

# INTERNATIONAL BRIGHT YOUNG THINGS

Following the release of the CBI's First Steps report, TS asks EdisonLearning's Paul Lincoln what it has to say about giving students the skills they need in an ever-shrinking global education space...

**Teach Secondary: So, why is international comparison important in the first place?**

**Paul Lincoln:** It is critical that we recognise our students are global citizens; we've never had a world that is so small and where everything that happens impacts on everybody all of the time, so it's very important going forwards that our students are globally and internationally aware. There's always going to be comparisons between how well our young people are doing and learners elsewhere, and regardless of the arguments about data we need to address where we sit in the scheme of things. There is always controversy over the use of international data, but we shouldn't ignore how other countries' approaches to education are working. The report is absolutely right; if we don't make sure all our students are successful then our economy is going to be weakened by a massive tail of underachievement, which will be costly to us and also to society as a whole.

**TS: What do you hope the report will achieve?**

**PL:** I think the substance of the CBI report and what it is saying is spot on. I believe we are far too focused on measuring stuff at age 16, and that we need to be having our final assessment at age 18. I think we have to get back to trusting teacher assessment much more; so I hope the report generates some serious debate and consensus on what schools should be about.

**TS: What does the report tell us about readiness for 21st century learners?**

**PL:** It is true that schools are working to the narrow accountability agenda; which makes schools wary of taking risks and doing anything differently. Nowhere does the

**'FIRST STEPS**

– A NEW APPROACH FOR OUR SCHOOLS' EXAMINES THE CURRENT PERFORMANCE OF UK EDUCATION SYSTEMS DRAWING UPON DISCUSSIONS ACROSS THE WORLDS OF BUSINESS AND EDUCATION. THIS REPORT, CREATED BY THE CBI, CALLS FOR AN OVERHAUL OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM TO DELIVER FOR THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE. FIND OUT MORE AT [TINYURL.COM/BS348NX](http://TINYURL.COM/BS348NX)



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

PAUL LINCOLN IS FORMER LEADER OF ESSEX COUNTY EDUCATION SERVICES AND NOW GLOBAL EDUCATION OFFICER AT EDISONLEARNING (EDISONLEARNING.NET), A RESEARCH BASED ORGANISATION THAT DEVELOPS EFFECTIVE, SUSTAINABLE AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT WORLDWIDE.

report address how our young people are coping with the dramatic and rapid technological way in which the world is changing. It spells out a whole range of attributes and behaviours that are required. If we were able as a nation to lay that out and hold our schools accountable for it, as the report is saying, we'd be in a much better place and we would find we'd be competing more with countries like Singapore and Finland where that more rounded set of attributes and successes are valued. Our young people need to have the basic skills in literacy, numeracy and technology – and in addition to that, the abilities, attributes, and behaviours that employers are looking for, but this will only happen if both sets of requirements are delivered through the curriculum.

**TS: What does this mean for us in the classroom?**

**PL:** If you ask a teacher, 'what would you like your students to be like as adults?' educators all have similar answers: rounded, self-confident people with high self-esteem and having the tools to be successful in a number of potential career areas. It's our job as teachers to provide opportunities for students to engage with the broad set of attributes, competencies and skills that go beyond subject knowledge and content. I think there are lots of different ways to do that; and there are plenty of different tools available. For me the critical thing is to be very intentional about it and relentlessly pursue this goal. The CBI report has a lot of really good stuff in it, so let's see if we can build a stronger consensus about the key ingredients and get political support for it... and if not, let's do it anyway in our schools.

