**21st Century Skills – Rachael Roberts**

21st century skills is a term that everyone seems to be talking about, yet no-one seems entirely sure what exactly it means. Or rather, everyone interprets it slightly differently. However, most people would agree that 21st Century skills are those skills which are or will be needed to succeed at work and in life over the coming century.

Traditionally, career progress has been seen as quite a linear thing. One job or role leads to another further up the ladder. However, the workplace is changing. Organisational structures are becoming much flatter. Roles are becoming much less defined, and teams are often dispersed across different countries. I have experienced all of this first hand, working with different publishers through rounds of restructuring.

The professionals of today and of the next generation are less able to progress up a traditional career ladder. This is partly because in a flatter organisation it is harder to develop people by moving them upwards, and partly because the goal posts keep moving.

People need to be much more versatile and flexible, and most of all, they need to be willing to keep learning something new.

Top 10 skills in 2015

1. Complex problem-solving
2. Coordinating with others
3. People management
4. Critical thinking
5. Negotiation
6. Quality control
7. Service orientation
8. Judgement and decision making
9. Active listening
10. Creativity

The World Economic Forum recently published a report specifying the skills which will be considered important in the workplace of 2020 (not so far off).

**Top 10 skills in 2020**

1. Complex problem-solving
2. Critical thinking
3. Creativity
4. People management
5. Coordinating with others
6. Emotional intelligence
7. Judgement and decision making
8. Service orientation
9. Negotiation
10. Cognitive flexibility