

.The school of the future

Generally speaking, schools have looked the same for the last 75 years or more. Of course, technology is now a key part of the classroom, and interactive whiteboards may have replaced the traditional chalkboards. But still the basic premise remains the same – the teacher stands at the front facing rows of desks which students sit behind

.School of the future

So, schools really haven't changed much physically for the better part of century. Some schools have experimented with flirtations of 'open plan' classroom design – but long corridors with conventional classrooms off them are still largely the order of the day

Indeed, the way schools are organised has changed little either. Children are still typically grouped by age first and then by ability second. Of course, all over the world, you will always find isolated stories of schools being particularly innovative and creative. These are the schools that have decided to do things a little bit differently (often with great results), but – by and large – not upsetting the status quo seems to be the way most schools do things

But technology has never moved at such a fast pace. Many people will be asking the question: What should the school of the future look like? People are intrigued by the thought of embracing technology more to improve the learning environment. AI (Artificial Intelligence) is big news these days – Will robots take over from teachers one day

Technology is moving quickly and it can enable us to do some amazing things; so: what will schools look like in 20/30 years' time

§VIRTUAL CLASSROOMS

The extent to which the schools of today are fit for purpose is a hot topic. Many educationalists believe that some of the things schools do are simply obsolete now. These include losing school days either through illness or bad weather. A former Law and Business teacher, Dave Townsend, created a virtual classroom to cater for one of his students who was unable to come into school for 6 months because of an immune deficiency problem. Townsend was able to develop a facility that enabled the student to log on and view the classroom so that learning was not affected in any way

With the technology and software that is available today, let alone in 20/30 years' time, the idea of a virtual classroom could become commonplace

§PART-TIME SCHOOLS

Technology has made remote working simple. The possibilities and potential it offers – no more commuting into the office, for example – are endless. Many companies have already embraced remote and flexible working opportunities. The trend is only likely to grow in the years to come – and it could extend into the world of education too

In the Australian city of Alice Springs, The School of the Air is already offering something similar to its students. Many of the school's students simply live too far away from the school to make regular attendance practical. Therefore, students receive lesson materials via the post or the internet

Of course, we should never underestimate the value of classroom conversations and social interaction. But, it is also true that technology now enables students to shoot and edit video, make a radio show, design posters and websites, blog – and interact online as well

§The question could be asked: Is the traditional classroom now redundant

§ROBOTS NOT TEACHERS

Many educationalists now believe that is only a matter of time before robots – intelligent machines – begin to replace teachers in schools

There will always be a place for teachers, but intelligent machines will be able to offer a more individual and personalised experience for students overall

Ultimately, the extent to which the schools of the future are transformed by technology will be determined by government education budgets and policy, but the technology certainly has the potential to completely transform schools over the next 20 or 30 years