

Ideas are for free

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What's in an idea? Ideas open possibilities. They open doors to change. They can push good beginnings and end bad practices. In this 25th year, we, at *Teacher Plus*, asked our contributors to share one big idea each that could mark a big change in schooling and education.

Some of the ideas featured here are a re-iteration of thoughts, some are serious, and a few can be implemented. But all of them could have a profound impact.

Of course, an idea remains just that until it is implemented. And for that to happen, it takes commitment and resources. But without an idea, there's nothing. So here are some ideas – big, small, middling – that you could take on, give a shape to, and put to work in your own spaces.

Chuck the book

I am not from the tech bandwagon prescribing that students and teachers throw away printed textbooks and replace them with digital copies on a Tab or iPad. To me, the 'textbook' is a metaphor and physical construct for a constricted view of learning a set of demarcated content. It is *this* Holy Grail that needs to be chucked out – *the one that teachers use to preach and examination boards choose questions from* – to test learning. This readymade, instant mix, 'Read it and you will know all' textbook has no place in the 21st century schoolbag.

The idea that, "It's good enough if I know what's in the book" is falsely reassuring. We know neither employers nor situations limit themselves to 'textbook scenarios'. A wider grasp of things from multiple sources – *everyday experiences shared in class by the teacher and children, digital sources like the WWW, internships and field projects* – are crucial preparation aids for the real world. While physical 'subject' textbooks promote the view of isolated disciplinary expertise, innovative solutions always come from interdisciplinary teams and approaches. Learning in subject specific silos reinforced by textbooks should break down to be replaced by transdisciplinary *application* of concepts.

The body of knowledge is ever increasing and changing constantly. Skills important today become irrelevant tomorrow. The *ability to learn* is more important than *learning* itself. A 'textbook' should not be the limiting factor to children becoming autonomous learners. *Chuck the notion of "only the textbook", not the textbook.*

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