THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

BROOKINGS CAFETERIA PODCAST

PLAYFUL LEARNING: A NEW PATH TO EDUCATION REFORM

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P R O C E E D I N G S

DEWS: Welcome to the Brookings Cafeteria, the podcast about ideas and the experts who have them. I'm Fred Dews. The American education system, say my guests on this episode, is not preparing all children to thrive and that many schools continue to operate according to an early 20th century factory model that aimed to mold students for the industrial economy.

Kathy Hirsh-Pasek and Helen Hadani are co-authors of a new Big Ideas paper in our Policy 2020 series titled *A new path to education reform: Playful learning promotes 21st-century skills in school and beyond*. In this interview, Hirsh-Pasek and Hadani explain what playful learning is and what it isn't, what 21st century skills are and why they are essential for our times, and how educators and school administrators can bring the playful-learning approach to classrooms.

Kathy Hirsh-Pasek is a senior fellow in Global Economy and Development at Brookings and in the Center for Universal Education and also Stanley and Debra Lefkowitz Faculty Fellow in the Department of Psychology at Temple University. And, Helen Hadani is a fellow also in Global Economy and Development and the Center for Universal Education as well as a fellow in the Metropolitan Policy Program's Ann T. and Robert M. Bass Center for Transformative Placemaking.

Also, on this episode, Amy Liu, Vice President and Director of the Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings, introduces the new Blueprints for American Renewal & Prosperity project that will feature fact-based federal policy solutions to counter the unprecedented impacts and disparities laid bare throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and bring long-needed prosperity to Americans of all walks of life.

You can follow the Brookings Podcast Network on Twitter, @policypodcasts, to get

information about and links to all our shows, including Dollar and Sense, the Brookings trade podcast; The Current; and our Events podcast. First up, here's Amy Liu introducing Blueprints for American Renewal & Prosperity.

LIU: Hello. I'm Amy Liu, Vice President and Director of the Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program. And, on behalf of our president, John Allen, and my colleagues across the institution, I am happy to introduce a new project that we are launching on Wednesday, December 9th. It's called Blueprints for American Renewal & Prosperity.

These blueprints are a series of federal policy ideas to inform a new presidency and Congress as an eager world awaits U.S. actions. The solutions we need today, they cannot be marginal. Instead, they absolutely have to match the scale of the challenges that will confront the incoming Biden-Harris administration and their peers in Congress.

So, for instance, the coronavirus has exposed the deep limitations of America's public health capabilities. Our economy, our policies are not delivering high-quality jobs or earnings mobility for workers. Systemic racial inequality, it's widespread, relegating generations of families from meaningful wealth and opportunities. There are new technologies, but while they're expanding growth possibilities, they're also facilitating the rise of misinformation and job displacement.

There are states and local communities that are battling fires and droughts in the West and then flooding along the Gulf Coast in the Atlantic. All of these are indications of the nation's many environmental vulnerabilities. We have public sector institutions, whether U.S. or multilateral ones, that have lost public trust and they need to reinvent themselves to keep pace with changing times.

Lastly, but absolutely not least, the U.S. must radically rebuild its national security

capabilities, it must strengthen global alliances, and it must respond to threats across the globe. So, for all of these reasons, Brookings experts from across the institution have come together to offer these Blueprints for American Renewal & Prosperity. And, as the title implies, the hope, the vision is for the U.S. and the world to emerge from these multiple crises stronger, more equitable, and more resilient.

Now, as I mentioned, the Brookings Blueprints will launch on December 9th, and we plan to release the ideas in six batches over a 3-month period, from December through next February, and they'll reflect the sets of challenges I just described.

As teasers, here are some proposals you will find in the Blueprints. My colleagues will suggest using tax policy, for instance, to tackle the racial wealth gap, including new forms of asset-building beyond home ownership. You'll find a framework for a more equitable health system. There will be ideas to better govern artificial intelligence, engage China, and confront 21st century threats. On climate resilience, there is an idea to create a fund to finance sustainability projects.

Throughout the project's timeline, you'll hear from our experts who will share their ideas via events, podcasts, and, of course, through our written work. So, stay tuned to all the Brookings channels to engage with the stellar content in the next few months.

Let me close with this. I do believe, after several years of very little substantive policy discourse, that our federal policymakers and our institutions with the public have an obligation now to re-animate vigorous debates about the issues that impact the lives of people in communities. Even with divided government, we ought to create demand for some serious policy considerations that can bring leaders from different parties together in genuine problem solving. The moment demands nothing less.

So, in that spirit, I hope you come to Brookings and our Blueprints for American Renewal & Prosperity as a source for ideas and as a source for ideas that matter to the next administration, Congress, and the American people. So, join us, again, on December 9th with the launch of our Blueprints for American Renewal & Prosperity. Stay engaged, and more importantly, stay safe.

DEWS: And, now, my interview with Kathy Hirsh-Pasek and Helen Hadani on playful learning to promote 21st century skills.

Helen, Kathy, welcome to the Brookings Cafeteria.

HIRSH-PASEK: Well, thank you. It's so good to be here, Fred.

HADANI: Thank you, Fred.

DEWS: So, we're here to talk about your new paper for the Brookings Policy 2020 series, co-authored with Elias Blinkoff and Roberta Golinkoff, and it's titled *A new path to education reform: Playful learning promotes 21st- century skills in schools and beyond*. I want to start with how you open the paper, and that's with a reference to what you call the horse-and-buggy model of education. Why is that the place you start, and what is it?

HIRSH-PASEK: We start with the horse-and-buggy because the world has changed a lot since the 1970s. In the 1970s, -- well, I shouldn't admit this -- but I was in graduate school and I still remember that first computer, an ENIAC, when people were surprising us that some day you might actually be able to shop over the internet. It seemed so unrealistic.

And, what we've done in education since the '70s is we've tried to repair the old system. The old system is really based on a kind of factory model, if you will. That is, if students do the right thing and they take the right test, and we change this, we change that, we change another thing, then the test scores will go up.

But, the truth is the world around them has changed tremendously. And, to be successful in the 21st century, adding new wheels to the horse and buggy or adding a new steering mechanism to the horse and buggy will still leave you with an updated horse and buggy, not a reformed education system.

HADANI: Just to add on to that, when you step into classrooms today many of them look strikingly like they did even a hundred years ago. So, you have a teacher at the front lecturing to students that are sitting in rows, and they're supposed to "absorb" the information.

And, so, as Kathy said, you see other areas, medicine, technology, business, so many other areas that look nothing like they did even a few decades ago. But, when you step into a classroom, many of them, at least in the U.S., look so much like they did years ago.

DEWS: As we continue this conversation here on this podcast, I want listeners to know that we will be getting to the playful learning construct, but to get there I want to kind of go through some of the issues that you lay out in the paper. And, one of them is that you diagnose further some problems with the American education system. So, how do you as education researchers measure whether or not the American education system is or isn't working?

HIRSH-PASEK: Well, there are a lot of ways to measure that. The standard way is to give tests, and, of course, what happens -- I'm all for accountability, and I really want to stress that. I think everyone who wrote this paper is all for accountability. But, accountability of what becomes the question.

So, if indeed your test has happened in No Child Left Behind, which was introduced in 2002, what happens is you tend to only teach for whatever's going to be tested, because then those schools that have taught to the test and those schools that do better in the test scores are going to be the ones that are going to be rewarded. So, that becomes very circular and that's, in

fact, how we've done it.

The other way to look at this is there's an international test called the PISA, and that stands for the Program for International Student Assessment. Every kid at age 15 in many countries around the world takes the PISA test. And, the United States has been obsessed with how Americans do on the PISA test, which sadly is not so good.

DEWS: It does seem though that, in the American education system, at least, there are some children or some kinds of children, certain demographics, maybe, that are doing well but maybe a whole lot of other kinds of kids are getting left behind. Can you address that problem for a minute?

HADANI: Even before COVID, we had issues with achievement gaps. That's been in existence since, I think, the mid-'70s. And, again, it hasn't budged very much. Even though there have been reforms to try and boost children who are living in under-resourced areas, the system, as Kathy said, is just broken.

And, so, we have these growing educational equities, inequities, and now with COVID, that's just been exacerbated, because you have the differences between the haves and the have nots in terms of access to high-speed internet and just being able to access distance learning now.

And, so, we have some students, yes. The more affluent students living in more affluent areas are able to receive an education that really emphasizes student agency and engagement through a collaboration and inquiry. But, then you have many, many children living in these under-resourced areas that are viewed as just sort of products of the system, and it's focused on standardized testing as these quality-control measures.

They also don't have access to out-of-school learning opportunities that many affluent students have that are able to boost their learning. And, that also gets to our point about a playful

learning environment in which children can learn these skills of collaboration and creativity.

DEWS: Just to follow up, Helen, on one point you just made about COVID-19. I mean, all of this that we're talking about is in the context of a global pandemic that is keeping a lot of children away from an actual classroom. A lot of children are learning online. And, then a lot of children, maybe they're not in a classroom setting whether online or in person at all. So, it seems like we're in a very challenging reform environment to begin with.

HIRSH-PASEK: You know, we are. But, I just wanted to add onto Helen's point to say that sometimes the most challenging of moments that human societies go through are also the times when we have the great opportunity to re-examine what we're doing and not be satisfied with same-old, same-old, and so it gives us chance, I think, to look at what the business community is telling us. They have transformed dramatically, as Helen said, to enter into the 21st century. The schools? Not so much.

And, for the lower-income are kids from under-resourced environments, around the world, by the way, not just in the United States. The disadvantage is so great that it's likely to leave them far behind for a long time if we don't re-evaluate.

DEWS: On our continued journey in this discussion to your actual policy proposal for Playful Learning, I want to make one more stop, and that's around this concept that you lay out called 21st century skills. Actually, I came to understand this concept or know about this concept through interviews on this show with colleagues in the Center for Universal Education on the global education side, like Rebecca Winthrop and others talking about 21st century skills.

Can you both talk about what you mean by 21st century skills, what are they, and why are they important?

HADANI: Yeah, sure. I mean, I think this term 21st century skills has been applied in

many different areas. People have sort of different collections or different lists. Kathy and Roberta talk about the six C's, which are collaboration, communication, content, critical thinking, creative innovation, and confidence. And, these are sort of a suite of skills that are rooted in the science of learning and also build on each other.

So, it's important to know that these all work together. Children progress through different levels or different stages of these skills. So, for example, without collaboration you have students that may struggle to become very strong communicators, because they haven't yet learned to be very sensitive or respond appropriately to other people.

So, when we talk about 21st century skills, we're really emphasizing that to thrive in today's very globalized and rapidly-changing world, children need to develop this breadth of skills, which, yes, you mentioned Rebecca Winthrop and our colleagues at the Center for Universal Education really emphasize and focus on.

And, so, breadth of skills is beyond numeracy and literacy, so typically standardized tests are very focused on those two content areas. We want children to be able to engage in both independent and lifelong learning. Also, knowing that many of the jobs that children today will do in the future have not been created yet, so how are we supposed to prepare them for that future?

Well, one of the most effective ways is to give young people something that equips them a suite of skills that equips them to tackle new and different challenges creatively and innovatively, and that's what the six C's will do. Also, emphasizing this is an approach that promotes educational equity, so addresses this, again, question that we're struggling with today.

DEWS: Something I learned from talking to scholars in the Metropolitan Policy Program is that a certain set of skills will help today's learners and today's workers avoid their job getting

replaced by automation.

HIRSH-PASEK: That's a very big issue, and I think one way to think about it is, what can we do to help children outsmart the robots in the future? One nice thing about the robots, if you hire them -- hire them -- buy them, is that they work 24/7 and they don't really have sick leave, right, and generally they don't complain to their bosses.

So, given all those as kind of positives, what do humans have over the computers? And, the answer is, we have a lot. We still are better thinkers than computers, not better memorizers, but we are better thinkers than computers. We're better pattern generators and pattern recognizers than computers. We're better empathizers than computers. So, we have a lot that we can do that the computer really cannot supplant.

When we talk about the 21st century skills -- and that term is used very broadly -- so, at Brookings to the Center for Universal Education, we did a deep dive, and there are a number of ways to really think about them.

But, as Helen said, almost all of them include that you have to learn to get along. You have to learn to be able to communicate more effectively. You have to learn to have content. By the way, we're not leaving out content. It's critically important. It's not to be displaced. It's just to be broadened as a construct. So, if we think of these in the broader way of what we need, we come to recognize that there are not soft skills and hard skills but indeed the hard skills are made from the soft skills.

And, I just want to add two other points here. Business leaders already figured this out. They are already talking about preparing children from cradle to career. And, amazingly, if you look at the interviews of corporate CEOs, you find them talking about precisely the same suite of skills that developmental scientists are using and that we put into the six C's.

So, when I look globally around the world at what it's going to take to prepare our children to outsmart the robots, the factory model simply isn't it. Tweaking the horse and buggy will not do it anymore. We need what in business they call a greenfield experiment -- start over and imagine what really would accomplish what you need and then work back and say how do the systems that we have in place allow us to achieve this vision.

DEWS: Let me stay on the six C's for just one more moment in terms of skills, because I know that's a critical -- what you call a scaffolding piece of the Playful Learning approach. And, Helen, you enumerated them a minute ago. I'll just repeat. The six C's are collaboration, communication, content, critical thinking, creative innovation, and confidence. Of those six, is there any one that is the first among equals, if you will?

HIRSH-PASEK: Well, the answer is yes and no. These are really highly interrelated and build upon one another, as Helen so beautifully put forth. In fact, if you look at the architecture of the brain, what you will find is that if you want to talk about what we know and how we learn, it does start in one simple place, with human-to-human relationships, social communities. Find me a business today that doesn't work on teams, where people don't say, oh, my team is doing…, oh, my team is working on… There's a reason for that.

Very few of the major corporations, maybe none, fail to have international cooperation and teamwork going on. That's the way it works. So, if we can't build human-to-human relationships, social understanding, intuiting the meaning that others mean to give us, even though we've come from very different backgrounds, then indeed the whole system will collapse.

HADANI: Another thing to build on what Kathy said is, if you look at it from a developmental perspective, for parents out there with young children or infants, what you see is what they crave, and what they need first is social interaction, right, which then leads to

collaboration and communication.

They try to communicate with you from the very earliest days, from how they look at you to the sounds that they make. So, really building on the collaboration and communication pieces, you can see, even from a developmental perspective that provides the foundation for building the six C's.

HIRSH-PASEK: And, I would add to what Helen said -- because you said that so beautifully, Helen -- just to say that everything we're talking about here is well-established science. This is kind of thousands and thousands and thousands and thousands of papers that people don't have to read, because they can look here for the kind of consensus view of what's important and what the build looks like for a human to become a human learner.

So, in this paper what we do is we talk about the how of learning and we talk about the what of learning, and the six C's becomes the what of learning, and "playful" learning -- and by "playful," put it in quotes.

What we don't mean is aha. Wow. This is so incredible. Where is the next balloon? We're really talking about a kind of engagement that happens that allows you to be more like a discovery learner. That gives respect to the worker, the learner, the student, because all of us come as explorers and scientists of ourselves as we approach the world that we live in.

DEWS: I'm going to follow up on that definition of playing learning, because I think that's really the crux of this. It's in the title *Playful learning promotes 21st- century skills*. But, a lot of people will hear playful learning and think about a bunch of kindergartners running around and painting by numbers and singing along and just looking for the balloons and -- can you expand further on playful learning?

HADANI: I think part of the magic of play is that it is so fun and engaging and you could

look at -- you could spot it anywhere. You can identify play so easily. But, yet there's a whole science behind it. Like Kathy just said, there's thousands of papers also on play and playful learning.

So, playful learning, to get a little technical for a minute, is an umbrella term that includes things like free play and guided play. And, you can think about play -- actually, Kathy and her colleagues wrote a fabulous paper several years ago, thinking about play as a spectrum.

So, you have on one end free play, which is, Fred, what I think you just described, sort of children running around, there's no sort of learning, while they're just having a good time. And, there's nothing wrong with that, and children learn from that. But, there's no learning goal in free play.

So, in free play, children are both setting up and engaging in their own play, without a clear learning goal. So, an example could be making a pillow fort in your living room, which probably is happening a lot these days with kids and parents home so much.

At the other end of the spectrum you have what we call direct instruction, and this, unfortunately, is what you see a lot in classrooms, especially classrooms -- well, for all ages, but this is not what we want to see in classrooms especially for young children. This is where the teacher exercises control in both initiating and directing the lesson, but it is towards a learning goal.

And, then you have, in the middle, guided play, what we call guided play, and this may be a term that may be relatively new to most people. It's where the adult initiates or designs the activity or interaction, and it is importantly centered around a learning goal. It could be learning something about colors or shapes or numbers. However, the child still maintains control over their learning experience. They are dictating what block they're going to add, what colors they're

going to mix together.

So, an example of this is a well-curated, science-based children's museum exhibit. So, you have the museum educators that are sort of acting behind the scenes to design the exhibit with a learning goal in mind, but when children and families come to the museum, it's the children that are directing their experience. They are engaging with it in however they want to. They come from different families, different contexts, and so they're dictating their own experience.

DEWS: I want to let listeners know that, not only are we talking in this podcast episode about a policy paper that you've written for the Brookings Policy 2020 series, but it reads and it has resources in the paper that feel like a roadmap for educators to get to this state.

For example, I mean, Helen, you're just talking about free play, guided play, direct instruction. There's a great figure, and there's other figures and tables in the paper, that lay this out in really handy constructs for people to see the flow of these things, a level of the '60s, for example. Can you talk about how educators, how teachers, how administrators, how policymakers get from where we are now to a place where playful-learning principles, the '60s principles, are more in effect?

HIRSH-PASEK: Sure can. And, in fact, we have a couple of really great examples to help show educators how this is possible. Part of what anyone would want right now is a kind of proof of concept. And, I'm happy to say that we've been working with a couple of schools, one in Westchester County, Pennsylvania, where we have several schools, kindergartens that decided they really want to try it.

And, at first, people really wondered, oh, my gosh, what the heck is playful learning going to be. Now, you can think of it as kind of discovery learning or project-based learning,

emphasizing learning to learn skills. So, I don't want people to get hung up with the word play. We've been asked a lot -- should we leave the play out? And, in the end of the day, no, we shouldn't.

You know, it's a pretty basic human function, and I say human. I shouldn't even say that. Monkeys play. Dogs play. Cats play. I recently saw a paper -- octopuses play. So, it must be a pretty basic thing throughout the human condition that one of the ways we learn is through play.

Anyway, we went to a school. We went to the kindergarten. We talked to the teachers. We taught the teachers how you could do thematic-based education toward the very same goals that they had before but widening them to include the 21st century skills. Well, okay. They'll give this a try. So, let me just describe one of the classrooms to give you the flavor of what it looked like. These kids were middle-income kids. And, then I'll show you a tremendous example of children from underserved communities.

In the middle-income school, the teachers went through the training that we offered, and they decided to try a theme of weather in one of the classes. I remember walking up to this one child. I had no idea what he was doing. He had a cardboard box that was somehow pointed to some kid who was standing in front of a map.

Now, I want to remind you, as I speak, that I am talking about 5-year-old children. All right. The little boy said to me, oh, yes, I'm the weather person right now. I'm the person filming what's going to happen. The little girl, standing in front of the map of the United States says to me there is now a low front that is coming across the country -- she points to California, talks about how it's moving across the map, and therefore in 2 days we can expect that there will be precipitation.

Now, I'm hearing low front, precipitation, understanding of a map, whoa, whoa, whoa,

wait a minute. Let's re-convert that. I'm hearing literacy, I'm hearing science, and I'm hearing STEM. Okay. I go to the next table. Next table, kids grouped in four. How many drops of water can you put in the diameter of a circle in order to make that circle fully wet? Same as how many drops of rain. And, when you're done, please make sure you graph it. Sounds like a math lesson to me, age 5.

We go now to Grand Rapids, Michigan where a school redefines its view of success -- Godfrey-Lee School -- redefines its aspect of success based on what the community wanted, jobs for their kids at the other end. They took some of the training that we did, had fabulous teachers on their end, and at the end of the day didn't just find teaching was more enjoyed, that the student got more out of it in terms of collaboration, creativity, and the confidence to give things a try, intellectual confidence, learning to learn. But, guess what? Their math and learning skills went up, too.

DEWS: And, these are public schools.

HIRSH-PASEK: That's public school. Yep.

DEWS: So, how do you scale this kind of education reform?

HIRSH-PASEK: Well, we've been working on the scale, and one of the things that we now realize is that if you had a set of principles, like we do in the how and what of learning, then the scaling is a little bit easier once you teach that to the superintendents and the principals and the teachers who, by the way, are ecstatic when they see this form, because they can mold it to what they prefer to teach.

It's moldable by culture, it's moldable by community, and therefore it reduces inequity because it highly motivates the teachers and the students. They can teach exactly the same content but teach it in varied context.

HADANI: And, I think that's a great point that Kathy makes, because it takes advantage of the leverages, teachers knowledge, and experience. Again, it's not trying to provide a different type of content. Like, I'll just take common core, for example. That's a completely different system that teachers are having to learn, then to teach their students. This is something to adopt the content that teachers are ready, want to provide, but just in a different way.

DEWS: So, it's not a specific curriculum, like common core, or some other curriculum it might be. It's more like a framework for achieving the end goal of teaching 21st century skills.

HIRSH-PASEK: Exactly. I mean, in fact, take a teacher who really thinks, wow, knitting is my thing. I can teach math through knitting. I can teach patterns through knitting. I can teach things about homeless people through knitting, so, social studies. I can teach the science of how the stuff sticks together through knitting.

So, when you start to realize the breadth of what I'm able to accomplish by also allowing the teachers to think, the freedom to think, and to teach their material in new ways, it's a win-win-win for everybody. And, the students are the ones who then come out on top even in the standard outcomes, let alone in the 21st century outcomes.

DEWS: Kathy, you mentioned earlier the No Child Left Behind Act. Helen, you just mentioned common core. The current federal education policy structure, I guess, you call it, is the Every Student Succeeds Act. So, I mean, looking ahead, what is the federal government's role in education policy in terms of perhaps trying to promote this kind of framework?

HIRSH-PASEK: Well, I think the federal government has a large role to play. One of the things that we've known for a long time is that we're not succeeding. You're not succeeding when you can't pull up the bottom part of your population and allow them to have opportunities in a knowledge-based economy. That simply doesn't work.

It's not okay when we are ranking 13th and 37th in reading and mathematics relative to the rest of the world. When you look at where we stand, it's not like, oh, we're 13th and 37th but we're in the highest tertile of an accomplishment on these tests. No, no, we're at or below the average across the world, which is not good enough for an American economy that wants to be the leading economy. We've got to do something to shake it up.

Canada did something to shake it up. In fact, in their lower grades what they decided to do is put in a play-based education system, and voila, they moved to number five in the international rankings. They used to be around where we are.

So, the first thing I would recommend we do is not continue to use a horse-and-buggy approach but rather to create a forum and entertain at that forum what a, for lack of a better word, Tesla approach to education would be by bringing together the very best scientists and by allowing people to truly discuss how we learn and what we learn and to re-evaluate our educational mission statement. Other ministries of education around the world are doing just that.

China has. China has reconfigured the way they want to think about outcomes for students. Singapore has come to ask us -- how do you do this? We want to learn from you. Singapore, which wants to have a more create entrepreneurial population for the future. Can it be done? Other countries are doing it. Canada, Singapore, China. Can the U.S.? Yes.

It may take a little bit more centralized thinking, because all of the education systems that have zoomed to the top have a more centralized role for education and then throw it back to the community level, which is the way it works in the United States, state by state, neighborhood by neighborhood, county by county. But, we have to have some grounding, and just like the COVID vaccine, it has to be grounded in the science.

DEWS: As we wrap up this conversation, Kathy and Helen, I want to ask you both to reflect on and talk about anything that we haven't covered that you think is important. And, also, can you tell listeners what next steps could be, especially people who are in the education field who are listening to this episode who might want to after they read your paper and take further steps?

HADANI: Yeah, sure. I think, again, thinking about education being a priority in this country, and hopefully with a new administration it will be. I mean, it was sort of disheartening to see in the recent presidential and vice presidential debates that education didn't even come up as a main topic, as a main question for the candidates to answer.

So, really, shifting our focus, again, in today's world, with COVID and the pandemic and knowing that there are going to continue to be these gaps, these equity gaps, and that we need to really think about how to address those so that all children can get the education for them to thrive in the 21st century.

Also, thinking about teachers and how they are struggling in this current time and will continue to struggle, because we don't value teaching enough in our society, and we don't train teachers as professionals, we don't compensate them as professionals, and then we therefore don't respect them as professionals. And, as Kathy mentioned, there's other countries that have a very different model of this, and what you see then is their students are being prepared for the future.

I also like to think about a quote from Martin Luther King in thinking about the fundamental purpose of education and school is that it's intelligence plus character is really the goal of a true education. And, I think right now we are thinking about this either in an either/or fashion, intelligence or character, or we're just leaving out the character part, which can mean many different things, but, again, points to many of our six C's, also curiosity, persistence,

creativity, and motivation.

As Kathy mentioned, it's not soft or hard skills. It's them together, working together to support and build these breadth of skills in young people that they need to thrive in the future.

HIRSH-PASEK: And, I will add to that wonderful closing statement, Helen, that one of the fundamental questions that we are faced with as we approach 2021 is what counts as success? What do we want for our children? What should it look like when you graduate from high school? Should you just be a great test-taker, or should you also be prepared to be a real citizen in the community in which you leave, to have a happy, healthy, thinking, of course, life and an ability to learn to learn.

How do we help teachers achieve the training that they need, because they are doing a herculean job in classrooms, especially right now. How do we help teachers get the pay that they deserve, the respect that they deserve? It happened in Finland, which everybody brags about as number one. Well, how did they get there? Respected, paid teachers, and did better professional training.

And, also, education today is not just a matter of what happens in a classroom, it's a matter also of what goes beyond a classroom. So, we have to start thinking about informal opportunities for learning, whether it's digital informal opportunities for learning, or in some work that we're doing at Brookings and in the Playful Learning Landscape Action Network we talk about playful learning landscapes, where we are literally transforming public spaces so that they can help children and families learn to learn in their communities. So, what does it mean to be successful?

DEWS: Well, we'll end it here on that note. I want to thank you, Kathy Hirsh-Pasek and Helen Hadani, for sharing your time and expertise with us today. It was a very fascinating

conversation. I'll put links in our show notes to your paper, *A new path to education reform: Playful learning promotes 21st-century skills in schools and beyond*, and some of the resources so people can learn more about this research and the path forward. Thank you both very much.

HIRSH-PASEK: Thank you, Fred. Really appreciate it.

HADANI: Thank you, Fred.

DEWS: The Brookings Cafeteria Podcast is possible only with the help of a team of amazing colleagues. Our thanks go out to audio engineer Gaston Reboredo and our intern, Ryan Jacobs, to Bill Finan, Director of the Brookings Institution Press who does the book interviews, to Marie Wilkin, Adrianna Pita, and Chris McKenna for their collaboration, and finally to Camilo Ramirez and Emily Horne for their guidance and support.

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