




**SHAPE THE FUTURE  
OF LEARNING FOR  
THE COMMUNITY  
YOU SERVE**



The WebStudy Foundation inspires change and innovation. Our approach is designed to ensure that everyone is on the same page, resulting in a faster and more coordinated planning process. By taking a collaborative approach, we help stakeholders develop a unified plan that is responsive to the changing needs of those they serve.

The changing nature of skills needed to work in today's era is placing unprecedented demands on accredited educational providers and workforce development programs.

**Systemic change requires:**

- **People to be proactive towards acquiring skills**
- **Educational providers to offer relevant programs**
- **Businesses to develop strategies to train and reskill their employees**


## **Shared Challenge – To Pivot and Adapt**

The cycle of change has been ongoing since before the industrial era up to the present day. This white paper describes how the interplay between education and industry has evolved to meet the needs defined by each change. To achieve economic success, it is important for people, educational providers, and businesses to collaborate strategically across silos to accelerate change and move away from traditional modes to attain advanced learning. Silo thinking has got to go. Meta-conversations serve as a foundation for the collaboration needed to form those agreements. A networked community can help people receive the education they need, perform the work they are capable of, and ultimately produce a strong economy.

The cycle of change that we find ourselves in today may seem complex. Uncomplicating the complex inter-relationships between education, work, and the economy will provide a smooth path for us to navigate today's transitional period between eras.




Transitional periods in society move from chaos to improved workability, when it is created by the community it serves.

A young man and woman are smiling and looking at a book together. The woman is on the left, wearing a red and blue plaid shirt over a white t-shirt. The man is on the right, wearing a blue denim shirt. They are both looking at a book that the man is holding. The background is a warm, indoor setting with a red rope railing.

Seeking a silver bullet solution for a problem that is constantly changing would be an exercise in futility, as the environment and context are always evolving. Historical periods of change date back to the pre-industrial era. Table 1 shows that in each era, our access to learning expanded and people acquired new skills. This changed what kind of work was performed, where it is performed and how it is produced. The rate and quality of change is very different in rural versus urban areas. Differences previously seen between countries are now evident within the same country based on population density. To successfully create a new future for education & work, one needs to accept the mindset that change will continue to evolve at different rates for different populations.

People now realize that they must keep learning new skills throughout their lives to keep up with the ever-changing job market. Dr. Gary Matkin and others named this concept the "60-year curriculum." In his book, "*The 60-Year Curriculum*," Chris Dede talks about ways to learn throughout one's lifetime to deal with challenges such as globalization, threats to sustainability, climate change, and new technologies.

ERA	EDUCATION	OCCUPATIONS
Pre-Industrial Society	Education was scarce, expensive and restricted to males	Peasants, farmers and fisherman engage in manual labor
Industrial Revolution 1750 - 1850	Two hours of education a day compulsory for children working in factories	Farmers and craftsman evolve to industry workers in a factory
Second Industrial Revolution 1870 - Early 20th	Transportation improved access to schools linking learning to a class. Teachers supply information verbally from the front of room. Financial support improved by urbanization.	Factory workers, mechanics, and electricians move the work from farms to cities.
Digital Revolution 1940 - variable end date	Education was a one-way process utilizing class notes, textbooks, videos, supported by state funds. A two way process introduced via the Internet.	Workplaces transitioned to offices full of engineers, designers and IT specialists. Goods became affordable, life expectancy is prolonged, better housing & exponential growth in population.
Industry 4.0 2011 - variable end date	1.0 To support varied learning rates, educational delivery adopts a project-driven approach with more visual artifacts available anywhere and anytime.	Jobs are being automated. Preferences for remote, internet-based work is impacting the allocation of human resources.
Industry 5.0 Variable Date - Present	2.0 A national ambition to attain a middle-income status drives "innovation & industrialization" of any time/ any place lifetime learning.	Self-employed people perform freelance tasks across multiple companies to achieve work/life balance. Smart digital technology, machine learning, & big data blur the lines between occupations, jobs, skills and employment opportunities.
Industry 6.0 Future 2030 - 2050	3.0 <b>To be collectively created ...</b>	<b>FUTURE GOAL:</b> Harmonious human-machine collaborations, with a specific focus on the well being of the multiple stakeholders (i.e., society, companies, employees, customers)



Enormous change is needed to create opportunity for the continuous upskilling required to achieve six decades of worthwhile employability.

Educational providers offer relevant education to build skill and mastery in different occupations, and businesses hire these occupations to produce goods and services. Both accredited universities and colleges & nonprofit workforce training providers play a crucial role in addressing these changes by offering "right-shaped" programs that help current workers acquire just-in-time, high-demand skills. Yet, defining the right shaped program, considering the rate of change for new skills, creates a vicious cycle when attempting to prioritize to meet resources and budgets. New technologies like cloud computing, automation, data exchange, artificial intelligence and the internet of things (IoT) are changing industries in different areas and at different speeds. 75% of the jobs that have been most affected by these changes are related to technology or digital fields.

[The Skills Report](#) shows that automation and technology have led to a decline in average wages in some industries. Skills in business consulting, specialized sales, database architecture and administration, network protocols, web design and development, and Microsoft development tools are in active decline. Half of all jobs are at risk of being automated, blurring the lines between occupations, jobs, skills and employment.

To stay ahead of the disruptions and be competitive in the job market, people need to continuously upskill and reskill to remain relevant and marketable. There is a growing demand for skills in fields such as data analysis, artificial intelligence, user experience (UX) design, cloud computing, and cybersecurity. Investing in education and training in high-demand skills can lead to career advancement and higher wages.



Online delivery has provided greater access to education, but also created new challenges in terms of quality control, accreditation and standardization in credentials. Change in educational practices are not ubiquitous, one size does not fit all, nor is it place bound, or time bound. Lessons learned in the first two decades of digital learning suggest a shared perspective for a created future is emerging. A project driven approach to education may support learners with any time/any place access to learn new information via the internet.

A growing number of workers have chosen to become self-employed freelancers or pursue gig-based careers. The pandemic accelerated this trend towards a more flexible and adaptable workforce. As a result, individuals are seeking faster pathways to quickly acquire new skills to remain competitive in the job market without pursuing another degree.

## Shared Context for **Systemic Change**

To meet the challenges posed by these paradigm shifts, accredited educational providers and nonprofit workforce training organizations must innovate together to meet the changing regional economic trends. Many readers may be saying, “What? They don’t even talk to each other.” Yet, we know they are interconnected systems in mutually dependent relationships. Accepting the context that: a) people seek degrees or certificates in competency from educational providers, b) educational providers offer relevant education to build skill and mastery in an occupation, c) businesses hire occupations for production of goods and services, d) wages are exchanged via commerce to support the economy and e) career growth results in upward mobility. The graphic on our website is designed to show you the dynamic nature of these relationships.



*"Almost always, great ideas don't emerge from within a single person or function, but at the intersection of functions of people that have never met before."*

**Clayton Christensen**

Educational providers need to innovate their programs and curriculums to meet the changing needs of the society and the industry, and businesses need to be innovative to stay competitive. Educators need to build capacity in remote delivery and flexible scheduling, and companies need to keep their employees up to date with new skills with in-house training or tuition-assisted programs. A "systems-thinking" process and multi-stakeholder decision-making is needed for these inter-connected groups to prepare for success in the future.

## Create Your Future

UNESCO commissioned several global reports to rethink the role of education at key moments of societal transformation. ["Reimagining our Futures Together: A new social contract for education"](#). The UNESCO World Higher Education Conference (WHEC2022) in Barcelona, is where 2,500 participants (with another 8,000 online) converged around the theme "Reinventing Higher Education for a Sustainable Future".

This kind of integrative thinking together can be replicated throughout our country. These systemic changes require collaboration between educators, employers, learners and other stakeholders to create a flexible and responsive ecosystem that can keep pace with the rapidly changing world of work.

Traditional higher education models may need to be rethought and transformed to better meet the needs of today's workers. Institutions can support this shift by offering targeted certificate programs and flexible learning opportunities that allow individuals to build on their existing skills and acquire new, in-demand skills in a concentrated and focused way.

Many departments overseeing program and curriculum revamping lack the agility to accelerate change. They need to prioritize their resources and focus on the areas where their community needs the most help. This requires a deep understanding of the skills and how they are applied in various industries. By doing so, educational providers can provide the right support to individuals looking to advance their careers or acquire new skills.



We have an opportunity to take collective action in virtual convenings and turn a passive audience into an active audience. A unified approach is possible to create a continuous change loop for societal transformation, replacing incremental change as the status quo. It's time to pivot and adapt.

The WebStudy Foundation wants to bring stakeholders together to accelerate their planning of the next evolutionary step. We promises to work with diverse groups to address the anticipated labor shortage and improve the economic outlook. We researched the work done in systems- thinking processes that allows diverse groups to consider multiple perspectives. Together, we'll design and facilitate convenings to bring people together from different backgrounds and skills to innovate new solutions.