

# IS THIS THE END FOR CLASSROOM CREATIVITY? NO, SAYS THE GLOBE

Cuts in both arts and education funding are rife at the moment. As a result, creativity in the classroom is often the first area to suffer. Is this how it must be in times of recession? Sarah Nunn explains how creative arts in the classroom can build schools of the future – and how Globe Education can help to make that difference

The world of education is changing; changing rapidly. Technology is connecting us globally but an increasing number of young people are disengaged with our current education system that still ranks knowledge above imagination, stifling creativity and invention. The complex language of the arts communicates our experiences and beliefs but, in times of change, many schools look inwards to handle the imminent challenges, often missing the opportunity to re-examine and re-imagine their current curriculum provision to discover a new direction.

Limiting our thinking in times of difficulties is short-sighted. Ironically, the *Building Schools for the Future* programme, intended to invigorate our outdated school buildings by equipping learners with cutting-edge design and facilities, was the first education initiative to face elimination.

Next in line to be curtailed: the *Creativity, Culture and Education* (CCE) department. Their government funding halved to £19.1m, ending Creative Partnerships, who had been a national lifeline, providing the 'most disadvantaged communities' access to highly-skilled artists, choreographers, actors and directors. In 1999, *All Our Futures* reported that schools had narrowed their curriculum provision to focus on literacy and numeracy. Our league table mentality was potentially de-humanising our young people; their emotional and spiritual wellbeing, which is often awakened through physical and intellectual engagement with the creative arts, was being neglected. Eleven years on, is history in danger of repeating itself? How can we ensure that the beating heart of creativity continues to resonate in every child's experience during their lifetime at school?

Despite these cutbacks, there is an answer. Dialogue. Like-minded schools who value the creative arts need to collaborate, striking up their own partnerships with arts organisations, and head teachers need to actively empower a person within their establishment to lead on creativity. Pro-active decision-making will ensure the arts avoid further relegation in the subject hierarchy that is still entrenched in our institutions.

Building the right partnerships can be daunting but there are resources available to ease the transition. Globe Education at

Shakespeare's Globe, in association with King's College London, has devised an MA that encourages teachers to think differently about creative arts in the classroom. 'The MA Creative Arts in the Classroom is unique', explains current student Melissa Bicknell, 'in that it combines both professional, educational theory with practical approaches for the classroom, informed by collaborations with arts organizations. We work mostly with Shakespeare's Globe, but also with other arts organisations, theatre companies and practitioners, giving me fresh inspiration and skills for the classroom.'

In 2004, the first intake of teachers – secondary and primary – arrived at the Globe to embark on this innovative course, which is now in its seventh year. The first module, 'performing arts', is a series of 10 three-hour evening lectures, seminars and workshops, aiming to immerse the teachers into the current thinking on creativity, to inspire debate and innovation in the classroom.

During February half-term, participants complete a week-long residency at the Globe, working with a range of specialist practitioners from the theatre and education departments. The teachers indulge physically and intellectually in the creative space. Over the two years, they also complete theoretical modules at King's College, focusing on areas such as 'Notions of English' and 'English and the Arts of Language'. Completing the teacher's creative journey and forming the basis for their dissertation is a second placement with another art organisation of their choice. Past residencies have included the Eden Project, the Guggenheim in New York, Unicorn Theatre and the ENO.

The Globe endeavours to be a centre of creativity, constantly re-interpreting Shakespeare for the modern age, and feel ideally positioned to host an MA that welcomes dialogue with other arts organisations who may also be striving to discover new thinking and pedagogy on the value of creative arts in the classroom. Previous participants have become assistant heads and ASTs leading on creativity, even national consultants. In changing times, perhaps the perspective of this MA could indeed help to build schools of the future.



**Sarah Nunn** is a learning consultant for Globe Education and director of programmes for Creative Elements & Partners

For more information on the MA, go to: [www.shakespeares-globe.org/globeeducation/teachers/macourse/](http://www.shakespeares-globe.org/globeeducation/teachers/macourse/)