

Encourage students to innovate rather than copy

Education has often placed a heavy emphasis on subjects that are quantifiable, such as mathematics and science, in an effort to prepare students for future careers and meet societal demands. However, this focus has sometimes resulted in a neglect of the arts and design subjects, leading to a lack of balance and missed opportunities for holistic development.



Photo by Anastasia Shuraeva via www.pexels.com

Fortunately, educators and experts alike are recognising the importance of integrating creative disciplines into education to nurture well-rounded individuals equipped with the skills necessary for success in the 21st century.

Deidre Spencer who is the curriculum leader of arts and design at Crawford International Lonehill believes in keeping abreast of educational trends, pedagogical developments and curriculum innovations to facilitate student development. The arts and design curriculum is mainly focused on developing higher-order thinking skills such as evaluating and creating, whereas standard subjects sometimes place less emphasis on these areas.

Spencer believes that the development of higher-order thinking skills hold value in education and unpacked a few benefits it has for students.

1. Develops life skills

Arts and design play a crucial role in developing life skills in individuals. In the realm of arts and design, individuals learn to observe and interpret the world around them, fostering skills in observation and attention to detail.

Spencer explained how the planning and research phase of an art or design challenge contributes to this. It enables students to create product that resonates with the real world and captures the attention of the audience.

2. Builds social skills

Collaboration and teamwork are fostered through art projects as individuals learn to work together, compromise, and value diverse perspectives. Spencer agrees that art is a social subject and notes that students collaborate to get ideas for their artwork.

“Being in a collaborative environment not only develops students’ vocabularies, but it also has the ability to bring students out of their shell as they share their ideas”, she says

3. Encourages innovative thinking

Arts and design encourage experimentation and risk-taking, cultivating an openness to exploration and new ideas. Artistic pursuits also nurture perseverance, as artists often face challenges and setbacks in their creative process, requiring them to persist and find innovative solutions.

Creating is a continuous process of keeping up with current trends and creating new solutions and ideas that prepares students for their futures.

“To cultivate successful citizens, we want them to be creating, not just copying”, says Spencer.

4. Leading into the future

Spencer highlights how the thinking process in an arts class and being in a creative environment equips students with various skills that prepares them with the opportunity to pursue multiple careers.

“Students don’t study towards a singular career anymore, they tend to branch out and explore multiple career opportunities,” she says. “the design thinking process of a creative subject encourages them to think critically and problem-solve”. She used the example of how the technologies used in hospitals necessitates a level of design thinking to design and justify the use of these technologies. This shows that arts and design is not limited to a singular industry or career path.

5. Develops emotional intelligence and self-expression

Arts and design promote self-expression and emotional intelligence, allowing individuals to understand and manage their own emotions. Arts and design allow individuals to explore their inner thoughts, feelings, and experiences in a creative manner. Through artistic expression, individuals can also gain insights into their own personal narratives and identities, fostering self-awareness and introspection.

“The arts class provides students with one moment in a day where they can just be who they want to be, allowing them the time to regroup”, notes Spencer.

Spencer encourages parents to support their children if they would like to take arts as a subject. By developing these

higher-order thinking skills, arts and design empower individuals to navigate complex challenges, express themselves authentically, and contribute meaningfully to society.

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