

P.p1 educational structure of 11-16 year olds

[Art & Culture](#), [Dance](#)



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s2 {font: 7. 0px ' Helvetica Neue'; font-kerning: none}The reasoning behind this essay is to investigate whether claims that the current educational structure of 11-16 year olds is tailored to a world that doesn't exist anymore and what effect that is having on the children of today. I will look at both sides of the argument and weigh up the cases stated by both. Also I will bring my own experiences into play as I had only just left school in 2004 when a lot of these questionings began to garner wider interest. How have these experiences shaped my own life path?" Creativity in education is as important as literacy and it should be treated as such.

"" We don't grow into creativity, we grow out of it, or rather, we are educated out of it"-Sir Ken Robinson, Ted Talks, Feb 2006, California These quotes are taken from a Ted Talk given by Sir Ted Robinson in 2006. Sir Ken is a man who has been immersed in education for a long time, he was a professor of arts at Warwick University for 12 years and also lead a national commission into creativity in education in 1999 and in 2003 he was knighted for his services to the arts. The fact that this was being publicly raised by someone of his esteem over 10 years ago, and researched and analysed over 17 years ago, hints at the problems there are within education. The question now is does the education system really stifle creativity? In my experience, this is a real problem. Although I was naturally good in most subjects at school I used to " Coast" as was stated by several of my teachers

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and do just above the base requirements to get good grades. In all honesty I didn't revise for one GCSE and my grades ranged from A-C with only one dropping below to a D. This doesn't mean I didn't struggle.

When I was a child everything I did for fun was based on my senses and perceptions rather than thinking. I drew, I painted, I sculpted new parts for my toys out of blue tac, I built dens, Art Attack was my favourite program, I loved music, I loved sports. I didn't read. I REALLY didn't read. I could but It didn't stimulate me at all.

I'd rather listen to someone else read and doodle little images of what was going on as my English teacher would tell you. I was constantly told to enjoy art and football in my own time and focus on my "academic" subjects if I wanted a real job. I went to college not having a clue who I was and ended up with an absolute mish mash of A-levels to study; Biology, P.

E., Graphics, Music Technology. Long story short I dropped out in my second year and went into full time employment in a job I didn't really like but the money was good. Fast forward 11 years, I'm 29 and I am in my final year of a BA in graphic design after spending that 11 years living weekend to weekend in a job I grew to loathe.

I've come full circle to something I was told to ignore as "no one ever makes it", "its not a realistic job prospect". You tell me there's not a problem.

Creative Minds
The main crux of the argument on the for side is that we are all born creative. As children we are uninhibited, innocent and unafraid of taking risks.

The freedom that allows means that our capacity for originality and innovation is unbound. During Sir Ken Robinson's Ted talk he speaks of how our current education system was shaped by industrialism between 1800 and 1900 and was geared towards everybody getting jobs in that environment. The current environment is completely different. He states that in this day and age, we are educating children that will retire in 2065 in the same way.

How can this be setting them up in the best possible way to cope with societal change when we don't even know how our world is going to change month to month in the current climate. The problems facing the world today are not a revolution like industrialism, they are almost a devolution. Steps backwards in international relations, healthcare, living space, resources, global warming, the list is endless. New problems require a new mindset, we need the raw creativity we are all born with to flourish if we are going to find solutions to these problems.

Being creative doesn't just affect the arts, it affects our whole method of thinking and problem solving. Being creatively free means that you are open to making mistakes, you are open to that child like naivety to unshackle your mind and allow it to explore all avenues without judgement or fear of ridicule. This is the basis of Sir Ken's talk.

There needs to be a complete structural rethink within academia to nurture the talents of all and not just cherry pick the few that flourish in the current set up. Another dimension of the for argument is almost a mini debate within itself, can creativity be taught? A lot of creatives will tell you its a gift that

can be honed but in the end you're either creative or you are not. This view is beginning to become outdated, the consensus now is that everybody is creative, its just that few are allowed to develop that talent due to the way they are educated/raised etc. They are steered away from it to suit more traditional jobs, " maths and science are key" they say, but how much further could maths and science be pushed if we incorporated creativity into all of the academic subjects? New discoveries cannot be made repeating processes that have been tried and tested for decades, so why not? In an article within Creative Review entitled " Can Creativity be Learned?" several leading creatives from the commercial world discuss the issue.

" A friend said to me a very long, long time ago ' Music is the greatest of all art forms', and I went ' Um, I'm not sure- I think life is the greatest of all art forms.'" - Sir John Hegarty, Founder, BBH and The Garage, Soho

Sir John Hegarty points out that every decision we make has creative influence, getting dressed, what type of car we own, these are all expressions of ourselves but the key thing to understand is that because we are all creative doesn't mean we will be world renowned for it. Everybody has a basic level of all disciplines which we can improve at with practice but, for instance, because I can play five a side football, if I spent a year training in a professional environment that doesn't mean I would become a world class footballer. We can be creative but accept our limitations which some my argue is actually beneficial in improving as a designer." I think my creativity comes from confidence and the more confident I feel, the more at ease I am to express my feelings and my thoughts and my ideas." - Caroline Pay, Joint Chief Creative Officer, Grey London

Caroline Pay argues in her piece that

confidence is key to unlocking creativity and this ties in with what I had said earlier about not being afraid to make mistakes. If you empower students to not worry about consequences academically then some of their best work could come from evaluation and in turn rectifying mistakes made.

Accidents litter the world of discovery from exploration to science and we wouldn't be where we are without them so why not celebrate them and breed confidence in our younger generations? " Under the guise of a politically motivated austerity programme, this government has savaged arts funding with projects increasingly required to justify their artistic and social contributions in the narrow, ruthlessly instrumentalist approach of the Thatcher governments." - Jeremy Corbyn, Labour Party Leader

Jeremy has always been a strong advocate of the arts during his long political career and he believes 82 million pounds worth of cuts to the arts, within the previous 5 years, have caused a crisis that could contribute to the decline or " suffocation" of the sector within Britain. The Labour leader sees the arts as key to unlocking creativity and in turn essential to any artistic enterprise which fits with Sir Ken Robinson's argument. He also states that the arts and creative community are fundamental to underpinning social policies with regards to achieving their objectives.

Using things such as theatre, dance, music etc. to bring communities together helps to engage younger audiences and could even keep potentially vulnerable members of the community stimulated, introducing them to things they would otherwise never experience. Creativity has influenced so

much of British culture and in turn the world it would be a travesty for these cuts to educational and professional arts sectors to continue.

Traditional Academia This has been a hard side to draw an argument from. Whether that is through biased media coverage because its not seen as “rebellious” or headline worthy is questionable but there seems to be a big lack of coverage defending the system. The key sound bites of the argument for, or the defence, seem to be coming from politicians. The politicians involved also tend to be connected, active or involved with the current government. Along with bloggers who have teaching experience within the education system but aren’t “experts” some would claim. For example Justine Greening, Secretary of State for Education, spoke at the Teach First annual conference on Tuesday 24 October 2017. In the entire speech there was no mention of creativity as an issue, instead her speech was geared towards traditional jobs and thinking.

Her example of disadvantaged children not having aspirations to be lawyers because they aren’t aware that job is available as a career path being a case in point . There is also a very ‘ London heavy’ focus to her speaking, talking of the inner city comprehensives Teach First have worked with. This is a nationwide problem and only providing examples from a city that already has over saturated media coverage isn’t helpful. What does the current system do for parts of the country that aren’t extensively funded or used to test run almost all revolutionary ideas for social change? The approach she is leading is in conjunction with Teach First. Through this initiative the

government are utilising the minds of teachers and volunteers from working sectors to push forward the next wave of educational reform.

It is though, reform of existing ideas and policy, not a new approach. It's based on expanding career opportunities for already prioritised academic subjects. What about those who don't fit? What about the children lost in cascades of words and numbers that mean nothing to them? Do they just become the percentages that we write off as collateral in government statistics? Teach First are promoting non teachers volunteering their time to go into schools and explain their personal career path after leaving school. It's aimed towards people who are in non traditional jobs so that pupils from all backgrounds can gain knowledge into different sectors and what it takes to become successful through the experience of others that have been there." Literacy and creativity go hand-in-hand. A highly literate person can become hugely creative in the production of written works.

" - Brent Silby, The Journal of EducationThe Journal of Education is a site I have come across and it contains an article that is a direct response to Sir Ken Robinson's TED Talk. The article ' Do Schools Kill Creativity - A Response to Ken Robinson' has a range of well thought out responses and provides back up to its retorts. One of the key factors Sir Ken talked about was schools not valuing literacy and creativity as equals. The point made in this article is that surely if someone is brought up to a high standard of literacy and producing work using those teachings they are in turn themselves being creative are they not? If they go on to create original written works or new formulae within mathematics are these endeavours not considered creative

because they are academic? Another case made within the piece is that students within the current education system are exposed to a wide array of creative subjects; the design technologies, art, music, drama, P.

E., with many now also offering more contemporary courses such as game design, film production etc. " Sir Ken Robinson's ideas on education are not only impractical; they are undesirable." - Joe Kirby, Pragmatic

EducationSomething tells me Sir Ken might have annoyed a few people. The page ' Pragmatic Education' has another response to his YouTube ditty in the form of an article by Joe Kirby. He uses a quote from author, teacher, UK education blogger, and expert on education research Tom Bennett who seems to imply that someone without any classroom experience such as Sir Ken shouldn't be trusted to speak about the state of education, he then ended with the witty zinger:" Being told by a non-teacher with a PhD in education how to teach is a bit like being told by a virgin how to get laid." Joe goes on to argue that practice results in talent, creativity and intelligence and that not everyone is blessed with them as a gift. Two of the examples Sir Ken gave undermined his own argument; Hans Zimmer's parents were musicians and he grew up listening to, playing and experimenting with music allowing him to practice extensively.

William Shakespeare's writing prowess was also the product of his education rather than some God given talent. He was well educated in literacy which allowed him to break and revolutionise the already established rules to create his works because he was so familiar with them, both examples of creativity born out of education within a subject. His next point is not an

open one... there is only one kind of intelligence, multiple intelligences don't exist.

That's it, no question. The main cause of creativity not being nurtured is social class, rich children get culturally educated and gain diverse knowledge, poor children don't because they lack access to the same resources. Strong Viewpoint! The focus here for Joe is that if you ask parents whether they would be happy having children who couldn't read or count as opposed to not being able to dance or draw which one do you think they would choose? Illiteracy and innumeracy effect a child's future development and job prospects and so they are proportionately prioritised because of this." It would be good if there was a cross-party agreement on issues arising from a consensus among interested parties rather than chucking everything out every five years," -Tim Hands, chairman of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference Tim hands claims the education system, or more specifically the exam side of things, isn't broken and believes its constant upheaval from the political merry-go-round that is failing children. Another crucial argument from the pro creativity side is that educating pupils for testing purposes or exams is one of the biggest flaws but Tim says this isn't the case. His argument is based on his experience as chairman of the headmasters and headmistresses conference and deals with 250 of Britain's most prestigious schools.

There in lies the problem. It isn't students at these schools that are struggling and so education reforms are probably not seen as necessary. He does however make an extremely valid point about not giving individual

governments control over education and rather agreeing an overall direction between all parties that they can work towards if elected into power. He wants his time as chairman to yield one thing, to put the child at the centre of education. Conclusion This is a compelling argument regardless of what side you sit on. As Sir Ken said “ education is personal.

” We all become very opinionated and know what should be done in our own minds which makes it hard to stomach the opinions of others. I have to be honest although there are some truths to parts of the academic argument it seems a little prehistoric in some of the points made. There doesn't seem to be an openness to explore incorporating creativity into the curriculum in a more prominent role. A lot of the responses to Sir Ken's suggestions seem like the kind of reaction you would receive if you criticised someone's cooking, they seem like scoldings rather than a coherent argument of how something works or can be tweaked for efficiency. Like defending an old movie that you love but no one else thinks stand up to the test of time. I think there is some value in the Teach First initiative as expanding students horizons can only be a good thing. Letting the less fortunate know that circumstances don't define them is an encouraging message but is it enough? I don't think it brings any fresh perspective to the table, its just reheating what's already at the table. The point made by Joe Kirby about there only being one kind of intelligence actually really offended me along with his dig at culture within the lower classes.

In his world it seems as though if you struggle academically you are stupid... really? The last I heard pressure was one of the key ingredients that leads to

failure. There are sportsmen who are terrible at maths but with one hastened look up can work out angles and trajectories to execute manoeuvres that others couldn't dream of. The "Urban Youth" who are supposedly academically poor can pluck words from thin air to inspire, anger, criticise or hurt people and coherently sew them together to a beat, but that's not intelligence. My sister is dyslexic and had a horrific time at school yet she has managed to pass 3 NVQs in social care and other relating subjects off her own back. I dare you to tell me she's not intelligent.

The lower classes are so socially diverse that they breed their own cultures, they are a stewing pot of different nationalities that largely pull together within communities and live side by side. Those children will know far more about the worlds cultural diversity through their surroundings and friends than any amount of knowledge money can buy the 'rich kids' as he puts it. It's this Neanderthal approach of the old guard that is hurting students, conform or fail.

Tim Hands' largely is an unreasonable response, to suggest that nothing is wrong because people who don't have to struggle with social stigma or lack of resources aren't lagging behind is ludicrous. I did like what he said about the child being the centre of education though, shaping it to the child and not the other way around. Education isn't military, we don't need robots, we need individuals to get the most out of society, to bring different viewpoints to problems where solutions have gone stale with conventional thinking. Even if a complete reform isn't on the table this kind of thinking can only breed positive change. His comments on successive governments struck a

chord too, chopping and changing policy and direction every time a government comes in is going to destabilise a system that is already swaying in the wind. There should be a debate in parliament to agree a direction and some key concerns between all parties so that the work to be done is clear and a line can be drawn through all governments to connect the progress being made and what is still to be done. I think it is clear to see that I sit on the creative side of the argument although I have tried to remain open and take on board some points from the academic case. I can still see some floors on my side of the fence too.

I think Sir Ken would be wise to strip back the jokes and concentrate on facts in his argument. For people receptive of the idealise myself it's a refreshing way to be engaged and spoken to but to the sceptics, as I found in many of their articles, they see it as smoke and mirrors, a magicians show to divert to his agenda rather than everything laid out in black and white. When you're perceiving you're being attacked this can create a disconnect and therefore fail to convince. I think the Creative Review article was the most sensible and universal approach for people to accept, talking of honing your creativity given the opportunity rather than everyone being born with it. Like all disciplines there are levels to attain and not everyone is capable of them so I think simply being able to practice your creativity in all subjects could unlock so many doors for students who struggle with conventional teaching. The key to that practice is another one of Sir Ken's points about not scaring students out of making mistakes, evaluation and moving forward with a solution are far more important to personal development.

That leads nicely onto the final phase of pushing that creativity into all aspects of life through artistic enterprise. I think Jeremy Corbyn shows a lot of promise in his intentions but feasibility is the only worry. But the worry is the mistake. Our country pioneered in so many things from music, art, architecture, literature, exploration, sport, unfortunately not in our culinary delights but to see these expressive sides of life become curtailed due to funding or government policy would be an absolute crime. I spoke earlier about there being so many new solutions waiting to be found for some of the worlds biggest and most pressing problems, but we will never get there unless we let go of our hang ups and knock down a few walls.