

Foreword

How will education reinvent itself to respond to the megatrends that are shaping the future of our societies and educate learners for their future, rather than our past?

Governments cannot innovate in the classroom, but they can help build and communicate the case for change. They can also play a key role as platform and broker, as stimulator and enabler; they can focus resources, set a facilitative policy climate, and use accountability to allow innovation rather than compliance. To that effect, education policy makers need to develop proper innovation policies, better identify key agents of change, champion them, and find more effective approaches to scaling and disseminating innovation. This includes finding better ways to recognise, reward and give visibility to success, doing whatever is possible to make it easier for innovators to take risks, to encourage the emergence of new ideas – but also to monitor change in education systems and be able to link innovations with educational performance.

While it is easy to talk about innovation in education, it is time to engage in the more difficult task to talk about how we actually know where and how innovation is happening, and whether it is effective. While most countries and most companies have innovation policies or departments, innovation remains a marginal policy agenda in most education systems. Even where there is some policy, few systems know whether their efforts have any effectiveness. Policy reform is usually preferred, as a top-down change decision, but many policy reforms change institutions and administrative rules without having impact on what really makes a difference: teaching and learning within the classroom.

Measuring Innovation in Education is one of the few available tools to make innovation in education visible. This year's edition builds on the first issue that was published in 2014 with a wealth of information about what has changed in education systems over the last decade. It aims to initiate debate on how to develop the capacity of our education systems to prepare learners for their future, to sharpen innovation policies in education and better target policy instruments.

In most areas, the prevalence of educational practices varies greatly across countries. There is perhaps more innovation than we might believe, but probably a lot less than what the challenges faced by many systems would require.

Among the educational practices covered by this report, major changes in informal teacher professional development should be highlighted as an encouraging trend. Innovation and improvement requires collaboration, peer learning, including international peer learning. It requires to turn schools into learning organisations. Apparently, this is gradually happening, and that's a great news, even if it happens slowly.

Some of the results should lead us to think more carefully about policy implementation. For example, some countries have invested in major curriculum reforms, but saw little innovation in the classroom.

There is also little evidence that the curriculum emphasis on teaching the skills that will allow students to thrive in a world where innovation is critical have translated into different teaching and learning practices. This is worrisome in a world where artificial intelligence and robotics might transform the role of humans in the productive and social processes.

This report exploits in innovative ways the international studies that countries have engaged in over the past few years, showing the value of countries' investments in these surveys. The OECD is committed to do more on this agenda. Our work on developing new measures of innovation in education will continue, taking new innovative approaches, so that countries better understand how to deal effectively with innovation to improve their education systems.

While waiting for the next edition, I strongly encourage readers to browse this book, a few indicators or one chapter at a time, to check how educational practices have evolved within countries, and to reflect on whether they believe this is the right strategic move. The information provided here is indeed a key resource to step back on how students learn and are taught, and to think strategically on the education we want in the future.

Andreas Schleicher

Director for Education and Skills

Special Adviser on Education Policy to the OECD Secretary General

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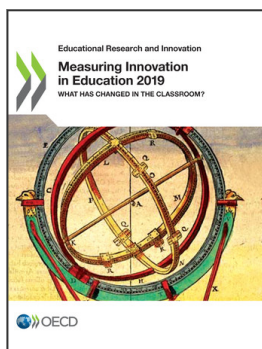
This book was authored by Stéphan Vincent-Lancrin, Senior Analyst, Joaquín Urgel, Consultant, Soumyajit Kar, Consultant, and Gwénaél Jacotin, Statistician, with the help of Anastasia Andreeva during her internship at the OECD. The project was led and conceptualised by Stéphan Vincent-Lancrin, and carried out as part of the work on Innovation in Education of the OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) within the Directorate for Education and Skills.

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