired!!

	Student agency. Alternative schooling to inspire traditional educational systems.
Jim	Today is an exercise in evolution. Each topic had different amounts of design, each minimally facilitated. So much chaos today. The first instinct is to ask for answers. Less you do, the fewer answers you give, the more effective the process can be.
Fu	(Ladies and gentlemen and nonbinary, the lyrics to Fu's new jazz rap hit) (or the titles of tracks in his new album) Evolution in motion. Motion in evolution. Old is new, new is old. Inspiration as restoration, vv. Community is power, vv. ===== Safe space-- thank you for making it a brave space.