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# Transformation of Teachers' Competences: Why and What Is Next?

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## Abstract

Today as never before, meeting our society's challenges demands educational excellence. Reinvigorating the economy, achieving energy independence with alternative technologies and green jobs, and strengthening our health care system require a skilled population that is ready for the critical challenges we face. Also, the 21st century has introduced new imperatives into education practices, stimulated by increasing concern about global inequities and lack of fairness. The 21st century is described as an interconnected world where globalisation, information communication technology and knowledge explosion, against the background of which the importance of teachers' professional activities, teachers' competences and their change becomes apparent, because teachers today have to deal with the issues of education of knowledge, skills and values of future generations. The subject of this article is the transformation of teachers' competencies. The aim of the article is to analyse the transformations of teachers' competencies and the factors that determine them. The article discusses the conditions that determine the change of teachers' competencies and their diversity in the world, the importance of the change of teachers' competencies; changes in education are presented, which are determined by various social, technological, ecological and other conditions. Also, this article aims to answer the question – what transformations in the teachers' competences and expression can be expected in the future. The analysis and insights in the article are based on the analysis of scientific literature and documents.

**Keywords:** education, social transformation, teacher competencies.

## 1. Introduction

World is facing “unprecedented challenges – social, economic and environmental – driven by accelerating globalisation and a faster rate of technological developments. At the same time, those forces are providing us with myriad new opportunities for human advancement. Education can equip learners with agency and a sense of purpose, and the competences they need, to shape their own lives and contribute to the lives of others” (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (hereinafter: OECD), 2018, p. 2).

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Change and progress encourage parents, teachers and students themselves to think more and more often about the meaning of education, its relevance in the career or life path of every person. The nature of work is changing beyond recognition, people are increasingly working in virtual environments and using the help of artificial intelligence to perform various tasks. In this context, there is a need to develop the competences of children and the general public that would allow them to successfully adapt to these changes. In order to ensure that current students could not only get a job in the future market, but also developed competences to live in a harmonious and happy society, we must focus on the individual needs and opportunities of students. By giving due attention to each student and creating the right environment for his/her personal education, we can ensure that each student will not only understand the meaning of 'lifelong learning' but also take responsibility for their own education, discover the aspects that interest them in educational programs (Genys et al., 2020).

Education must evolve to continue to deliver on its mission of supporting individuals to develop as persons, citizens and professionals. It must remain relevant to continue to shape our childrens' identity and integration into society. In a complex and quickly changing world, this might require the reorganisation of formal and informal learning environments, and reimagining education content and delivery. In an ageing world, these changes are likely to apply not just to basic education, but to lifelong learning as well. By providing the competences needed to operate in the modern world, education has the potential to influence the life outcomes of the most disadvantaged. It can help combat the increasing fragmentation and polarisation of our societies, and empower people and communities to take charge of their own civic processes and democratic institutions. Access to learning and knowledge not only opens doors to individual and collective opportunities, it has the potential to reshape the future of our global world (OECD, 2020).

OECD (2018) argues based on the available research that teacher quality is the most important school variable in determining the success of an educational system. In other words, an education system is effective when its teachers use teaching practices which improve student performance and develop the full potential of every student, regardless of their socio-economic background, native language or migrant status. Good teaching stimulates and guides students' development so that their achievements go beyond even their own expectations.

N. Simonović (2021) points out the task of every country that wants quality education is that it must inevitably permanently improve the educational policy focused on the field of education and professional development of teachers. Improving the quality of school work is a dynamic process, open to innovations and changes brought about by the accelerated development of modern society.

Education as indisputably one of the most dynamic professions requires a certain meta-competence of constant self-examination and finding ways to respond to the always new needs of the future society.

Abundant research on the future of education and the activities and competences of teachers and discussions on these topics at various levels show the relevance and importance of the topic. The subject of this article is the transformation of teachers' competences. The aim of the article is to analyse the transformations of teachers' competences and the factors that determine them.

## **2. Conditions and Diversity of Transformation of Teachers' Competences**

### **2.1. Teachers' Competences and Their Importance**

D. Bartram, et al. (2002) states that competence is a group of behaviors that play a role in achieving the desired outcome. In other words, the capability is a person's ability to apply or use his or her knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors, and personal characteristics to perform a difficult task in particular roles and positions. According to J. Sulaiman et al. (2020) and their research on teacher competences in Malaysia, there are five main components of competence:

- 1) knowledge – referring to one's information and knowledge;
- 2) skills – referring to one's ability to perform a particular task;
- 3) self-concept and values – refer to a person's attitude, values, and image;
- 4) characters – the ability to perform tasks in his / her field;
- 5) the motives – emotions, desires, physiological needs or impulses to action (p. 3537).

The combination of elements of nature and reason is identified as a critical driver for a person to perform tasks without strict supervision. These five components of competence are crucial behaviors that influence high performance.

Being a teacher at any level requires a significant amount of knowledge and skills. S. Zeiger (2018) has suggested the following list of core competences for educators.

1. Interacting well with students. "Educators must be able to positively interact with all students.
2. Creating a learning environment. Educators must set high expectations for student performance and behavior. All rules must be enforced consistently and fairly. Students should not have to worry about being bullied in the classroom and should feel comfortable when speaking up.

3. Good at lesson plan design. All educators must be capable of designing lesson plans to meet student needs and cover the standards. This requires knowing how to choose and create instructional materials to accommodate students at different levels.
4. Able to use varied teaching strategies. Competent educators may lecture, but they also incorporate a variety of strategies, including non-traditional teaching strategies, to help students with multiple learning styles to learn and stay engaged. Educators should also attend regular professional development sessions to learn new strategies and the latest best practices.
5. Able to assess. Educators must design or select and administer effective assessments.
6. Able to identify student needs. Being able to identify and address student needs is a crucial component in an educator's job. This is done by partly using formal and informal assessments to help guide instruction. However, it also involves getting to know students beyond an instructional level, learning about their interests, recognising changes in mood and making sure students are mentally and emotionally focused on learning.
7. Good at communication. Communicating effectively with parents and other stakeholders in a child's education is a key component of an educator's job.
8. Able to collaborate. Educators must be able to collaborate with other teachers and school staff. Teachers can learn from one another and grow into better teachers through collaboration. They can also collaborate to make the school a safe, effective learning environment for all students and to improve the overall image of the school and the instruction that takes place there.
9. Maintaining a professional appearance. Being an educator requires maintaining a professional appearance at all times. This includes dressing appropriately and acting professionally. Educators often serve as role models for students.
10. Demonstrating a commitment to the profession. Educators must make a commitment to education and professional development. Subject matter knowledge fades, teaching strategies change and new research is always modifying the way students learn and teachers teach. By furthering their education and taking part in professional development sessions, educators can continue to improve the quality of the education they provide" (Zeiger, 2018).

Education is a part and a reflection of the society. Therefore, not only rapid environmental change affects education, but also the needs, traditions and trends of each country, society, community. In the first decades of the twenty-first century, we saw waves of different sizes and shapes related to the expansion of schooling around the world and its adaptation to the learning needs of the emerging technological and globalised society (OECD, 2018).

Another challenge is hidden in the educational process. By educating, we prepare the future generations who will create the world of the future. The logical conclusion is that today's teachers are creating the future. Education – the way we organise teaching and learning throughout life – has long played a foundational role in the transformation of human societies. It connects us with the world and to each other, exposes us to new possibilities, and strengthens our capacities for dialogue and action. Nevertheless, to shape peaceful, just, and sustainable futures, education itself must be transformed. Improving student learning and educational equity requires strong, consistent, and sustained collaboration among parents, teachers, school boards, superintendents and administrators, business leaders, and the community. Moreover, such improvements require that we all take responsibility for the academic and social well-being of the students in our charge. It is in this spirit of collaboration that we offer this joint statement on elevating the teaching profession to improve the education of our students. Teachers are at the center of every education system. According to B. Žygaitienė et al. (2013) research in Lithuania, the transformation of education begins with teachers. Changes can be observed in the goals of education, ways of teaching and learning, and assessment of learning results. Therefore, a teacher should constantly develop his/her professional competences. An educator of the 21st century must not only comprehend well in the changing society and understand the political situation, but also understand the cultural, economic and social dimensions on the global level, be aware of their changes and be able to comment on them to their learners (Žygaitienė et al., 2013).

Teaching is a demanding profession that requires both passionate commitment and a broad range of complex knowledge and skills. Teachers need to be well grounded in the subjects they teach and proficient with the latest classroom technologies. They need to be skilled in managing a classroom, interacting with, and engaging their students. They must be able to recognise and move beyond their own biases in order to identify the unique strengths and talents of students from every background. They need a command of a variety of effective pedagogical practices, as well as the latest neurological research, especially about how very young children and adolescents develop and learn. As a society, we need to value and respect teachers, maintain a high bar for entry into the profession, and reward them as professionals (Genys, et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, as the International Teaching and Learning Survey (TALIS) report (2020) states, in the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, on average, only a little more than a quarter (25.8%) of basic education teachers feel that they are properly evaluated by society. In Europe, Finnish teachers feel most appreciated (58.2%). This once again confirms the common opinion that teachers are one of the most desired and respected professions in Finland. No special research is needed to prove this claim. It is enough to pay attention to the fact that only about 10% of all applicants who want to study are accepted to study at teacher training universities. The evaluations of teachers in the Baltic countries do not differ much from the average of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development: in Estonia - 26.4%, in Latvia - 23.3%. In Lithuania, the share of teachers valued by society, in their own eyes, is much smaller - only 14.1% agree with this statement. respondents. By the way, only 2% of Lithuanian teachers interviewed in the study absolutely agree with this statement.

It is important to note that it is difficult to measure goodwill based on the materiality of the activity. It has been observed that teaching, more than any other profession, is an activity without a clear measurable outcome. According to E. Bakonis (2021), who draws on research carried out by scientists in countries around the world to assess the prestige of teachers, the results of the activities of athletes, artists, doctors, inventors are always better seen, and others – family, public organizations, educational institutions in general – tend to take advantage of the teacher's contribution in educating a young person. And on the contrary, there are quite a number of factors due to which the responsibility for one or another failure is undeservedly placed on teachers, thus contributing to the deterioration of their prestige.

## **2.2. The Requirements of a Changing World for Competences Change**

Our world is at a turning point. We already know that knowledge and learning are the basis for renewal and transformation. However, global disparities – and a pressing need to reimagine why, how, what, where, and when we learn – mean that education is not yet fulfilling its promise to help us shape peaceful, just, and sustainable futures (UNESCO, A new social contract for education, 2021). We live in a fast-changing world, and producing more of the same knowledge and skills will not suffice to address the challenges of the future. A generation ago, teachers could expect that what they taught would last their students a lifetime. Today, because of rapid economic and social change, schools have to prepare students for jobs that have not yet been created, technologies that have not yet been invented and problems that we do not yet know will arise.

According to J. Sulaiman et al. (2020), the development of science and technology took place very fast in the era of industrial revolution 4.0. This situation requires humans to work on a complex framework of thinking and communication skills. There are four critical 21st century skills which include learning and innovation skills, life and career skills, information skills, media and technology and necessary literacy skills. Teaching practices based on the 21st century skills elements have begun to be emphasised by educational institutions to meet the demands of the workforce in the market. This phenomenon stems from the urges and complaints of business organisations that question whether graduates produced by educational institutions are unable to compete in the global market, either technical or soft skills. Excellent academic achievement or a degree certificate does not guarantee accessible job opportunities.

So how do we educate for this unknown future? There is a need of a global citizenry capable of not just doing, but creating jobs and finding solutions to a host of unprecedented global challenges. This requires a broad approach to education that reaches all children where they are and fosters the development of the unique strengths and potential of each individual child. School cultures need to promote entrepreneurship, global awareness, and a humanistic outlook that includes appreciation of diverse backgrounds and viewpoints. “The world economy no longer pays you for what you know, but for what you can do with what you know. This challenges not only the content of what we teach, but the ways in which we teach.” (OECD, 2023, p. 34).

To navigate through such uncertainty, students will need to develop curiosity, imagination, resilience and self-regulation; they will need to respect and appreciate the ideas, perspectives and values of others; and they will need to cope with failure and rejection, and to move forward in the face of adversity. Their motivation will be more than getting a good job and a high income; they will also need to care about the well-being of their friends and families, their communities and the planet (OECD, 2018).

Education today is much more about the ways of thinking which involve creative and critical approaches to problem solving and decision-making. It is also about ways of working, including communication and collaboration, as well as the tools they require, such as the capacity to recognize and exploit the potential of new technologies, or indeed, to avert their risks. And last but not least, education is about the capacity to live in a multi-faceted world as an active and engaged citizen. These citizens influence what they want to learn and how they want to learn it, and it is this that shapes the role of educators. It became very clear and clearly visible and understandable that there can be no going back or slowing down in just a few years, because we could observe the rapid development of many areas of life. The last decade was marked by significant progress in various fields such as science, medicine and technology

but at the same time, the number of problems in today's society has steadily grown. In 2020 and 2021, which were undoubtedly some of the most uncertain and difficult years of the last decade, the biggest problems in the world were the COVID-19 pandemic and poverty.

The teacher and the school must always be ahead of the curve, ahead of the overall development of society. This is a challenge that only an educated, creative, enterprising person with humanistic values can accept and overcome. He or she accepts difficulties and challenges as an opportunity to improve, to learn, to broaden his or her outlook. Such a teacher is called a competent professional (Litvinaitė, 2022, p. 5). In order to develop soft skills in the education system of any country, it is important to simultaneously raise the students' own motivation to learn, i.e., strive for educational practices to be learner-oriented, such as student-initiated, project-oriented rather than process-oriented teaching, when the student does not passively receive information, but actively participates in the educational process, identifies the angles of personal interest to him/her. Such an educational process helps to develop key skills such as meta-learning (understanding of one's own learning practices) and character development. Non-traditional educational methods, such as experiential learning, are particularly effective in helping to develop competencies (Genys et al., 2020).

New vision of education's future in greater harmony and balance with humanity and a wider planetary world is in fact not a contract through which parties can opt in or out on others' behalf. Relational interdependence is an ontological imperative, reflective of a mutually connected world. It can translate into a wide range of intentional, shared mutual undertakings at every scale and in every sector. What such actions and agreements may look like in education could vary considerably in each context. The proposal to probe, unpack, and reimagine a new social contract for education in diverse contexts is therefore a promising one at this critical stage in global consciousness. A discussion on the social contract for education is an especially welcome shift from the narrow and myopic focus on goals, targets and benchmarks that characterise much of international education development discourse (Toukan, 2023).

### **2.3. Education and Problems to be Solved**

The Center for Strategic Analysis of the Government of Lithuania STRATA (2022) points out that the rapidly changing and difficult to define modern world, accelerating technological changes pose great challenges for education, training and skills. Historically, a good education acquired in educational institutions provided a person with valuable knowledge and skills that allowed one to realise oneself at work, get higher income and find a place in society. At the same

time, education was and remains an important factor shaping modern society, ensuring its well-being and providing it with a common cultural foundation. However, in recent years, digital technologies are being rapidly integrated into our lives, the changing habits and needs of the young generation are changing the usual models of education, opening the way for more diverse forms of it. The context of the future is no longer as stable and predictable as it used to be: experts talk about the ever-increasing fusion of physical and virtual realities in the future, automation, the changing labor market of the future, not to mention global factors such as climate change and environmental degradation, growing demographic imbalances, and migration flows, etc. The question of what kind of knowledge, skills and qualities a person will need in the future in order to survive and thrive in such a world becomes especially important. What are the challenges facing education in this uncertain future?

According to (Filipenco, 2022), the world is currently faced with these main problems:

1. Climate change.
2. Wars and military conflicts.
3. Water contamination.
4. Human rights violation.
5. Global health issues.
6. Poverty.
7. Children's poor access to healthcare, education and safety.
8. Access to food and hunger.
9. Migration.
10. Weapons accessibility.

Is it possible to include all the sensitive topics and the knowledge needed to solve the challenges in the curricula? According to M. Al Asefer et al. (2021), non-academic skills such as personality, emotions, empathy, and metacognitive skills such as curiosity and self-efficacy, though they are not an inherent part of any subject-specific curricula or classroom instruction, are crucial to the long-term well-being of individuals, the ultimate purpose of education. We have sufficient knowledge about human development to develop practices and systematic efforts in the school environment, so that students can develop the potential they were born with through attentive nurturing that educators are able to provide. While it may be true that information can be accessed at the touch of a fingertip and that “teachers are no longer the oracle”, it does not necessarily follow that the sharing of knowledge no longer has a crucial role to play. A teacher's input in filtering, sharing and explaining content is as critical today as it has ever been.

Humans are natural learners. The challenge, and a primary goal of education, must be to nurture already curious, flexible, creative, and potentially critical thinkers – to keep their natural predisposition for learning alive throughout their school lives and beyond. The question of how to accommodate everything in educational programs, how to select what is important today and know what will be important in the future: individual and distance learning; global education and national education; technology use, communication on line and human-to-human communication, etc. Looking at it from the other side, maybe everything is not incomprehensible and such a story has already happened and everything is just repeating itself? About 400 BC, Socrates expressed this concern: “this discovery of yours will create forgetfulness in the learners’ souls because they will not use their memories; they will trust to the external written characters and not remember of themselves. The specific which you have discovered is an aid not to memory but to reminiscence”. Of course, Socrates wasn’t referring to iPads, laptops, or so on, he was talking about written language (Sahlberg et al., 2016, p. 4).

Let us return to the changing environment and the unevenly developing world. While the European countries and the USA are thinking about how to make education even more advanced, there are countries where completely different and non-educational problems are being solved. According to UNICEF (2021), 150 million children participate in laborious activities dangerous to their health. As one can imagine, this work hinders a child’s ability to fully invest in education. Violence is a global issue that exists in all shapes and sizes. Violence can be directed against a particular group like women, LGBTQ+ members or children. One in five girls are married before the age of 18, and child marriages prevent children from becoming educated, it can lead to severe health consequences and increased risk of violence. Also, there are such problems as: water contamination and shortage; poverty; inequality; terrorism; lack of food, etc.

According to the analysis by The Center for Strategic Analysis of the Government of Lithuania STRATA (2022), future education and learning will be affected by all six megatrends, although the challenges they pose will be of different magnitudes (see Table 1)

**Table 1.** Relevance of megatrends for future education (STRATA, 2022, p. 11)

Tendency	Level of relevance	Character of relevance
1. Accelerating technological change and hyper-connectivity	extremely relevant	To achieve equal access to new forms of learning; to combine personalised training with the transfer of a common cultural background; constantly update teaching methods; open the education system to continuous renewal.
2. Climate change and environmental degradation	relevant	To convey climate change knowledge to the public, to develop the desire to contribute to the improvement of the environment.
3. Growing demographic imbalance	relevant	Pay special attention to lifelong learning, adapt learning methods to older people.
4. Diversification of education and learning	extremely relevant	Create convenient platforms for personalised learning, flexible ways to recognise acquired qualifications.
5. Varying inequality	extremely relevant	To level the disparities in access to learning (geographical, technological), including childrens' and adults' learning.
6. Changing health challenges	relevant	To impart knowledge to the public about a healthy lifestyle, including mental health.

As we can see in Table 1, the megatrend of increasing demographic imbalance (3) will increase the importance of lifelong learning, the need for learning methods adapted to older people. Trends in climate change and environmental degradation (2) and changing health challenges (6) suggest a significant role for education, providing the public with knowledge about opportunities to contribute to environmental improvement, healthy lifestyles, including mental health. However, the trend of accelerating technological change and hyper-connectedness (1) is most relevant in the field of education. This trend is inseparable from the trends and challenges of diversifying education and learning (4) and widening inequality (5). Accelerating technological changes create new opportunities to learn in a variety of ways, beyond formal forms of learning or the conventional education system. However, their impact on people and society is not unambiguous.

STRATA's (2022) analysis suggests that megatrends create tensions in relation to skills and competences that future educational goals and objectives will need to focus on:

- ▶ The tension between the personalisation of learning and the shared canon of cultural knowledge. Very broadly formulated and possibly contradictory expectations are placed on schools. The task is to focus on the skills and competencies required for the future labor market, to personalise learning methods, taking into account the individual needs and abilities of each learner. However, the school is also expected to provide a cultural basis for a cohesive community, ensure the adoption of the society's cultural tradition, and become a place of democratic skills. The challenge for the education system is to find a balance between these quite different expectations or even educational missions.
- ▶ The tension between skills and abilities and background knowledge. The school is tasked with becoming the basis of future knowledge and action. On the other hand, it is recognised that it is very uncertain what skills will be needed in the future. Due to this uncertainty of the future, there is a tendency to talk about the qualities to be developed, the motivation to learn, digital skills, but not the knowledge and expertise that must be imparted. Learning methods, new methods and tools are considered, not content. These considerations relegate the discussion of the necessary background knowledge and knowledge to the background. The general uncertainty of the future creates a challenge in education to redefine what is the basic knowledge and understanding that needs to be taught to learners and which would become the basis for building the future.
- ▶ The tension between leadership and community qualities to be developed. Quite different goals for the development of personal qualities are formed for education. People are seen as “human capital” for building a future economy and a well-functioning state. Such a person must not only have the motivation to learn all the time, improve and deepen professional knowledge, but also have leadership qualities, the ability to take initiative and overcome obstacles, generate new ideas, be proactive, not be afraid to make mistakes, and take personal responsibility. In addition, such necessary and important qualities for a person of the future society are emphasised, such as orientation towards comprehensive personality development, emotional resilience, the ability to find answers to questions of meaning, empathy, social compassion, citizenship, creativity, community. It is these more community-oriented characteristics that are needed in order to understand the challenges facing the future today (climate change, crises of democracy, social exclusion). These quite different complexes of personal characteristics shape two different ways of functioning in the future: authoritarian leadership without empathy or “bureaucratic” leadership that does not encourage change. Future trends

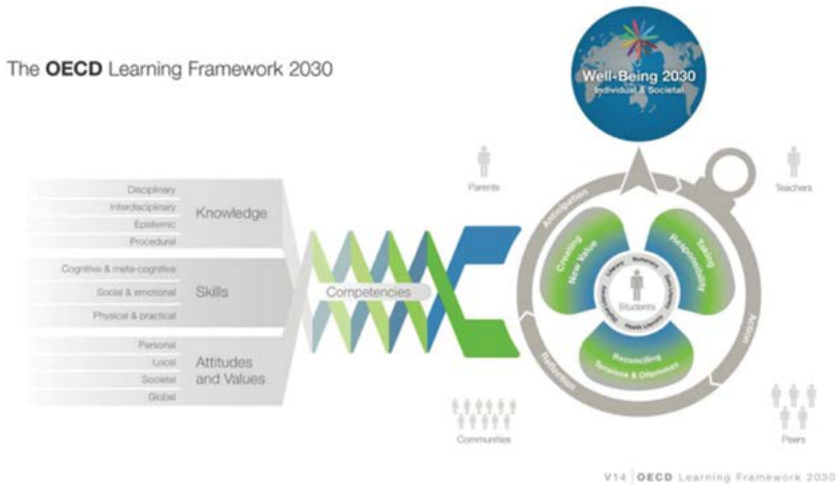
challenge education to redefine the qualities to be cultivated, which combine personal leadership and empathy and community spirit, the ability to make joint decisions and act as a team, to promote the qualities of team leadership (“democratic leadership”).

## **2.4. Transformations of Teachers' Competences in the Future**

Unpredictable scenarios and trends of the future (globalisation, climate change, digital lifestyle, demographic changes, technological breakthroughs) change thinking, attitudes, lifestyles, the world of professions, communities. A new page for the evolution of thinking was opened by the complexity of civilisation and its further increase. Gradually, the cognitive perception of the world is being replaced by critical, analytical, creative, non-standard, the so-called “competence-based” thinking, conditioned by most global processes (Bakonis, 2021). To meet the up-to-date requirements tailored to society needs and opportunities of modern technologies, education quality improvement occurs due to using information and communication technologies, including distance education technologies, guided by the principle of free and flexible educational process catering for education openness, easy access to it, and economic efficiency (Yudina et al., 2020).

The children that had entered education in 2018 will be young adults in 2030. Schools can prepare them for jobs that have not yet been created, for technologies that have not yet been invented, to solve problems that have not yet been anticipated. It will be a shared responsibility to seize opportunities and find solutions (OECD, 2018). It is impossible to say what challenges will be confronted today's students, or what the workplace of the future will look like. Ensuring that they leave school with the habit of learning well established will or, in other words, prepare students for a world not yet known (An Economist Intelligence Unit Report, 2022).

OECD (2018) talks about the need for new solutions in a rapidly changing world environment, economic and social spheres. The following guidelines are formed for education: the need for broader education goals, individual and collective well-being; navigating through a complex and uncertain world; the need for a broad set of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in action; competencies to transform our society and shape our future. OECD “Education 2030” stakeholders have co-developed a “learning compass” that shows how young people can navigate their lives and their world (Image 1).



**Image 1.** The OECD Learning Framework 2030: Work-in-progress (OECD, 2018, p. 4)

There are three essential questions to ask of education as we look to 2050: What should we continue doing? What should we abandon? What needs to be creatively invented afresh?

Clearly needed is a global citizenry capable of not just doing, but creating jobs and finding solutions to a host of unprecedented global challenges. This requires a broad approach to education that reaches all children where they are and fosters the development of the unique strengths and the potential of each individual child. School cultures need to promote entrepreneurship, global awareness, and a humanistic outlook that includes the appreciation of diverse backgrounds and viewpoints. Education must always maintain concentration and appreciation of human values, it is necessary to rely on the positive nature of a person, his eagerness. Any new social contract must build on the broad principles that underpin human rights – inclusion and equity, cooperation, and solidarity, as well as collective responsibility and interconnectedness (UNESCO, 2021).

Increasingly rapid technological, environmental and demographic changes force us to look for solutions how to ensure smooth adaptation of the society. It is agreed that lifelong learning is one of the most important factors that can help adapt to the changes that are taking place. This topic is a frequent subject of research and debate both in international organisations (e.g., UNESCO, World Bank, European Commission, OECD, CEDEFOP, etc.) and in national institutions or academic communities (STRATA, 2020).

A teacher cannot step into the future alone. Governments, businesses and education providers should collaborate to build a strong, interconnected

ecosystem committed to a comprehensive upskilling agenda (OECD, 2018). As indicated during the World Government Summit (2023):

- Demand will grow for social and emotional skills, higher-level cognitive skills, and both basic and advanced digital skills.
- Early childhood is a critical period for skills development.
- Higher education is shifting to a skills-first approach. Institutions are increasing real-world application of skills in their curriculums, with an emphasis on building communities and networks. As they do so, a rethink of some credentials is taking place, including the emergence of a new microcredentialing system in higher education that prepares students for the world of work more flexibly.

In the World Government Summit 2023 document *The Skills Revolution and the Future of Learning and Earning*, there are identified a lot of foundational skills that will help citizens thrive in the future of work. Here are their main groups:

- Cognitive: critical thinking; planning and ways of working; communication; mental flexibility;
- Interpersonal: mobilizing systems; developing relationships; teamwork effectiveness;
- Self-leadership;
- Self-awareness and self-management: understanding own emotions and triggers; entrepreneurship; goals achievement;
- Digital: digital fluency and citizenship; software use and development; understanding digital systems.

Seeing so many skills, it is probably even clearer that it is very important now and will be important in the future – to teach for lifelong learning, to teach to love this process. Thus, success will visit those who adapt to changes and will be open to them. According to J. I. Onebunne (2022), transformative use of educational technology requires changes in pedagogy, curriculum, assessment policy, ICT and funding. In fact, digital education needs excellent teachers and the teaching profession needs digital education. In the 21st century, graduates will need a capacity for inventiveness and the ability to respond effectively to novelty. The new world will require them to have a thirst for continuous learning, for updating their knowledge and skills in information literacy. They will need the personal resilience to deal with uncertainty and failure. They will need confidence in their own values and commitment to the well-being of society.

### 3. Conclusion

As the analysis of the scientific literature and documents has shown, there is a noticeable shift in teachers' professional activities and expression of competences. The world and the education system are changing, affected by global and local changes in all areas of people's lives. Teacher quality is the most important school variable that determines the success of an education system. A teacher should constantly improve his professional competences. Also, the teacher of the 21st century must not only have a good understanding of the changing society, understand the political situation, but also understand the cultural, economic and social dimensions on a global scale. It is important to emphasize that education and its changes take place against the background of climate change, wars and political turmoil, violence, health problems, migration and other negative phenomena and events. This inevitably affects the content of education, its forms and perspectives. The literature and documents analysed by the author allows us to claim that in the future it such competences of teachers will be important which could help to resolve the tension between: the personalisation of learning and the shared canon of cultural knowledge; skills and abilities needed for the future and prior knowledge; leadership and community.

In addition, this work examines the need to research, improve, change and expand the competencies of teachers. This is necessary in order to meet modern requirements adapted to the needs of society and the possibilities of modern technologies, to improve the quality of education. The future competences are associated with the lifelong learning of teachers and the improvement of competences, creating such an education that could satisfy the diversity of learners, society's expectations, economic efficiency, and aspects of technical fulfillment.

### 4. Literature

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