# *Building holistic systems for educational improvement: From curriculum to pedagogy to assessment principles*

**A position paper for AEA-Europe's Holistic Assessment Special Interest Group**
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## Introduction: Why 'Holistic'?

Arguably, 21st century students are radically different from their predecessors and are "no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach" (Prensky, 2001, p.1). Accordingly, educators and employers are increasingly recognising that to thrive within their families, local communities, and wider society, and to work within a 21st century global knowledge economy, young people need to complete their formal education with more than just a strong foundation in a core curriculum of traditional subject areas, with its emphasis on the development of discipline-specific knowledge, understanding, and skills. Education needs to be broader, nurturing the whole of a person and not just a part of them, and this is the essence of the concept of 'holistic'.

The overarching question of what young people need in order to prepare them for adult life has been explored extensively, for example by the OECD in its identification of 'key competencies' (OECD, 2005) and 'transformative competencies' (OECD, 2019). These studies typically involve discussion of the wide range of knowledge, skills, attributes and values (including solid ethical values) that being an educated person in contemporary society entails. They go well beyond the traditional 'academic' and technical skills and knowledge currently prioritised in many education systems. Additionally, personal attributes such as a positive learning disposition and high levels of personal wellbeing, with their potential to enhance an individual's capacity to collaborate, innovate, self-regulate, and create, are increasingly accepted as important for outcomes in life, from education to employment (OECD, 2019).

The terminology used in this field can be confusing and is evolving. The 'competencies' referred to by the OECD (2005, 2018, 2019) in their Learning Framework 2030 constitute a wide-ranging and inexact classification that lacks a single, universally accepted definition within it. Early in the 21st century, skills that transcend single subject disciplines tended to be termed *21st century skills*, (e.g. Trilling and Fadel, 2009) even though several can be traced back to Socrates (Suto, 2013). As the decades have progressed, many researchers and educationalists have renamed them *future skills*, *future-ready skills*, *transferable skills* or *transversal skills*[1]. The term *non-cognitive skills* has also been used (Gutman & Schoon, 2013a, 2013b), although few would doubt the high levels of cognition in the mental processing required (Ramus, 2015).

Multiple studies emphasise the predictive power of wider skills and attributes, including personality traits, in academic success, and their direct positive effect on employment outcomes (see Rammstedt, Lechner & Danner (2024) for a recent review). Measures of such skills and attributes have been found to be as effective as conventional measures of disciplinary knowledge and skills in predicting educational aspirations and academic and vocational performance (e.g. Ozer & Benet-Martínez, 2006; Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007; Doménech-Betoret, Abellán-Roselló, & Gómez-Artiga, 2017). Moreover, measures of self-discipline (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005) and conscientiousness (Poropat, 2009) have outperformed IQ as predictors of educational achievement, even after accounting for key socioeconomic factors such as demographics, school attendance, and access to educational resources at home.

[1] To avoid confusion of terms, we will use 'transversal' or 'wider' skills in what follows, unless an alternative is included in a quotation.

Summarising the findings from European studies which drew on recent large-scale, high quality data sources designed to investigate these 'non-cognitive'[2] skills, OECD researchers concluded that:

> *"Together, these studies provide robust evidence that (1) non-cognitive skills are largely independent of cognitive skills, (2) non-cognitive skills are incrementally associated with life success over and above cognitive skills, and (3) most of these associations can be generalised across countries."*
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> Rammstedt, Lechner & Danner, 2024, p.23

## Holistic Education

Transversal skills and competencies which transcend conventional subject disciplines appear to cohere well within the concept of holistic education, which entails an experiential learning approach in which educators seek to address the emotional, social, ethical, and academic needs of students. Cultivating all aspects of a student's growth acknowledges the broader social, societal, and economic responsibilities of education (Delors et al., 1996). With its focus on the:

> "*…fullest possible development of the person, encouraging individuals to become the very best or finest that they can be and enabling them to experience all they can from life and to reach their goals,"* (Forbes, 2003, p. 17)

holistic education embraces its potential to influence societal behaviour, economic success, well-being, employment potential and career success (Chiteji, 2010). Thus, holistic education not only supports personal development but also addresses systemic educational equity by fostering competencies that are less dependent on prior social and economic capital. This ambition has a deep-rooted history in European pedagogical philosophies such as *Bildung* (Klafki, 2009).

A coherent, aligned instructional system that integrates curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment is one of the characteristics of a good educational programme. Coherence resides in the alignment of factors such as curriculum content, textbooks, teaching content, pedagogy, assessment and drivers and incentives (Schmidt and Prawat, 2006; Oates, 2018). There is clearly a strong link between a programme of learning and its assessment: assessment cannot be decoupled from teaching and learning in the classroom (Pellegrino, et al., 2001). Alignment occurs when curriculum, pedagogy and assessment are mutually supportive; that is, they identify and support learning and progression in agreed knowledge, understanding and skills. The impact of the curriculum-pedagogy-assessment 'triad' is well-attested (Pellegrino, et al., 2001; Pellegrino, 2006; Achtenhagen, 2012): a direct relationship exists between how the curriculum is taught, learners' experience of the curriculum, and their performance in assessments (Schmidt et al., 2001).

We now therefore reflect upon what it takes to build assessment systems to support holistic education, which will potentially lead to improvements in outcomes and life chances. We structure our thinking around the triad of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, since consideration cannot be given to one without reasonable understanding of the others. Each of these interconnected areas poses key questions for our Special Interest Group to explore in its work to develop the potential of holistic assessment.

[2] On the apparent distinction between cognitive and non-cognitive skills, Messick (1979) expounds: "Once the term cognitive is appropriated to refer to intellective abilities and subject-matter achievement in conventional school areas … the term non-cognitive comes to the fore by default to describe everything else" (p. 282). Several commentators have argued for an alternative name for non-cognitive (e.g. Ramus, 2015), contending that cognition is mental information processing and that social skills, for example, involve the processing of social information.

## Holistic Curriculum

First, we consider the curriculum, which sets out what is to be learned and what matters in learning. Holistic pedagogy and assessment can be meaningful only when they are aligned with a holistic curriculum which promotes progression in a wide range of interrelated skills and attributes as well as knowledge and understanding, within, across, and beyond taught subjects and disciplines.

There seems to be a mounting requirement to fully integrate transversal skills into the curricula of education systems from early years through schooling and into colleges and universities, and for these skills to be an explicit pillar of educational policy (Garcia, 2014). Over the past two decades, national curriculum specifications around the world have shifted in their focus. Coherent subject progressions – sequenced goals and standards in specific disciplines such as science and geography – continue to form the bulk of these specifications. However, pupil centeredness, dispositions, and broader skills have increasingly featured in national specifications. In some cases, they appear in the broad overall goals of the curriculum. In other cases, they have featured in year-by-year subject specifications, such as the 'value, ethics and attitudes' statements within the Singaporean National Curriculum (e.g. Ministry of Education, 2023).

There is wide variety in the detailed content of frameworks of transversal skills and competencies. Kotsiou, Fajardo-Tovar, Cowhitt, Major, & Wegerif (2022) conducted a major scoping review of the field, analysing 99 different frameworks which had been constructed for different purposes across a variety of educational policy, research and practice contexts. They sought to consolidate them by making sense of the overlapping terminology used by different academics, educationalists and organisations. The research team found the published frameworks to be prolific and complex, covering an astonishing 341 different terms that are generally referred to as skills. Moreover, they found that 'skill' is often used as an umbrella term for attitudes, competencies, and knowledge, as well as meaning 'the ability to do an activity or job well, especially if you have practised it' (which is the Cambridge Learner's Dictionary definition of *skill*, 2025).

Despite a lack of consensus across the various frameworks about exactly which skills a well-designed holistic curriculum might include, Kotsiou et al. (*ibid*.) identified considerable duplication across the 99 frameworks in their review. They were able to extract nine meta-categories of skills within which all other skills can be classified. The meta-categories are: 1. higher order thinking skills, 2. dialogue skills, 3. digital and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) literacy, 4. values, 5. self-management, 6. lifelong learning, 7. enterprise skills/innovation, 8. leadership, and 9. flexibility. Whilst there is the potential for these nine meta-categories to be refined further, they provide a reasonable overview of the skills that many in the field would include in holistic education.

A second call for the re-alignment of education has emerged from ideas of 'work readiness' and 'preparation for adult life'. Proponents have argued that employers are demanding skills such as working with others, critical thinking and creativity (which overlap with the skills analysed by Kotsiou et al., 2022), either as well as, or in preference to, disciplinary knowledge. This shift reflects a broader international trend recognising that school-level curriculum models need to prepare learners not only for qualifications and access to further and higher education and the workplace, but also for the complexities of life, including civic participation, ethical reasoning and adaptability in a rapidly changing world. Allied to this, a third call argues for wider skills as preparation for an uncertain future. Whilst some proponents emphasise skills over knowledge, others see knowledge and skills as inextricably linked, with each playing a critical role in the development of the other throughout life (e.g. Christodoulou, 2014; Hirsch, 2006; Willingham, 2021).

In addition to decisions around which categories of transversal skills might be prioritised, and which skills within these categories to include, we identify three other key considerations in the design of a worthwhile and usable holistic curriculum. First, it is important to be aware that different types or levels of curricula exist within a given education system, and decisions need to be made and communicated around what should be covered within each curriculum type. Some skills can be found within a jurisdiction's published (sometimes statutory) curriculum. They may be explicitly included as curriculum

content, or their presence could be readily identified by mapping teaching or assessment objectives to a taxonomy of thinking skills. For example, Anderson and Krathwohl's (2001) revision of Bloom et al. (1956) could be used, as could the mental procedures domain of Marzano and Kendall's (2007) taxonomy. Alternatively, the skills may be covered more implicitly, offering teachers greater flexibility. For example, the skills may be included in suggested teaching activities, course materials and resources, with their nurture depending on the values, creativity and priorities of the teacher enacting the curriculum with their students in the classroom. For example, communication and dialogue skills could be developed through collaborative learning activities in one mathematics classroom, whilst in another, a more didactic approach which provides minimal opportunities for student interaction could be used to teach the same mathematical content.

Secondly, decisions around what to include in the curriculum are influenced by decisions around overcrowding, and balancing breadth and depth. In secondary school, the risk of overloading the curriculum can become very real. For example, Harlen (2010) made the case for basing school science curricula on the 'principles and big ideas' of science presented in a broad progression over three phases of school education, rather than prescriptive detail for each stage of schooling and/or each separate science subject. When redesigning England's national curriculum, Oates (2010) argued it should cover fewer concepts in greater depth, concurring with Schmidt & Prawat (2006) on curriculum design. However, even when this principle is followed *within* a subject discipline, particularly in secondary school, the challenge can still exist in the form of suggestions and campaigns for a wider range of skills to be covered within them, especially where these are seen as separate and discrete rather than integrated into disciplinary learning. In the early years phase, this may be less of a problem, since many curricula tend to focus on 'learning how to learn' and the social and emotional skills needed to navigate the world of the nursery setting or school classroom, rather than prioritising the disciplinary content of the later years. The early years curriculum in Scotland, for example, focuses on executive function and self-regulation; communication and language; confidence, creativity and curiosity; movement and coordination; and self- and social development (Education Scotland, 2020).

A third consideration about holistic curriculum is that content should not be confused with curriculum structure. Sometimes, education systems have moved to adopt more integrated structures in order to promote more holistic learning. However, this is not a necessity. According to the philosopher of education Paul Heywood Hirst:

> "*Team teaching, enquiry methods, visits, films, work-cards, individual or group projects, are all usable with a subject-structured curriculum, and chalk and talk can perfectly well function in an integrated context. Formal and informal approaches, collaboration and competition, none of these picks out a subject or integrated curriculum.*"
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> (Hirst, 1974)

A recent meta-review of the impacts of subject-based and integrated curriculum approaches on students' learning outcomes found the quality of empirical evidence to be low, and its authors could not support one approach over the other (Kreijkes & Greatorex, 2024). However, a key principle of good curriculum design is that whichever structure is adopted, it must be used right across curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, to ensure coherence.

## Holistic Pedagogy

Next, we consider pedagogy and its relationship to curriculum. National and international debates have increasingly framed 'knowledge rich' curriculum models and 'competence-based' models as being in opposition to one another pedagogically. The former have emphasised 'teacher-directed learning' whilst the latter have emphasised 'enquiry-based' and 'learner-led' approaches. The debates have been fractious. However, we would argue that while a focus on the acquisition of disciplinary knowledge is essential, equally essential is a focus on how each young person is constructing their understanding, their learning dispositions, their ability to work with others, and other wider elements of development. Rather than choosing between knowledge-rich and competence-based models, and the pedagogical

approaches typically associated with each, it is possible for a holistic approach to integrate them, recognising that deep understanding of subject matter and the cultivation of social and emotional competencies are mutually reinforcing goals.

Henrekson and Wennström (2023) have presented an important reconciliation of these oppositions. They argue modern neuroscience recognises that the pedagogical approaches which skilled teachers use to build discipline-specific knowledge and Wennström understanding also involve the development of additional transversal skills. When students and teachers work together systematically over time to build up their disciplinary knowledge, these additional skills are improved simultaneously.

> *"The most important of them are self-discipline, motivation, work ethic, perseverance, reliability, responsibility, punctuality, social skills, and emotional stability. Recent research has shown that these factors are important not only for success in the labor market but also for living a good life in the broader sense……"*
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> Henrekson and Wennström (2023, p.3)

Henrekson and Wennström's evidence reinforces that the development of these transversal skills can be an outcome of well-structured, focused disciplinary teaching, thereby challenging the idea that such skills must be taught separately. It supports the broader position that their development is not about teaching more but about teaching better; by intentionally designing classroom and school activities and tasks that nurture wider skills.

The questions for curriculum design at the school level, and particularly in the secondary school, therefore become about where these are placed in the curriculum and to what extent they need separate and focused curriculum provision. Henrekson & Wennström's argument that effective pedagogy can simultaneously develop discipline-specific and transversal skills has been long evident in close evaluation of education in Japan during its period of high attainment and high equity (Crehan, 2016). For example, the 'Han' organisation of elementary schools supports a rich and demanding discipline-focused curriculum, where pupils are arranged in groups of five to six, each group of mixed ability, working together during study, but also collaborating on school cleaning, and other service tasks. The Han system maximises the development of social skills and empathy through collaborative learning. Learners learn commitment to the group by ensuring that any personal learning is made available to the group through discussion and demonstration. The commitment to meeting the requirements of tasks set for the group encourages planning and social responsibility.

Analysis of mathematics pedagogy in Singapore likewise shows the integration of mathematically-focused curriculum content with the development of wider transversal skills (Crehan, 2016). Elaborated practice is at the heart of the mathematics curriculum model, encouraging both deep learning of techniques and mathematical structures, but the approach also ensures that multiple and varied presentations of mathematical ideas facilitate learning by students with different assumptions, misconceptions and perspectives, building persistence, comparison and reflection. Verbal problems in mathematics support analysis and higher-level critical thinking, while questioning techniques by teachers ensure all students' views and misconceptions are used in the learning discourse in the classroom, supporting high levels of social learning. Singapore student life is characterised by high levels of self-organised collaborative learning outside contact time. Establishing a 'learning culture' in a school, or group of schools, clearly involves collaboration and co-construction across the learning community.

This integration of wider skills into learning practices and the learning culture of schools supports a discipline-based formal curriculum and a rich, wider 'informal' curriculum. Depending on the prevailing culture, this informal curriculum may be very rule-bound, with expectations of behaviour established explicitly on entry to the school and periodically explicitly reinforced, with explicit instruction on study skills, social and moral life and citizenship, alongside discipline-focused study. Nevertheless, whatever the specific approach, contemporary curriculum theory and curriculum development would greatly benefit if the false oppositions of the last decades were left behind, and the latest thinking about the highly interrelated nature of discipline learning and wider transversal skills were used as the basis of policy and practice.

## Holistic Assessment

Now, we explore which factors might contribute to the design of dependable holistic assessment in the context of holistic approaches to curriculum and pedagogy. It should be recognised from the start that developing holistic approaches to assessment does not necessarily change established principles and standards in educational assessment practice, across contexts and settings. AEA-Europe (2022) set out guiding principles for assessment in their European Framework of Standards for Educational Assessment. Similarly, Gardner (2012) sets out ten principles underpinning quality assessment in his book chapter 'Quality Assessment Practice'. These principles emphasise the overall purpose of assessment as being to improve learning and promote learners' progress, taking into account its interactive relationship with curriculum and pedagogy.

It is also important to acknowledge that we are referring to assessment in educational settings, from the early years through the school years and into colleges and universities. These various settings provide a safe space for learners to gain the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to navigate their gradually expanding social world and learn with and from others, with each stage of growth and progression contributing to and shaping the next. We argue that a holistic assessment process needs to be primarily in learners' interests, appropriate to their age and stage, both active and interactive, forward-facing in suggesting next steps in their learning and promoting their motivation and engagement. There will need to be agreement amongst stakeholders in and across the various settings involved about what matters in learning. This will enable the design of holistic approaches to assessment that are explicitly part of the curriculum/pedagogy/assessment cycle and that support learning and development across a whole range of relevant skills, taking these as interrelated, interacting and explicitly amenable to development and progression, including through different developmental stages of pre-school, school and college education. With regard to progression in transversal skills, the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) has recently been investigating progression in creativity (ACER, 2025), while Skills Development Scotland has produced a framework for progression in what they term *metaskills*, referenced to the current Scottish curriculum framework (Skills Development Scotland, 2021)

With regard to the detail of what should be assessed, and how, we recognise that there may be variations across different cultures, countries and jurisdictions, and amongst research, policy and practice communities, about what our children and young people need to learn in terms of both discipline-specific knowledge and skills and interrelated transversal learning skills. It will be important to design assessment activities that reflect stakeholders' shared understanding about what particular skills look like in practice, mirroring learners' lived experience in their classrooms and communities.

It is also important to recognise that the decision to assess an aspect of learning, and the means of doing so, will always have consequences and impact, and a 'wash-back 'effect in classrooms, since it signals the extent to which it is valued by the education and wider community. The higher the stakes for learners, teachers and policymakers, the greater the impact and the more likely that classroom practice and pedagogy will reflect the content and structure of the assessment, rather than shaping them. In principle therefore, when designing holistic assessment, including online assessment, it will be really important to consider carefully the impact and wash-back effect on classroom practice, and especially on learners themselves. The format, focus and content of a test or examination where the stakes are high for both learners and teachers will inevitably involve 'teaching to the test'. This makes it vital that it is a 'test worth teaching to', clearly matching its associated curriculum and pedagogy (Kifer, 2001).

A common approach to measuring transversal skills such as self-control, grit, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, collaboration, and other 'hard-to-measure' constructs, is through self-reported questionnaires and psychometric scales, where participants typically respond to a series of Likert-type items. Whilst the empirical validation of these kinds of questionnaire scales is well established in the measurement literature (Gehlbach & Bronkworth, 2011; Schmitt, et al., 2011; West, et al., 2016), concerns about self-reporting abound, with particular concern around self-report measures being used

in high-stakes educational assessments. The technical risks include 'social acceptability bias' where respondents give answers that they think will be expected or look good to others, and 'self-deception bias' where the self is perceived in an unrealistically favourable or unfavourable light (Kruger & Dunning, 1999).

To reduce the potential risks of self-reporting, a multi-method approach might usefully be considered, combining self-reports with teacher ratings, peer feedback, behavioural observations and/or performance-based tasks, providing a more triangulated, dependable account of a learner's skills and competencies. Gathering this kind of evidence may best be done involving collaboration and co-construction amongst experienced stakeholders in a particular learning community, possibly including the learners themselves, to design and use holistic assessments that reflect their particular contexts and settings. For example, when McMaster University Medical School was investigating the possible introduction of Multiple Mini-Interviews (MMIs) as part of their entrance tests, to evaluate transversal skills relevant to professional practice in medicine, such as interpersonal skills, professionalism and ethical/moral judgment, they involved faculty members in both identifying those skills and participating in the MMIs to evaluate candidates' performances. This gave them ownership and agency in the admissions process (see, for example, Eva, Reiter, Rosenfeld, & Norman, 2004).

With regard to evaluating the outcomes of an assessment, all participants (including learners) will need to be clear about how those judgments will be made. We suggest that detailed information about what is involved in the assessment process and how to prepare for it, examples from peers and/or previous cohorts of what good outcomes look like, and published mark/rating schemes, can have a positive impact on both professional and student learning. In principle, where holistic assessment involves human observations/judgments about the quality of responses, involving in systematic moderation processes all those whose understanding/practice may change as a result of the assessment, including learners themselves through peer- and self-assessment, and providing feedback and building learner profiles, will help to build shared understanding of both the focus and content of the assessments, and the quality of responses. For example, McMaster University publishes detailed guidance for applicants on the structure and process of its MMIs and on how to prepare and rehearse for them (McMaster University, 2025). Ensuring transparency in how judgments are formed and allowing learners to reflect and contribute to those judgments helps demystify assessment and fosters metacognitive awareness and self-regulated learning.

Thinking about how information from holistic assessment might be recorded and reported to relevant stakeholders, we suggest that this will need to be done in a way that supports and promotes exploration of the relationships amongst the different aspects involved. Different stakeholders should be explicitly committed to accessing, using and publishing qualitative and quantitative information about interrelated knowledge and skills from holistic assessment in ways that benefit rather than disadvantage learners and their teachers. They should also be committed to profiling progress and achievement for individuals, groups, or populations, and indicating how the two might interact, respecting individuals ' rights to privacy and confidentiality as appropriate. Feedback from analysis of information and data from holistic assessment should be used routinely to inform planning for improvement across policy, practice and research communities. Such feedback mechanisms should be formative, ongoing, and designed to support responsive teaching and institutional learning, rather than serving solely as summative judgments, often used for rank-ordering and system accountability purposes, with potentially counter-productive wash-back effects.

## Next Steps

In the final part of this paper, we consider some of the potential directions for, and challenges facing, AEA-Europe's Holistic Assessment Special Interest Group. We have argued that it is increasingly evident that transversal skills matter, are "crucial for long-term success" (Sultanova et al., 2024, p.2) and they should, therefore, be fully integrated into educational planning and provision. One of the challenges of enacting a coherent holistic teaching, learning and assessment system is the integration of transversal skills into teaching and learning practices and facilitating their infusion within a school culture. How

embedded in a particular school context should an assessment of, say, self-regulation skills be? How would a wider range of assessment methods with differing and disparate underpinning philosophies fit together coherently? Moreover, if skills such as critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, collaboration, self-regulation, digital literacy, and digital competencies (to name but a few) work together, then should they be assessed in concert or as discrete skills? How could this be accomplished? Can all of these skills be defined, articulated and operationalised for assessment purposes? Should all be assessed?

If these constructs are not well defined, then it is difficult to support the claims made about the usefulness of assessments. It is, therefore, crucial to develop a coherent understanding of the abilities underlying the targeted construct. Holistic assessment will require the development of a shared language around transversal skills and competencies that links educational goals with observable behaviours and developmental trajectories. For assessment purposes, without clear operational definitions and progression models, teachers and learners will continue to face uncertainty about what counts as evidence of learning in these domains.

Arguably, to be truly 'holistic', assessment systems need to evolve beyond isolated approaches and incorporate integrative frameworks that reflect how transversal skills are taught and interact with discipline-specific competencies and contextual influences. For example, tasks that simulate real-world challenges or interdisciplinary projects may offer more authentic assessments of complex skill sets.

Another burgeoning area for consideration within holistic education (and assessment) is wellbeing. Wellbeing is increasingly cited as an objective of education (White, 2007):

> *"…the idea that education should equip people to lead flourishing lives and help others to do so is now becoming salient in policy-making circles" (p.17).*

Wellbeing matters for education and assessment. In many countries, reviews of the curriculum, particularly for mandatory schooling, have increasingly included wellbeing in their lists of desired curriculum outcomes, with some moves for wellbeing to be seen as a discrete part of the school curriculum, with the aim of developing particular areas of knowledge and skill. Furthermore, there is increased advocacy for a 'whole school' approach to wellbeing. In the light of this, how do wellbeing initiatives cohere with the concept of holistic education? Wellbeing has become as much a concern for parents as it is for students and their teachers. Parents are concerned about curriculum overcrowding leading to stressed students. If new subjects and competences are taught and assessed, then what should be removed from the curriculum?

A different though not unrelated challenge is that not all educational jurisdictions internationally have yet fully embraced widespread adoption of holistic approaches, with some valuing achievement in core PISA subjects more highly, for example. The policy and cultural setting for an assessment in a particular jurisdiction will inevitably shape the content, tenor, and direction of approaches to the implementation of holistic assessment within the school curriculum.

For the assessment research community, systematically reviewing and comparing how various education systems define, prioritise, and embed holistic pedagogy and assessment, including wider skills such as collaboration, creativity, and self-regulation, can illuminate the extent to which these approaches influence learner engagement, equity, and long-term outcomes. Such comparative insights could help identify not only exemplary models but also contextual barriers that affect the integration of broader competencies into meaningful learning and assessment practices.

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