

STORIES OF HOPE

REIMAGINING EDUCATION

EDITED BY
SANDRA ABEGGLEN, TOM BURNS,
RICHARD HELLER, RAJAN MADHOK,
FABIAN NEUHAUS, JOHN SANDARS,
SANDRA SINFIELD, AND UPASANA GITANJALI SINGH





<https://www.openbookpublishers.com>

©2025 Sandra Abegglen, Tom Burns, Richard Heller, Rajan Madhok, Fabian Neuhaus,
John Sandars, Sandra Sinfield, and Upasana Gitanjali Singh
Copyright of individual chapters is maintained by the chapter authors



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0). This license allows you to share, copy, distribute and transmit the text; to adapt the text for non-commercial purposes of the text providing attribution is made to the authors (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work). Attribution should include the following information:

Sandra Abegglen, Tom Burns, Richard Heller, Rajan Madhok, Fabian Neuhaus, John Sandars, Sandra Sinfield, and Upasana Gitanjali Singh (eds), *Stories of Hope: Reimagining Education*. Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0462>

Further details about CC BY-NC licenses are available at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

Copyright and permissions for the reuse of many of the images included in this publication differ from the above. This information is provided in the captions and in the list of illustrations. Every effort has been made to identify and contact copyright holders and any omission or error will be corrected if notification is made to the publisher.

All external links were active at the time of publication unless otherwise stated and have been archived via the Internet Archive Wayback Machine at <https://archive.org/web>

Digital material and resources associated with this volume are available at <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0462#resources>

Information about any revised edition of this work will be provided at <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0462>

ISBN Paperback 978-1-80511-571-7

ISBN Hardback 978-1-80511-572-4

ISBN PDF 978-1-80511-573-1

ISBN HTML 978-1-80511-575-5

ISBN EPUB 978-1-80511-574-8

DOI: 10.11647/OBP.0462

Cover concept and image by Rachel Denbina, CC BY-NC

Cover design by Jeevanjot Kaur Nagpal

Beyond the curriculum: Introduction

John Sandars

In this section, the authors present a wide variety of innovative approaches that are stories of hope and have the potential to revitalise the curriculum, with examples from both childhood education and Higher Education. These approaches from Canada, India, and the UK include conceptual thinking (what could be done), and practical experience (what has been done). The use of the term “revitalise” highlights how the curriculum, which is often constrained by political and economic agendas and policies, can be resuscitated by a deep breath of creativity. This creativity can transform not only learners to holistically flourish so that they can achieve their individual and collective potential but can also enable similar changes in the teachers. Many authors have emphasised the importance of co-creation of the curriculum between learners and teachers, with each benefitting from sharing their different perspectives and having a mutually beneficial opportunity to learn and personally develop. The overall message that is clearly made by all of the authors is that there is hope for the current education system but only if all learners and teachers can develop their individual and collective agency to feel empowered to be creative in the design and implementation of the curriculum so that innovative change can provide learning and personal development that goes beyond the current constraints of the curriculum.

The section begins with a collection of chapters that propose a call to fundamentally transform the curriculum and wider education system so that it clearly aligns with the values that are at the core of

education. In "Learning vs education: A view beyond the divide", Akitav Sharma highlights the deeply personal nature of learning and discusses the general implications for the design and implementation of the curriculum. In "Belonging through compassion: Supporting hope through the design of a website for educational development and social justice", Vikki Hill and Liz Bunting provide a compelling case for embedding compassion throughout the entire curriculum and across the wider education system, with a focus on both learners and teachers. This message is continued by Umme Mansoor in "Humanising student and instructor experiences to nurture relationships and improve engagement", with a discussion of humanising education through a process in which learners and teachers can become active collaborators in the creation of a meaningful educational experience.

A focus on the long-term impact of education and the need to have transformation at the present time is highlighted in the next collection of chapters, with proposals about supporting learners to increase their wellbeing and to holistically flourish, both as individuals and collectively. Michelle Morgan, in "The ten wellness spheres to support student and staff health and wellbeing in a modern, post-1992 university in, through, and out of the study lifecycle", discusses the importance of enabling both learners and teachers to flourish holistically. Nayiri Keshishi extends this discussion by considering how to develop a learner's inner developmental goals in "Unlocking a new generation of leaders: How universities can support students' inner development goals". This emphasis on the personal growth of learners is continued by Phoenix Perry in "The pedagogy of joy: Working with engaged presence". An essential aspect of achieving flourishing is the development of resilience, and an innovative approach through immersive games is presented by Rachel Higdon and Hilary Thomson in "'Resilience Finders': Flourishing in life through immersive game experiences".

The urgent need to recognise the diversity of learners is emphasised in the next collection of chapters. Karen Arm, in "Storying the silences of social mobility", discusses the importance of embedding social justice in the curriculum by highlighting the opportunities of increased social mobility into Higher Education and its effect on active participation in the learning environment. Stephanie Jury, in "How can you know what you don't know?: Changing the narrative around the 'successful

learner'", offers several practical recommendations for supporting the increasing diversity of learners, including applying universal design for learning to curriculum design and implementation.

Engaging the diversity of learners, with a diverse range of preferences and capacities, requires challenging the norms of Higher Education and this is discussed in several chapters. Megan McGee, in "An imperfect practice? What barriers are there to providing outdoor education opportunities for children?", discusses the importance of outdoor education and connection with nature for learning. Although childhood education has been the main focus of this approach, it appears to have potential benefits for Higher Education. In "Moving, making, and mingling: Moving towards an embodied pedagogy", Susannah McKee and Marie Stephenson highlight the embodied nature of learning and movement, providing practical suggestions regarding how this approach can be implemented. There is a similar discussion by Hilda Mulrooney in "Food for thought: Pandemic hope" on the importance of food and eating in our lives and how general learning experiences can be built around this topic.

The final chapters in the section highlight the importance of developing the agency of learners so that they can regain their power to take greater control over their learning and personal development, both as individuals and collectively. In "'It's a bit like academic me-time'; Can mini virtual writing retreats create a more hopeful, joyful, and humane Higher Education?", Aspasia Paltoglou and colleagues describe how learners increased their agency by sharing their experiences through virtual writing retreats that offered an opportunity for collaborative learning beyond the standard curriculum. Joshua Thorpe, in "The opportunity of constraint: How beating one's head against the wall can open a door", also emphasises the need for learners to collaboratively engage in writing workshops to regain their agency and voice in academic writing beyond the current constraints in Higher Education.

