

Foreword

In the four decades since the publication of Ivan Illich's ground-breaking work, "Deschooling Society" (1971), the landscape of education has undergone profound transformations. Illich's critique of the institutionalisation of education laid the foundation for re-evaluating traditional learning structures. Personalised learning has emerged as a beacon of innovation and empowerment as we stand on the precipice of a new era.

Illich's "Deschooling Society" remains a seminal work that questioned the fabric of formal education, arguing for the liberation of individuals from institutionalised learning. His insights spurred a wave of critical discourse, inspiring subsequent generations of scholars to delve deeper into the possibilities of personalised learning.

Drawing on Illich's ideas, esteemed authors such as Sir Ken Robinson, in "The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything" (2010), have explored the importance of nurturing individual talents and passions within education. Robinson's work underscores the need to shift from standardised, one-size-fits-all approaches to a system that acknowledges and embraces each learner's unique strengths and interests.

Furthermore, the pioneering research of Sugata Mitra, as demonstrated in "Hole in the Wall" experiments and "School in the Cloud" (2021), has highlighted the transformative potential of self-directed, technology-enabled learning. Mitra's work showcases how access to information and collaborative problem-solving can foster personalized educational experiences, transcending geographical and socio-economic barriers.

As we compile this comprehensive exploration of *Transforming Education for Personalized Learning*, we must recognise the contributions of these influential thinkers and others who have continued to shape the discourse. This book aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice, offering insights and strategies that educators, policymakers, and learners can employ to create a more personalised and effective learning environment.

In the following pages, we embark on a journey to explore the diverse facets of personalized learning, incorporating the wisdom of Illich and building upon the foundation laid by subsequent scholars. The transformative potential of personalised learning beckons us to reimagine education, ensuring it becomes a truly empowering and enriching experience for everyone.

Geoff Paul
University of Sunderland in London, UK