Creative thinking
The role of creativity in our education system
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Something old, something new

Plans to “restore rigour in the key primary subjects” were set out by Education Secretary Michael Gove recently in his new draft overhaul of the Primary National Curriculum. The plans propose a back-to-basics curriculum, focusing on times-tables, spelling and grammar. Pupils will be expected to have learned their times-tables up to 12 by the age of nine, to multiply and divide fractions by the age of 11 and to start learning and reciting poetry from five years old. The coalition Government has made much of giving schools more autonomy in how and what they teach. Some have welcomed the renewed focus on the traditional “three Rs” as good preparation for secondary school. However, some union leaders fear that this heavily prescribed curriculum will leave little room for teachers to adapt learning to their individual pupils’ needs and to make lessons exciting for them.

This supplement looks at how far a very traditional approach can be reconciled with what we now know about the benefits of a creative education, which promotes the ability to question, make connections, innovate, problem-solve, communicate, collaborate and to reflect critically. Can we have both rigour and creativity? Can we avoid throwing the baby out with the bathwater? ●

This supplement, and other policy reports, can be downloaded from the NS website at newstatesman.com/supplements

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CHANGING SOCIETY

Matching demand

By Stephen Twigg and Dan Jarvis

A child that begins primary school this year will not finish their working life until around 2075. It is hard to imagine what society will be like then: the only certainty during his or her life will be change.

Two skills that are essential to be able to succeed in an uncertain world are creativity and resilience. Labour introduced reforms to give more freedoms to schools, giving heads and teachers the space to foster creativity and resilience. While many schools have taken advantage of this, at a system-wide level schools, colleges and universities can be doing more to promote these skills, and the Government should be encouraging this, not stifling it.

One of the challenges is that our education system was founded on an Enlightenment belief that a core of so-called "academic" subjects are somehow superior to practical, vocational or creative skills.

This conceptual hierarchy has been codified in the Government’s “EBac” – the English baccalaureate. While literacy and numeracy are rightly critical bedrocks, it places no value on subjects such as music, religious education, engineering, design and technology, and art, showing that the Government does not understand their social or economic value in today’s world. This may have dire consequences for Britain’s economic future if it is not addressed.

The technological advances of today’s...
digital and creative industries require Britain’s education system to be at the cutting edge. What is creativity? The educationalist Ken Robinson has argued that one element of creativity is “divergent thinking” – the ability to make the associations and lateral connections between ideas.

About ten years ago, George Land and Beth Jarman published their research on divergent thinking. They gave a series of tests to 1,600 three to five year-olds. If they achieved above a particular score they would be considered “geniuses” in divergent thinking. An amazing 98 per cent scored at the genius level or higher for divergent thinking. They gave the same tests to the same children five years later at the ages of eight to ten. Then only 32 per cent scored at the genius level. At the ages of 14 to 15 and the result was 10 per cent. They gave the same test to over 200,000 adults and the figure was 2 per cent.

It is extraordinary that, at the age of four, we have the ability to “think outside the box”, in a way that decreases as we go through the education system. Perhaps it’s not surprising. Too much of our education system teaches children not to take risks, and that there is only one answer (it’s at the back of the book – no peeking!).

Many schools and teachers already promote creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship. Take, for example, Paddington Academy in central London. Through its focus on the importance of developing speaking skills, to its excellent entrepreneurial programme, innovation and creativity are being harnessed. However, we need to understand how to encourage the entire system to follow the lead of Paddington and other schools that are leading on this agenda.

If we are to break down the barriers that stop some bright young people succeeding, then being articulate and confident is critical. Employers’ organisations such as the CBI have long argued for speaking, communication and presentation skills to be given a higher priority. Labour is looking at how we could do things differently if we were in government.

As part of our policy review, we are looking at how we can promote a stronger focus on spoken skills and creativity in a revised national curriculum, as well as trying to ensure that we increasingly build the link between skills and industry so that our education system matches demand.

As any business leader will tell you, most great learning and most great ideas happen in groups. Collaboration is critical to a successful and confident education system. This involves the collaboration of pupils – and yet our assessment system is almost entirely predicated on testing individuals; it involves the collaboration of schools and teachers – and yet the Government is encouraging a greater fragmentation and atomisation of our school system; and it involves the collaboration of ideas – and yet our curriculum and pedagogy is too often based on a strict delineation of subjects and lessons.

Let’s take just one of these – the collaboration of ideas. Steve Jobs understood its importance and turned it into a multi-billion dollar business model. Instead of simply hiring the best coders and programmers for his IT business, he hired artists and designers to make his products appeal to the human instincts of consumers. His own background in calligraphy gave him an unusual perspective, which helped transform the world of technology.

Creativity isn’t about a certain type of subject such as art or music or design, it’s about a way of thinking. As Jobs put it, “Creativity is just connecting things”. It’s not just about improving thinking though, creativity can help by channelling energies into productive outcomes, improving attainment even in ‘non-creative’ subjects.

An Ofsted report from 2006 found that creativity could help improve how pupils behaved. Pupils who had worked with creative people, such as writers and fashion designers, were more punctual, better behaved and worked better. It said pupils developed skills such as improvisation, risk-taking, resilience and collaboration.

Labour’s academies programme, which provided greater freedom for schools to innovate, and develop partnerships with businesses, including creative businesses, helped to raise standards in some of the toughest and disadvantaged neighbourhoods across the country.

Two examples embody Labour’s commitment to promoting creativity. In Harmony is a music scheme for disadvantaged youngsters, inspired by ‘El Sistema’ from Venezuela, and championed by the then education minister, Andrew Adonis. With projects in Liverpool, Lambeth and Norwich it provides a chance for children to take part in symphony orchestras. The Henley Review of Music Education reported last year that “there is no doubt that they have delivered life-changing experiences”.

Creative Partnerships was a flagship programme developed by the Labour Government to bring creative workers such as artists, architects and scientists into schools to work with teachers to inspire young people and help them learn. The programme worked with over 1 million children and, apart from the cultural and creative benefits, it was expected to generate nearly £4bn for the UK economy – the equivalent of £15.30 for every £1 of investment. Bizarrely, funding for Creative Partnerships has been massively cut by the current Government.

Sadly, the Government’s approach is stuck in the 1950s. The O-level and CSE system was designed over half a century ago, when our economy needed far more unskilled jobs and where people were expected to “know their place” in a divided education system. We need to encourage entrepreneurship and creativity in our schools, to keep up with rapid changes in the labour market, not aspire to a rose-tinted view of history.

Celebrating and encouraging creativity is also a way to play to our strengths as a nation. In the last ten years, the creative economy was the second fastest-growing economy in the UK behind the financial sector, generating significant numbers of jobs and providing huge earnings to the economy through exports and revenue.

Yes, employers and parents want young people to have a firm grasp of the basics – this is crucial, but it’s not enough by itself. Young people also need to be encouraged to think critically, in a way that enables them to solve problems and develop rewarding lives and careers.

Collaboration is the key to creating the Jobs of the future. Stephen Twigg MP is Labour’s Shadow Education Secretary and Dan Jarvis MP is Labour’s Shadow Culture Minister.
Building creativity into our future

Participants talk about the mixture of strategies, techniques and technologies that can help to prepare our young people for the jobs of tomorrow

Jonathan Derbyshire It is a propitious time for a discussion on creativity and education – last week, the Secretary of State for Education Michael Gove reiterated his commitment to traditional models of pedagogy, to the “Three Rs” and to what the government calls “uniform learning”. It’s unclear what room, if any, Mr Gove’s model leaves for creativity in the classroom. To open the discussion, I’d like to invite Stephen Twigg, Shadow Secretary of State for Education, to address that issue.

Stephen Twigg In the light of the overhaul of the primary curriculum that was announced last week, I would like to start by making five points briefly. First, ten years ago, we published the primary schools strategy Excellence and Enjoyment. The aim of this document was to reaffirm literacy and numeracy but also to celebrate the broader curriculum; to ensure that children had a rich and exciting experience at primary school, and that they learned a wide range of things in a variety of different ways. So I am deeply concerned that what has been published in the last two weeks is a retrograde step. We all learn in different ways and this must be reflected in the curriculum. I see no reason why we cannot have rigour and creativity; in fact they should go hand in hand.

Second, while there is a lot of government rhetoric about reducing the amount of government interference in what goes on schools, the new document seems to be pointing very much in the opposite direction of that.

Third, the curriculum needs to include personalised learning, where children’s education is built around their interests, needs and attributes.

Fourth, our children’s education needs to contain a combination of building core knowledge and building skills, and I think we need to find the correct mix between core knowledge and skills. There should be more focus on skills, resilience, communication and arts. I was at the recent CBI event about its survey on education and skills. The survey showed that employers require more presentation skills and “soft skills”. This is what we need for our future economy. There is no contradiction...
between creativity and rigour.

Finally, schools are increasingly treated as islands but they shouldn’t be isolated from their communities. Schools need to collaborate both with each other and in other partnerships if they are to offer their students the best start in life.

Dan Jarvis The timing of this round table event is immaculate. I am something of a latecomer to this particular party but, as a parent of primary school-aged children, I have become seized by the value that young people get from creative and cultural experiences, both in and out of schools, for several reasons. There is an intrinsic benefit in being involved in creative opportunities because they provide you with transferable disciplines. For example, even singing in a choir or playing a musical instrument in a group gives you team-work skills, confidence and character development that you can take with you.

There is a statistic which I am very fond of using, which is that, of my children’s contemporaries – who are aged between seven and nine – 60 per cent of the jobs that they will go on to do haven’t even been invented yet. What these children need is access to opportunities that will prepare them for that.

Jonathan Derbyshire Thanks both of you for starting the debate. Stephen Twigg expressed worry about government policy and you have both argued to defend creativity in a number of ways because it has both an intrinsic value and an economic value. We’re preparing children for an uncertain future. We need to be wary about policy and a false dichotomy between core knowledge and skills, and we cannot choose between rigour and creativity.

John Dunford There is a cultural aspect of the rigour versus creativity argument. Since 1988, there has been a top-down national curriculum system. It has created a different culture and it is this system that is the one that all people under the age of 45 have operated under. That includes the vast majority of the teaching staff in this country – anyone under the age of 45 has spent their whole career with a top-down curriculum – and they are the decision-makers in the system now. Frankly, the biggest thing headteachers need to do is to create a culture change. People are locked into looking up but they need to stop looking up and start looking out.

Ian Fordham There is another important group of decision-makers in this and that is school governors. As a governor at my son’s special school, I think that they can be key. Governors can bring in creativity and start to shift the balance of the decision-makers. Creativity isn’t command and control.

Another point I’d like to make is about “best practice”. There is a tyranny of best practice and it tends to mean that, once something has become regarded as “best practice”, it becomes constricting and is difficult to break away from. We need to share creative practices that work.

I agreed with what John [Dunford] said about culture change and I think that school governors are key to that change.

Stephen Crowne I think we need to take a more international view. The creative agenda is a very strong movement worldwide and it’s about the whole approach to education. There is a huge amount of ideas among curriculum pedagogy. We need a more confident, creative, innovative, expressive set of young people in the interest of economic growth and development. They are the drivers of future economies. We need more professional sharing.

Simon Bartley We need a vision for the UK. Building on the international perspective, all countries around the world have a different approach to how they teach their teachers but many teachers simply follow the path from school to sixth-form college, to higher education and straight back into school again to teach. Where is the creativity being inculcated into their lives? We should expect teachers to work in industry, commerce or charity and get their hands dirty before they start to teach. We have to be able to change the attitude in schools.

The rest of the world has a wider understanding. Creativity is not just an arts subject; there is creativity all over the place, in engineering for example. Don’t fall into the trap of thinking that education only happens in schools; it’s in colleges and workplaces too. Everything in work, and in play, has a creative element to it.

Creativity in management is just as important as creativity in art. We need to get at it at all levels. We must think of creativity not as a subject but an entrepreneurship skill.

Jonathan Derbyshire We should try to define creativity.

Gareth Mills Again on the international dimension, we need evidence to inform practice and we need to be careful about our evidence. There’s been a lot of talk about the bypassing of evidence in these new primary curriculum reforms.

Three-quarters of Gove’s panel on the reforms are worried about the way that evidence has been used or misused. A curriculum diet, if rich, includes the arts. They can have a positive impact.

It is important that children learn how to learn. Learning to learn is an important part of the curriculum. We need to develop knowledge, skills and an attitude to learning.

The curriculum that was published last week was more like pieces of a puzzle. What we need is a framework for learning, not a prescription. Aims for education are lacking.

Jonathan Derbyshire So do we agree that a framework was missing from what was published last week?
**ROUND TABLE**

**Simon Bartley** Doesn’t a framework have to come from some sort of vision for the UK? We need a vision or it is extremely difficult to put the right thing in perspective. If we were a business, as a country, we would have a vision. We need to know were these aspects of education should be taking us.

**Gareth Mills** I think there are three areas where we need to articulate aims: we need to focus on aims for individuals, aims for society and aims for the economy.

**Stephen Twigg** Yes, Gareth is right. I feel I should put my hand up and admit that we didn’t do enough to make the curriculum less prescriptive in the Labour government. We definitely need a national curriculum but it does need to be dramatically less prescriptive.

**Paul Collard** On the issue of definitions, we lack a language of creativity which works for schools, teachers and pupils. We can prove that bringing creativity into lessons works by measuring behaviour and attendance but we have to create a language in order it be able to describe its progress. The literature is staggeringly dense and incomprehensible. But, in an attempt to make things clearer, five habits of good learners have been identified: pupils should be imaginative, disciplined, persistent or resilient, inquisitive and collaborative. So we have been able to give the means by which they can assess children by saying, for example, “Observe how curious and inquisitive your kids are”.

However, once teachers have that language, it turns out they still cannot really identify creativity because they don’t have time. They always come back saying the day is structured too rigidly to allow pupils the time to be curious. Consequently, by the time children are 14 or 15, they have been taught not to be curious.

So, we do have the language to measure how creative we are being but we need to train teachers to help them use it. Teachers say “I don’t want another book that I just don’t understand”. So what we need to provide is help for them in the classroom – not just hand them a document that they cannot put into practice. And we need more time in the curriculum for children to ask questions.

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**“By the time children are 14 or 15, they have been taught not to be curious”**

*Paul Collard*

**John D’Abbro** I have been a practising headteacher and what I know is that, at the core of learning, there is a “learning relationship” and that relationship is absolutely key.

In order to learn we have to be able to take risks. Teachers have to be able to take risks because pupils learn not to become creative if they’re frightened of taking risks. The lack of willingness to do this comes from league tables and Ofsted judgements, which make schools shy away from being creative or reaching out and collaborating.

The risk culture has been knocked out of the system because of the necessity for schools to get results.

We should let schools collaborate and think about the quality of their relationships. We have got to start being honest and recognise that work life as we have known it will not continue in the same way in the future.

The people who are children today will have more leisure time when they grow up. They need to consider how they are going to structure their time. Otherwise, we are likely to see some more of the types of behaviour that were in evidence during the riots last summer. Pupils will need to be “problem finders” not just problem-solvers, and consider “how people are”.

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**Dan Jarvis** In my constituency of Barnsley we have had the Building Schools for the Future programme, so some great schools have been built – but they’re just a shell, just a building. Leadership is the most important thing.

Sometimes there is a “teach to the test” mentality, where it is just results that matter.

I don’t often talk about my career in the army but, in my 15 years there, I did not experience any evidence of “teaching to the test”. If you are learning how to use a machine gun, you need to actually know how to use one and why. When teaching someone how to do that, you need to engender an understanding of why they need to learn to use it. It is more about the importance of results without a focus on tests.

We need to teach teachers how to assess and examine in this way.

**Stephen Crowne** Can we gain leverage on creativity by changing assessment? I have been working on high-level problem-solving and how we could use this approach to assess in the classroom. It is what we call formative assessment that we need more of, rather than summative assessment, which is tests.

**Jonathan Derbyshire** There is a theme of the challenge of preparing students for the future.

**Noah Samuels** I think that fundamental aspects of the jobs of the future will be the same but there will be technical aspects that will be different. Skills are enduring: visual jobs and jobs that involve engineering or coding persevere – the job is similar.

Companies are constantly trying to find a balance between rigour and creativity. Google balances hitting targets with the need to be creative and develop evolving products. People have to find time to be creative and find whole new ways to interact while still hitting targets. It’s complicated but we have to find the balance.

**Stephen Twigg** What do you think is the difference between the English system and systems in Germany or France. How are we doing compared to the rest of Europe?

**Noah Samuels** What we notice at Google is the availability of talent when we are
Connor: “Computer science graduate numbers are down about 20 per cent. Business people are still good – there are lots of good Oxbridge graduates. We don’t struggle to fill the roles but there aren’t enough tech-savvy people with good digital skills.”

Stephen Crowne: “We need people with the confidence to put up ideas when nine out of ten of the ideas they put up won’t go anywhere. It’s less about content, more about attitude.”

John Dunford: “It’s about both. We can’t be creative without technical knowledge and creative skills. For cross-product solutions we need what I call “warp and weft” in the curriculum. Children need to develop both core knowledge and skills, and they can develop them at the same time. I’ve been saying to headteachers that they need to look at that warp and weft of developing skills through content. Teachers can have attention on knowledge and, at the same time, develop those skills. We need to develop a clear framework of what a well-educated 11 year old needs to be able to do and then develop the warp and weft to do it.”

Tom Kenyon: “We separate the arts and the sciences but the really interesting stuff happens when disciplines collide.”

Joe Hallgarten: “I’d like to come in and strike a chord of disagreement – there’s been rather a lot of agreeing going on! I think that the new framework that has been produced is OK, so long as there is space in it for schools to develop their own curriculum. We’ve heard much from government on the rhetoric of “freedom”. I actually think it is OK if schools can inject other stuff, so that about half children’s time should be spent on things other than the national curriculum; and there should be accountability for individual skills. On the statistic about 60 per cent of the jobs that current pupils will go on to do not having even been invented yet: I’d like to point out that it’s not a statistic, it’s a prediction with no empirical base. There has been “diversification” on creativity; it’s not in decline but there is something of a postcode lottery around young people’s attitude to creativity. Schools’ attitude is OK but the parental engagement is not there. We need to get parents on board to increase demand for creativity.”

Stephen Twigg: “Yes it is fundamental for parents to be on board. The risk is that using creativity is seen as a softening of approach. But we do see primary schools in challenging neighbourhoods doing really well by doing their own thing in terms of phonics and “reading recovery”.”

John Dunford: “The point about parents is important. What do parents want? If you ask them, it isn’t just about exam results, they want something much broader. However, that’s not so much what you get when you ask parent governors. Schools that are doing well are able to be confident, whereas schools that are struggling a bit tend to be more...”
confident and constrained schools is the way forward.

Gareth Mills We need a paradigm shift to see headteachers as the “architects” of learning experiences. If the job was viewed like this you might design a broader curriculum and look at bringing in people from industry. Children should have an entitlement to experiences, such as science experiments, not a list of stuff to check off.

On assessment, what we do is rather like the tail wagging the dog. We only have one assessment tool – standardised tests. And the answer won’t come from a top-down approach – teachers’ engagement is key. The evidence says that children who are involved in their assessment do better.

Paul Collard On the “jobs of the future” discussion, I have some data from a study done by Levy and Murnane, looking at the percentage change of job skills between 1960 and 2002. The skills have been split into various types. The skills that are all decreasing as a proportion of jobs are: manual skills whether they are “routine” or “not routine”; manufacturing skills and routine cognitive skills; whereas the skills that are increasing in proportion are non-routine analytical skills and non-routine interactive skills.

The “Govian” reform is focused on routine cognitive capacities, despite their declining importance.

Simon Bartley We have to be careful about statistics. We have fewer people mending roads now because we don’t value the jobs, and now we have more potholes. We mustn’t throw out the baby with the bathwater.

We’ve got to be smarter at some of the things that we do. School trips can be creative experiences but the way we do it “compartmentalises” the experiences. We need to talk in an engineering sense about the whole day out. We should get on the coach and talk about how the road that we’re travelling on was made, where it goes to, and use an experiential way of learning things. Creativity is all around us.

Primarily, we need young people to go through this system to get a job.

Jonathan Derbyshire Do we need to go back to the definition of creativity?

Ian Fordham At the moment we have “planet business” and “planet education”. We have to try to move away from that cycle and connect work with skills and further education.

We need to scale up policies and not just make yet another bolt-on initiative. For example, I heard of a project intended to help children read aloud by getting them to read to a dog – the dog is non-judgemental about their reading and it is supposed to give the children confidence. We don’t need another bolt-on initiative.

Roger Walshe Education at the British Library focuses solely on skills: critical thinking, literacy, progression and research-based learning. The aim of this is happy, well-balanced, informed citizens, who should be able to function, understand, problem-solve and have the flexibility required to be a lifelong learner. We mustn’t forget that learning also happens outside of school.

John D’Abbro We need to embrace technology. We just don’t accept it in school – we make kids hand in their phones the moment they get in to school, instead of getting them to make use of them in school.

Also, why do we have a three-term year? It makes no sense to have a six-week break in the summer when kids forget everything. Why not break it up into four terms? Kids need to be able to access learning as and when it suits them, and we need to trust kids to do that. Why are we still so constrained as adults?

Dan Jarvis Stephen Crowne makes a good point about collaborative problem-solving. At the University of Sheffield they are giving cash prizes for collaborative problem-solving work.

On school trips, I think they give opportunities that can be life-changing; many of these children would not have been able to have such experiences without them. We shouldn’t be complacent about these experiences being life-changing.

Simon Bartley Visits to somewhere such as the Olympic site can be creatively stimulating for all sorts of reasons.

John D’Abbro Taking kids on a school trip to Spain, for example, has benefits culturally, benefits for their language development and for their creativity.

We have to maximise the opportunities for creativity to get the most out of the whole trip We’re always looking for a quick fix but there isn’t one. We need to take this out of the political arena and be able to play without the fear of getting it wrong.

Paul Collard Going back to the definitions of creativity, when we try to get creativity into schools it often goes into the arts. However, the definition needs to be more diverse. Lots of activity in the arts isn’t creative, for example, much of the detail of learning a musical instrument is technical engineering stuff, without much creativity involved.

Kids arrive at school with their heads bursting with knowledge, they need to know what to do with it. What Gove’s reforms are doing is cramming in even more knowledge.

Why can’t school be a place where how to learn can be measured? We should get more accreditation for what we already know but, at the moment, there is no way to structure this.

Ian Fordham I worry about the knowledge gaps. Some things must be known but we need value, not just knowledge. We need a framework of accountability that includes the richness of the issues – progress, destination and the way that we assess learning. That needs to be part of individual and summative analysis.

Stephen Twigg We need both. We have to develop a way of assessing skills.
ROUND TABLE

Stephen Crowne I think there is a risk of reduction. So much about behaviour, values and leadership is really the territory of Ofsted and not the territory of metrics. We need a clearer statement about the attitudes and behaviours that we want to encourage. A government statement of values might be the way forward.

John D’Abbro We should ask kids whether they are happy. Their relationships with teachers are the core experience and, if the kids are unhappy, it needs to change.

Paul Collard There is an issue about the objective assessment of vocational learning, experiences and so on. Can we perhaps get technology to capture this stuff?

Ian Fordham How do you capture learning that happens outside of school hours? How do you capture that non-formal learning? The Mozilla Open Badges project is looking at different ways of accrediting learning, using a different approach.

Joe Hallgarten We have been working with ASDAN on the RSA Opening Minds Award, which presents a series of challenges around the five Open Minds competences.

Creativity is not just about the arts, although it can happen through the arts. Exploring problems is good preparation for work.

Where is arts provision going – especially in Key Stage 4? If we’re not careful we’ll be heading for a ten-year decline in arts provision. It’s partly to do with the English baccalaureate and partly to do with pressure from Russell Group universities.

Roger Walshe On assessment, issues on how to assess project work have been completely sidelined. And there has been a complete U-turn on project work in the new curriculum.

John Dunford Accountability drives behaviour. Assessment by average point score is better than assessment relying on whether or not you get five GCSEs at grades A–C. Intelligent accountability can help you deliver the education system that you want.

At Whole Education, with the Association for School and College

“...value does not get lost. And we need to remember the social justice argument that education has the ability to lead us out of poverty.

The challenge for policy-makers is to accept that we need a different baccalaureate – the response to the baccalaureate – the response to the baccalaureate that we have now has been a big negative.

The silos that we see in education are not just in schools – they’re in the business world too. We need to bring more entrepreneurship into the education system – we’re not good at that. Creativity is not just about the arts and design and technology and so on.

Stephen Crowne I’m more sceptical. It think it’s more about capturing behaviour when it occurs and rewarding it at the time. Employers do use group work when they’re interviewing candidates, to see how they work in a team.

PC Why don’t we make progress? Why

is it not progressing? The consumer – the child – is not perceived as the client in the education system; the voter is.

Only 22 per cent of households have children but educational success is key to the electorate. We need to be able to demonstrate to the electorate that education is progressing.

Stephen Twigg It is interesting that, if you ask people about how good they think schools are generally, their response tends to be somewhat mixed. But if you ask people about their own particular school, then their opinion is usually that it is good.

Simon Bartley Employers are also consumers of education.

Gareth Mills I think that, on accreditation, we need to look at a balanced scorecard approach if we are going to shift people’s energies.

Jonathan Derbyshire It’s time to wrap up now, so let’s go to Stephen Twigg and Dan Jarvis for some closing comments.

Stephen Twigg I think the issues we have been discussing are long-standing issues rather than new ones. We need to accept that Labour didn’t solve them – I accept that criticism. We need to ensure that the argument for creativity having an intrinsic value doesn’t get lost. And we need to remember the social justice argument that education has the ability to lead us out of poverty.

The challenge for policy-makers is to accept that we need a different sort of baccalaureate – the response to the baccalaureate that we have now has been a big negative.

The silos that we see in education are not just in schools – they’re in the business world too. We need to bring more entrepreneurship into the education system – we’re not good at that. Creativity is not just about the arts and design and technology and so on.

Dan Jarvis I’d just like to thank everyone coming and for making this such an intelligent, useful and constructive debate.

Jonathan Derbyshire Yes, thank you all for making the time to take part in what has been a very stimulating discussion.
FACTS AND FIGURES

Young people who attended the Creative Partnerships activities made, on average, the equivalent of 2.5 grades better progress in GCSE examinations.

Creative Partnerships worked with over 1m children and over 90,000 teachers in more than 8,000 projects in England from 2002-2011.

Schools that have worked with Creative Partnerships show a greater increase in pass rate than those who have not in the same local authorities: 16.6% compared to 14%.

An independent survey of Head teachers found that as a result of Creative Partnerships:

- 92% have seen an improvement in pupils' confidence
- 87% have seen an improvement in pupils' motivation
- 94% have seen an improvement in teaching skills
- 79% have seen an improvement in attainment
A good education is highly structured, delivers measurable improvements in pupil learning and behaviour, and helps pupils acquire skills and manage knowledge. A creative education, such as the approach modelled by Creative Partnerships, achieves all these and more, as is well evidenced in the recent report, The Impact of Creative Partnerships on the Well-Being of Children and Young People by Ros McLellan, Maurice Galton, Susan Steward and Charlotte Page.

A creative education is designed to generate curious, ambitious, reflective, autonomous adults, intrinsically motivated, self-managing and capable, not only of imagining a better future, but of delivering it. In the world into which young people today will emerge, this is vital. The world no longer awaits job seekers. It demands job creators, young people capable of inventing their own futures, changing the nature of their employment several times in their lives, and forever developing new skills. Without this flexibility of mind, adaptability to new circumstances and passion for continuing to learn, their future is bleak.

A creative education ensures activities in school in which pupils are involved develop their competence (so they feel effective) their autonomy (so they understand themselves to be the source of their own behaviour) and their relatedness (through which they feel connected to other individuals and their community). The dominant mode of teaching and learning in English schools which the Secretary of State for Education Michael Gove is determined to reinforce, is mainly concerned with the transmission of knowledge and technical skills from adults, who possess them, to children and young people, who don’t. When transmission is allowed to become the exclusive pedagogical practice, you get a deficit model of education, in which the pupil’s lack of knowledge and skills is constantly reinforced, which has been shown to erode confidence and self-belief. It also undermines pupils’ sense of autonomy because they come to experience their behaviour as being externally directed and not driven by personal interest, curiosity or enjoyment. Curiosity, interest and enjoyment are suppressed until they become absent. By the time they leave secondary school, they have not developed the self-regulation, intrinsic motivation, independence and confidence to succeed or become fulfilled. Many young people develop these attributes elsewhere in their lives, and as they get older they bring them to bear increasingly on their learning but many young people do not, particularly those from more disadvantaged backgrounds. This is highly relevant to the current debate about university education.

Universities complain that they have difficulty in attracting and retaining students from more disadvantaged backgrounds. This is because A-levels are a poor predictor of success at university. Gove responds by asking universities to redesign the A-level curriculum, but the failure of young people to progress at university is because they failed to develop attributes such as self-regulation, intrinsic motivation, independence and confidence. We don’t need redesigned A-levels, we need redesigned education.

A creative education reduces the dominance of transmission in education so that, while still achieving good academic results, it produces resilient, disciplined, self-starting young people. This approach requires teachers to become partners in young people’s creative journeys, to be the co-creators of their learning. It also requires those working with young people to allow young people to make meaningful choices in determining the nature and shape of the projects they pursue. It recognises that success for young people will come from the boldness of the activities they undertake, combined with high expectation, and through the experience of success that builds their confidence and sense of agency.

However, the default pedagogy in many schools is one of transmission.

CREATIVITY IN PRACTICE

Getting teachers out of their comfort zone isn’t easy but it improves results

Take a risk

Paul Collard

The world no longer awaits job seekers. It demands job creators
Once this has become the dominant practice in the classroom, teachers are quick to devise strategies which guide the pupils to the correct answer. ‘Guided discussions’ impacts pupils negatively in two ways. Less able students become highly dependent on the teacher to provide the clues to the answers, and so are unable to replicate the process without the structure the teacher has created. More able students are demotivated as there is little satisfaction in getting the right answer.

In interviews with pupils in The Impact of Creative Partnerships on the Well-Being of Children and Young People, pupils are able to articulate their dislike of this style of teaching clearly, as shown in this interview with top-set Year 8 pupils:

Pupil 1: I hate science.
Interviewer: Why do you hate science?
Pupil 2: ...It’s cos we write a lot, like...
Pupil 1: Yeah that’s all we do. Just copy off the board and do worksheets.
Pupil 2: Like six thousand slides that we just copy.
Pupil 1: And we haven’t done a practical in a whole term.
Pupil 2: And we have a test on it every week.
Pupil 1: All we’re doing is copying every book – I know for a fact that nobody would go back into the book and read it.

In other words the approach taken by the teacher, while it might guide the pupil to the correct answer and some success in passing tests, suppresses pupil interest, curiosity and autonomy. Children are very aware of this:

Interviewer: What do you want teachers to do?
Pupil 1: I just want to get on with my work. I want to do it myself. If the teachers are always helping us it’s not our work. We need to learn.
Interviewer: So you like doing it on your own, even if you make mistakes. Is that OK?
Pupil 1: Yeah. Because why do we come to school if teachers are going to help us? We’ve come to school to learn, not have people helping us learn.

The fact that the “guided” approach leads to decreased pupil motivation is now widely accepted outside the ministerial team at the Department of Education. Recently, Sir Michael Barber, acknowledged that this problem was a key factor in problems that arose in schools after a highly transmissive approach to literacy and numeracy teaching was introduced by the British government between 2000 and 2010. He admitted in an interview in 2011, that this had led to reduced motivation and increased behavioural problems.

A creative education takes a different approach. It provides an education which: “affords choice, provides opportunities for self-direction, provides feedback which is informing (helps pupils self-regulate) rather than corrective (demonstrates the right answer), enhances intrinsic motivation and promote feelings of autonomy and self-efficacy.”

This approach is modelled by creative professionals that Creative Partnerships bring into the classroom:

Interviewer: Is [naming an artist] the same as a teacher?
Pupils: (in chorus) No.
Interviewer: In what ways is she different?
Pupil: She lets you take the big decisions.
Interviewer: How do you feel about that?
Pupil: It’s scary at first in case things go wrong (nods of agreement from other pupils)
Interviewer: But if it comes out right in the end?
Pupil: Then it’s magic. You feel proud and warm inside (nods of agreement).

So, in a creative education, pupils are encouraged to become risk-taking, autonomous learners who exercise considerable choice, not only on the content, but on their working methods and the form of their final presentations. Motivation is then largely intrinsic and the outcomes have been largely as predicted by educational theory. What McLellan et al found was: “Improved self-confidence, greater capacity for self-regulation, a strong feeling of belonging to a community and increasing evidence of resilience (demonstrated by pupils’ ability to cope with setbacks).”

But, for Creative Partnerships to have a lasting impact on a school, the ways of working modelled by creative practitioners need to be adopted by teachers. Initially this requires teachers to focus more on processes than on outcomes – on the ways the school is organised and the ways that teachers teach. Teachers in all Creative Partnerships schools have reported that initially they find this change of focus extremely difficult. It also requires more time to be devoted to planning and reflection, often in circumstances where teachers feel that they are short of time. However, the effort is worth it as the following teacher attested.

“If you’d said to me two and a half years ago that the staff at this school could take a whole week and devise a series of activities and deliver them to students, I would have thought you were absolutely mad. Even when we tried to do single days, everything was a big ask. It was the idea of something different, something new, taking a risk, stepping out of your comfort zone, the workload involved, according to the different people, there was always a strand of people that relished anything new and different and exciting and challenging and fun, but there weren’t enough of them. And what this has enabled us to do is to draw everyone in.”

In its 2010 inspection of Creative Partnerships, Ofsted pointed out: “...there is not a conflict between the national curriculum, national standards in core subjects and creative approaches to learning. In the schools which were visited for this survey, careful planning had ensured that the prescribed curriculum content for each subject was covered within a broad and flexible framework and key skills were developed. These examples were accompanied by better than average achievement and standards or a marked upward trend.”

So, the creative approach to delivering the core curriculum resulted in better than average academic results. It also lays the foundations for success beyond school.

So why is Michael Gove, trying to turn back the clock to reinforce teaching practices which are far less successful?

Paul Collard is chief executive of CCE