

Associate Professor Pauline Roberts, Faculty of Education, SCU

Overarching questions

1. What are the key areas or issues for future research in each field or sector?
Recognition of need for diverse teaching practices and that context matters – can't cookie cut content across locations.
Inequity in recognition and pay for teachers in ECEC settings.
Unintended consequences of policy changes eg NAPLAN and MySchool increasing teaching to the test.
Narrow focus of assessment – more than academics is needed.
Inclusion – universal support for ALL children
Equity of quality in education experience regardless of location
2. What steps should we take to drive short-term gains and long-term advancement in these areas?
Listen to teachers on the ground experiencing the issues.
Give things time to work before adding something else – Still looking at Action Now outcomes and then TEEP and core content is added.
Systemic change rather than focusing on small element such as ITE.
3. What mechanisms are most effective for addressing the aims of the Decadal Plan?
Co-design instead of top down.
Broad range of evidence being accepted.
Look at positive international models rather than rely on UK and US which are not really doing any better.
4. What current policy and practices enable or constrain equity and justice for all?
LANTiTE; funding structures of schools; lack of investment in regional and remote workforce in terms of upskilling people in community rather than moving people in for short timeframes.
5. What research focus areas should be prioritised to improve quality and equity for all learners? Briefly describe the specific research investments, capabilities and relationships that would make this possible.
Assessment – non-academic assessment that can be scaled to measure things other than academic achievement that narrows curriculum. How can we measure things that matter and can positively impact wellbeing?
Universal supports as a minimum for all children with tiered support from here as needed.
School refusal and engagement – what is happening that is making children not want to come. Is it the narrowed focus and lack of diversity in content as schools move to commercial programs, narrowed focus on literacy and numeracy and teaching to test for NAPLAN?
6. What systematic changes are required to embed First Nations perspectives and practices into curriculum and learning frameworks? Please share examples of effective research-based, community-led and culturally responsive approaches that could be scaled.
The system needs to work for Indigenous children and then it will work for all – it is good practice to align with the trauma-informed and safety-focused lens needed here and all children will benefit. SNAICC have great ideas on this but are not always listened to. Co-design will be critical.
7. How would a more integrated approach to research across sectors, disciplines and institutions benefit the experiences and outcomes for all learners?
Strength in numbers – large multi-state projects that support a cohesive message about what works (other than AERO) that can be offered as alternate evidence source for government. We know what quality looks like but too much else is in the way and the evidence currently being used is not quality or encapsulates the diversity required.
8. How can teachers and early childhood educators be attracted to and retained in the profession, particularly in areas in greatest need?
Need to rectify pay gap from ECEC to school and have government fund ECTs the same way they do primary teachers. For ECEC, need to move from parent focused funding support to educator support so ECTs can be paid from govt funds.
Also need to explore how to upskill people in regional and remote areas through supported pathways. These people are already living in the regions and so qualifying them will increase chances of them staying the longer term as they are already embedded within that community. Needs a broad approach to flexible study, mentoring and support as well as consideration of practicum requirements to meet the needs of these cohorts.
9. How can those from diverse backgrounds be encouraged and supported to join and stay in the profession? Please share examples and strategies to help identify successful case studies that can be learned from and scaled.
As with previous, diversity is blocked at many turns through current practices and requirements. This includes Indigenous PSTs who cannot travel from country to complete PEx, or diverse students who cannot meet LANTiTE requirements. Curtin had a program with the Department of Education that was having success but is no longer being funded.
10. What are the priority areas for evaluation in educational practice? Briefly describe the specific investments, capabilities and relationships needed for effective evaluation.
Need to look beyond tick box and academic only focus. POM for instance has good potential but also problematic if it becomes like NAPLAN in the misuse of results and competition against settings. What about the other things that matter? Wellbeing and social emotional development – harder to assess and evaluate but more important for many children/students than the sole focus on academic achievement.
Trust the schools to be involved instead of paying external people to assess and evaluate – only making money for them.
11. What are the most effective ways in which cross-sector research can help address contemporary challenges in the education sector?

Share the wealth more effectively. Instead of constantly giving funding the group of 8 who keep working with same groups and not bringing in new stakeholders is narrowing focus. If broader collaborations were rewarded and guidelines in place to ensure all funded projects are multi-disciplinary, have reps across the country (not just down the east coast), and intentionally support more diverse groups would be a good place to start.

12. How would a more joined-up approach to research across different sectors, disciplines and institutions benefit the education workforce across their career?

Closer alignment to the classroom cohort. They are diverse yet the PSTs are not matching this diversity.

13. What are the capabilities and relationships required to enable educational research to impact change over the next decade?

Need to reduce competition and reward collaboration

Increase funding but with generous timeframes to allow effective co-design.

14. What is working in current approaches to research training? What isn't working?

Industry partnerships for HDR are good – extend internship options for this perhaps.

15. How might a national approach increase the impact of education research and build research relationships, both across sectors and within Australian and international research communities?

Less East Coast focussed.

This is a key point:

Reframing teacher education from a problem requiring regulation to a collaborative partner in co-designing workforce solutions could serve to better recognise ITE as a significant field of education research and practice in its own right, better reflecting how teacher educators work alongside schools and systems to address workforce and equity challenges. (p. 9)