

Preface

Unlike most professions, teaching comes packaged with a blueprint, or an embedded chip that tells us how to “do school” no matter what the sector or context. As we have all been students, we have learned how teachers are “expected to” teach. Much time, energy and money goes into replicating the past through teacher training, induction and professional development. This means that teaching and education generally are the hardest to change in society. Yet Fullan (1993) and many other theorists believe that change is a journey not a blueprint. And it is this journey of needed change that this monograph reports on. Our findings are from ResearchGate, an online forum where educators and researchers frame and answer questions and globally connect with each other. Our question was to identify the skills that 21st century teachers must have to ensure that high-quality learning takes place. This topic thread was created by one of the three authors (Hélia Jacinto) with well over a thousand responses posted from participants in 26 countries from a wide variety of disciplines, sectors and contexts. The Appendix summarises them.

To try to capture the essence of their posts, this monograph exposes the ways that the research data were gathered and analysed, the themes that arose from the discussion thread and a direction forward for current and in-service teachers/researchers.

ResearchGate is a networking site for scientists and researchers to ask and respond to questions, learn more about teaching, find research collaborators and to share research results. Every day of the week, around the clock, ResearchGate posters reply speedily to even the most specialised and arcane questions. Some of the posters are novices, just entering the field of teaching, while others are experienced teachers and researchers. A critical review of their posts yields a collective wisdom seldom heard from the teachers on the ground.

This monograph project came about because a couple of ResearchGate posters recommended that a summary be made of what had been discussed. We put up our hands, because we also wanted to better understand the ideas being expressed. Our hope is that teachers and researchers can learn from these posts and produce

high-quality learning for the 21st century. We generated a list of 23 categories of skills that are arranged alphabetically by first letter in an acrostic table to help the reader internalise our classification.

As intimated above, the following question is the focus of our attention. In the next paragraph appears the full question as posted on ResearchGate.

The industrial revolution is long gone, as well as teaching to follow a certain routine, procedure or task. Today's world is changing by the minute, and we "all" have access to such changes almost immediately. So teachers, today, have to prepare students for a world that is totally unknown, for jobs that do not exist yet, and hopefully, those future men/women will be able to create those innovative jobs. Are teachers, in your countries, being prepared for these responsibilities and challenges? How?

Reference

Fullan, M. (1993). *Change forces: Probing the depths of educational reform*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

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