Editors' note

The end of the year offers a chance for reflection, this year more than most. 2020 saw Covid-19 accelerate the world of EdTech. While schools closed, EdTech stayed open.

For EdTech companies, the chances to pause and learn – whether at conferences, workshops or team sessions – were interrupted by a sea of new customer requests, disruptions to funding and the need to do more with less.

Since our last EdTech Insights briefing, we've been speaking to some of the leading voices in EdTech to ask what it takes to find, fund and grow a successful EdTech venture.

For UK-based **TwinklHive**, that question is at the heart of its work to fund and accelerate EdTech ventures. We had the chance to sit down with both TwinklHive and one of its companies, the learning platform **Natterhub**.

Funding fuels growth and backs innovation, but not all funders are created equal. EdTech is a space where returns must be measured in learning outcomes as well as a successful financial quarter. We talked to **Tory Patterson (Owl Ventures)** and **Rob Lowe (LEGO Ventures)** to find out what it takes to navigate this landscape and guide a successful portfolio of EdTech ventures.

For a wider look at the world of EdTech start-ups, **Dr. Wayne Holmes** and **Elinor Honigstein of the UK Israel Tech Hub** report back on a recent UK-Israel EdTech event.

This is the second issue of EdTech Insights. We hope you will think of it as a chance to stop, reflect and learn. We'll be back in 2021 with more interviews, insight and analysis. Drop us a line to get involved.

The teams at Oriel Square and EdTech Publik

In focus... LEGO Ventures

Funding makes headlines. It doesn't matter if it's a new seed round, valuation or exit, money generates noise. And that's before you add the beloved LEGO brand to the equation. But what's an EdTech funder looking for? What drives their decision-making? What does success look like?

Rob Lowe offers his thoughts on the state of EdTech, its efficacy, what LEGO Ventures is looking for and what it means to invest for the future.

Why it matters

Funders are essential to the EdTech ecosystem, offering not just capital and support but articulating a vision of what EdTech can and should look like. A relatively new entrant to education venture capital, LEGO Ventures (founded in 2018) has rapidly become one of the leading voices in the EdTech landscape. Not just because of its portfolio, but thanks to its wider influence at the intersection of learning and play. Along with LEGO Group and the LEGO Foundation, LEGO Ventures works to articulate a vision of learning, creativity, and play in education across its portfolio, including Fresh Grade, Caper, Homer, Peppy Pals, Eedi and Hualala.

Rob Lowe
Head of Value Creation at LEGO Ventures

Rob brings a wealth of experience in children's technology, entertainment and creativity-based products to LEGO Ventures. Before LEGO Ventures he led at the LEGO Group where he launched LEGO Life, a safe social network for kids. Before that, he worked on marketing and product development at Nintendo and BBC Studios. Rob serves in the leadership team at LEGO Ventures, helping to build the investment thesis and building the relationships between the portfolio and the LEGO entities.

What's it all about?

The LEGO mission is all about learning through play, creativity and collaboration, and this is at the heart of our work at LEGO Ventures. We've recently spent time focusing our investment thesis into digital play and education as key areas where we might find the next big expression of the broader LEGO idea. We believe in open-ended, project-based learning and we want to see that established in schools, but to do that we need investment and foundational change. We know schools can take time to make decisions and that it's not easy to make changes, so we want to help companies build both for schools and home learning.

Experiential learning is built into everything we do. Learning should be about enjoying something and trying it out: see if it breaks, see how it fixes. Then, we ask how we apply that learning to topics such as coding, English, or maths.

> **We've been narrowing our investment thesis into digital play and gaming as potential areas where we might find the next big expression of the LEGO idea.**

What makes LEGO Ventures different?

The significant difference is that we're not looking for a quick exit; we are looking to build pillars that will move the idea of learning through play forward within the LEGO group of companies. We don't just want to invest money, but also to think about how LEGO entities can support and foster ideas and strategy. In addition, the venture model is different for education companies – it

takes longer. This means that more patient capital, like LEGO Ventures, is perhaps more suited to education.

What about efficacy in EdTech?

We want to understand what EdTech offers to make it truly effective and productive. We are lucky to have the LEGO Foundation working from the charity side, but also building a research platform around learning through play. When looking at efficacy in EdTech, we like to look under the hood and ask, what is being gained, what is being grown?

We want to see a balance of education and pedagogy, which can be a hard balance to get right at the beginning.

People assume that any game or product has value, but addiction is not the same thing. When I worked at Nintendo, we created a brain training product which sold well to older consumers. The reality was that the improvement in the game was actually more similar to an improvement you might see in Grand Theft Auto – people were getting better at the game, but not necessarily sharpening their minds as much as they may have thought.

What are you looking for at LEGO Ventures?

We want to see a balance of progressive types of education and emerging pedagogy around 21st century skills, which can be a hard balance to get right at the beginning when you have a mix of technologists and teachers. We are looking for openness and the ability to know your gaps.

The first key thing is to figure out what adaptive and AI learning actually is. There is a significant amount of due diligence now to ensure that companies are able to deliver in this area; we want to be confident in the talent and confident that they have the ability to scale. Second, we like a bit of weirdness and adaptability – with our digital play thesis, for example, there is room for crossover between gamification and education.

We're looking for companies that believe in the idea of learning through play, have the right values at their heart, and a vision of how to get there.

What has been the impact of COVID-19?

Initially, we saw a spike in activity across digital learning platforms from March to May. That has now readdressed itself and we're seeing much higher consumer acquisition costs. The reality is that more people are putting marketing money into the market to keep momentum, so it becomes harder to acquire and retain users in your platform. We are continuously working to support each company and try and keep our portfolio healthy.

What trends or companies are you excited about?

We're looking for companies that believe in the idea of learning through play, have the right values at their heart, and a vision of how to get there. One example I've seen both from a potential investment perspective, and from a parent perspective, is Pobble – a creative writing platform where people can build on other people's stories. It offers open-ended stories where people can play and evolve and is building a safe community for students. Homer is another exciting investment for us that has aspirations to build a learning programme across platforms.

We also see a lot of adaptive learning platforms which deviate from a linear learning pathway to follow what individual students understand and need. There are many ways this can be done using adaptive technology.

Key Takeaway

When I moved from marketing to product, I learned that the key to realising your vision is listening to people and reacting to the data. Don't miss opportunities to use the data to make the experience better, but don't solely rely on it to give you direction.

In learning about venture capital, I've realised that it's not always difficult to raise money or find a founder who has an idea. What is hard is finding someone who believes in what they're doing, knows how to do it, doesn't overvalue their company, and has a growth plan that they are willing to adapt when it inevitably needs adapting!

In focus...TwinklHive

With EdTech firmly on the radar of parents, educators, students and investors, there's a lot to think about when it comes to building a sustainable and successful EdTech start-up. Born out of Twinkl's mission to help those who teach, TwinklHive is on a quest to accelerate and disrupt innovation in education by supporting EdTech entrepreneurs and equipping them with the tools they need to create meaningful impact.

Amber Jardine talks us through the growth, aims and impact of Twinkl's latest venture.

Why it matters

Twinkl is a global educational publishing house leading the way in EdTech, but we recognised that we cannot develop every solution ourselves. TwinklHive

is an extension of Twinkl's mission to help those who teach; by encouraging like-minded entrepreneurs and equipping them with the tools needed to create meaningful impact, we hope they will disrupt the industry and provide real support for parents, teachers and educators.

Amber Jardine
Hive Manager at TwinklHive

Amber is Hive Manager at Sheffield-based EdTech accelerator, TwinklHive. With experience in international business and project management, Amber provides strategic support and service delivery to each start-up within TwinklHive's investment portfolio. Amber is continuously inspired by entrepreneurs and their innovative education solutions.

What's it all about?

Developed within Twinkl, a global digital educational publisher, TwinklHive offers seed investment, residency, access to services and mentorship to support start-ups. Through TwinklHive, we are promoting Sheffield as a natural home for entrepreneurs and encouraging start-ups to take advantage of the great opportunities the city has to offer. Our aim is to stimulate the EdTech sector here in Sheffield by encouraging pre-revenue businesses to relocate to the city.

What's the most surprising thing you've learnt so far?

Companies aren't failing from a lack of knowledge or ability, they just need support to deliver all aspects of their business plan more efficiently, and ultimately, to enter the market and scale. Our unique accelerator model gives us direct access to industry experts enabling us to offer business support tailored to each individual start-up. Our unique proposition has proven to be successful, and we have experts in everything from digital growth marketing to resource production.

> **Companies aren't failing from a lack of knowledge or ability, they just need support to deliver all aspects of their business plan more efficiently**

What has been the biggest challenge?

A big challenge has been shifting people's perception of Twinkl to encompass TwinklHive in order to develop pipelines and build Twinkl's reputation in the investment ecosystem. Whilst Twinkl is a global market leader in education, we've had to work hard to establish our brand in a new market. Alongside this, the team has needed to adopt and develop a start-up mindset, as scaling the accelerator is a vastly different challenge than building on the growth of an already successful business.

What advice would you offer to start-ups?

We often repeat the importance of having a new business model alongside new technology. Truly disruptive innovations use entirely new business models; you can't put your own spin on a competitor's model and expect to gain a competitive advantage. You need a new model to shake up an industry; we strongly believe that the start-ups in our portfolio have that potential.

> **Truly disruptive innovations use entirely new business models; you can't put your own spin on a competitor's model and expect to gain a competitive advantage**

What does success look like for TwinklHive?

To see the start-ups we have supported as market leaders, making a real impact on people's lives and Twinkl's mission 'to help those who teach' being fulfilled. We will continue to support passionate entrepreneurs to build, launch and scale their products and services.

What next for TwinklHive?

One key aim this year is to promote and encourage entrepreneurship as a career path. We have recently launched an entrepreneurship scheme to support young people to start a digital business in South Yorkshire. The scholarship provides mentorship, co-working space and funding of up to £40,000. Alongside this, we are set to develop and deliver our very own business course to help aspiring entrepreneurs to become investment-ready. We will be guiding them through the process of validating their concepts through testing and adapting to feedback, preparing for minimum viable product build and producing business plans and key financial documentation.

Key Takeaway

● To truly shake up the industry, you need a new model – we often repeat the importance of having a new business model alongside new technology.

● Companies aren't failing from a lack of knowledge or ability – we're supporting start-ups to deliver all aspects of their business plan, then enter the market and scale more quickly.

● Investing in EdTech start-ups and helping them to grow is the best way to support more parents, teachers and educators to work with fellow EdTech leaders.

In focus...natterhub

We've heard from TwinklHive about what it takes to successfully grow and nurture an EdTech start-up, but what is it like to be on the receiving end of that funding and support? Natterhub – the first company to join TwinklHive – is the safe, secure and immersive social media platform for children, created specifically for use in primary schools across the globe.

CEO Manjit Sareen answers our questions about the experience so far.

Why it matters

At a time when digital communication is at the heart of our social connections, this fully-gated learning environment empowers educators to teach online safety. With over 20 years of education and 20 years of business experience, co-founders, Manjit Sareen (CEO) and Caroline Allams (Chief Creative Officer) researched, honed and developed the idea before approaching Twinkl, and then TwinklHive. With their backing, Natterhub officially launched in April 2020 to help children stay connected in a safe environment at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Manjit Sareen, Co-Founder and CEO, Natterhub

Manjit is is one of TechRound's BAME 50 Under 50 Entrepreneurs of 2020. Inspired by Natterhub's social mission to prepare children to thrive online, Manjit shapes and leads the company's commercial and strategic development.

What's it all about?

Natterhub was born out of the realisation that, in almost all areas of life, we create education around new experiences – learning to swim, riding a bike, crossing the road. Yet children are given connected devices and sent off onto the internet with little or no guidance. So, former teacher Caroline Allams decided that the best way to teach digital literacy might be to create a sandbox environment where children can play at 'being online' in a safe space, and learn the importance of kindness and digital empathy.

What's been a key highlight of working with TwinklHive?

The most rewarding and impressive part of the experience at TwinklHive is the process they have to create huge amounts of content. As a start-up, we would never have been able to create that system so quickly; it has been an incredible string to our bow to be able to develop large numbers of lessons and also be able to adapt and react to the changing landscape of school life during and since the pandemic.

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What has been the most challenging aspect of the accelerator programme?

As entrepreneurs, it is difficult not to feel impatient and when there are just two of you, it is easy to jump on things that need doing quickly. Suddenly working with a much bigger team takes longer to get some things done. Although, in the long run, more does get done (of course) so I don't think this is an accelerator programme issue, I think it is a Natterhub entrepreneur issue!

How do you think your experience would have been different without the pandemic?

It is easy to think that launching might have been easier without the pandemic, but actually, it has helped us enormously in the sense that teachers have had to be upskilled rapidly in EdTech and software. The profile of digital literacy has been raised, as has online vulnerability. Whilst we do not wish to profit from these negatives, we have worked hard to adapt to the fast-changing environment and provide a solution as quickly as possible for pupils and teachers.

Teachers have had to be upskilled rapidly in EdTech and software. The profile of digital literacy has been raised, as has online vulnerability.

What's the most valuable piece of advice you've taken away from the experience so far?

Develop your product based on feedback and make sure you are able to adapt quickly and give the customer what they need.

Are there any exciting developments you can share?

We have listened to our teachers and they want their pupils to have the content we have in our platform. However, with all the other plates they are spinning, it is not always possible to be there for their pupils every step of the way. So, we have designed some 'Natterled' lessons taught by our animated teachers for independent sessions in the classroom and at home. They are launching in the new year and we are very excited!

We owe it to our children to build their knowledge and resilience so that they can be safe, savvy internet users.

What does success look like for Natterhub?

In ten years from now, Natterhub will be in every school around the world and it will be a given that children are not bought their own device until they have been through their Badges of Honour system.

Key Takeaway

Natterhub prepares children to thrive online. It is not enough to just be safe online; we owe it to our children to build their knowledge and resilience so that they can be safe, savvy internet users.

In focus...UK-Israel collaboration in EdTech

The UK Israel Tech Hub, together with MindCET and other industry leaders from both countries, has launched the UK-Israel EdTech Taskforce to promote bilateral opportunities for collaboration, knowledge-sharing and investments in EdTech, and to drive growth and innovation.

In response to the rapid shift to remote learning in recent months, the Hub and the Taskforce have designed the UK-Israel EdTech Map, launched the GESA Awards - COVID track and held a UK-Israel EdTech Event, introducing British and Israeli industry players to the countries' leading education innovators. Dr Wayne Holmes and Elinor Honigstein of the UK Israel Tech Hub talk us through the lessons they learned along the way.

Wayne Holmes
UK Israel Tech Hub

Wayne (PhD, University of Oxford) is a learning sciences and innovation researcher. For almost a decade, he has focused on the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to both enhance and further understand learning and its ethical and social implications. He has co-authored three books about AI and education, advises UNESCO and the UK's All Party Parliamentary Group on AI, and he has given invited talks about AI and education around the world.

Elinor Honigstein
UK Israel Tech Hub

Elinor has spent the last decade leading on strategic and commercial partnerships in social impact and tech organisations. She works as the Partnership Manager at the UK Israel Tech Hub, a UK government venture responsible for building tech partnerships between British businesses and Israeli innovation across different sectors. She also promotes and drives initiatives in the space of social impact and tech including gender diversity and EdTech innovation projects.

Why it matters

EdTech is a high potential area for collaboration between the UK and Israel, providing mutual benefits. Israel is one of the most dynamic aggregators of advanced technologies (such as AI, machine learning and cybersecurity) which play a vital role in increasing the capacities of education systems. Home to over 500 EdTech start-ups and accelerators, the country also offers an advantageous beta testing site with thousands of teachers across the country ready to try new education technologies. The UK is a global leader in UX, design thinking and pedagogy. It hosts many of the fastest-growing EdTech companies in Europe as well as the international headquarters of many leading educational market players.

UK-Israel EdTech event

Our recent UK-Israel EdTech event, held for the first time online, brought together eight innovative EdTech solutions from Israel and the UK who presented to industry experts. Their products demonstrated how EdTech can address an unexpected range of educational needs. Among these, the EdTech products provided tools that:

● help teachers prepare engaging lessons;

● enhance cyber-security;

● help students improve their social skills;

● provide teachers with an easy way to develop student support chatbots specific to their needs.

EdTech's role in the new normal: Lessons learned

The global shift to – or in some contexts a renewed interest in – online learning has inevitably brought opportunities along with challenges. While many EdTech solutions around the world reported huge increases in registrations in the early months of the pandemic, little is known about any subsequent increase in student engagement or learning achievements.

Was the uptake in the use of EdTech simply an emergency response, which will fade away when most schools have fully reopened? Or are we witnessing a 'new normal', with EdTech playing a significantly increased role in physical classrooms?

Much has been learned during school closures, or at least much that was already known has been brought into focus. Industry experts at Israel EdTech Week highlighted these key issues:

● The British Education Suppliers Association argued that for EdTech to achieve its potential it must find

its place in the broader educational ecosystem of educators, students, parents, employers, and policymakers. **The growing acceptance of EdTech by these stakeholders during school closures must now be leveraged** and not squandered.

● Pearson reminded us that **identifying and solving real needs will only happen if EdTech companies learn from educators and learners**; because, as Wix explained, innovation can come from everywhere.

● The Tony Blair Institute emphasised the value of co-design – **educators and technologists genuinely working together**, building upon the creativity demonstrated by teachers around the world during the pandemic, to develop effective student-centred products.

● Emerge – the UK's leading VC in Education – argued that **the most effective educational approach is likely to be blended** – a judicious mix of online and offline teaching and learning. Here, the questions focus on how to leverage the best possibilities of each: how to avoid students spending their time in shared physical spaces ignoring their peers while they engage in screen-based activities; and how to ensure that EdTech mitigates rather than increases the impact of the digital divide.

● Brighteye VC, Europe's leading EdTech venture capital firm, and Barclays Ventures, agreed that **for innovative tools to be widely used, they need to generate measurable academic outcomes and be easily scalable**. This means focusing on real academic value, what schools 'need to have' rather than what

it would be 'nice to have', while clearly articulating distribution models and growth trajectories.

● Finally, the Israeli investor Doron Libshtein argued that EdTech companies should go beyond performing well as a business or delivering strong academic outcomes and **focus on social-emotional learning, creativity and collaboration, and the mental well-being of all students.**

Key Takeaway

The combination of compelling, gamified pedagogy, reduction in costs of data and devices, and the emergence of adaptive learning, coupled with the rapid shift to online learning, has brought EdTech blinking into the sunlight.

Whether the sector will ultimately fulfil its promise depends on whether EdTech entrepreneurs and their solutions:

● work collaboratively with all educational stakeholders (listen to learners and educators, and leverage opportunities for educator/technologist co-design);

● create an effective balance between online and offline learning;

● help students become more resilient, creative and collaborative;

● address a genuine educational need; and

● articulate distribution models and growth trajectories.

In focus... Owl Ventures

No funder occupies as large a portion of the EdTech spotlight as Owl Ventures. With $1.2 billion in assets under management, the Silicon Valley-based firm (founded in 2014) is the largest firm solely focused on EdTech.

Managing Director Tory Patterson talks us through what makes investing in EdTech different, why the Asian EdTech boom is here to stay, and highlights from the Owl portfolio.

Why it matters

Featuring the likes of Byju, Degreed, Whitehat Jr. and Masterclass, the portfolio list at Owl Ventures is a who's who in EdTech, covering nearly every global region and stretching from early childhood through to professional and lifelong learning. September saw Owl announce a pair of new investment vehicles ($585m) signalling that the fund has no intention of abdicating its role as the world's leading EdTech investor. But beyond the size of the cheque, Owl wants to use its influence to shift EdTech towards a place where efficacy and outcomes play a greater role.

Tory Patterson Managing Director at Owl Ventures

Tory is actively involved with all facets of the firm and serves on the board of directors of a number of its portfolio companies. As one of the early pioneers in the next generation of leading EdTech companies, Tory has led investments in some of the most successful companies in the sector.

What makes Owl different?

Owl was designed from inception to help this specific EdTech brand of entrepreneur achieve greater success. In the 2013–15 market, we identified a glaring gap in funding for education technology. There were enough catalysts in the market to suggest that learning software was going to be more broadly adopted.

Once we built conviction that that market timing was lining up, we moved very aggressively. We designed our firm from the top down, with the sole focus being accelerating the rate of scale for the world's cutting-edge EdTech companies. We sought out investors

who could be strategically relevant to helping the growth of an EdTech business and the success of an EdTech entrepreneur.

WE DESIGNED OUR FIRM FROM THE TOP DOWN, WITH THE SOLE FOCUS BEING ACCELERATING THE RATE OF SCALE FOR THE WORLD'S CUTTING-EDGE EDTECH COMPANIES.

What makes EdTech entrepreneurs different?

When I started investing in EdTech in 2010– 15, most of the entrepreneurs we were working with had fire in them to go build something; they were ex-teachers, administrators, or people who had been working in the education ecosystem. For a lot of those early educator-entrepreneurs, technology didn't come first. They were people with deep market insights, experiences and user empathy, but they needed an introduction to technology company infrastructure. In the early days, most of the founders we were working with needed real infrastructure assistance. Now, we are starting to see repeat founders – whether they're from the EdTech category, or from another space.

A LOT OF THOSE EARLY EDUCATOR-ENTREPRENEURS WERE PEOPLE WITH DEEP MARKET INSIGHTS, EXPERIENCES AND USER EMPATHY, BUT THEY NEEDED SUPPORT WITH INFRASTRUCTURE.

What makes EdTech markets different?

The biggest problem with investors is that they each have lived, ingrained experiences with schooling. People have significant blind spots about what school is actually like today, especially for people not like them. On top of that, you have the difficulty of marketing to education stakeholders. There are several factors which make EdTech markets different:

● You need to reach all stakeholders – students, teachers, administrators and parents – and you need to be universally liked across stakeholder groups which have different, and often competing, interests.

● You need to figure out how to set up a go-to-market strategy where the vast majority of your customers are going in, especially in the early days.

● You need a capital-efficient go-to-market strategy that speaks to users who are very difficult to market to.

● You have to prove product efficacy with a credible third party and use that data to drive unpaid PR to get in front of teachers. It's not as simple inserting capital into web-based marketing to drive impressions and adoption. It doesn't work like that in EdTech.

Can you share some highlights from the Owl portfolio?

● Labster is a lab simulation software company selling into the secondary and higher-education markets. Pre-COVID, it was on a growth tear and has increased its revenue five-fold this calendar year. With upwards of $20m annual recurring revenue, it is one of the fastest growing companies in the world. Allowing students to experiment and practise outside of the expensive lab environment, Labster is meaningfully advancing science education and experimentation.

● Newsela provides engaging, standards-aligned content with text that is adapted to different reading levels. The company found a capital-efficient go-to-market strategy, building off freemium content that had a high viral coefficient, making it easier to upsell the product. Newsela boasts metrics that would match any leading SAAS (Software as a Service) company.

● Noodle Partners is a US-based online programme management (OPM) service helping universities launch and scale university programmes. Noodle is empowering campuses to retain revenue and keep it, rather than just license it to another company. Universities and campuses are very important for our society and we should be empowering them to be more successful rather than competing with them.

Is the Asian EdTech boom here to stay?

For individuals in Asian economies, there is a path to class mobility through education, and people want to invest in that. I think the world is responding with exuberance to the power of that model. For example, based on their operating margins, the market they're playing in, the quality of their product and the power of their balance sheet, I see nothing standing in the way of Byju (in India) becoming the most valuable education company in the world. This could be a 100 billion dollar enterprise.

THERE IS A PATH TO CLASS MOBILITY THROUGH EDUCATION, AND PEOPLE WANT TO INVEST IN THAT.

What would stop that growth?

Byju needs to navigate international expansion but – as it will be able to undercut pricing in a lot of markets – I don't see any reason why that wouldn't succeed. The cost of synchronous tutoring in the United States and elsewhere is high; companies like Byju will deliver a lot of that value at a fraction of the cost and subsequently grab an enormous market share.

What's the biggest mistakes made by EdTech founders?

At the end of the day, the reason people buy these products is because there's a belief that their students will achieve more as a result. If you're not pitching outcomes, you're totally missing the point. So, investing in customer success and proof of outcomes

is essential. To do that, you need quantifiable or quantitative data. The go-to-market plans that really sing are the ones that rely on an existing love of the product or compelling data on student outcomes. The earlier that companies can amass that data, the sooner they can leverage it for their scaling and expansion.

If you're not pitching outcomes, you're totally missing the point – investing in customer success and proof of outcomes is essential.

The second thing to look at is customer success. We see companies talking about big sales and marketing budgets compared to miniscule customer success budgets. For me, the return on investment of doubling that customer success budget is much greater than spending that money elsewhere in the organisation.

Dreambox Learning is a great example of a company with a truly world class sales infrastructure that has the luxury of partnering with industry-leading outcomes data, and an excellent customer success organisation. All of us who work in the EdTech space are continuously learning from Jessie Woolley-Wilson (Dreambox's CEO) and I count myself as a student of her work.

Where will EdTech take us next?

Call it direct-to-consumer or, as I like to think about it, family empowerment. Education is being pushed into everybody's living room. There are 1.8 billion families around the world with a very pointed opinion on what their kids are being taught, how they're being taught and why they're being taught it.

We're entering a phase of the market where there's going to be an explosion of entrepreneurship around enabling families to take control of supplemental content and support to keep students progressing. I think this will involve a lot of consumer spending on tutoring and customised education paths.

EdTech Publik and Oriel Square are collaborating to bring the global education technology community closer together. We know that the fast-paced world of EdTech can be difficult to navigate and we want to help. In our EdTech Insights series, we will bring you articles and interviews from the front-lines of funders, entrepreneurs and leaders working to improve education. We'll be talking all things EdTech, from investment and transaction trends to what works in content, policy and innovation, through to who's who.

Coming up: get our key takeaways from BettFest, as well as insights from the world of digital assessment. Plus, we interview the winner of the Edtech Startup Award: Covid Response track as part of the Global EdTech Startup Awards 2020. Sign-up here!

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