

### World 3: Only Connect



Widespread awareness and recognition of the increased pressure on natural resources such as water, clean air and productive land has led to a change in the way mainstream society talks about them, with most people now thinking of them as finite common goods shared by all. Having such concrete examples of common goods, coupled with a wave of industry nationalisations in the early part of the 21st Century, has supported a renewed sense of the public sphere and a reinvigorated civil society. Central to the evolution and maintenance of this newly strengthened social space are the various network technologies supporting communication between people. Not only do they facilitate on a practical level the exchanges and conversations that constitute this new civil society, but the rhetoric of the early "world-wide web" established a discourse of egalitarian collaboration and democratic activism that was able to take root in the reconfigured post-recession social landscape<sup>1</sup>.

This web-inspired remoulding of civil society differs from traditional formulations in a number of important regards. Developments in network and communications technology have lessened the need for social action to take place within formal organisations and groups - people are able to speak, act and mobilise others more fluidly and responsively without necessarily needing the support of a particular organisational structure<sup>2</sup>. Following this, there is less of an expectation that groups will achieve particular aims in isolation. At the same time, the complexity of the problems facing society in the 2010s and 2020s are such that interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral working is increasingly seen as the only way to generate new and appropriate strategies for change. Working within disciplines or sectors, or restricting your resources only to people within your immediate vicinity or workplace, is increasingly seen as an old-fashioned and unproductive way to do business. As a result, public action is seen as achievable only through the interdependent action of individuals working across diverse settings.



This requires a certain conception of citizenship within wider society. People have begun to consider themselves and each other as custodians, sharing a responsibility towards keeping the public space - environment, governance, infrastructure - healthy and resilient, through demanding and monitoring accountability from their local and national representatives, participating in democratic processes, and, most importantly, recognizing the importance of taking action themselves. This is not as taxing as it sounds: no single individual is expected to make a difference on their own (though there are a few remarkable people who do). Instead, aims are achieved through the cumulative effect of many small contributions - ten minutes asking for signatures online

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<sup>1</sup> Various networks to support people may not just be systems for work or education, the role of games in forming and supporting groups could be considered - for a discussion see the section "Virtual forms of collective experience" in Eva Vass' paper "New technology and habits of mind".  
[www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/new-technology-and-habits-of-mind](http://www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/new-technology-and-habits-of-mind)

<sup>2</sup> Another discussion around the role and formation of groups is in Sarah Riley's paper on youth cultures, "Identity, community and selfhood: understanding the self in relation to contemporary youth cultures". The neo-tribal theory suggests why youth groups are seen as acting against the dominant adult society.  
[www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/identity-community-and-selfhood-understanding-the-self-in-relation-to-contemporary-youth-cultures](http://www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/identity-community-and-selfhood-understanding-the-self-in-relation-to-contemporary-youth-cultures)

from one person, a few pounds towards a charity's administrative costs from another. There is an expectation that any task be shared, whether by a few people addressing a local issue or a federation of national charities: any positive action is understood to be the result of lots of people working together, with any credit and recognition derived from this collective action being spread around the group rather than accruing to any particular individual. The important thing is to do your bit, however small it might be, rather than seek recognition for your efforts.

Leaving recognition to the group, rather than claiming it as an individual, might have been seen as unreasonably selfless only a couple of decades ago at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Similarly, shouldering the burden of personal responsibility for real action, rather than imagining the responsibility to be someone else's, might have been seen as impossibly worthy. However, both of these are made possible through the redefinition of individual identity that has taken place over the preceding years that makes the idea of a discrete and separate identity harder to sustain. For example, as people got more used to computers and networks taking on tasks (such as managing contacts or remembering information) that they would previously have done, as hundreds or thousands of people were seen to be involved in the production of everything from material objects to computer programmes, as individuals became used to being connected to friends, family, workplaces and communities wherever they were, so the idea of the 'separate' individual became harder to sustain. A person's thinking and actions were seen to be intimately tied up with machines and other people.



People are still individuals, of course, with their own names and needs and idiosyncrasies: the difference is that everyone understands how impossible it is to assign recognition for particular individual achievements when they depend so much on other people's ideas and actions. This notion of interdependence runs deep throughout society, meaning that people have more of a sense that they benefit when wider society benefits, and when people feel some responsibility to act in the interest of wider society, they are unlikely to imagine that they will be acting alone.

With this sense of public obligation comes a wider appetite for consideration of moral and ethical issues. Rather than being seen as distorting what ought to be a secular space, the public discussion of many areas of human experience previously thought of as private moral issues is considered the mark of a properly responsible society. The emphasis on interdependence and the recognition of other people that is seen throughout civil society has a resonance with religious notions of common fellowship, and fundamentally the public sphere is no longer regarded as a place defined by its freedom from religious or moral perspectives. Equally, it is not a place where these perspectives are accorded any special privilege or exemption from the collective responsibility to maintain strong public institutions and shared values. Religious beliefs are no reason to opt out of making a contribution.

More generally, difference is recognised and even celebrated as a source of understanding and perspective, but, as in the case of religion, not privileged: the obligation to consider the interests of wider society before the interests of a particular

group applies without exception. For some groups this might feel, from time to time, like an imposition, but in general people see that imposing this obligation equally is the only condition under which people can be expected to contribute to the wider good. The preferred approach is to minimise points of conflict between the aims and needs of particular groups and the wider needs of society: with the weakening of associational thinking and allegiances to particular groups, the increased awareness of the interdependence of human action and the greater place of ethics and morals within the public sphere, these flashpoints occur far less frequently than in the past.

Where they do occur, it is the responsibility of the state to resolve them. In general, the state's primary role is to maintain civil society. This duty is discharged in part through resolving tensions, but for the most part the state's focus is on achieving this aim through creating a strong civic culture of active engagement in public life<sup>3</sup>. The 'tragedy of the commons' - the failure of people to work to preserve common goods when this is counter to their short-term individual interests - is the biggest threat faced by the state, and it works to combat this tendency on a number of fronts. Where necessary, the state regulates group and individual



behaviour, legislating to ensure that long-term societal interests are prioritised. It promotes interdependence between groups and fosters permeable community boundaries, attempting to lessen the identification people might feel with one particular group, helping them to move between groups, and encouraging them to look beyond individual or community interest to the broader interests of society. Where inter-relationships between groups don't exist, or connections aren't present, the state provides opportunities for these to grow: its aim is to nurture an ecology of mutually interdependent groups and individuals. These aims require it to maintain a public space for a genuine national conversation and interaction between different groups and sections of society, with the state taking an active role in ensuring that no single voice distorts this space, including its own. Its role is only possible if people trust it to maintain this space - a modest and sufficient voice, as opposed to a stridently political voice, goes some way towards this, but more formal mechanisms of accountability and transparency are still crucial.

Another source of legitimacy for the state is gained through devolving aspects of governance to local authorities and town halls on the principle of subsidiarity, ensuring that services are provided at the most appropriate level: local functions and services, such as maintaining public spaces, child and elder care, rubbish collection or community policing, are managed, funded, overseen and in some cases carried out by representative local government groups comprised of local residents. Participation in these groups is seen as an important social contribution and worth the effort needed to find time to contribute in this way. There are many socially useful tasks of this nature available, and many are undertaken by those in receipt of a state-issued benefit paid to the active retired and those who are currently not in paid employment. Participation in

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<sup>3</sup> There is a discussion around the possibility of a devolved collective set of leaders - the "Great Group", in Penny Tamkin's paper "In search of leadership". [www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/in-search-of-leadership](http://www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/in-search-of-leadership)

these groups is also a way of ensuring accountability at a local level: the state has trusted local people to monitor and service local needs using government resources and working within a national framework, and this requires genuine oversight at a local level. In practice, service provision is often provided by non-governmental and third sector organisations<sup>4</sup>.



In order to support this state benefit and the administrative burden of devolved service provision, levels of personal taxation as a proportion of personal income have risen, when compared to levels a few decades ago. In part, tolerance for higher taxation reflects the degree to which arguments for greater commitment to civil society have been successful. Additionally, the effects of this taxation can be seen at a local level, as they enable people to undertake their civic functions, making it easier for people to view taxation as a means of supporting their work, rather than a way

of paying other people to do the difficult jobs. There is a greater emphasis on the capacity of work to support direct improvements in the quality of life, as opposed to indirect support through remuneration. The notion of the 'triple bottom-line' that gained currency in the early years of the twenty-first century has led to a re-evaluation of the ways in which a company's success might be measured, emphasising the responsibility of all firms to consider themselves as connected to the whole of society rather than being isolated, and consequently to consider 'profit' as the positive economic and social impacts of its activities, rather than merely its internal fiscal surplus. Similarly, for individuals, 'success' is seen now in terms of the quality of life they are able to enjoy, rather than the size of their bank balance<sup>5</sup> or the number of houses they own: the fashion for less conspicuous consumption that began in the wake of the global recession in the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, coupled with the constraints imposed by new international legislation on carbon emissions and other environmental regulation, has supported this.

What this means in practical terms for employees is that they can expect their employer to recompense them in other ways than the purely financial. This might take different forms. In its most straightforward guise, many firms offer perks to employees that recognise the other parts of their life: discounts with local businesses, flexible working opportunities, job sharing - and offer these as defaults, rather than discretionary rewards. Support for employees' health and wellbeing is widely provided through well-designed work environments and allowances for wellbeing or healthcare purchases, motivated again through a recognition of the positive impact this has both for the

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<sup>4</sup> Structuring this is not straightforward, as Heike Doering points out in "Communities and citizenship: paths for engagement?", being included in the discussion is not the same as being involved in decision making - which leads to a feeling of disillusionment rather than empowerment. [www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/communities-and-citizenship-paths-for-engagement](http://www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/communities-and-citizenship-paths-for-engagement)

<sup>5</sup> The idea that high incomes correlate to happiness is unproven, happiness is more likely to equate to belonging to groups, socialising with friends and family, and having the freedom to choose leisure activities (see Nattavudh Powdthavee's paper "Happiness and well-being"). In this world there seems to be a strong link between happiness and success. [www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/happiness-and-well-being](http://www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/happiness-and-well-being)

employees and for society as a whole. At a deeper level, employees are recognised as full moral individuals, more than a brain or a pair of hands for hire, and employers acknowledge the values held by the workforce through supporting projects and causes that are aligned with the priorities of their employees, and by doing business in a way commensurate with the overriding ethical sensibilities.

The fundamental development in the culture of the workplace since the early years of the century has been to recast the relationship between employer and employee in a way that recognises that what is good for one is good for the other and good for society: that is, it is in the interest of employers to ensure that employees are in a position to contribute to society as well as its own endeavours. Indeed, in the widest sense, contributing to society is the company's endeavour, as it is for employees. Rather than trying to limit employees' interactions with other communities, then, responsible employers are those who support links into and out of the workplace, not only to wellbeing sites such as gyms and health clubs, but also to professional organisations and other companies. The past twenty years have seen an explosive growth in the number of in-kind relationships and partnerships between firms, enabling skills exchanges and internships between different companies and across sectors. Flexible working enables employees and companies to negotiate time shared between the two, perhaps for one company to share expertise in a particular area, or for an employee to gain exposure to knowledge not currently found in their present company. Employees benefit from increased opportunity in the workplace, through enlarged networks and greater skill sets, while companies benefit as they are seen to be committed to principles of interdependence, innovation and lifelong learning. By now, someone's learning history is not seen as something separate from their CV.

To enable this change of attitude, management structures have had to shift focus towards fostering a fluid working population, ensuring that working communities of practice are porous and permeable and allowing movement between them. This has only been possible through a cultural shift within industry, particularly within IT departments, as the rhetoric of control and access is replaced by facilitation and openness. As employees become more mobile, personal ICT equipment travels with them, and as information moves between companies, open standards become more important. Working across different platforms in different locations has pushed businesses to reconsider long-entrenched attitudes towards knowledge that saw it as valuable only as long as it remained within the company: new licences enable firms to share intellectual property while remaining in a position to extract value from it<sup>6</sup>. Moving the greater part of the responsibility for network security and intellectual property management onto the shoulders of employees is part of this settlement: in the same way in which a certain minimal level of literacy in computer-mediated communication approaches is necessary for entry into the workplace, a basic level of awareness of the risks attendant on the use of network technology and a knowledge of web hygiene is a pre-requisite for being trusted to participate in this flexible and fluid landscape.

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<sup>6</sup> For a discussion around how information communication technology may change the way we work see the paper "Information and communication technology, work and employment" by Matthew Dixon; will the cost implications affect the community (are some more equal than others?) [www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/information-and-communication-technology-work-and-employment](http://www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/information-and-communication-technology-work-and-employment)

This change of attitude towards knowledge and technology can be perceived within the media and leisure industries, with the same tensions between trust and control playing out over the past few decades. Producers and publishers have for the most part recognised that the principles of interdependence and public good are best served not by trying to restrict and limit the ways in which information (in this case music, film, electronic artworks) can be accessed, but by enabling it to move across different groups without restriction. For artists, the highest recognition possible today is to encounter their work preserved as they originally conceived it, although work that inspires others to use it as source material for their own work is acknowledged to make more of a contribution to cultural life<sup>7</sup>. "Broadcast" events make up a minority of the media environment (the term "broadcast" refers now to any cultural experience in which the relationship between producer and consumer is one-way with no interaction: the notion that a media experience might be limited to a particular time was already quaint by the year 2010 and has no currency today at all). The majority of media is thought of as participatory - though that description says nothing about the level of engagement of the audience - and producers expect that their work will be completed by the collective action of their audience, experiencing their work as one part of a larger media stream in which they navigate between different interest groups and enthusiasms<sup>8</sup>. This patchwork environment is in part the result of the new economics of media, with producers and publishers having to spread their work across many different platforms and contexts in order to fund their work, and consumers paying small amounts for each mode of engagement they desire. Everyone pays for the right to generate and distribute content: the line between "producer" and "consumer" has been considerably blurred in the past few years.

A similar blurring of boundaries has taken place within the family. Legislative changes and developments in the biological sciences have shaken the traditionally prominent position of the heterosexual couple caring for their biological children and ushered in a landscape where family ties are seen as being as much negotiated as they are inherited. Within society as a whole, there was little appetite for the preservation of "the nuclear family" as traditionally understood, given the move away from emphasising allegiances to particular groups, and plenty of support for encouraging the boundaries of this particular form of community to become as porous and flexible as those of other forms. As a consequence, supported by people's general understanding that society's business is their business, many of the roles traditionally located within families are now situated within society as a whole, and the protection of vulnerable family members, or the care of those unable to care for themselves, are responsibilities shared amongst local communities and the wider public. Families are still as much a site of love and support, suffering and insecurity as they have ever been: today, though, they are only one site of many, and easier to configure in ways that allow people to flourish.

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<sup>7</sup> This idea of the common good goes against the idea of intellectual property rights described in the "Quick review paper on work and employment" by Rob Wilson and Lynn Gambin.

<sup>8</sup> Briony Greenhill in her paper "The digital landscape and new education providers" looks at social software for example as a means of creating and sharing knowledge as a group and discusses whether there is likely to be a trend to peer produced learning media.

## Education

### Goals and outcomes

The primary goal of education is to strengthen the public sphere, by fostering and developing dispositions and habits of mind that encourage individuals to value interdependence and recognise the impact of their actions beyond their immediate context. An essential component of this is supporting people's capacity to apprehend other perspectives beyond those that they are familiar with, giving them a better chance of being able to work in a truly interdependent way<sup>9</sup>.



A further essential aim for education is to prepare people for mobility, to encourage them to find stability and security outside a fixed locale or long-established way of being. Having a society that depends on there being few barriers to movement between different groups requires that people feel able to make the best use of these permeable boundaries, and are capable of recognising the benefits of doing so. These aims are reached through an effort within education to build shared values and spaces for collaboration, within which discussion across different learning communities is possible and accessible.

These interactions are not limited to formal learning arenas but are extended to encompass working and civil life experiences, with no upper age limit on contributions. Participation in these spaces is not expected to come to an end at the same time as school attendance does<sup>10</sup>.

*These features and goals of education are shaped by the nature of the society described above. Below, we present two different possibilities for education in this world. In one, the values of the world and the characteristics outlined above have led to an education system that is capable of sustaining itself and wider society in that form. In the other, these values and features have given rise to an education system that is unsustainable and must eventually lead to change.*

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<sup>9</sup> For a discussion on how Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) can be used to support this communal future see the paper by David Studdert: "Community and CMC: the virtual absence of online communal being-ness" [www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/community-and-cmc-the-virtual-absence-of-online-communal-being-ness](http://www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/community-and-cmc-the-virtual-absence-of-online-communal-being-ness)

<sup>10</sup> Victoria Carrington and Jackie Marsh in their paper "Forms of literacy" look at the types of literacy that will be expected in the future - including the shift as a result of new technologies; of particular interest is the section on social spaces. [www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/forms-of-literacy](http://www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/forms-of-literacy)

## Scenario 5: Integrated experience

A pedagogy of authenticity runs throughout education, with a general expectation on the part of learners that the behaviours and practices they encounter in a learning context are genuinely rooted in practices outside that context. This is supported by the ease with which learners can move between contexts: now that the traditional division between “education” and “real life” has been blurred, and learning is understood and expected to be a fundamental part of any endeavour, there are more opportunities for learners to compare their learning with their experiences in other contexts. Just as learning is understood to be an element of all areas of experience, so too are those areas of experience to be found within educational settings - the movement is reciprocal and equal, rather than being based on an uneven notion of education as lacking real-world input and needing to be made “relevant”.



Learning is a process of participating in meaningful activities and developing competencies and knowledge

This shift has reconfigured the relationship between teacher and learner in ways that better foreground the democratic principles education strives to exemplify. The role of teacher is still crucial in supporting and stretching learners in order to make the most of their abilities, in modelling constructive behaviour and in guiding learners and helping them flourish. But the sources of teacher authority have changed.



You are constantly connected with others via tools that actively support, promote and encourage reflection upon collaboration and contribution

For one thing, learners are likely to encounter a wider range of people in a teacher role than previously: in keeping with the principles that ensure that communities allow easy movement between them, learners are not necessarily tied or affiliated to a single learning institution, often spreading the time they spend learning amongst several institutions, making use of particular facilities at one, engaging with a particular area of expertise at another, or participating in a culture unfamiliar to them. This means individual teachers might be less likely to spend time with particular learners, and certainly learners encounter a wider range of teaching approaches than in previous generations<sup>11</sup>. For another, as the boundaries between knowledge domains and

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<sup>11</sup> Examples of varying future teaching approaches can be found in the paper “Technology and embodiment: relationships and implications for knowledge, creativity and communication” by Sara Price and her colleagues; they suggest two scenarios for how technology will influence educational practice, embedded experiences and shared interfaces. [www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/technology-and-embodiment-relationships-and-implications-for-knowledge-creativity-and-communication](http://www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/technology-and-embodiment-relationships-and-implications-for-knowledge-creativity-and-communication)

academic disciplines have become more porous - a consequence of the movement toward interdisciplinary working - that part of a teacher's authority that derived from their position as a representative of a particular discipline has waned. And teachers' claims about the relevance (or otherwise) of particular learning behaviours can be verified or challenged by learners' other experiences: "you'll need this for your exam" is a sentence that doesn't have to be taken on trust, as it used to.



The curriculum is developed around the demands of the public sphere

Of course, the traditional examination has also changed, perhaps more than the role of teacher. The emphasis on authenticity in learning has challenged the role of the examination in evaluating and assessing learning. More critically, the importance placed on collective, rather than individual, action in the wider world, has made it essential for new forms of assessment that focus on the group as the unit of evaluation. Learners generally receive accreditation that reflects the level their group achieved through delivering a project of one sort or another, rather than receiving a personal grade that reflects their own individual performance on a specific day. This approach is generally felt to be more in keeping with

the ethos educators generally wish to support, does away with many of the curricular constraints that were associated with the individualistic forms of assessment prevalent in the early part of the century, and is closer to the ways in which the majority of people generally find themselves being asked to work.

Still, the system is open to abuse by freeloaders, and can be difficult for some to work within, particularly those who feel most keenly the lack of individual recognition, or whose inability to collaborate well renders their other abilities invisible. While levels of student resistance to this approach are considerably reduced from the early days of its introduction, there are still some learners who prefer to study with providers who offer individual accreditation, and are prepared to pay for it. These individual certificates are not so much an aid to finding employment - employers would rather see evidence of group achievement - as they are a form of personal validation for those who feel unrepresented by the mainstream approach, and are seen by some more as evidence of vanity than of achievement. Now that education and learning no longer have a cut-off point in the form of a single final qualification, particular qualifications matter less than an individual's general learning career.

This reflects a radical shift in public perceptions, a move away from seeing education as a finite occupation that is completed with a final examination, towards thinking of education as collaborative and contextual open-ended process that continues throughout life. This new view sees education as everyone's business, and as integrated into all areas of work, leisure and personal life. Education can no longer be seen simply as the 'place where society gets fixed' or as the means by which



Your success is determined by your contributions to groups and your collaboration with colleagues

to shape individuals at the start of their lives. Instead, education is seen as a continuous element of everything that people do. This changed perspective was only able to gain wider public support once older generations had had the experience of substantial commitment from industry and government to lifelong learning in the second decade of the century.

## Scenario 6: Service and citizenship

Education is considered to have a major role to play in maintaining and supporting civil society. But the permeability of group boundaries and interdependence between groups that characterise much of wider society has not been reproduced within education. Instead, education's role is seen as helping learners meet the needs of particular groups and sectors, rather than the needs of society as a whole. Learning experiences are informed by a pedagogy of service in which the importance of the community or group is emphasised over the individual learner or civil society, and education's purpose is to ensure that these groups have access to the skills and qualities they require.



Education is a process of learning about the skills, competencies and roles that individuals play in the 'real world'

Consequently, the notion of a positive civic mindset is an ideal that few reach. Instead, people focus rather on their place within each group they identify with, and although the rhetoric of communal values remains, the reality is that people's various community memberships are more meaningful to them than any notion of being a part of wider civil society. This, naturally, is a threat to the health of the public sphere, and the state has had to intervene, legislating for (that is, compelling) the teaching of citizenship information, rather than enabling people to develop first-hand experience of lived citizenship. Such teaching begins to weaken the notion of personal responsibility for action in support of wider society still further.

As a sector, then, education has become more distinct from other areas of people's lives, such as their work or family. It addresses two different societal priorities. At one extreme, it acts as the primary site for the formal teaching of citizenship information, the discussion of the relationship between an individual and wider society, the articulation of the responsibilities and obligations towards society that might fall to individuals, and the emphasis of the value of thinking and acting communally (and the more these topics are considered the proper subject of education, the less frequently they arise in the wider world). At the other extreme, it has a practical duty to fit learners



The highly standardised curriculum provides instruction in citizenship, and in a range of 'key

for the roles demanded of them by the various communities they belong to, ensuring that there are opportunities for individuals to fit themselves with the skills required to enable them to contribute to each group<sup>12</sup>. There is a tension generated by these two roles: on the one hand, learners are encouraged to imagine that they ought to prioritise the needs of wider society, and on the other, it is made clear to learners that their priority is the specific community or group whose needs are being met by acquiring a particular skillset. This is a contradiction most people find easy to live with: although lip service is paid to the social contract and the responsibility shared by everyone towards maintaining a healthy civil society, in reality it is more urgent to ensure that people are in a position to contribute to the group. Either way, learners are left in no doubt that they should consider themselves to be in service to a collective entity greater than the individual.



You are encouraged to use tools and resources that allow you to 'model' participation in the social world

Education is itself in the service of the learner and their communities, and the sector is expected to provide support for both throughout their lives. There are a variety of different knowledge domains and communities, each of which has its own curricula, formal and informal, and while in the professional world outside education, these areas might have cause to overlap and inform each other from time to time, when acquiring the skills and behaviours necessary for entry into these domains and communities, learners expect to encounter the relevant bodies of knowledge and practice in isolation. In part this is a consequence of imagining education to be in the service of the different elements that comprise society, and having to respond to their priorities singly rather than coherently: however, it also reflects the lack of capacity within many educational institutions to support working across domains or disciplines. As a result, learners have come to think of knowledge not as something that is developed through practice, but as something that can be acquired prior to practice: before a new skill can be employed, an individual must first have the necessary knowledge delivered to them through some sort of educational intervention. Learning is increasingly seen as something that happens outside usual social contexts, something that should be there and provide necessary input when necessary for employment, work or wellbeing support, but which in the ordinary course of things is not particularly relevant<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> This forcing into a role is opposed by Jenny Bimrose's paper "Careers guidance, identity and development", which looks at the role of career guidance in 2025 and beyond. It is an interesting discussion of why such support benefits the individual and the community. [www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/careers-guidance-identity-and-development](http://www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/careers-guidance-identity-and-development)

<sup>13</sup> This argument ignores the idea that we need to learn how to learn. For a discussion on this see the Steven Higgins paper "Learning to learn". [www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/learning-to-learn](http://www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/learning-to-learn)



Learning is a means of effectively preparing you for the 'real world' in future

The role of the teacher has become fundamental to learning, although changed subtly from more traditional conceptions, and embodying the tension between social aspiration and demand-led provision of skills that sits at the heart of education. For early years instruction, where the curriculum spends much more time focussed on state-mandated explorations of citizenship and social responsibility, teachers have a role to play in fostering a social and moral conscience, encouraging learners to see themselves as members of a group and to direct their energies towards the success of the group. In instances where the teacher's role was historically largely instruction, they have a greatly reduced part to play. The notion

that knowledge can simply be acquired, combined with the rise of the amateur content producer, has meant that for some specific skills and behaviours, it is easier for learners to engage with other practitioners, through video instruction and communication forums, than it is to find and access a specialist teacher or coach.

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For other areas of expertise, particularly those that require learners to engage with a professional ethos or culture, teachers still have a role, though their authority is entirely connected with their domain-specific knowledge, and they tend to be closer in spirit to what was traditionally thought of as a consultant, facilitator, coach or trainer than to the old-fashioned idea of a pedagogue. Nevertheless, when there is a need for a teacher, their role is to deliver knowledge to learners, whether in a classroom, training room or from another time zone, for a limited period culminating in a formal, individual assessment<sup>14</sup>.



Your focus is on developing the skills and competencies that will most effectively prepare you to take your role in the communities

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<sup>14</sup> For another perspective on the purpose of education see the paper by Kathryn Ecclestone and Dennis Hayes "Affect: knowledge, communication, creativity and emotion". This looks at the role of education in emotional well being rather than the acquisition of knowledge. [www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/affect-knowledge-communication-creativity-and-emotion](http://www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/affect-knowledge-communication-creativity-and-emotion)