



Name: Education Services Australia

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Improve school student outcomes with the best available tools and resources

What (if anything) needs to be done to improve the use of edtech tools (including GenAI) in schools?

Technology has always been a part of school life and each new society-wide advance creates special opportunities and challenges for schools. Education focused technology, generically described as edtech, has grown substantially in the last 30 years, however the potential benefit to schools varies widely. Some edtech is simply general-purpose business or consumer tools aimed at school, parent or student markets. Other tools are for the 'education market' but are designed for further and higher education or workplace learning, rather than schools. Others still are designed specifically for the schools' sector (possibly for one country or region or for a category of user) to target particular needs.

Schools are unique institutions with unique requirements that arise from the shared work of professional adults and children and young people to enable and support their learning, wellbeing and development. This creates many and complex obligations for educators and milestones for children and young people.

Great school edtech offers enormous productivity gains; saving time, improving quality and sometimes both, for students, educators, schools and systems. Conversely, poor edtech in schools reduces productivity; it gets in the way of the core business of learning, it increases equity gaps between more and less advantaged students or creates new burdens or risks that far outweigh the potential benefit. GenAI amplifies the potential for either positive or negative outcomes of edtech use. From our experience, detailed in our response in Q3, we believe there are three features that make edtech more likely to be great for schools.

First, the edtech is specifically appropriate for Australian schools and their context. This means it meets expected security and privacy standards as a minimum but also that it aligns with the administrative structures of the school and their governance arrangements (whether within the government, Catholic or independent sectors and for their state or territory context). Where the edtech supports teaching and learning, additional accommodation of applicable curriculum and standards is vital. This includes accommodation of special needs and equity considerations. Where any of these do not exist, it increases risk and burden on educators, schools and systems, reducing productivity.

Second, that the edtech is solving for an identified need or delivering a clearly defined benefit. And that it can demonstrate how this can be achieved for the school. One useful model is the SAMR progression standing for Substitution and Augmentation which are enhancements to current practice and Modification and Redefinition which are transformations that deliver previously unavailable benefit. Further developing evidence standards for edtech design and impact in Australia would improve the potential for schools and educators to benefit from their

investments in money and time.

Finally, that edtech empowers rather excludes the teaching profession. Effective learning relies on expert teaching. Where edtech increases quality or efficiency for teaching practice it is a productivity gain. Where it ignores the vital role of the educator or de-skills them (or their students) it creates new risks to learning achievement. This risk is more pronounced for schools, teachers and students in disadvantaged settings. High quality edtech considers and incorporates strong implementation, including the professional learning required for teachers, to realise its promised productivity gain.

What more (if anything) needs to be done to improve awareness and access to high quality lesson planning and curriculum materials in schools?

High quality teaching and learning resources, efficiently accessed and effectively used are a powerful way to reduce disparities in student learning outcomes. There are important factors to ensure this can be achieved in Australian schools for our students. We respond to your question in two parts; (a) what teachers are aware of and can access and (b) what is 'high quality'?

On access, there is a vast selection of digital resources that teachers can draw upon. There is national investment in quality content (for example by the Australian Government and national architecture agencies) as well as jurisdiction investment in resources for their own curriculum and syllabus. The Catholic and independent sectors and some Australian non-profit organisations produce curriculum aligned resources and international non-profits provide free, non-curriculum aligned resources. There has been an expansion in paid subscriptions to online learning systems and continuing development from traditional education publishers, with international players making Australian versions rather than creating for Australian curriculum. And there is rapid growth in non-traditional online resource sharing services. Often, each resource provider has its own separate site or front end. The quality (described further below) varies widely between these sources.

On awareness there are ongoing challenges for time-poor teachers to discover the most relevant and valuable resources. They often find resources through generic search tools (shaped by search engine optimization rather than local quality curation) or develop their own lists of preferred places, moving between the scores of sites described above. Teachers report precious time and effort wasted in this discovery but also highly value their professional autonomy to select and adapt resources for their context and needs.

High quality has different dimensions that each need to be addressed if a resource is going to deliver its intended benefit. Productivity risks arise from misinformation (increasing rapidly with GenAI), inappropriate or irrelevant content that is not aligned or is misaligned to the curriculum being taught and content that is not easily accessible or discoverable. All of these add time and complexity for teachers in working with resources or negatively impact student learning if presented to them, without teacher modification. In ESA's work detailed in our response to Q3, for the high quality resources we create or curate, we consider (i) educational value (defined as a resource's potential to successfully promote learning and development by students, teachers or leaders within the Australian school context, which is an existing national standard), licensing (for free use by teachers and ability to adapt), alignment to curriculum (national or a jurisdiction's) and metadata (to improve accessibility and efficient discovery). If all dimensions are addressed, a resource has the greatest opportunity to save time for teachers and improve learning outcomes for students. If any is absent, it diminishes the opportunity.

One ESA project, directly relevant, is Scootle. For nearly 20 years ESA has managed a collection of quality curated resources from verified sources, made freely available to Australian teachers. In late 2024, the Australian Education Senior Education Officials Committee invited ESA to propose a refreshed service, coordinating national effort, that provides easy access to a comprehensive suite of quality assured practice guides, support materials, sequenced lesson plans and inclusive curriculum aligned digital resources. With jurisdiction and sector representatives, we are developing this proposal now. We have agreed a shared ambition “to improve every teachers’ experience in discovering, selecting and using quality digital resources to save them time and increase their positive impact”.

Drawing on teacher surveys (from the Grattan Institute as well as ACARA and ESA) we know that teachers want (i) resources to be high quality, curriculum aligned and adaptable by them, (ii) access to be seamless from preferred local portal to all available national and jurisdiction resources, kept up to date and offered free of charge; and (iii) support to be available to ensure effective and efficient use to improve learning. To achieve this, our design principles are that the service needs to (i) Work for student learning and achievement – resources are assured against agreed quality standards (covering impact, accessibility and useability), (ii) Work for teachers’ context – are aligned to relevant curriculum, are free to access, can be adapted and reused and can be accessed from online places they already work from, (iii) Work for jurisdictions and education system manager’s complexities – can differentiate access and use by sector based on licensing, can integrate local and remote resources (shared from other jurisdictions) and can easily share own resources with others with minor additional effort and (iv) Work for national services and assets – accommodate security, privacy and technical standards, avoid duplication and be financially sustainable. We are in design phase now and believe it has significant potential to “reduce duplication, pool resources and support all teachers across school systems” which the Commission wishes to explore. We would be pleased to share our learnings and experience to date.

Is there anything more you would like to say about edtech, GenAI or lesson planning and curriculum materials?

We welcome the Commission’s inquiry on this vital area. ESA has a special perspective on this topic given our purpose, experience and expertise. ESA is a Ministerially owned, not-for-profit company that works for all Australian education systems and sectors to improve student outcomes, enhance teacher impact and strengthen school communities. Stakeholder surveys consistently report that ESA enjoys a high level of trust in digital technology infrastructure, applications and services and resource development. The breadth of our solutions is presented on our website, however we draw attention to two relevant solutions; Teacher Resource Hubs and Safer Technology for Schools (ST4S).

In addition to Scootle, referenced in our response to Q2, ESA also develops and manages high-quality digital teaching resources including whole school and lesson planning resources, professional learning courses and webinars, student and family resources. Hubs address core curriculum such as Literacy, Mathematics, Languages, Digital Technologies and Civics and Citizenship providing evidence-based content and trusted classroom support. The Student Wellbeing Hub provides support across the breadth of the school community providing resources, strategies and tools create safe, inclusive spaces for teaching and learning. ESA also supports targeted education priorities, for example, the Girls in STEM Toolkit (GiST) designed to stimulate uptake in STEM careers and English Language Learning for Indigenous Children (ELLIC) play-based resources to support children in remote and very remote

communities for whom English is not their home language prior to entering primary school.

ESA's Safer Technologies 4 Schools (ST4S) initiative is a standardised approach to evaluating digital products and services used by schools across Australia and New Zealand against a nationally consistent security and privacy control framework. The goals and standards shared by all systems and sectors are the basis through which ST4S evaluates software and platforms promoted for Australian education environments. ST4S provides free, independent, clear and consistent advice to school consumers reducing duplication of research and testing effort and risk to users in a rapidly growing international market.

Which of the following best describes you?

Program Director

Are you currently using any edtech tools (including learning games and GenAI) to support teaching and learning in the classroom?

No

If yes, what has been your experience with using these tools?

The participant did not respond to this question.

Are there things you would like to do with GenAI or edtech tools that you can't do currently? What's stopping you from doing these things?

The participant did not respond to this question.

If no, can you tell us why you are not using any edtech tools?

Not working in classroom teaching and learning, Responding on behalf of my organisation.

Do you access lesson planning and curriculum materials online?

No

If yes, what has been your experience with using these tools?

The participant did not respond to this question.

If no, can you tell us why you are not using online lesson planning and curriculum materials?

Not working in classroom teaching and learning, Responding on behalf of my organisation.

Support the workforce through a flexible post-secondary education and training sector

Credit transfer and recognition of prior learning

In your experience, how well does the credit transfer and recognition of prior learning system operate in Australia? Does it adequately support students to move between courses or have their work experience recognised as part of a qualification? Are there ways it could be improved?

The participant did not respond to this question.

Which of the following best describes you? Please select all that apply.

The participant did not respond to this question.

In the past 3 years, have you applied for credit recognition or recognition of prior learning (RPL)?

The participant did not respond to this question.

If yes, what was your experience in applying for credit recognition or RPL like?

The participant did not respond to this question.

If no, can you elaborate on why you didn't apply?

The participant did not respond to this question.

Work related training

What are the main reasons individuals and/or businesses do or do not participate in work-related training?

The participant did not respond to this question.

What role, if any, should businesses be playing to address any barriers and better support the offer of work-related training to employees?

The participant did not respond to this question.

What, if anything, could government do to address barriers and better support the offer of work-related training to employees?

The participant did not respond to this question.

Which of the following best describes you? Please select all that apply.

The participant did not respond to this question.

For business owners, managers and sole traders, how many employees do you have?

The participant did not respond to this question.

For employees/individuals, have you participated in any work-related training in the last 12 months that did not relate to general compliance (such as WHS)?

The participant did not respond to this question.

If yes, can you elaborate on the reasons for the training and any benefits you received from doing it?

The participant did not respond to this question.

If no, can you elaborate on any challenges or barriers you faced in attempting to undertake work-related training?

The participant did not respond to this question.

For business owners, managers or sole traders, have you provided or supported your employees to participate in work-related training in the past 12 months?

The participant did not respond to this question.

If yes, can you elaborate on the reasons for the training and any benefits you or your employees received from doing it?

The participant did not respond to this question.

Can you describe whether you accessed any government assistance, what type, and the amount received? If you didn't access any financial assistance, please tell us the reasons why.

The participant did not respond to this question.

If no, can you elaborate on any challenges or barriers you faced in attempting to provide or support your employees to undertake work-related training, such as the time or cost, availability of relevant or high-quality courses, and level of interest from your employees?

The participant did not respond to this question.

Balance service availability and quality through fit-for-purpose occupational entry regulations

What are the effects of occupational entry regulations? Please describe your experience and name the specific occupations you are referring to.

The participant did not respond to this question.

Do you believe current occupational entry regulations are proportionate to the level of risk associated with different professions? Why or why not? If not, do you have any suggested improvements to regulations to better reflect risks? Please name the specific occupations you are referring to.

The participant did not respond to this question.

Which of the following best describes your connection to occupational entry regulations? Please select all that apply.

The participant did not respond to this question.

Which state or territory are you predominantly based in?

The participant did not respond to this question.