

# EDUCATION, ENVIRONMENT, ART

## A new year: new opportunities

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In this wet winter, what promising new shoots for art and design education are lying dormant in the muddy educational landscape created by the flood of government policy initiatives? New schools and new kinds of schools, new initiatives in cultural education, changes afoot for the curriculum and examinations – will these prompt new possibilities for art, design and built environment education outside the confines of the classroom?

### CONTEXT

#### Schools

Academies, free schools and studio schools are non-profit making, semi-independent, funded by taxpayers, but not in local authority control. They are promised greater autonomy in deciding the length of the school day, the content of the curriculum and the ways they access funding and allocate their budgets. Freed from the constraints of the National Curriculum and the influence of local authorities, such schools are creating their own ways of dealing with the challenges of general education. The government claims that such schools will provide greater choice for parents, will drive up standards and will create the potential for new partnerships and opportunities for learning. Critics see the likelihood of increased competition, and anticipate they will damage other schools by taking pupils and resources from them, leading to the break up of the state school system.

#### Priority School Building Programme

*Building Schools for the Future* (BSF) was scrapped by the government in 2010, and replaced by the *Priority School Building* programme to repair and refurbish schools in the greatest need, and to build some new schools. The Education Funding Agency (EFA), an executive agency of the Department for Education (DfE), has instituted a standardized approach for new construction through baseline designs:

*The designs are not site-specific but will suit a range of sites and orientations. One of the secondary designs is devised as a 'kit of parts' making it particularly suitable for awkwardly shaped sites or those where some buildings are being retained. External areas are not in the scope of the project, although consideration is given to access to the outside (1).*

The degree of critical response shows that one size does not fit all. There is much scope for engaging school communities in the design process of creating new learning environments that respond to the specific needs of people and place. School grounds are an obvious starting point. The award scheme, *Grounds for Optimism* (2) sought to empower students and teachers to participate in design and decision-making processes in schools, and offers a useful model.

## Curriculum

After all the research, Ofsted inspections, assessment procedures, league tables, teacher appraisal and other initiatives to raise standards, Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Education, admitted in a written statement on the National Curriculum Review, that: *'Over the past ten years our education system as measured by performance in the OECD's PISA international league tables has deteriorated significantly'* (3). In December 2011 the DfE published *The Framework for the National Curriculum – a report by the Expert Panel*. In his letter of June 10 2012 to Tim Oates, who had led the panel for the National Curriculum review, Michael Gove stated:

*I agree with your clear recommendation that we should define the aims of the curriculum. We need to set ambitious goals for our progress as a nation. And we need a clear set of expectations for each subject. I expect those aims to embody our sense of ambition, a love of education for its own sake, respect for the best that has been thought and written appreciation of human creativity and a determination to democratise knowledge by ensuring that as many children as possible can lay claim to a rich intellectual inheritance* (4).

He intends a revamp of the National Curriculum. On 7 February 2013, the draft programmes of study for all National Curriculum subjects in Key Stages 1 to 3 were published for consultation. This is how art and design education was described:

*Art and design embody the highest form of human creativity. Art and design teaching should instil in pupils an appreciation of beauty and an awareness of how creativity depends on technical mastery. They should learn to draw, paint and sculpt as well as design and create aesthetically pleasing objects in two and three dimensions. Pupils should learn about the achievements of great artists and designers* (5).

In tandem with the curriculum review, the government has reconsidered the current examination system, and had intended to replace the existing GCSE qualification with the English Baccalaureate Certificate (EBC). However, critics were concerned that this would introduce a narrower, more academic curriculum by sidelining cultural subjects such as art, design technology and music, and destroy equality of opportunity. Sheila McGregor reported:

*Already his Ebacc reforms, which reduce the core secondary school curriculum to a narrow range of so-called 'academic' subjects, are adversely affecting teacher recruitment and curricular provision. School managers fail to replace arts teachers when they leave, and they cut down the number of teaching hours allocated to art and design, as well as other arts subjects such as drama and music.... A recent poll by Ipsos Mori shows that over the last year alone 27% of schools cut courses as a direct result of the Ebacc measure. The previous year the figure was even higher at 45%. Of the courses cut, drama, performing arts, art and design, and design and technology are the worst hit* (6).

On February 7 2013, the Secretary of State for Education announced a revision of his plans. He decided against renaming the exams and introducing a single examination board. He pulled back from ditching GCSEs and creating an EBC. All subjects will continue to be assessed through GCSEs. The English Baccalaureate league tables for GCSEs and A levels have not been scrapped. These will continue to be published alongside new school accountability measures. It is proposed that art and design becomes one of eight subjects, which together form a new performance indicator for schools. The Secretary of State made it clear that schools should not be constrained by the National Curriculum:

*A key principle of our reforms is that the statutory national curriculum should form only part of the whole school curriculum, not its entirety. Each individual school should have the freedom to shape the whole curriculum to their particular pupils' aspirations—a freedom already enjoyed by the growing numbers of academies and free schools, as well, of course, as schools in the independent sector (7).*

Examinations have always influenced what is taught in schools – the examination tail wags the curriculum dog. But how many tails can a dog have? Performance indicators, league tables and qualifications for entry for students into training, higher education or the job market are all pressures on the curriculum. What is a broad and balanced curriculum for? Should it be to service higher education and industry? Or should it be to nurture the individual's ability to understand the world, to think independently and to do things? Should it be to learn how to learn?

## **Cultural education**

The Cultural Learning Alliance, a group of individuals and organisations working across the arts, cultural, creative, education and learning sectors, sees cultural learning as '*an active engagement with the creation of our arts and heritage, and the expression of what and who we are as individuals, as communities, and as a nation.*' It considers partnership and collaboration are key to its successful delivery. It posits that through cultural education:

*... young people gain the skills to become creative, and that it inspires civic engagement and helps neighbourhoods to make positive changes through collective ownership of culture, resulting in personal, social and community benefit and a shared sense of place ... Young people who have the opportunity to learn through and about culture are better equipped to achieve across the curriculum, and to take responsibility for their own learning (8).*

## **Henley Review**

These sentiments are echoed in the Henley Review, which describes the cultural education available in schools, provided by teachers, arts and cultural organisations and practitioners. It called for a national plan for cultural education, for cultural subjects to be included in the National Curriculum and the English Baccalaureate, and the creation of a new funding enterprise, the Cultural Education Partnership. The Review sees cultural education as important for young people's intellectual development:

*3.23 The skills, which children acquire through good Cultural Education, help to develop their personality, abilities and imagination. They allow them to*

*learn how to think both creatively and critically and to express themselves fully. All of these skills are strong influencers on wider academic attainment in schools and help to grow a child's interest in the process of learning within the school environment (9).*

The Review does not disassociate the concepts of creativity and knowledge:

*3.28 ... I would argue that children and young people should receive a Cultural Education, which is fuelled by the desire to share both creativity and knowledge. The two should never be seen as being mutually exclusive. An excellent Cultural Education will help children to learn how to be creative, while at the same time helping them to learn about creative and cultural subjects (10).*

The Review sees sense of place as an important aspect of cultural education:

*3.34 Aside from visits to historic sites, an important part of the heritage area of Cultural Education is the creation of an understanding of a sense of place for children and young people. The implications of disconnection from a young person's built environment have significant consequences, with potentially greater levels of vandalism and anti-social behaviour (11).*

A survey in 2012 by the National Foundation for Education Research (NFER) saw London schools as reasonably committed to and pro-active in cultural education:

*In terms of cultural engagement, London schools tend to be cultural commissioners – seeking out opportunities for pupils, parents and staff; intrigued engagers – highly motivated to know and do more; cultural eclectics – engaging their pupils in a range of cultural activities; or have other school priorities (12).*

However, the survey found that a substantial minority do not refer to cultural education in their school development plans or have a member of the governing body with responsibilities for cultural education:

*Key barriers to schools' cultural engagement include lack of funding, transport issues, lack of information about the available opportunities, and time to arrange activities. A tailored offer from cultural organisations is crucial. Schools want activities that are relevant to the curriculum, that meet their needs, that are high quality in terms of planning and communication as well as delivery, and that ultimately benefit their young people's life chances. Best practice from schools highlights the importance of accessing local cultural provision, incorporating teacher development into activities, school-school collaborations, and leveraging funding from various sources (13).*

### **Bridge organisations**

In 2010, Arts Council England (ACE) published its 10-year strategic framework, urging that every child and young person should experience the richness of the arts. The goals should be: *'to improve the delivery of art opportunities in a more coherent way; and to raise the standard of art being produced for, with and by children and young people.'* 10 bridge organisations have been funded from April 2012.

*To help us achieve this we will fund a network of 10 'bridge' organisations that*

*will use their experience and expertise to connect children and young people, schools and communities with art and culture. They will connect schools and communities with other National portfolio organisations and others in the cultural sector, including museums and libraries (14).*

### **Awards**

Participation in award schemes has proved a useful indicator of schools' involvement in cultural education. The Artsmark Award, a national programme funded by ACE, enables schools to evaluate their arts education programmes.

The Arts Award, also funded by ACE, is a national qualification that encourages young people to be involved in the arts and to develop creativity and leadership skills. ACE reports that levels of participation in arts and cultural activity amongst young people are high, but that people from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to participate.

### **Organisations**

Art clubs and sketch clubs in schools, and in some places, Saturday art schools run by art schools or local authorities, have existed for many years. Recent initiatives by the Sorrell Foundation have introduced fresh impetus. The National Art&Design Saturday Club creates opportunities for 14-16 year olds to pursue their interest in art and design.

*As well as 30 weeks of inspiring classes in areas ranging from drawing and sculpture to printmaking and stop-frame animation, club members visit London's best museums and galleries and exhibit work in their own Summer Show at Somerset House. They are also given the opportunity to attend an inspirational Masterclass with one of the UK's foremost artists or designers.*

*There are over 100 colleges and universities across the UK with art and design courses that can run Saturday Clubs. This year (2012), the programme will involve 27 of them; we want to scale up over the next 3 years to provide opportunities and offer inspiration for many more young people. (15).*

A pilot programme, Design Club, also supported by the Sorrell Foundation, promotes after school clubs run by teachers for 7-11 year olds. The aim is to inspire and inform young people about design.

*Design Club provides a 'look in the kitchen' at contemporary design, including the kind of roles and jobs available in the industry. It explains how creative processes work; and also helps develop classroom and life skills, including debate, discussion, critical analysis, and literacy (16).*

Students do not pay to join the club, but may have to pay for programmes.

Because the school curriculum is based on separate subjects, it is not easy for teachers to develop areas of study that cross subject boundaries, such as cultural education and design education. Unless these form significant strands in curriculum policy, provision is dependent upon the keen enthusiast. The management of schools does not always make it easy to support inter-professional collaboration. Bringing in expertise from outside the school, with artists and organisations providing services, can imply that teachers lack expertise, encourage a degree of passivity and

prompt students to be treated as potential audience rather than active players in the scene. However, collaborative projects that draw on the different kinds of professional skills provided by both artists and teachers can extend what schools can do themselves.

## ART AND DESIGN EDUCATION

Art can frame how we are able to understand experience. It values a personal, emotional response. It is about shaping ideas. It is essentially about making meaning. It is about making things in order to crystallise, symbolise and communicate thoughts and feelings. The intention may be to reflect the world as the artist sees it, or to challenge and disturb, to offer a personal or an alternative view. Art is increasingly about doing things, taking action and making things happen. These characteristics should be reflected in art and design education.

We need to nurture aesthetic sensibility. In a world dominated by digital technology, the educational value of first-hand experience and emotional engagement is increasingly important. All encounters with the environment are the results, in the first place, of myriad sensory stimuli. All ideas and interpretations flow from these. How do we make sense of our environment? What does it mean to us?

We need to promote design awareness, to encourage young people to think about how we shape and manage our environment. How has the environment come to look the way it does? How do we respond to our surroundings? What do we enjoy and appreciate in the places where we live and work? What makes us sick of the sight of them? What makes them special or distinctive?

We also need to encourage a critical stance, to enable young people to make informed judgements about aesthetic and design qualities. What do we value? Whether we are aware of it or not, we are making judgements about quality all the time. We prefer certain things to others. The easy bit is to like or hate something: the difficult thing is to explain why. Critical study helps young people develop a vocabulary to explain how they have arrived at their judgements, and to give reasons for their opinions.

Whether slow and imperceptible, or sudden and dramatic, maybe traumatic, change is the only certainty we have. Do we respond to new consumer products, to artworks, or to environmental change with concern, self-confidence and good judgement? Or do we react with a vulnerable lack of awareness and understanding? How might we look again at a familiar place and see it anew? What are the needs or opportunities for change? What should the environment be like in the future? We need to nurture design capability, so that young people can deal with the experience of change positively, creatively and responsibly.

Very importantly, we need to build in opportunities to support young people's creativity. Ken Robinson's view is that we need a fresh understanding of human capacity and of the nature of creativity: *'human intelligence is richer and more dynamic than we have been led to believe by formal academic education.'*

*Creative insights often occur by making connections between ideas or experiences that were previously unconnected. Just as intelligence in a single mind is interactive, creativity is often interdisciplinary. This is why the best creative teams often contain specialists in different fields. This has serious*

*implications for the culture of organisations that want to promote creative development (17).*

The European Commission advises that concerted action is needed to nurture creativity through improved education for both economic and social benefits:

*There is a need for stronger partnerships between the cultural and creative sectors, social partners and education and training providers, both through initial training and continuing professional development. This should provide sectors with the mix of skills needed for creative entrepreneurship in a rapidly changing environment.*

*Creative skills need to be learnt from an early age, in order to lay the foundations for a constant replenishment of creative talents and stimulate demand for more diverse and sophisticated creative contents and products. In a lifelong learning perspective, creative skills and competences can help to respond to changes in requirements of the labour market.*

*Partnerships with education can also contribute to a stimulating learning environment, helping learners, notably those in difficulty, acquire basic skills and develop competences required for their future professional life, thus improving their employability. Creative and cultural initiatives at the local level can contribute to the integration of marginalised communities and offer opportunities for people in deprived neighbourhoods (18).*

There are now more possibilities for teachers to work collaboratively with artists and designers to extend and enrich students' learning. Education that links art, design and environment creates opportunities for students to work together to address environmental and design problems, to generate and test out possible solutions. It encourages young people to think '*what would happen if?*' It prompts them to consider the use of materials and technology. They are able to generate ideas for change and improvement and to test them out through drawing, photomontage, construction and 3D modelling, bringing into play powers of imagination and invention.

It is important to nurture young people's urge to make things, to do things, to change things, to create – through re-working their own experience and recycling the ideas of others to shape their thinking and actions. Here, techniques such as appropriation, adaptation and transformation are useful. Through projects focused on school design, neighbourhoods and public art, young people develop dispositions, skills and capacities to be creative. These include the ability to wonder, to question, to experiment, to treat failure positively, to take risks, to value difference, to collaborate with others and to explore different points of view.

## **BUILT ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION**

Schools are not the only places where learning takes place and teachers are not the only educators. Schools able to determine their own curriculum, and decide how they manage learning, will have greater freedom to make use of the built environment as an educational resource, as a setting, as an inspiration or as a subject for study. The environment offers infinite possibilities. It is constantly available and easily accessible! It is free – it does not cost money to walk out of the classroom and into

the street. The costs are in teachers' time to research funding opportunities, to forge partnerships with cultural organisations and to collaborate with artists and designers in the planning and management of projects and programmes that can extend and enrich what schools can do themselves. Significant starting points are how students experience their environment, how they are able to make sense of it, how they respond to it and what it means to them. Studies should raise questions: How do young people impact upon the environment? How confident are they in dealing with the notion of change? How do they see themselves as agents of change?

*Education that focuses on the built environment and public art can contribute to young people's intellectual, emotional and social development as well as their moral and cultural well-being. Education through art enables young people to experience the world, to understand it, to think about it, to feel, to value and to take action in certain ways that are not possible through other disciplines. Educational projects that create links between art, design and the environment establish new relationships between learners and their surroundings. They offer young people opportunities to explore, investigate and discover. They nurture different ways of thinking and feeling; provide opportunities for active learning and problem solving; develop skills of perception, communication and invention; and encourage the exploration of different social roles and relationships. Sometimes they enable young people to take action, to put their ideas into effect. Most importantly, involving young people in public art and environmental design projects develops their capability to deal with the process of change positively and creatively (19).*

The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) merged with the Design Council in 2011. Although this meant that CABE's education work came to an abrupt end, many of the publications are still accessible through its archive, as well as through *Engaging Places*, a guide to using buildings and places for learning, both excellent resources for educators.

### **School environment**

The school itself, both buildings and grounds, offers an excellent starting point. Whether it is an existing site, or there is new development planned, or perhaps a new school is being built, pupils should have opportunities to engage with design issues and to participate in design activity. Planning new learning environments or refurbishing existing ones present wonderful opportunities to engage learners in the design process and encourage community participation. Organisations such as *Learning through Landscapes* in England, *Learning through Landscapes Cymru* in Wales and *Grounds for Learning* in Scotland have done much to promote young people's participation in environmental change. Landscape design is an area that is taking on increasing importance as we face sustainability issues concerned with our relationship with the environment. Where better to begin than in schools?

### **Example: Bitterne Park School, work with SCA+D**

During a design activity week, 14-year old pupils studying art and geography at Bitterne Park School in Southampton, a specialist school in performing arts, explored possibilities for the design of a new performing arts centre. The Solent Centre for Architecture + Design organized the project, involving an architect and two artists. The first exploration was a visual survey of spaces in the school. Pupils made use of their bodies, voice and movement to investigate space and relate this experience to the needs of a performance space. They were asked to write down their subjective and objective responses to the site. Questions and issues around the nature of a



performing arts centre were continually explored. Blue-sky thinking, with no strict parameters or predetermined outcomes, enabled them to generate ideas and possibilities for development.

In developing proposals, pupils first made a vision statement about the nature of the problem they had set themselves, then used this to develop a project brief, which specified what the design would try to achieve. Developing sketch models to outline the ideas that underpinned the final design was a very exciting and enjoyable phase. This was part of the feasibility study, requiring a very broad-brush approach. These initial ideas were discussed and critiqued, and pupils had to explain and justify their choices and decisions.

The next phase was the concept design, when specific proposals were made to test ideas through peer review and critique. Proposals were shaped and refined through the use of more developed models together with a range of drawings, including sections, elevations and plans to show spatial relationships. Students prepared an exhibition and PowerPoints to present their work to staff, parents and governors, and responded to questions and comments on their work. Students experienced the difficulties of designing a building. They gained some understanding of the complexities of the design process and learned more about the decisions that impact on environmental design. Many had to learn a new vocabulary and develop greater confidence in expressing their ideas. They also gained improved social skills of interaction and cooperation.

## **Neighbourhood**

The ordinary, everyday aspects of our surroundings can be fascinating subjects for study. An exploration of the neighbourhood enables pupils to encounter sights, smells and sounds at first-hand. Discovering their local area, children recognise that they are part of the place and the place is part of them. The intention is to nurture aesthetic sensibility and design awareness, to start children thinking about how we shape and manage our environment. Each year in the primary school, pupils can tackle a project with a different focus: the school grounds, the local streets, the neighbourhood, the town centre, then a contrasting environment further afield.

## **Example: My Square Mile**

*At the age of eight we know a patch of ground in a detail we will never know anywhere again. In Welsh it is called 'y filltir sgwâr' – the square mile – and it exists in the Welsh psyche as one of a series of cognitive maps around home and locale* (Professor Mike Pearson, University of Wales, Aberystwyth).

This was the introduction to *My Square Mile*, initiated by the Design Commission for Wales, directed by Carolyn Davies and Lynne Bebb. Building on artist-residencies, the programme was piloted in primary schools in Swansea, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion. A pack (book and CD), published by the Design Commission for Wales, was sent to all primary schools in Wales to encourage projects exploring relationships between buildings, spaces and people. The aims were to develop design awareness, celebrate local distinctiveness and local identity, and create a sense of place, to nurture emotional attachment and a sense of belonging. Discovering their local area, children recognise that they are part of the place and the place is part of them.

The *My Square Mile* pack (book and CD) is available from the Design Commission for Wales, or a pdf of the book can be downloaded from the Commission's website:

### **Public space**

It is not only buildings that give the townscape a particular quality. Environmental design is about relationships between people, buildings and spaces. What is the purpose of various kinds of space? Are they social spaces where people meet and congregate? Are they for sport, play or recreation: or for rest and relaxation? Who uses them? How well do they work? What sequence of spaces do we encounter? Do people pass through quickly or stay there for some time? How easy is it to walk around? How is vehicular and pedestrian traffic separated? What is the experience of someone in a wheelchair or pushing a pram? These are the kinds of questions young people address in exploring public space.

### **Example: Shaping Places**

*Shaping Places* was an education programme in primary and secondary schools, developed by the Kent Architecture Centre and delivered in collaboration with the Solent Centre for Architecture + Design and a range of partners, including artists, designers, architects, landscape architects and planners working with teachers from a number of disciplines. Projects focused on local design and development issues. The aim was to engage young people in the urban design process in the hope that the next generation might be better prepared to play an active role in future in shaping the built environment, whether as citizens, designers or built environment practitioners. Teachers adapted ways of working in art and design and geography to contribute to environmental design education. The emphasis was on learning strategies to develop visual and spatial modes of thinking as well as verbal skills. It required students to make connections and judgements, and nurtured their powers of imagination. Learning through design involves collaborative working and group effort. The work cut across subject disciplines and addressed wider curriculum concerns, such as citizenship and education for sustainability.

SEE: Adams, E. (2006) *Shaping Places*, Chatham, Kent Architecture Centre, available as a pdf:

[http://architecturecentre.org/documents/publications/shaping\\_places.pdf](http://architecturecentre.org/documents/publications/shaping_places.pdf)

ALSO: Adams, E. (2006) *Getting Out There...Art and design local safari guide*, CABE, available as a pdf:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/files/getting-out-there.pdf>

### **Public art**

We need to recognise the value of art and design, not as artefacts, but as a range of processes, as a means of perception, a way of seeing the world, of creating cultural identity, of making meanings, of understanding who we are and how we choose to live. Are we content to leave students to the delights of the Internet as their main source of experience of art, and to view art merely as interesting images, styles and effects? How might we engage them in questioning the place of art and the role of the artist in a rapidly changing society? An excellent starting point is engagement with public art, to explore the special relationship between art and the environment of which it is part, and to reflect on the role of the artist as an agent of change: changing places: changing perceptions.

Many people are familiar with public art as sculptural objects in public spaces. These offer excellent stimulus for a study of contemporary art:

*... it is possible to develop an everyday relationship with public artworks as part of our daily routine; they define a unique space and establish relationships with users; they can stimulate thinking and imagination, as they are physically and (sometimes) intellectually accessible to all; they express the qualities, beliefs and values of diverse cultures and artists; and facilitate construction of diverse interpretations (20).*

However, public art is very much concerned with art as process just as much as art as product. The process of art can provide a much more powerful educational experience for students, through involvement in conceptualizing and creating art, being involved in consultation or fabrication, or engaging in collaboration and celebration – being an active participant, not merely a viewer or spectator.

### **Example: 2Up 2Down**

This is evident in a project commissioned by Liverpool Biennial, and developed by artist Jeanne van Heeswijk, who has been working with young people from Anfield and Breckfield to rethink the future of their neighbourhood.

*It provides a way for local people to make real social and physical change in their neighbourhood. Architects URBED and other design specialists have worked with the community to remodel a block of empty property including the former Mitchell's Bakery and the two terraced houses next door. Taking the whole community as their client, they have designed an affordable housing scheme, bakery shop and kitchen, meeting and project spaces, with the needs of real individuals in mind. At the core of the process is a series of intensive design workshops with young people from Anfield, held both in the bakery itself and in local schools. These workshops have followed the process of a traditional design process, though using tools and methods that allow those untrained in design to articulate their ideas about space, place, shape and form (21).*

### **Example: SPUD**

SPUD, an organization focusing on space, place-making and urban design, works with professionals across a broad range of disciplines to develop projects that link environment, design and education. Here, the intention is not so much to change the environment as it is to change attitudes towards sustainability. SPUD plans to develop a new project, *The Exbury Egg*, a temporary, energy efficient self-sustaining workspace for artist Stephen Turner in the estuary of the River Beaulieu.

*It is a place to stay and a laboratory for studying the life of a tidal creek, a collecting and collating centre with integral storage & display areas. The Egg will be anchored like a boat within a cradle structure and will rise and fall with the tide. The light touch and basic nature of the Exbury Egg aims to re-appraise the way we live; to properly consider sustainably and future use of natural resources.*

*There will be an extensive education programme covering primary age students through to university. Schools will be able to engage with the Egg project throughout its programme, including the construction period, on*

*science, art, ecology and engineering topics. Opportunities for community participation with people of all ages will be offered through a series of events, seminars and workshops once the Egg is in place in April 2013 (22).*

The school itself provides opportunities not only for exploring how places are designed, used and managed, but also what they mean to us. The challenge for teachers is to move out of the comfort and confines of the classroom, and to recognize the potential of the school environment as both a setting and a subject for study.

Going even further beyond the school gates, the public realm offers a wide range of experiences of art and design. From advertising to urban zoology, it can provide the stimulus for exploring ideas of change, adaptation and transformation. Working contacts with environmental designers can bring into sharp relief the challenge and excitement of how we shape and manage our environment.

Art and design teachers are keen to introduce young people to artists' work, but tend to favour established artists. Public art provides students with insights into contemporary art practice, yet most art teachers prefer to arrange gallery visits. This may be because they are overwhelmed by considerations of health and safety, deterred by risk assessment and managing a class of students in the street, so prefer the comparative safety of a coach ride to an art gallery, enclosed and supervised – containment and control. However, the direct experience of an artist's studio, of witnessing how art is created, of understanding purposes and processes as well as the products of art, is more likely to have a transformative effect on students than the gallery visit, which can be similar to window-shopping.

### **Educational strategy**

A pedagogical strand linking the projects identified here is the use of drawing as a medium for learning. Numeracy and verbal literacy are key in developing our capacity to understand experience, to think and to participate in the concrete world of objects and experiences as well as in the abstract world of ideas. Visual and spatial literacy are also important if we are to equip our students with the intellectual survival kit to help to enable them to prosper in an increasingly complex world, to be inventive and creative. So much in our material culture depends on drawing – the complex range of environments, products, communications and systems that support and shape contemporary life could not be brought into existence without drawing.

Drawing is an intellectual activity that links sensing, feeling, thinking and doing. It can make the invisible visible, accessible, usable. What is evident in projects that link art, design and environment is that they require different modes of thought. Drawing can be reflective and meditative. It can be exploratory, investigatory, questioning. It can create a space for thinking, and also fix experience and create a trace, a memory or a memorial. It can shape a vision of the future.

The education programme of The Campaign for Drawing has produced powerful evidence and arguments to support learning through drawing in schools and informal education. Its professional development programmes, providing training for educators to embed the use of drawing in their everyday practice, have explored how drawing can develop skills of perception, communication and action.

*A key contribution has been to show how drawing can help develop thinking skills, through illuminating various purposes and uses of drawing as a medium for learning. For instance, drawers may wish to understand something for themselves. These drawings make use of personal imagery or symbols and may make sense only to the drawer – drawing as perception. Drawers may wish to communicate information or ideas to others. Here they need to adopt codes or conventions that the person attempting to read the drawing can understand – drawing as communication. It may be that drawers start drawing with only a vague idea of the subject matter or intention, but through drawing, ideas take shape and are developed and refined – drawing as invention. Sometimes, drawers will want to make something happen as a result of their drawing – a plan to make something or to do something – drawing as action. Drawing is presented not as a set of discrete skills and techniques: rather it is seen as a way of prompting different kinds of thinking, emphasizing the importance of ideational thinking, as well as conclusive thought (23).*

## **CONCLUSION**

Recent government initiatives in the design, construction and management of schools as well as possibilities offered by the new impetus in cultural education, create potential for curriculum development in those schools that are not hampered by the constraints of the National Curriculum and the dead hand of assessment procedures. Government rhetoric emphasizes the freedom schools have to develop their own curricula. Stronger support for arts subjects is emerging. Funding from the Bridge network may encourage schools to establish collaborative partnerships with cultural practitioners and organisations, to extend and enrich cultural education and to create new opportunities for studies that link art, design and environment. The ideas are not new. But they need to be revisited and revitalized with fresh energy from new educational initiatives. Resources are available to support education that links art, design and environment. The potential is there. It just needs the commitment of schools and the efforts of teachers to make it happen!

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