

On thinking about the future and moving forward

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*I have accepted the role of moderator of an upcoming symposium in London in October 2025. The focus is **The Next 5 (years)** and the emphasis is on predicting what things would look like in the following five years. The effort began with a twenty-year prediction that became almost impossible – given the speed of change and the unpredictability of what was ahead. Framed to a shorter five-year period the responses (papers) flew in from around the world – Australia, Macau (China), United Kingdom, Japan, France and Thailand. Also most interesting is a snapshot (prediction) across numerous Sectors including - corporate governance; music education; global business; music composition; global financial markets; business education and training; 'skills without borders'; global economic and geopolitical shifts; ES; AI skills gap; state-based funding in Asia; and creative industry challenges. Essentially - a 'Pot Pourri'*

The accompanying publication – **The Next 5 Years** - is prefaced with 'This publication places the emphasis on predicting what the next 5 years will look like from a number of perspectives. The challenge this time around is to look closely at what we have achieved to date - and then, using a longer lens, predict what our future (within a number of industries) will actually look like. It is not so much about 'crystal ball gazing' as an informed (and possibly optimistic) projection of both ourselves and the world around us'. My own humble contribution is in three parts.

A free eCopy of the book is available online - [The Next 5](#)

The next 5 (years)

Written in November 2024 and reflecting on the so-called 'post COVID period' (remember COVID is still with us) I predicted a significant shift to online learning in higher education specifically; questioned the dubious wisdom in the mandated return to the F2F classroom; acknowledged the emerging challenges associated with balancing assessment and managing academic integrity (already a big issue in the higher education sector); emphasised the need for strategies for developing scholarship opportunities for non-research organisations; emphasised the notions of meeting smarter and heightened communication; and championed the understanding/adhering to compliance on an ongoing 'rolling' basis.

See - [6113ad_ad083e7f7a5c43188158ddfd225d30dc.pdf](#)

See - [6113ad_7ceeefffeef164cdbae32e84a11b16cd5.pdf](#)

The implausible dream

Written in November 2024 the chapter shares a journey that began in the mid-1990s teaching a masters' level program as a transnational project (now all the rage). The program involved teaching eight (8) subjects in intensive mode on location in Singapore. It involved me personally flying to Singapore twelve (12) days at a time teaching on two weekends and three evenings – and being available each day for student and learning support.

In the early 2000s I co-created *The Virtual Conservatorium* that provided the opportunity to deliver a music degree to anywhere and anyone using an online platform. Despite the relatively 'clunky' technology of the time (certainly compared to what we use today) – the idea worked. It also meant reduction in travel commitment to support students.

See - [6113ad_6706699af95e4b578f4b1bece1172c4e.pdf](#)

In the mid-2000s I was able to support the development of online subjects across a larger University context and multiple locations. In the early 2020s it became imperative (partly driven by the COVID pandemic) to develop online product and processes that included online work integrated learning (WIL) segments and a bespoke online invigilation program. The mode was essentially online and later morphed into hybrid.

In 2024 I became involved in an online (with hybrid option) delivery of a doctoral program for a Thailand University reaching across a vast territory using some quality online resources and video conferring equipment.

Who would have believed this was possible (plausible in 1990)?

See - [6113ad_bf1c441df2694d81a08242cca09f5485.pdf](#)

Strategically thinking

Written in February 2026 I was asked to develop a strategic plan/strategic intent for a small higher education provider. There was little doubt in my mind that a plan was needed if a five-year projection (later tightened to a four-year plan) was to be put in place. With a student centric focus, the intent developed five key domains including growth, diversity, quality, co-operation and benchmarking – each domain with a number of key performance indicators (KPIs) that were easy to report against on a regular basis.

See - [6113ad_b5c24928610c4f338eb3276bf251f487.pdf](#)

Reflecting on some thirty years of innovation (one could argue creating a future) the thought occurred to me that I have been actively involved in five-year projections and in most cases successfully predicting the future – without really knowing. So, the next five years will no doubt see me out of the higher education environment (retirement pending) meaning I will not be an active participant - but I remain fascinated with the range of predictions in the collection and look forward to moderating some twenty-three (23) presentations in October.

See - [London 2025 | musicum20](#)

Emeritus Professor Greg Whateley is currently Chief Executive and Executive Dean at the Australian Guild of Education (Melbourne). He is also President of Musicum20 – an international think tank.