

Future–Proof Transformational School Design for the New Era

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ‘New Era’ defined as post pandemic has opened up a conversation for more opportunities to transform school design in order to create a more functional, engaged democratic society premised on a social responsibility reflecting a multicultural, empowered workforce. This chapter is a product of the collaboration of a UK and a US educator looking at two case studies of secondary education and one higher education that serve as examples of success for transforming schools. Using Bolman and Deal’s Four Frames for Organizational Design, the authors make the case for school designs that take into account diverse learner groups and diverse pathways leading to an educated and skilled workforce. A result from this analysis includes a specific, short list of components to consider for transforming schools.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

This chapter covers the following:

- A discussion of the current landscape of education in the 21st Century focusing on school design and reasons for transformation.
- A comparison of the UK and US school systems to consider global perspectives on school design and what this means for the US.
- Identification of the skills needed for a contemporary workforce.
- An account of the how literature supports the need for transformation redesign.
- Offers solutions to school design in the US with support from a mix of models and case studies from the US and the UK educational system.

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- Prompts for one to consider as to what principles may benefit your own organization.

INTRODUCTION

What makes education truly transformative is how we collaborate, work together and cross geographical boundaries. The co-authors of this article come together from across the Atlantic: Mara is a Los Angeles born and schooled, from childhood to working educator, who has the privilege of working overseas in the United Kingdom (UK) and now in Europe. She brings the US perspective along with her views and learnings about the UK system since her role as a teacher trainer for a UK Further Education Institution. The other author, Mary, is born and educated in the UK, through the state funded route. She has experienced secondary to Higher Education from a working-class perspective, being the first in her family to attend university. She has worked in all levels of education, but mainly secondary, as an educator for the last 20 years and most recently as a Teacher Educator in initial teacher training where she met Mara. This unique relationship and professional dialogue has led to much discourse and has led to our collaboration for this publication.

Together these authors have worked through this article with the intention of identifying inclusive school design options that they believe benefit both countries and support the need for *Future Proof Transformational School Design for the New Era*.

What role does education have in creating a functional, engaged democratic society premised on a social responsibility reflecting a multicultural, empowered workforce? There is a significant gap between those prepared for the workforce after secondary school and in many cases after university. (Bonvillian, W. and Sarma, S. 2021) This is supported by the World Economic Forum where the top skills for 2025 show a need for consideration of technology use, monitor and control, linked to analytical thinking, complex problem solving, creativity and social influence. (Whiting, 2020) This supports a higher skilled workforce with links to social implications that have social influence. It can be argued that this social influence would require the end goals of equality, democracy and be multicultural with greater social justice. The role of education then is key to achieve these goals.

Identifying a gap in the skills needed for the workforce, therefore leads to education being on the cusp of a true disruption where it can no longer be the case that the journey of secondary school to college to career is the status quo. Present day there are many more routes with a push for more inter-relationships between business, secondary school and university connections such as the varied apprenticeship scheme in the UK, and Linked Learning programs in the US. It is in this relationship that we can see a new structure emerging that connects education with societies' need for a prepared workforce. When considering key elements, the UK has introduced in their education structure, the US could take these and adapt them to benefit all learners and ultimately improving the future workforce and securing a more democratic, socially responsible society.

The UK has been at the forefront of having a differentiated secondary system with many different schooling options for 14 years and up. In years past their different options were guilty of perpetuating the classist society with a predominance of high-level government officials graduating from elite schools, based on the economic advantage of being able to pay for this education. Often seen as a barrier, it is now more equitable as more people from all social backgrounds now go to university. (Mai, 2005) With this exception aside and shifting the elitist paradigm and the pretence that attending a top university is all that matters one can learn lots about how to create a more equitable, viable and relevant secondary

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