

EDUCATION

for the 21st century

Jacques Rancière

Graham Harman

Dr. Nina Power

George Szirtes

Paul Reville

Diana Oblinger

Emily Campbell

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Bente Elkjaer

Issue #:

Toby Young

Classrooms, like textbooks, are increasingly designed to get students thinking rather than simply transmit knowledge. What has caused the change from an instruction paradigm to a learning paradigm? Why has learning gone from being a distinct activity which happens in the formative years of a person's lifetime to a daily experience which takes place anywhere and at any time, throughout a person's life? Where do these changing knowledge traditions originate? Are they driven by new technologies or are today's methods of teaching and learning the manifestation of a broader shift in what people think of, and hope for, from education?

In 1947 Martin Luther King Jr. wrote, "The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education." Using this quote as a starting point, we invited a number of experts from different fields to complete the statement "The function of education is..." with the aim of opening up a discussion on some of the issues facing education in the 21st century.

Farshid Moussavi, Kate Kilalea

Jacques Rancière, Philosopher

“The aim of education is the suppression of education conceived as a separate process of Learning. We learn from a multiplicity of encounters throughout our whole life and we must also continuously unlearn.”

Graham Harman, Philosopher

“The function of education is to give the young a taste for surprise.”

Dr. Nina Power, Senior Lecturer in Philosophy

“The function of education is to convey enthusiasm. There is no content without will and no will without enthusiasm.”

George Szirtes, Poet

“The function of education is to enlarge our understanding of the world and ourselves by exploring in depth that which has been thought, written and articulated about it, and by means of this exploration better to fit ourselves for that which we and others are likely to experience in it.”

Paul Reville, Professor and Director of Harvard University
Education Redesign Lab

“The function of education is to connect young people to possibility, hope and a meaningful place in the world. Education should challenge each student to excel while providing a fair opportunity for all to succeed.”

Diana Oblinger, President Emeritus of EDUCAUSE

“A function of education is connection. Connection is a term associated with being online. However the physical and the virtual are connected and interconnected. Connections magnify the reach and value of not just information, but also our relationships, creating opportunities for learning, working and collaborating on an unprecedented scale.”

Emily Campbell, Director of Programmes at Creative Education Trust

“The point of education is to help young people understand how the world came to be the way it is. With this understanding, they are better able to shape its future - and their own futures as individuals and citizens.”

Bente Elkjaer, Professor, The research programme,
Lifelong Learning

“The function of education is to teach an ability to act imaginatively in situations of uncertainty.”

Toby Young, Journalist and Educationalist

“The function of education is to acquaint each new generation with the most important work that’s been done in the humanities and the sciences by all those who have come before – what Matthew Arnold summarised as the best that’s been thought and said.”

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Jacques Rancière is a French philosopher and Professor of Philosophy at European Graduate School in Saas-Fee and Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Paris (St. Denis).

Graham Harman is a philosopher of metaphysics and professor at the American University in Cairo, Egypt.

Dr. Nina Power is a senior lecturer in philosophy at Roehampton University and the author of *One-Dimensional Woman*.

George Szirtes is a Hungarian-born British poet, writing in English, as well as a translator from the Hungarian language into English.

Paul Reville is the Francis Keppel Professor of Practice of Educational Policy and Administration at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He is the founding director of HGSE's Education Redesign Lab.

Dr. Diana G. Oblinger is President Emeritus of EDUCAUSE, a nonprofit association whose mission is to advance higher education through the use of information technology.

Emily Campbell is a founder-director of the Creative Education Academies Trust. She is Director of Programmes and principal author of the innovative design programme that distinguishes a growing family of secondary schools in the UK Midlands.

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