

## Arts Education Crucial for Future Success

The arts could become more important for young people than maths in the future, according to a leading education expert.

Researcher Andreas Schleicher, who leads the Programme for International Student Assessment at the intergovernmental economic organisation OECD, told a House of Commons inquiry that he believed young people could benefit more from the skills gained through creativity than test-based learning.

He was giving evidence to the Education Select Committee as part of an ongoing inquiry into the fourth industrial revolution—the influence of technologies such as robotics and artificial intelligence on society.

Schleicher, who is widely regarded as one of the world's leading educational thinkers, said: 'I would say, in the fourth industrial revolution, arts may become more important than maths.'

'We talk about "soft skills" often as social and emotional skills, and hard skills as about science and maths, but it might be the opposite,' he said, suggesting that science and maths may become 'softer' in future when the need for them decreases due to technology, and the 'hard skills' will be 'your curiosity, your leadership, your persistence and your resilience.'



His comments come amid ongoing concerns about the narrowing of the education system in the UK to exclude creativity and prioritise academic subjects.

Campaigners argue that this is prohibiting many young people from pursuing creative careers. However, Schleicher said that too narrow a curriculum could also make young people less prepared for the demands of the future.

He said British schools largely regard skills as inferior to knowledge, and can be very focused on traditional tasks such as memorisation.

'When you look at the types of tasks that British students are doing better [than other countries], they are more those that are associated with the past than the future – the kind of things that are easy to teach and easy to test. It is precisely those things that are easy to digitise.

'The modern world doesn't reward you for what you know, but for what you can do with what you know,' he said.

## Music Curriculum Tender Draws Ire from Educators

The school standards minister Nick Gibb has announced on Twitter that the ABRSM has won a competitive process to draft the new non-statutory Model Music Curriculum.

The model curriculum was previously announced on 11 January, alongside new funding for music education hubs. At the time, the Department for Education (DfE) said that:

'The new curriculum will be developed by a group of teachers, education leaders and musicians and will be published in summer 2019. It will provide schools with a sequenced and structured template curriculum for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3.'

This 'group of teachers, education leaders and musicians' is the 'expert panel' mentioned in Gibb's tweet, which consists of 14 members from across music education and includes the ABRSM's own chief executive Michael Elliott.

Educators have reacted to the news with criticism, both of the tender process and of the DfE's choice of provider.

Stuart Birnie, head of the Music Service in Birmingham

was the first to respond, tweeting, 'I cannot believe this. Why don't you listen to the experts in music education? They (ABRSM) provide over priced graded examinations. Listen to the teachers in primary, secondary and special schools. What utter nonsense.'

And many others took to twitter to criticise the ABRSM's lack of expertise in classroom music and non-instrumental music learning. Others cited ABRSM's poor track record of diversity and inclusion of women and minority composers in their examination repertoire, as well as their outdated syllabi and pedagogical materials.

ABRSM has noted that their planned curriculum will be published this summer, aiming to provide schools with a practical, structured framework on which they can base their own programmes of study. Given that they have also noted that 'We're still at the early stages of this immensely exciting piece of work', a summer publication deadline shows that they are unlikely to be seeking further input.

## Schools Told to Reduce Pressure for SAT Exams

The Education Secretary, Damian Hinds, has criticised parents and teachers setting revision and mock papers for pupils ahead of sitting their SATs exams. He has said that schools and parents must not heap pressure on children, stating that Key Stage 2 tests are not public exams that they will be judged on in later life.

The cabinet member said he had been told stories of schools allowing their pupils to wear slippers and their own clothes during the tests in order to ease stress levels.

'These tests are tests for the schools rather than individual children,' he said. 'You don't carry your SATs results with you into a job interview. No one will ask how you got on in your SATs when applying for university.'

Pressure to do well in the assessments was also hitting children's mental well-being, he added. Mr Hinds raised concerns after hearing some children were being forced to spend their Christmas holidays studying past tests, with around a third of schools asking pupils to revise for the paper.

His comments will go down badly among head teachers and their staff who claim they are under pressure to perform

well in Key Stage 2 tests for fear of being converted into an academy and potentially losing their jobs.

MP Ministers overhauled the curriculum and assessment in primary schools during the last government, introducing more challenging content and tougher test papers. The move has placed even greater pressure on schools, raising the bar while introducing a tougher accountability regime. It has meant heads risk losing their jobs if they have a few years of poor results.



## Budding Artists Capture the Essence of Yorkshire

Four young artists from Yorkshire have seen their work transformed into t-shirts, after being named winners of Banana Moon Clothing's Big Draw competition.

The personalised clothing manufacturer, based in Birstall, West Yorkshire, challenged the young people of the county to create a piece of work that captured the essence of what Yorkshire means to them.

Three winning designs were selected from the dozens of entries submitted by children aged 8 to 12, by a panel that included representatives from York-based arts organisation art&, alongside Banana Moon staff.

The winning entries were created by 7-year-old Eloise, from Leeds, 8-year-old Joe, from Huddersfield, and nine-year-olds Finlo and Marni, from Marsden.

All three designs have since been transformed into a line of ten t-shirts for each artist to keep or share with friends and family.

Eloise's piece featured hand-drawn Yorkshire landscapes encapsulated within a Yorkshire white rose, while Joe's entry factored in several staples of the county, including a big

Yorkshire pudding with plenty of gravy!

Finlo and Marni's entry was submitted on their behalf by the Children's Arts School, Holmfirth, a charitable organisation that works with young people throughout the area to promote the value of art education as a tool to develop creative and innovative thinking.

