

White Paper 2010 'The Importance of Teaching'

A response from the National Society for Education in Art and Design

Principal concern

The Society's principal concern must be that given the importance of the creative industries to the British economy - importance acknowledged by the DCMS - the White Paper makes only one passing reference to the 'visual arts' and no mention at all of Art & Design, Design and Technology or ICT. This is despite the DCMS's own figures showing that the creative sector is roughly equal to financial services in terms of GDP - and they certainly cause a lot less trouble. The importance of design and the creative industries is amply supported by the research published in the third volume of [Creative Graduates: Creative Futures](#)

All the principal references to 'culture' are in the context of 'respect' and 'behaviour'. A single paragraph (4.31) suggests that 'Children should expect to be given a rich menu of cultural experiences' and by implication this would be achieved through a programme of school visits. There is no *requirement* to provide this and the inherent message seems to be that the arts, creativity and culture are of little importance in a twenty-first century curriculum. This is unacceptable in a curriculum that purports to be broad and balanced.

Teaching and Leadership

Paragraph 2.4 'Too little teacher training takes place on the job, and too much professional development involves compliance with bureaucratic initiatives rather than working with other teachers to develop effective practice '... two-thirds of all professional development is "passive learning" – sitting and listening to a presentation'.

Response: The inference here is that 'passive learning' and 'sitting and listening' are always negative. In the document from which the quote appears to come, House of Commons Select Committee Document 'The Training of Teachers', the critique is about content, not learning style. Sitting and listening is worthwhile if the presentation is inspiring and relevant. And with the majority of conferences these days, and the advent of 'teachmeets', including virtual audiences and Twitter feeds 'sitting and listening' is anything but 'passive.'

We entirely agree that too much professional development involves compliance with bureaucratic initiatives especially those instigated by the awarding bodies.

Paragraph 2.9. We note the government is determined to raise the quality of new entrants to the teaching profession, by ceasing to provide DfE funding for ITT for those graduates who do not have at least a 2:2 degree from September 2012.

Response: Agreed in principle but raising the entry bar will have little overall impact – few if any secondary PGCE students have a 3rd class degree. We note that as art and design is not a shortage subject no financial incentives will be on offer – given the likely cost of following a degree course in art, craft or design, there will be few graduates able to pay for the cost of an additional ITT course. There will be few 'Talented career changers' for the visual arts or design sector of the creative industries.

Paragraph 2.6. Reform initial teacher training so that more training is on the job, and a focus on key teaching skills including teaching early reading and mathematics, managing behaviour and responding to pupils' SEN.

Response: It is unclear whether this is intended to refer more to the primary BEd route rather than PGCE. PGCE students already spend two thirds of their time in schools and early reading and maths are unlikely to be the first concern of most specialist secondary teachers. Also much primary ITE is already done 'on the job'. The crucial point will be to only put ITE students with excellent models when they go into school. How can that be ensured? Student teachers/ trainees have to understand what/ why /how they are experiencing/observing or trying out etc in their school experience practice and they need time to read and become analytical. Teaching is not simply a craft dependent on tacit knowledge; it must not be allowed to become atheoretical.

We agree that teachers need good subject knowledge and academic preparation, overall literacy and numeracy, and the right personal and interpersonal skills. However the suggested means of achieving this are more contentious.

Paragraph 2.25. Create a new national network of University Teaching Schools, on the model of teaching hospitals, giving outstanding schools the role of leading the training and professional development of teachers and head teachers.

Response: Possible impact on the arts as outstanding teachers will be sought from the core subjects as a priority. But schools below 'Good' will increasingly find it hard to recruit new staff. The Teaching Schools will need a massive capacity to embrace this. Will they include and reach out to the 'industry' of each subject and indeed involve the subject associations to deliver and consult on training and professional development? They need to be outward looking and must not become closed shops.

Paragraph 2.10. Proposes that the current 'basic skills' tests of literacy and numeracy which student teachers are required to pass should be taken at the start of the course with reduced scope for retakes. It is proposed also to strengthen '... the rigour of the tests to ensure they set a high enough standard'.

Response: This may be an off-putting issue for many potential art and design trainees. It is known that there is a high level of dyslexia among art and design graduates. There may be an inclusion issue here.

Paragraph 2.11. Suggestion that the systematic use of assessments of aptitude, personality and resilience might be introduced as part of the selection process for teacher training.

Response: Effectiveness will depend on the quality of the tests. Do art teachers necessarily require the same qualities as science teachers? On the other hand a generic test concern with 'passion for and engagement in your subject' might apply to both the art teacher and the science teacher.

Paragraph 2.16. Proposal to provide stronger incentives at the point at which students would start postgraduate initial teacher training by paying off the student loans of high-performing graduates and offering more to graduates with good degrees and to those who would teach shortage subjects.

Response: This is very unlikely to apply to graduates in non-shortage subjects. If this is applied it might not be long before all subjects become shortage subjects.

Paragraph 2.24. Development of a national network of new Teaching Schools ‘...to lead and develop sustainable approaches to teacher development across the country’. These will be ‘...outstanding schools, which will take a leading responsibility for providing and quality assuring initial teacher training in their area’. These schools will be funded to offer professional development for teachers and leaders. The National College will be responsible for quality assurance of their work.

Response: It is hard to see how subject specific professional development will work in this context unless every department in the training school is ‘outstanding’. Experience shows that some schools do not provide sufficient time for their mentors to support and develop the classroom practice of their trainees. The loss of the subject specific theory based elements in this form of training could perpetuate orthodoxy as the school based programme provides only a generic learning and teaching overview. The capacity these schools will need is vast. They will have to engage with outside agencies and subject associations – and surely that should be explicit? There is a danger ‘outstanding teachers’ will be removed from doing their outstanding job i.e. teaching children. Will children then be left to be taught by less than outstanding teachers? To take the training hospital model, trainee doctors and dentists in their 7 and 5 years courses spend a significant amount of time ‘sitting and listening’ in university lecture theatres.

Paragraph 2.25. Create a new national network of University Teaching Schools, on the model of teaching hospitals, giving outstanding schools the role of leading the training and professional development of teachers and head teachers.

Response: There are some excellent PGCE art and design courses where trainees have the opportunity for very valuable peer support as a subject group. This has a positive impact upon them especially when they can share skills, subject knowledge and experiences. At a school there maybe a cross section of subject trainees that will allow some peer engagement but the sense of being part of a new generation of subject (e.g. art and design) teachers will be lost. A PGCE University based course facilitates a cluster of schools working as a network supporting delivery and sharing pedagogy. Guest speakers and end of course exhibitions from placements are an important part of their ethos and training. This cannot be matched easily in schools. Who is responsible for QA of individual to ensure they can deliver first class training. Will they have the strength in teaching and learning, resources and capacity to deliver it. Will it be a schools value added and OFSTED report that alone determines suitability?

Paragraph 2.26. The government promises to ensure that teachers have support for their professional development. Teaching Schools will be expected to draw together outstanding teachers (including Advanced Skills Teachers, Excellent Teachers and Leading Teachers) in an area who are committed to supporting other schools. They will also designate ‘Specialist Leaders of Education’ – excellent professionals in leadership positions below the head teacher (such as deputies, bursars, heads of department) who will support others in similar positions in other schools.

Response: This seems very sensible – perhaps the DfE will also maintain a register of such people including their subject specialisms? A check will be needed that such people keep their subject knowledge fresh at a high level. Specialist Leaders of Education should include people from the subject associations.

Paragraph 2.28. It is stated that it is vital that teachers have the opportunity ‘...to deepen their subject knowledge and renew the passion which brought them into the classroom’. It is planned to introduce a competitive national scholarship scheme to support professional development.

Response: Will this initiative focus only on ‘core subjects’? Teachers should not have to compete to access subject based professional development. Subject associations and universities are best placed to provide subject specific professional development. PD should be an entitlement. It is welcome that the government sees professional development as vital. But will it ensure that:

- *the strategic management of professional development at school levels is improved?*
- *it stimulates a need for PD and will improve and encourage take up?*
- *spending for professional development in schools is ring fenced, fit for purpose and clearly accounted for?*
- *teachers of art craft and design are able to access professional development in museums, galleries and studios working with artists, designers and makers?*

Paragraph 2.35. Review of the current 33 QTS standards.

Response: Reducing the number of standards may be a good thing but, again, the focus here seems to be on the primary sector. This might also lead to the narrowing of the curriculum to these focus areas.

Paragraph 2.55. The government accepts that while teachers should plan their lessons it should not involve a centralised planning template on schools.

Response: This seems like good news – especially if it means that the use of NC levels (attainment targets) is confined to end of key stage assessments and the use of sub-levels is discouraged. However it is unclear whether or not this is the intention.

Behaviour

Paragraph 3.14. ‘False allegations can damage teachers’ career prospects even once disproved. We will clarify that in future when employers are asked to give references for teachers they should never be required to report prior allegations which were found to be malicious or untrue. We will legislate to introduce reporting restrictions that prevent a teacher’s identity being revealed until the point at which they are charged with a criminal offence.

Response: This is welcome. The question of anonymity for teachers falsely or maliciously accused by pupils is long overdue but it will probably be impossible to stop gossip. A promise to speed up the progress of investigations is very welcome.

Paragraph 3.18-3.21. Head teachers are encouraged to take a strong stand against all forms of bullying including homophobic bullying.

Response: This is welcome.

Curriculum Assessment & Qualifications

Paragraph 4.1. Underlying this section is a stated ambition to reduce unnecessary prescription, bureaucracy and central control throughout our education system. It is the government’s view that the guidance on the National Curriculum is weighing teachers down

and squeezing out room for innovation, creativity, deep learning and intellectual exploration. 'The National Curriculum should set out only the essential knowledge and understanding that all children should acquire and leave teachers to decide how to teach this most effectively'.

Response: There seems little or no evidence that this is a common complaint amongst art and design teachers – the New Secondary Curriculum for art and design was welcomed by an overwhelming majority and some excellent work has emerged as a consequence. A bigger problem is the insistence by many head teachers on constant levelling – using attainment targets not designed for this purpose.

Paragraph 4.9. The government makes it clear (para 4.9) that the new National Curriculum will have a greater focus on subject content, '...outlining the essential knowledge and understanding that pupils should be expected to have to enable them to take their place as educated members of society'. It continues '..., in outlining what children should expect to know in core subjects, the new curriculum will allow a greater degree of freedom in how that knowledge might be acquired and what other teaching should complement this core'.

Response: If this suggests that there will not be any form of national curriculum for art and design or perhaps one principally focused on the canon of western culture it will be a retrograde step. Some guidance is required but this should not be prescriptive. The curriculum should cover aspects of art, craft and design from a global perspective including contemporary culture.

Paragraph 4.13. The National Curriculum will continue to inform the design and content of assessment at the end of key stage two and it will also continue to inform the design and content of GCSEs.

Response: It is unclear how this will relate to non-core subjects.

Paragraph 4.14. Academies and Free Schools will retain the freedom they have at the moment to depart from aspects of the National Curriculum where they consider it appropriate. But they will be required by law, like all schools, to teach a broad and balanced curriculum. And all state schools will be held accountable for their performance in tests and exams which reflect the National Curriculum.

Response: Again it is unclear how this will relate to non-core subjects. Will there be guidance for the arts? How will the government ensure a 'broad and balanced curriculum' and equal opportunities for all?

Paragraph 4.21. The government will introduce a new award – the English Baccalaureate – for any student who secures good GCSE or iGCSE passes in English, mathematics, the sciences, a modern or ancient foreign language and a humanities subject such as history or geography.

Response: Will this encourage schools to focus on these subjects to the exclusion of much else? Will it be at the expense of a broad and balanced curriculum in schools struggling to meet the new 35 percent target? What happens to children who want to pursue arts subjects? Or have more physical or practical leanings... or are less academically inclined? This will have a negative impact on BTEC and other vocational routes, and will affect the arts as pupils will be drawn into this and away from arts. In many schools art and design often is currently set against MfL, in one option, so any failure to redesign the options will result in a significant loss of more able students from non-core subjects. The Society believes that the

Baccalaureate should have a creative and cultural strand with an element of practical work and critical thinking.

Paragraph 4.27. the government states ‘there is much of value that children need to learn and experience which sits outside the traditional subject disciplines – the languages, sciences, humanities and mathematics which make up national curricula across the globe. So we will ensure there is space in the school day, and resources for school leaders, to guarantee a truly rounded education for all.’

Response: The danger here with no specific mention of the arts is that music, art, drama simply will be bundled into the ‘happy hour’ on Friday afternoon.

Paragraph 4.1. See opening statement

Paragraph 4.48. The government has stated its intention to reform GCSEs and A levels to ‘...support progression to further education, higher education or employment. They want universities and learned bodies to be fully involved in their development. They specifically want to explore ‘...where linear A levels can be adapted to provide the depth of synoptic learning which the best universities value’.

Response: The term ‘learned bodies’ should include specific mention of subject associations, many of which have strong international reputations as learned societies and which publish highly respected international journals.

Paragraph 4.50. The government will ask Ofqual to consider how best to reform GCSEs so that exams are typically taken only at the end of the course. Mark schemes will take greater account of the importance of spelling, punctuation and grammar for examinations in all subjects.

Response: Examinations in practical subjects such as art and design will need to retain an element of coursework – they cannot be properly assessed in the course of a three hour examination. Surely the requirement to assess spelling, punctuation and grammar is a feature of current examination and has not been removed?

Paragraph 4.51. The government will review vocational education and a particular concern seems to be that too many young people are following courses because they are easy for schools or colleges to deliver or because they confer advantages in the accountability system

Response: This will have a significant impact on BTEC and 14-19 Diplomas as viable pathways for students who want to pursue a career in the creative industries.

Paragraph 4.55. The government is committed to increasing the minimum age at which young people can leave education or training to 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015. This is in the national economic interest, as well as in the economic interests of young people.

Response: With the obvious emphasis on the ‘core’ it may be very difficult to keep all older students engaged and motivated.

New Schools System

Paragraph 5.2. ‘In many of the highest performing jurisdictions, school autonomy is central’.

Response: The tipping point for LAs losing their financial viability is a cause for concern, if it is believed that local management of funding is the most appropriate model. When the result of schools becoming Academies reaches a point where funding to others is no longer viable, these other schools will become Academies and enter partnerships. At this point local funding will cease to be viable and services may well break down, particularly arts, libraries and music.

Paragraph 5.7. 'In many of the highest performing jurisdictions, school autonomy is central. there are sufficient high-quality school places, coordinating fair admissions, promoting social justice by supporting vulnerable children and challenging schools which fail to improve'.

Response: This changes the opportunity for LAs to manage allocations based on more local perception of need and link this to local projects driving the development of particular approaches to learning, as well as opportunities to engage with wider developments. What is suggested above cannot be afforded in the climate being created. In particular this could well remove the funding and flexibility for some arts based projects unless LAs continue to fund through Culture, Leisure and also Community funding streams.

Paragraph 5.27. New Studio Schools are described that '...will also drive innovation in vocational education as Free Schools. They are 14–19 institutions with an entrepreneurial and vocational focus, catering for students of all abilities who are disengaged by an entirely academic curriculum.

Response: This is reminiscent of the Junior Arts Schools of the 1940s-1960s and might be an interesting development providing that they do not become a repository for the disengaged. There is also the question of what happens to the high flyers who want to follow a vocational route?

Accountability

Paragraph 6.17 & 18. Ofsted will be asked to return to focusing its attention on the core of teaching and learning, observing more lessons and taking a more proportionate approach – devoting more time and attention to weaker schools and less to stronger (para 6.17). Ofsted will consult on a new framework with a clear focus on just four things – pupil achievement, the quality of teaching, leadership and management, and the behaviour and safety of pupils..

Response: While this might not have a specific impact on art and design/arts, it signals an increasing move away from a focus on inspecting the quality of subject teaching.

Paragraph 6.26. The government will define a new minimum, or 'floor' standard, which we will expect all schools to meet a school will be below the floor if fewer than 35 per cent of pupils achieve the 'basics' standard of 5 A*-C grade GCSEs including English and mathematics, and fewer pupils make good progress between key stage two and key stage four than the national average.

Response: There is a danger that there will be much extra coaching for borderline pupils thus limiting their entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum.

School improvement

Paragraph 7.11 'Local authorities, Academy chains, professional associations, subject associations and others will also bring together teachers and head teachers in formal and

informal ways. Schools will be able to take advantage of opportunities provided by these organisations to work with other schools’.

Response: The recognition of the role of subject associations is welcomed but could be stronger throughout the document.

School funding

Paragraph 8.5. ‘End the disparity in funding for 16–18 year-olds, so that schools and colleges are funded at the same levels as one another and at the levels of the most efficient’.

Response: This is a serious issue for smaller 6th form subjects including the arts. This proposal makes it explicit that school 6th forms will be funded at the same rate as FE colleges i.e. £280 per pupil will be removed from the school 6th form. This will have a profound and significant impact on subjects with a smaller uptake as it will in effect make a 6th form group non viable with less than about 15 students studying a particular subject. This will mean that many subjects will only be taught in large 6th forms and FE colleges – this will be a particular problem in rural areas where there is no practical alternative to the local school.

John Steers
General Secretary NSEAD
Sunday, 05 December 2010

NSEAD
3 Mason’s Wharf
Corsham
Wiltshire
SN13 9FY

T. 01225 810134