

ETHOS

You might like to know where I am coming from! So here are a few fundamental thoughts:

Humanity

I believe in:

- The intrinsic value of each human being unrelated to their potential economic output.
- The equality of mankind.
- The need for humanity to responsibly take care of the planet now.
- The free, democratic and just rule of law where rights and responsibilities are balanced to protect the people.

I believe:

- We are designed to be creative, and to thrive and prosper physically, emotionally and spiritually.
- We flourish best in interdependent, respectful, caring relationships with our family, friends, local community and nation.
- The world is a global community and nations who pull their drawbridges up on the rest of the world do so to their own detriment. We are hard-wired for interconnectedness. If you bleed, I bleed.
- Employment should engender creativity and a sensible work-life balance, not create work-slaves, especially those trapped in poverty.
- Where money serves the people, not the other way round, it fulfils its proper function to provide shelter and prosperity.

Education

I believe:

- On a political macro level and on a local micro level, education should be led and guided by people who are cutting-edge, well-trained, caring, educational professionals, passionate about learning and teaching.
- Leaders should lead by example with humility: they should walk the walk as well as talk the talk. *See my article on Leadership and Authority:*
<http://www.artdays.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Leadership-Authority-Freebies.pdf>
- We are all learners first, then teachers.
- Children and students are not empty vessels to be filled. They bring something to the party when they learn! As such, I take a constructivist, discovery approach to learning, using a Vygotskian master-apprentice model.
- The word 'lesson' is outdated and implies a reduced facilitator role for the teacher, as well as a more passive role for the child.
- 'Lessons' should be replaced with 'learning activities': with the emphasis on 'activity'. Active learning, particularly with a problem-solving element, is the most memorable kind, enabling

knowledge to become contextually understood and therefore applicable to new situations: in other words, useful.

- Applying knowledge in a way that benefits others shows wisdom. Wisdom is the destination. Knowledge is the vehicle. Left to its own devices, knowledge puffs us up and makes proud.
- With the support and guidance of teachers, children and students can and should be encouraged to teach others what they have learnt. Teaching something demonstrates and confirms your confidence and ability in it.
- Powered by imagination, the creative process (with all its important mistake-making) needs to play an essential underpinning role beneath the whole curriculum. By being creative, we are being true to who we really are and we give ourselves the best opportunities to solve problems and enjoy our work, staying motivated to learn. *See my article on The Mechanics of Genius: <http://www.artdays.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Pre-Doctoral-Studies-Leonardo-in-London-Research.pdf>*
- The primary curriculum should be cross-curricular as far as possible. Discrete subject learning to build up particular skills needs then to be applied to real-life or close-to-real-life scenarios, in order for it to be meaningful and memorable.
- Children need the right 'why wings' to be motivated to learn. These are children's reasons for learning, not grown-up's reasons. *See my article on Motivating Children: <http://www.artdays.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Motivating-Children-Freebies.pdf>* Through differentiation, teachers need to take account of children's particular needs and their different learning styles.
- Learning to learn for life is an important goal and should underpin all learning activity.
- The planning and 'assessment' of learning and teaching are an interrelated cycle and should formatively speak to each other with the child's needs at their heart.
- In the current education climate, the words 'assessment' and 'inspection' have come to be associated with judgment and condemnation - and they stir up fear in all. Fear is not a good soil in which to grow learning. I prefer the word 'evaluate', which implies 'finding value'. This is far more positive. This does not negate the fact that adjustments, or even big changes, may need to be made. It just walks into the room with a smile on its face, not a scowl.
- A quality environment is crucial to the well-being and learning of all who work in it, and we underestimate its vital role to everyone's detriment.
- Collaboration between colleagues without fear of judgment is vital.
- Staffroom laughter is a must.
- Teachers need a life outside of teaching. Stressed-out teachers are not good for children. They need to have the opportunity to refresh and regroup and bring something of life and excitement to the classroom.

Art, Craft and Design

Art, Craft and Design help us to:

- make sense of the world around us and find meaning by linking our inner world to the outer world;
- express ourselves and communicate with others;
- create something new and unique, demonstrating our highest human capabilities;
- make something fit for purpose;
- feel joy, satisfaction, pride and confidence in the doing and the finishing process;

- develop key life skills such as listening, reflection, discussion, observation, co-operation, decision-making, time and resources management, organisation and evaluation.

Art education should be balanced between art, craft and design, helping children and adults to find and express their own visual voice through the creative exposure to all skills and media via cross-curricular themes or 'art for art's sake'.

Relevant to their age and ability, children and students need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their own (and others') work using subject specific vocabulary. By critically analysing the historic, contemporary and digitally future-looking work of artists, craftspeople and designers, children and adults can glean ideas and inspiration for their own practice.

The use of sketchbooks is important for observation, reflection and research. Starting points can be many and varied, and the work-activity personal or collaborative and open-ended within curriculum/design constraints.

I want to introduce students to the whole visual alphabet of making, not just a part, so they can write their own visual stories without limitations. I want children and adults to get excited about art, craft and design. I want them to see the endless possibilities they bring not just for school, but for life. *See my article "Art Message Children":*

<http://www.artdays.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Art-Design-A-Message-For-Children1.pdf>

Design Technology

The value and impact of design technology on humanity cannot be overstated. It has propelled mankind forward through the millennia from cave to space, straddling many fields of knowledge. At its heart lies a practical problem to be solved, necessity being the mother of its invention. From the simplest ancient bone needle to help us clothe ourselves with warm animal skins, to the far-reaching advances of the genome project, we have hit obstacles – and smashed our way through them.

The creative process wends its way through each and every problem solving activity, and this is described as 'iterative' by the Design and Technology Association. *See my article on The Iterative Design Process:* <http://www.artdays.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/The-Iterative-Design-Process.pdf>

Design Technology education therefore needs to embrace two things: real problems and real solutions. Solution skills modelled by teachers are important, but the 'finding out for yourself' bit, through trial and error, is far more important because it is far more memorable.

Using subject-specific vocabulary, Design Technology education should be hands-on and practical, particularly using teams to negotiate, collaborate, find answers, test and evaluate ideas. Teamwork models a real-world approach to this field of learning.

Time and resource restraints need to be factored in as these are always the sparring partners of all designers. There should be as little waste as possible, reusing and recycling materials wherever possible to remind ourselves that the world is not a bottomless pit of provision.