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Practice Ethos

PRACTICE ETHOS

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

Humanity

I believe in:

- The intrinsic and equal value of each human being unrelated to their potential economic output.
- The strength of diverse peoples working together for the common good.
- The need for humanity to responsibly take care of our beautiful planet now, leaving it, where humanly possible, in a healthy and sustainable state for future generations of life.
- Free democracy and the rule of law where rights and responsibilities, and justice and mercy, are balanced to protect the people.
- Free speech as the bedrock of democracy.

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 manufacture 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 page 5 on leadership.*
- 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- The word 'lesson' is outdated and implies a reduced facilitator role for the teacher, as well as a more passive role for the child.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 applicable to new situations: in other words, useful.
- Applying knowledge in a way that benefits others as well as oneself shows wisdom. Wisdom is the destination. Knowledge is the vehicle. Left to its own devices, knowledge can puff us up and make us proud. *See page 10 on wisdom.*
- 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, as well as reinforcing your own learning.

- Metacognition is a powerful tool for embedding and turbocharging learning.
- 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.
- 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. *See page 5 on polymathic thinking.*
- Children need the right ‘why wings’ to be motivated to learn. These are children’s reasons for learning, not grown-up’s reasons. *See page 8 on ‘why wings’.*
- Through differentiation, teachers need to take account of, and have an inclusive approach to, children’s particular learning needs.
- Learning to learn for life is an important goal and should underpin all learning activities and embed the act of learning as autotelic.
- Critical thinking is essential, and education should not indoctrinate. Educators should present facts to learners and not present contested views as orthodoxy. Heterodoxy – thought diversity – are crucial in education establishments, especially the academy, and we should fearlessly learn to ‘disagree well’¹.
- The planning and ‘assessment’ of learning are an interrelated cycle and should formatively as well as summatively speak to each other with the learner’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 many. 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, learning and teaching of all who work in it, and we underestimate its vital role to everyone’s detriment.
- Collaboration between colleagues without fear of negative judgment is vital.
- Laughter is a must – a healer that oils squeaky relationships and also makes learning memorable.
- 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, research, discussion, observation, co-operation, critical thinking, decision-

¹ <<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/about/disagreeing-well>> [accessed 23 August 2024]

making, time and resources management, organisation and evaluation.

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, craft makers 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.

Although 'art', 'craft', and 'design' each have their own flavours and personalities as such, they are interlinked and interdependent. The most successful creative practitioners can straddle all three and use them in whichever way suits their purpose. To name but a few examples, I think of creative practitioners such as ceramicist/artist Grayson Perry, fashion designer Guo Pei, sculptors El Anstui and Theo Jansen, architect Zaha Hadid and animator Nick Park. I would regard each one as a master of art, craft and design, able to draw on whichever they need for whatever they need at the time. They are masters free to fly! And this is how I aim to teach the subject – by drawing upon the strengths of all three areas and combining them to bring about stronger creative works. I want to give children the full visual alphabet for making, thereby enabling them to create with far more choice, fluency and power. Let them use the best of art – fabulous original, creative ideas – the best of craft – wonderful hand skills – and the best of design – well-thought-out plans and clear purpose. Together we have magic.

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 in an 'iterative' fashion.

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 us that the world is not a bottomless pit of provision.

Note: with the exception of the section 'Leadership', the following pages are excerpts taken from my book *The Art Tree Subject Leaders' Essential Guide*.

Leadership

Leadership borne out of true authority provides an umbrella of protection for people. There are leaders with authority and leaders without authority. The first ones are genuine; the second are imposters. True leaders lead by example. They walk the walk and therefore they can talk the talk. They do not ask those under their authority to do anything that they would not be prepared to do themselves if they could. They serve people wholeheartedly, putting them first.

True leadership equips through training and example, and then entrusts and releases the apprentice, stepping in to support from time to time. The extent to which they build an undercarriage of support and undergirding to people, is the extent to which the umbrella of protection covers them. Minimum undergirding: minimum protection.

True leadership is not a game. It is not about raising oneself up to a higher status. True leadership requires sensitivity, deep, deep learning and sometimes even brokenness. True leadership requires openness and acknowledgment of failures. True leadership praises, encourages, thanks and appreciates others. True leadership will perform the unpleasant tasks when necessary.

People will follow a true leader to the ends of the earth. They want to work for them. They are faithful and supportive towards them. They can more readily forgive them their mistakes. They feel free and can fly.

A true leader with genuine authority is a tree on which the birds can come and rest. A leader without authority is a cage in which birds are trapped and imprisoned and want to escape.

Polymathic Thinking

In August 2016 I visited London's Science Museum to see replicas of Leonardo Da Vinci's machines at the Mechanics of Genius exhibition, which included 39 historical models of Leonardo's inventions, including flying machines, diving equipment and weapons. There were also large-scale reproductions of Leonardo's famous drawings and sketches.

What strikes me about da Vinci are his prolific creative production and his thirst for solving problems. If necessity is the mother of invention, Leonardo applied his creativity and inventiveness to many situations of need or even imagined need, envisaging machines way beyond their time. His work as an artist, scientist, designer, engineer and mathematician demonstrated an extraordinary ability to solve problems in seamless harmony. Here, in Leonardo, we have a truly empowered polymath.

We need more polymaths! Multi-talented, multi-skilled, multi-thinking people who can adapt, flow and create according to need and desire, without separating out disciplines or attaching value to particular ones over others. Leonardo had a subject-equality approach to discovery, learning and invention. I think this approach is reflected in the comments made by Dr Elizabeth Blackburn, President of the world-famous Salk Institute (a cutting-edge research centre built by Nobel Prize Winner Jonas Salk). She states:

"Great research centers are places where inspired creativity, collaboration and scientific freedom should thrive. Time and time again we have seen that the most surprising discoveries and innovations arise out of pursuing high-risk, novel experiments and working with people outside our own areas of expertise."²

If scientific institutes such as Salk can see the

² <<http://www.salk.edu/about/leadership/>> [accessed 18 February 2016]

need for polymathic, multi-field thinking and collaboration, why can't educational establishments? Why is there still an archaic nineteenth-century view of learning which separates subject areas and places them in hierarchies or in competition with each other?

I believe learning, with a polymathic 'STEAM' thinking approach, is the way forward for education, and offers us the best outcomes for twenty-first century international needs. Sadly, STEM subjects have been favoured by the UK government over the arts.³ Between 2010 and 2016 arts GCSE entries fell by 28%; the number of hours arts subjects were taught in secondary schools fell by 17%; and the number of arts teachers was down by 16%. The Cultural Learning Alliance believed that "the fall in provision is a result of the accountability system, most notably the English Baccalaureate which excludes art subjects."⁴ However, by omitting the arts from the English Baccalaureate, we weaken education. 'STEM' needs the 'A' of 'arts' to create 'STEAM-powered' collaboratively minded individuals, drawing upon their multiple intelligences in a cross-curricular fashion to turbo-charge their problem-solving powers and production. Leonardo da Vinci is our example.⁵

John Comenius: Pansophism

Although he also lived so many years ago, Comenius (1592-1670) has been called the father of modern education. He thought that education begins in early childhood and should continue during life, advocating sensory experiences over rote learning.

Regarding polymathic thinking, exemplified by da Vinci, Comenius founded a branch of philosophy that he termed 'pansophism', which

means 'all knowledge'. He believed that knowledge or learning, spirituality and emotional development were inseparable – which is a holistic view of education.⁶

Arts Foster Scientific Success

In 2008, Dr Robert Root-Bernstein of Michigan State University, et. al., researched the area of the arts fostering scientific success. Adult arts and crafts avocations were tabulated from autobiographies, biographies, and obituary notices of Nobel Prize winners in the sciences, members of the Royal Society (RS), the U.S. National Academy of Sciences (NAS), and surveys of Sigma Xi members and the U.S. public. (An avocation is something that a person does in addition to their main occupation, especially for pleasure, e.g. a hobby.)

Data/results showed that:

- More than anyone else, "Nobel laureates were significantly more likely to engage in arts and crafts avocations"⁷
- The most successful scientists were more likely to be polymaths, having accrued a wider range of skills which might have improved their ability to experiment
- Increasing success in science is complemented by developed ability in other fields, such as the fine arts, crafts, and communications talents
- Innovative scientists cultivate correlative talents that merge vocation and avocation into integrated activity sets
- Creative scientists explore a broad range of unrelated activities, connecting the knowledge and skills gained into integrated networks ideal for raising and solving important scientific issues

³ STE(A)M: Science, Technology, Engineering, (Arts) and Mathematics.

⁴ <<https://culturallearningalliance.org.uk/arts-in-englands-schools-the-current-picture/>> [accessed 29 October 2021]

⁵ <<https://www.artsmark.org.uk/casestudies/steam-power-benefits-integrating-arts-and-science-sponsored>> [accessed 29 October 2021]

⁶ Pound, *How Children Learn*, p. 38.

⁷ Root-Bernstein, R.; Allen, L.; et al., "Arts Foster Scientific Success: Avocations of Nobel, National Academy, Royal Society, and Sigma Xi Members", *Journal of Psychology of Science and Technology*, Vol. 1, Issue 2 (October 2008), pp. 51-63.

- Many Nobel Prize winners, members of the RS and NAS pointedly remarked on how avocations develop useful skills: “hand-eye coordination; knowledge of tools and processes; better visual imagination; improved ability to communicate using words, images, and models; the stage presence of the practised performer; and a refined scientific aesthetic sensibility”.⁸
- Several scientists noted that academic skills alone were not enough to train someone for creative scientific work, which required “the entire range of abilities subsumed in the arts and crafts, integrated and focused on specific scientific problems and techniques.”⁹
- One personality factor related to creativity was openness to experience, exemplified by “an unusual degree of curiosity, desire for learning, puzzle-solving, and a desire to think carefully about ideas.” Diversity of avocation is frequently associated with openness to experience.¹⁰

Dewey: Integrated Activity

John Dewey (1859-1952) was an American philosopher whose work focused on the study of knowledge (epistemology). He was a big proponent of the school project approach to develop cross-curricular ways of learning, because the world is not split into subjects as we encounter it, and children’s education should reflect this.



Above: a year 5 STEAM research project on ‘Machines’. Here we combined art, design technology, maths, literacy and computing. Our large-scale gear train sculpture actually worked!

⁸ Ibid, p. 57.

⁹ Ibid, p. 60.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 60.

Why Wings

“A high-quality art and design education should engage, inspire and challenge pupils.”¹¹

Children need the right ‘why wings’ to be motivated to learn. These are children’s reasons for learning, not grown-ups’ reasons. This approach takes account of the work of Donaldson (relating learning to the language and culture of their world) and Dewey (championing children’s interests to prepare them as future citizens of democracy).

Motivation is “the driving force that elicits, perpetuates and maintains goal-directed behaviour”¹² and is related to basic primary biological drives (water, food, love, sex in the pubescent) and social needs (affiliation, belonging, reassurance, achievement). It can be determined by physiology (e.g. the need to eat and drink to stay alive); by behaviour (doing things to satisfy primary drives, e.g. earning money to buy food); or by psychology (e.g. behaving in a way to make friends and have a sense of belonging or move towards self-actualisation). These psychological determinants are instinctive and were explored by Moravian-born Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) in his psychoanalytic theories about psychosexual development and the unconscious mind. Freud regarded personality and the behaviours that stem from it as being influenced and motivated by the id, the superego and the ego. The id instinctively seeks pleasure, the superego carries our conscience (derived from parents and society), and the ego tries to balance the two (e.g. stopping us from being antisocial and finding acceptable ways to satisfy the id).¹³

In *PISA 2018: Insights and Interpretations*, Andreas Schleicher states that “the belief that we are responsible for the results of our behaviour influences motivation, such that people are more likely to invest effort if they believe it will lead to the results they are trying to achieve”.¹⁴ Clearly primary children are still learning about the consequences of their own and others’ behaviour and actions. However, as teachers facilitate their learning, they can hopefully elicit a ‘botheredness’ in children about what they are doing in school. This ‘botheredness’ (a phrase coined by British educationalist Hywel Roberts), seeks to take them from mere engagement to investment – and even obsession.¹⁵ Another British educationalist, Debra Kidd, likes to call this ‘lighting the fire’.¹⁶

Why? A Child’s Perspective

So when introducing art, craft and design (or any) learning activities to a class, teachers need to understand the need for motivation in learning, and harness the children’s natural motivations to enable better, deeper, more focused learning. You may find that some children are happy to accept: ‘because I said so’; ‘it will do you good’; ‘it’s for your future’; or ‘because the government/Ofsted says so’. But as you and I know, many children will not. Some children bring so many issues with them to the classroom that these reasons just do not wash. Some children have few issues, yet these reasons are still just not enough to ignite their learning fires. That’s when problems can be compounded: low- or higher-level disruption, poor output, low-quality work, ‘skim’ (soon-to-be-forgotten) learning, boredom, frustration, time-wasting, under-achieving, bad test results.

¹¹ National Curriculum Art & Design Purpose

¹² Winstanley, *Key Concepts in Psychology*, p. 161.

¹³ Winstanley, *Key Concepts in Psychology*, pp. 161-162.

¹⁴ Schleicher, *PISA 2018: Insights and Interpretations*, p. 37

¹⁵ ITL Worldwide, *Hywel Roberts on Teaching*, online video recording, YouTube, 27 August 2020, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kt3IyeEYOM&t=1s>> [accessed 22 December 2021].

¹⁶ RSA, *Debra Kidd on an Educational (R)evolution*, online video recording, YouTube, 18 December 2014, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=98Bbcm-jPlc>> [accessed 22 December 2021].

I have found over the years – mostly through bitter experience – that children need more than adult reasons for learning. They need children’s reasons. When a child is truly motivated, they bring an energy to their learning. As long as his/her basic needs (shelter, warmth, food, water, respites, relaxation, encouragement and care) are provided, he/she will fly with the ‘right why wings’. Those are the times when they love you! Those are the times when they do something extra at home without being asked and bring it in to show you the next day. Those are the times when they drag their parents in at home time to show them what they have been doing in school. Those are the times when parents say, “She never stops practising that song!” Those are the times when the children say at playtime, “Aw! Can I stay in and finish my work?” Wouldn’t it be wonderful if MOST of the time we gave children the “right why wings”? Or even ALL of the time? What would happen to their disruption levels, emotional well-being, long-term memory, test results, and most importantly, their learning?

Why not sit down quietly alone in a room and think back to what it was like to be a child. Can you ever remember wanting to do something because the government said so? Why did you want to do things? Think back ... and do not stop thinking until you can remember what it felt like to be a child. What motivated you to do things?

Why Wings: Examples

Beat another’s best result
 Beat the clock
 Beat your best result
 Breaking down barriers/mending bridges
 Building friendships/relationships
 Campaign for/against ...
 Caring for ...
 Celebrating a special event
 Competition against self/others/the clock
 Earning points/treats/privileges

Enjoyment (art days!)
 Exhibition for. . . Display for. . .
 Expressing yourself (art days . . .)
 Finding peace (art days . . .)
 Fun! (art days!)
 Fundraiser for...
 (marketing/advertising/ticketing)
 Gaining qualifications
 Gathering support
 Gauging opinion
 Giving a tour
 Having a laugh
 Inviting guests
 Organising people for . . .
 Performance for . . . (marketing/advertising/
 ticketing & box office/stage
 managing/costuming/ seating plan/make-
 up/lighting/sound)
 Petition
 Presenting for . . .
 Protecting others
 Protest about . . .
 Publishing a book about . . .
 Raising awareness
 Representing others/something
 Satisfying needs: hunger/thirst/tiredness/
 temperature, e.g. making refreshments or
 cleaning out the rabbit hutch
 Satisfying the need to know
 Showing off skills/learning
 Solving problems
 Teaching others – helping them to learn
 To make me feel better
 To make someone’s life easier
 To satisfy curiosity
 Understanding yourself and others
 Video/Blog for . . .
 Winning prizes/medals/honours
 Writing for a real audience:
 friend/relative/class/another class

Wisdom: The Endgame

“Wisdom is a tree of life to those who eat her fruit; happy is the man who keeps on eating it.”
Proverbs 3:18 ¹⁷

The Cambridge Dictionary describes wisdom as being “the ability to use your knowledge and experience to make good decisions and judgments.”¹⁸ I believe that wisdom is the end game of education: being able to apply knowledge, skills and understanding in a way that benefits others as well as oneself: a ‘universal ethical principle’ (see Kohlberg chart opposite). As Kohlberg explained:

“The development of logical and critical thought, central to cognitive education, finds its larger meaning in the broad set of moral values.”¹⁹

I believe the characteristics of wisdom can be seen at the top of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs: morality, as part of self-actualisation. Educator, psychologist and philosopher Lawrence Kohlberg (1927-1987) took a cognitive approach to the development of morality, and his stages are shown in the chart opposite.²⁰ He saw that values motivate behaviour and morality and are therefore fundamental to everyday decisions. Individuals progress through the stages of moral development in the same order, skipping none, rarely regressing, and sync their previous patterns of thinking into the next stage. Higher stages allow them to understand their experiences more comprehensively, but not everyone reaches them. Although development correlates with age, especially in the early stages of cognition, it can be retarded – but not accelerated. The chart opposite shows Kohlberg’s stages of moral development:

Level, Stage	Description of Morality
Preconventional Level 1, Stage 1	Punishment and obedience orientation. <i>(I do it, so I do not get into trouble.)</i>
Preconventional Level 1, Stage 2	Instrumental relativist orientation. <i>(I do it, so I get something out of it.)</i>
Conventional Level 2, Stage 3	Interpersonal concordance orientation. <i>(I do it, so you like me.)</i>
Conventional Level 2, Stage 4	Society maintaining orientation. <i>(I do it because it is the law, and I respect the law.)</i>
Postconventional or Principled Level 3, Stage 5	Social contract orientation. <i>(I do it because of the social contract we have with each other.)</i>
Postconventional or Principled Level 3, Stage 6	Universal ethical principles. <i>(I do it because it is the right thing to do.)</i>

Based on my years in education and of life experience, I believe that built into the benefits of wisdom are an ever-increasing circle of positive reinforcement, as good attitudes and ‘deeds’ are naturally rewarded in positive feedback loops and consequences. Other outcomes of wisdom can be good self-esteem, lack of prejudice, problem-solving, respect for others, confidence, achievement, friendship, and healthy family relationships, which are all in the three highest Maslow tiers. Wisdom resonates with the ‘learning powered mind’ in its reciprocity too: collaboration, empathy, listening and interdependence. Wisdom shows strong

¹⁷ Proverbs 3:18, *The Living Bible* (Cambridge: Tyndale House, 1971).

¹⁸ <<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/wisdom>> [accessed 8 October 2021]

¹⁹ Kohlberg, R.; Mayer, R. “Development as the Aim of Education”, *Harvard Education Review*, Vol. 42 (1972), pp. 454-5.

²⁰ Winstanley, *Key Concepts in Psychology*, pp. 137-139.

interpersonal intelligence and high emotional intelligence, and respects the intrinsic value of others, regardless of differences. Wisdom engenders a healthy mind, as it connects positively with others, being mindful of the here and now as well as being concerned for the future. Finally, wisdom favours free will and freedom: freedom to choose and to live free to care for one another and ourselves. Wisdom is the best of the best.

Wisdom works itself out in action. Over and over, psychologists and educationalists conclude that ‘doing’ and ‘activity’ are highly successful for learning. This makes sense in terms of wisdom, which keeps learning and developing with that ‘growth mindset’, like a well-watered tree.

And so, it starts with me. By turning on small lights within and around me, my growing positive attitudes and actions begin to ripple outwards towards others in the same manner.

On a micro level, my immediate local actions begin to have an impact around me; and they can even impact the whole world. It is like the ‘butterfly effect’ of ‘chaos theory’, conceived by American meteorologist Edward Lorenz (1917-2008), which was devised “to highlight the possibility that small causes may have momentous effects”.²¹ History is often changed by the small actions of individuals: American civil rights activist Rosa Parks’ refusal to obey a bus driver to break the power of segregation;²² and Mahatma Gandhi’s salt march to shatter the foundations of the British Empire.²³

Educator and education theorist Paulo Freire (1927-1997) was a Brazilian social activist who

worked on his own micro level with disadvantaged communities to increase their educational and democratic participation. In true John Dewey style, Freire’s transformational theories have played a crucial role in tackling inequalities, raising awareness and promoting the power needed to transform society.²⁴ Finally, on a macro level I would like to draw your attention to the wonderfully named WISE Qatar Foundation: an international multi-sector platform for creative thinking, debate and purposeful action for education stakeholders. WISE has become a global reference for new approaches to education, with a network of stakeholders from about 200 countries who share ideas and work together to find creative solutions to challenges facing education.²⁵

Wisdom, and the Teaching of Art, Craft and Design

By educating children in arguably the national curriculum’s most creative subject, teachers are nurturing well-being, confidence, intrapersonal skills, research methods and problem solving through enquiry-based learning in sketchbook work and the creative process, and deep satisfaction through the act of creation: arguably our highest human ability. Art, craft and design are hands-on, and lend themselves to an educational higher-value constructivist learning style. They offer some of the highest attributes of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (creativity, spontaneity, problem-solving, and feed into every cognition level described by Bloom (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation. All these things help children become well balanced and prepare them with work skills for the future.

²¹ Rouvas-Nicholis, Catherine; Nicholis, Gregoire, “Butterfly Effect”. *Scholarpedia* (2009): <http://www.scholarpedia.org/article/Butterfly_effect> [accessed 5 January 2021]
²² <<https://www.biographyonline.net/humanitarian/rosa-parks.html>> [accessed 8 October 2021]

²³ Pletcher, Kenneth, *Salt March* (26 June 2019): <<https://www.britannica.com/event/Salt-March>> [accessed 8 October 2021].
²⁴ Pound, *How Children Learn*, p. 79.
²⁵ <www.wise-qatar.org> [accessed 8 October 2021]

A super example of this creative subject's positive global input at a local level is UNESCO's Creative Cities Network, set up in 2004 to promote cooperation between cities that have "identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable

urban development".²⁶ At present there are 246 cities in the network working together "to place creativity and cultural industries at the heart of their development plans at the local level and cooperating actively at the international level".²⁷

Plastics in the Ocean: Wise Local Action for Global Impact

Whole school art days' work made over six days showing sea creatures and their environment being impacted by plastic waste, using card, paper, gum tape, wire, acrylic paint, oil pastels, marker pens, ribbons, plastic rubbish. Different age groups made different elements best suited to their ability, and everything was brought together at the end in one giant installation. The aim of the piece was to raise awareness of the issue of plastics in the ocean, and to change behaviour around the use of plastics.



²⁶ <<https://en.unesco.org/creative-cities/home> > [accessed 8 October 2021]

²⁷ Ibid.

A Message for Children About Art, Craft and Design

All artworks on this page are my own from childhood. Here I am below, aged 8.



Picasso, a very famous artist, said: “Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up.”

I think that children are the best artists in the world!

Some grown-up artists would love to be able to do what you do. You are so free and happy to ‘have a go’ and your art is imaginative, fresh and full of LIFE. Even if you are not going to end up being an artist, craft maker or designer in your future job (although it would be *great* if this happens), you can still enjoy art, craft and design as a brilliant hobby and as a way to keep mentally healthy.



Lots of grown-ups love creating things for themselves, their family, friends, home and community. It brings us all so much pleasure and sense of satisfaction. We can gain confidence and lots of skills when we do art, craft and design, and that, in turn, can give us confidence and skills to do other things. For example, being creative in art, craft and design can help you be creative in science. All the best scientists are creative because they can ‘think outside the box’. They come up with the best solutions to solving problems!

No artist, craft worker or designer creates without getting ideas from people, places or other things.

We just change the ideas a bit, mix them up with other ideas, and come up with something of our own. This means it is ‘original’. Keep your eyes peeled when you are out and about. Keep listening to your heart and thinking with your head. What you see and hear, what you think and what you feel are all good starting points for art, craft and design. And you can test some of your ideas in a sketchbook before you start making the final piece of work.



As we start to create work, we get used to what the materials and equipment we use can do. We learn new words like ‘graphite’, ‘composition’, ‘pattern’ or ‘symbol’. And as we make, we keep evaluating what we are doing,

making changes here and there if we think they are needed. Sometimes we can get frustrated if our art, craft and design do not go according to plan. Never mind! You might need to move on to something new – or just keep at it until things look and feel better. Lots of artists make mistakes. In fact, many artists say that their mistakes are the best things they do because mistakes make them think more creatively.



Ask for help from grown-ups and never give up. **Keep looking, keep caring and keep working. Believe me, something amazing will happen.**

Below: the work on the left is some of the art, craft and design I did when I was primary school age. The work on the right is the kind of work I do now. We all have to start somewhere and practice helps us to improve over time.



Drawings and Paintings



Book Illustrations



Clothes and Costumes

