



Whole
Education



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Whole Education: Introduction

A gulf has opened between what education systems provide and what young people need. Our education system rightly attempts to provide young people with literacy, numeracy and academic qualifications. But this emphasis on a set of core academic skills and a culture of intensive testing too often squeezes out other essential capabilities also required from a modern education. At a time of great social change these capabilities prepare young people for life in a competitive, globalised economy and a much more fragile and uncertain society.

Many millions of parents, carers, teachers, employers and children are already aware that there is a misalignment between what is happening in the classroom and what is required for a decent and productive life. Something more is required to prepare today's young people fully for the fast changing demands of the 21st century.

For the first time, a group leading non-political organisations in education are coming together to share and promote a set of common beliefs and practices. Our purpose is to accelerate the transformation in education already occurring across the country to ensure that every young person has access to a Whole Education, an education that will equip them with the skills and knowledge to succeed in life and to contribute positively to the creation of a good society.

The active partners behind Whole Education so far include Paul Hamlyn Foundation, RSA, Edge, Innovation Unit, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Human scale Education, Oxfam, UK Youth, Futurelab, Young Foundation, DEA, ASDAN, Co-Operative College, Food for Life Partnership and Campaign for Learning. Whole Education partner initiatives work with over 5000 schools and colleges (including over three quarters of secondary schools), as well as numerous youth organisations and charities engaging directly with young people.

Whole Education supports education that knits together academic, practical and vocational learning calibrated to the potential of each individual. We believe education should invest in the intellectual development of the young person as well as the development of social and emotional competencies. These competencies are a major part of the foundations that allow every young person to learn effectively and contribute positively to their own development and attainment and to the development of a good society.

We are already working to ensure that practitioners across the country who believe in Whole Education are supported to develop and share such practices. A key area of focus in 2010 will be to provide Whole Education EXPO events across the country to provide a 'one stop shop' for practitioners interested in Whole Education practices and initiatives.

We believe every young person deserves a Whole Education. We know many young people, parents, employers, teachers and citizens across the country agree. We will be working to stimulate debate about education across the country. For those that support Whole Education, we will engage and mobilise their support to help ensure all young people have access to a Whole Education.

Finally, we believe that the policy environment should be conducive to supporting Whole Education for young people. Acting as a voice for our supporters, actively engaged and otherwise, we will seek to influence policy in support of our aims for young people.

Whole Education: Aims and Objectives

Overall aim: To ensure that all young people have access to a Whole Education

Specific aims:

1. To increase awareness and understanding of the need for Whole Education and promoting its value
2. To increase engagement and support from individuals and organisations across society for Whole Education
3. To enable widespread development, spread and adoption of Whole Education practices
4. To enable necessary changes in education policy

Whole Education: Common Beliefs

We have set out below some common beliefs that hold true across the various initiatives that Whole Education supports.

Adaptable and Creative

We believe in equipping young people to meet the demands of a fast changing work place that requires independent thinking, creativity, employability and collaboration.

Learning throughout Life

We believe in equipping young people with the skills and personal qualities they need to handle the major transitions in life – from pre-school to primary, primary to secondary, secondary to further and higher, and to work. We believe that a major purpose of education should be to develop in young people a passion for learning that will last for their lifetime.

Developing Every Individual

We believe that every young person should have a curriculum that develops his or her potential. That goal demands that practical and theoretical learning are both accorded high status by higher education, employers and society.

More than Knowledge

We believe in diversity and choice of education pathways. Young people are motivated to learn and absorb information in different ways. Some learn better in a practical context; others perform better when faced with theoretical challenges. We should help young people build on these strengths, but should also encourage young people to learn in ways that they might find harder.

Building Resilience

We believe in teaching social and emotional competencies including self-awareness, empathy, resilience, self-respect, persistence, self-discipline, the ability to respond to discipline, and the capacity to collaborate and forge strong constructive relationships with others.

Trusting Good Teachers

We believe that more trust should be placed in heads and teachers who understand the requirements of the young people they teach. These practitioners are best positioned to design a learning process that raises attainment and encourages the best from each young person.

Independence and Reward

We support education that equips young people to think for themselves and make the very best of their talents. It builds belief that what a young person does – and how much effort he or she invests – can and will produce positive results and rewards.

Relevant and Engaging

We support learning that is active not passive. Young people should be encouraged to work collaboratively; to stretch themselves and work with others; to question and to be able to present their arguments, findings and knowledge in a coherent and literate manner.

Good Citizens

We believe that young people are more likely to volunteer, and to get involved in their local communities or otherwise be good citizens, if they see that their contribution matters. We believe that young people should be provided with opportunities to practice this active citizenship.

Joint Responsibility

We believe that each young person needs to take responsibility for their own future, but that this can only happen with the commitment and support of parents, the school and the wider community. For some young people, this further requires the support of well co-ordinated local support services. Schools that are accessible and operate without boundaries can act as catalysts in this process. Further, we believe that the voice of every young person needs to be heard in the shaping of their education.

More than School

We understand that young people spend much of their time outside school, in the community and online, and that out of school education has an important role in the development of young people. More dialogue and closer working between school, youth groups and others can enhance the education of young people.

For Everyone

We support education that allows no young person to be 'written off' or left behind. Every young person has the right to acquire qualifications that carry recognised value.

Whole Education: Get Involved

The list of partners, supporting organisations and individual supporters is growing all the time. Any person or organisation who shares our beliefs can get involved. Over the coming months we'll be sharing our plans for launch, launch events and various ways you can get involved.

If you share our beliefs, would like to show your support and register to be kept up to date with Whole Education plans simply e-mail us at: supportus@wholeeducation.org.

If you have any questions or would like to know how you can get more involved e-mail us at info@wholeeducation.org.