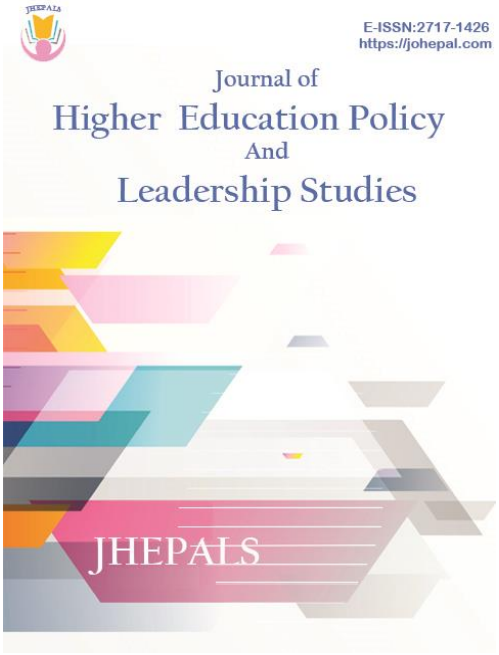
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The Importance of Art/Poetry and Philosophy in Educational Leadership, Well-being and Engagement of STEM Subjects

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Christine Challen *

Abstract

So much of our education system today is controlled by targets "getting pupils through exams" accountability everywhere you look. However, this drive for learning facts after facts has meant we have totally alienated students not only from society but from themselves and more importantly their own autonomy/agency in learning - very necessary qualities to effectively succeed in Higher Education. The unexpected arrival of Covid-19 has forced us all to reset and rethink. It has given us additional time to reflect and find out who we are. Many of us have turned to the arts and /humanities. During the lockdown, I have been reading widely – a diverse range of non-pedagogical literature. This has provided me through these writings with some ideas that indicate ways we might create a more holistic educational approach that encourages leadership and global citizenship. This review will describe how art and poetry (in particular Eliot); diverse literatures, creative oral and written communication might be used as tools. The aim is to find ways to stimulate and maintain trust and compassion and advance excellent teaching, leadership and employability skills. It will also illustrate how the use of art and visceral skills may enhance cognition towards deeper more critical thinking and further how these can enhance student emotional self-regulation, confidence and voice. Such strategies can be pivotal in stimulating, enriching and educating towards social justice, equality and diversity when planning to lead courses of national and international students in Higher Education.

Keywords: Art; Science; Philosophy; Engagement; STEM; Creative Communication; Autonomy

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The Role of Humanities in Leadership, Well-being and STEM Engagement

"Imagination is more important than knowledge" Albert Einstein
"Education is not the learning of facts but the training of the mind to think"
"Poetry is the clear expression of mixed feelings" W. H. Auden
"When a bird gets free it does not go back for remnants left at the bottom of the cage." Rumi
"Storytelling is the most powerful way to put ideas into the world today" Robert McKee

Introduction

Humanities, Educational Leadership, Well-being and Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) Engagement

The accounts of the battle against cancer by both Gross and Kalanithi although different, have several areas of common ground in relation to the importance of humanities and their role in educational leadership, well-being and science. In particular, how they relate the role of art/poetry and philosophy to enhance trust, communication in social learning and relationships, together with their impact in science/medicine and human problems about mortality. They correlate and cite the works of the *"meditative"* American poet T.S Elliot to support and enhance the positivity that our awareness of death can have on life as well as building excellent social relationships through compassion, integrity and respect. All of which are essential qualities for educational leadership and vision. In her book Wintering May beautifully describes life as "*not linear but cyclical"* which relates and also corroborates the work of Eliot and his use of seasons in Wasteland to portray the different phases of life. It is almost, an indirect argument against education being viewed as linear; a one size fits all approach. Instead it supports the need for an individualised style; embedding creative and innovative approaches to enable inclusive accessibility, achievement and a voice for all. Furthermore, this strategy will also enable education as a holistic journey to encourage self actualisation and identity.

Whilst reading Harari (2014) it becomes apparent that he too, like Kalanithi highlights the importance of trust within social groups and learning as well as stating *"trade cannot exist without trust."* This is true of successful leadership not just within education but throughout all different areas and aspects of life. Further highlighted through the works of Eliot and the destructive leadership during WW1, a theme within his poem Wasteland.

In any productive professional relationship between teacher and student whether in the classroom or out-with, to be effective it needs to be built on trust, integrity and respect. This also extends to the student's family, relatives and community who are part of their "supportive" educational journey. Such is social learning, therefore methods that enable consistent enhancement of these attributes within the *"core curriculum"* are crucial for future generations *"to learn how to get along with one another."* This will undoubtedly lead to successful educational leadership and community relationships through effective respectful communications that are built around trust and professional agency.

The *"deep beauty"* of the prose and the links with poetry and philosophy made me reflect and question; how we could implement such strategies and techniques not only in improving student engagement and autonomy within the STEM subject area but also to enable a more subjective approach in education, as part of a holistic reflective journey of being becoming, thriving and self actualisation. This approach could not only improve positive and effective responses through emotional regulation but also embed much needed tolerance and respect of *"people*

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skills"/values/opinions. These attributes are essential for our student's ability to be successful in society and develop global and cultural communication skills that will enhance both academic and building education towards developing resilience, respectful emotional regulation towards a pathway for social justice. As Amber Makaiau states *"It's important that we make room for this for learning how to get along with one another..... people skills being conscious of our cultural differences what makes businesses succeed and economies run."*

Harari (2011) also describes the importance of the Cognitive Revolution; new ways of thinking and communicating through creative writing and communication as being responsible for *Homo sapiens* thriving by adapting to social changes and behaviour. This he says *"opened a fast lane of cultural evolution bypassing genetic evolution."* Therefore even in the earliest times creative writing, story telling communication and trust resulted in the success (both leadership and educationally), adaptability and survival/thriving of the human race. Recently I have been surprised at the wide range of non-pedagogic literature including Pullman and others that support the importance of spiritual holistic and subjective journeys. How it enhances an independent, imaginative and curious spirit as well as the ability to problem solve and we will explore in detail its impact on both leadership and well-being within this paper.

The importance of the use of art, philosophy and religion in the teaching of Science, Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) also contributes to this outcome. Davinci's (who himself was a philosopher, artist and scientist) early anatomical sketches and using candy to build organ systems enables medical students to appreciate not just anatomy as a necessary subject for medicine but its wider visceral beauty. Further such studies can enhance understanding through the "messy state of art" embodiment, special-awareness and cognitive skills all essential to self-transformative thinking and becoming. We might also explore the use of questioning simple concepts like a rainbow and show how this can be developed from a primary aspect of colours through its overlapping creative associations with physics, maths, music, history and literature. This encourages connections between, the sciences, arts, spiritual and musical humanities enabling critical thought analysis necessary for self-development. More importantly it stimulates curiosity particularly in young children and this provides good cognitive foundations to build on.

The use of film making skills is another great technique as this builds communication, expression and self-confidence/esteem as well as the process of editing which is closely associated in the translational, transformative process towards becoming. Interestingly Pullman in his Daemon voices discusses in his *"The Writing of Stories"* how David Mamet a film director asks "*Where do I put the camera?"* Pullman uses this question successfully in his story telling but it also has huge implications and associations with not only self-critical analysis as part of becoming, but how we view our living experiences. These allow us to assess and reassess our circumstances, our "being" but more importantly transiently move us towards "becoming." In view of these observations, there are three key aspects that immediately come to mind: Can we realistically increase and develop cognitive and student autonomy skills using the "messy" state often said to describe art through active participation in creating and building leading to greater focussed brain attention? Yes if we can create the right balance of appropriate stimuli.

Evaluation and analysis of poetry and literature and the encouragement of reading, creative writing, speaking and film making/drama at all stages of education provide us with likely possible strategies for empowering, encouraging and empathetic attributes and excellent foundation for future leadership and employability skills and as part of a subjective/holistic journey in education.

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Are these alternative and more effective approaches to develop "real" student engagement, communication and autonomy in learning and not just students *"being busy"*?'''

The recent issues in the educational media and social network concerning inclusion of Special, Educational Needs (SEN) students. People believe that so far as is possible they should be within mainstream education and provided with equal opportunities such that they can reach their full potential. This requires rethinking around the differentiation strategies used to teach and engage these students. Undoubtedly, these will have to include inclusive, creative life-long-learning methods that results in the breakdown of possibly both educational and emotional barriers. Some of these approaches may be the most effective way to sever ties with the whole assessment and "work to exam" culture that seems to drive education in all areas and subjects. Such strategies are so often not effective or indeed conducive for those with SEN needs. They can actually prevent the acquisition of a broader/deeper understanding, critical thinking skills through holistic and subjective approaches including destroying communication, argumentative skills and self expression. Further and in some more severe cases a way of controlling emotions and mood swings often associated with mental health, autism and ADHD students, facilitating them to achieve better. *"Humans are immensely complex"* and there is an even greater need now to include arts philosophy and religion in education if we want to allow students to evolve from being towards becoming and continually thriving. The need to expose and embed students of all ages in the arts has huge benefits towards interdisciplinary and creative innovative problem solving skills. It builds social and cultural "becoming" as well as self-actualisation. Such attributes cannot be created on a subject based curriculum alone, and these are essential to build social connections with ourselves others and the world we live in. In the words of Paul Kalanithi (2016, p. 45) "*Human* knowledge *is* never contained in one person. It grows from the relationships we create between each other *and* the world."

Experience is key to being able to learn the art of becoming and the arts provide this type of developmental thinking. Citizenship and leadership cannot be taught without laying bare all the joy and relationships between the arts sciences and humanities. An excellent strategy and approach to reenergise and refresh self and human stable creative and innovative social tapestries and enable effective leadership of them (Challen, 2020).

This review will hopefully provide firm and substantial evidence of the need to consistently and continually develop innovative ways at all stages of education using art/poetry/diverse literatures and creative oral and written communication as tools to maintain trust and compassion and advance excellent teaching, leadership and employability skills. The use of diverse "real life" experiences from all different cultural/socioeconomic backgrounds through the arts and humanities and enriching diverse literature can further empower these skills and enhance student confidence and voice. Such qualities will also be pivotal and result in better staff and student well-being reflected in improved academic achievement and cultural led social integration. Further, this can also lead to empowering proactive skills towards enriching equality and diversity strategies within and towards excellent leadership for national and international students at HE and throughout educational sectors (Challen, 2020).

Values for Leadership

Importance of Consistent Learning in Leadership

Donald Mc Gannon states that "Leadership is an action, not a position" and that great leaders have vision. Such qualities can be effectively achieved by consistent learning, researching and keeping up

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with current/topical ideas and philosophies. This allows the leader to have the knowledge to act wisely, compassionately and with vision in times of challenge and controversy for the benefit and wellbeing of the institution and its staff. Ultimately this will instil staff confidence in their leader and result in the building of trust, integrity and respect all essential characteristics for exceptional leadership. However, we also need not only leadership in senior management but within classroom staff/office as well as pupils and young people. The impact of effectual leadership and its values is profound and it forms the basis of not only successful professional and social environments but enables fruitful collaborations, achievements and staff/student well-being. *"People power not powerful people* (Pai, 2021).

Therefore, the big question remains how can we ensure that we encourage this through *"action"* within and throughout institutions? How can we prepare our next generation(s) of leaders to act with integrity regardless of position so that we enhance the inheritance of the essential values necessary. What can we learn from Eliot and other literature about supporting within our subject teaching ways and techniques that will develop subjective/holistic strategies to develop the attributes needed to lead?

The History and Role of Creative Thinking in Leadership and Teaching

We begin this section with the interesting thought that some of the greatest creative minds behind many important discoveries were NOT scientists and some did not even have a degree or formal education!

Their ability to think was not measured in credits or exam results but through philosophy, deep thinking and questioning along with the use of art and building. These strategies allowed them to create and invent some of the most useful machines that today we take for granted. Through their powerful creative communication they were able to engage and enthuse people and in some cases alter how people viewed science and were thus highly respected and considered as leaders. Examples include Einstein and his theory of relativity which led to the making of the atomic bomb (Jha, 2014).

Whilst his other ideas that gravity, light, energy and matter were connected, changed people's perspective of how they viewed the world and its universe and importantly brought relevance to a complex theory and allowed connectivity/conceptualisation in science. Likewise Da Vinci. although "*officially classed" as* an artist had a great interest in science, technology and philosophy and while he did not invent the helicopter *perse* his sketches were thought to be the predecessor of the machine http://www.da-vinci-inventions.com/

A clear example of how the "messy state" of art encourages critical thinking, inventive and innovative problem solving skills. Such creative ability enabled them to inform others in a more inclusive, integrated and passionate transfer of their knowledge. In view of these illustrations of effective/successful use of art and philosophy in STEM resulting in great discoveries as well as respected leaders' two thoughts immediately come to mind: Why have we deviated from such successful learning and achievement, social and leadership skills, insisting on an exam-based curriculum? Why do we pursue compartmentalised thinking/black and white division of subjects rather than strive towards a more passion driven and inclusive integrated education.

In his book *"Do not Harm"* Henry Marsh (2014, p. 34) recalls when he was interviewed for Medical school that his interviewer at the time a Senior Medical Registrar said that it was "best to see medicine as a form of craft neither art nor science" he also describes "the sociable process of dissecting cadavers groups of students picking and scratching away at dead tissue while learning

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hundreds of names of organs, veins and vessels". Clearly showing the effectiveness of this technique not only from a social/peer aspect but also *"*as a transition from the lay world to diseases". He even goes on to give us an insight into how he commendably made elaborate drawings of "a bag of hands in various stages of dissection in the imitation of Versalius". Evidence of the power of art in building spatial conceptual awareness.

Another great leader of our time Mandela was a huge advocate of life-long learning/reflection/social learning which is supported by Kalanithi (2016, p. 45) when he states that "human knowledge is never contained in one person it grows from relationships we create between each other", thereby emphasising the power and effectiveness of language and communication in building trust an essential leadership skill. Such values are also expressed both as part of Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social education (Instructional Design, 2021) and Maslow's theory which are pivotal topics in teacher education training. Both stress the need for social wellbeing, pastoral and financial security to facilitate solid emotional foundations as essential contributors to high academic achievement and effective leadership skills. Recently staff and pupil wellbeing has been the focus of many social media discussions both within the education sector as well as industry and much debate about effective strategies including mentor schemes to ensure it is prevented. This is even more essential since the arrival of COVID and the long-term mental health issues it brings. Another key aspect of education is the drive to promote it as a life-long process which is not only restricted to formal learning/education institutions but also includes our social/communities/employment surroundings that influence how we grow and develop as a person. Such beliefs are pivotal in enabling education being thought as a means of improving "social justice". Mandela's life was a rich mosaic of life-long learning, struggle and critical reflection. Moreover, he fully supported the humanist approach that people were human beings first and foremost. His years of imprisonment gave him first-hand experience of education in prison and its struggles. His commitment to education was evident as *"*often when Mandela introduces a person he will talk about his education, or he will talk about what he learned from that person, whether a friend or an enemy. There's a very specific emphasis on learning". His ability to critically reflect and act on criticism as well as his humanist approach all resulted in his great leadership skills, worldwide following and admiration (MacGregor, 2015).

Finally, there is also the question as to the relationship between faith and educational leadership. Whilst In the "Return to the little coffee shop of Kabul" by Deborah Rodriguez (2016, p. 233) the struggles of Afghan women are forefront in this book, their fight to go to school to get educated in a "male dominated country." However some key quotes that link to the importance of leadership in education are "it is the power of a girl with a book that is the best weapon for progress," "because with educated women comes prosperity and with our voices and our strength comes change". Education then in all settings and religions/cultures is essential to great leadership which in turn is key to holding populations, employers and people together. In essence *"people power not powerful people"*.

I began this article with a quote from Rumi a 13th Century Persian poet, Islamic scholar and theologian, he perfectly links the importance if indirectly of the importance of religion and education leadership when he also says "When a bird gets free it does not go back for remnants left at the bottom of the cage" (Rumi, 2004, p.24; Rodriguez, 2016, p. 233).

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The Role of Diverse Literature in Developing Compassion Trust and Empathy for Effective Leadership Skills

T. S. Eliot stated that art "required a form which could impose order and meaning on experience". He goes on to say in The Dial 75 that "all art emulates the condition of ritual. That is what it comes from and to that it must always return for nourishment" (Shorer et. al., 1923, 480-483). Such is the core of not only being human but what we expect from leadership and counsel/teaching in education. However, it is not only important in leadership but as part of our social tapestry and towards using education for and towards social justice for all. Harari puts this very eloquently when he says "not equal biologically but equal in essence enable us to create a stable and prosperous society". He believed in order, not "because it is objectively true but because believing it enables us to cooperate effectively and forge a better society". Additionally he also "imagined order incorporated into fairy tales, drama and painting". Many of us turn to reading to escape the pressures and challenges of life but also as a way to enrich us through literary experiences fiction or non-fiction emotional empathy and trust. It is these that we more often than not along with the real life challenges and experiences that we have faced that determine and proactively contribute to our approaches to leadership, collaborations education and the wellbeing of our staff and pupils. More importantly is how we embed these in our subject teaching, to enable a subjective/holistic journey by providing a conducive space for student voice.

Eliot in his poem The Waste Land depicts the devastation of destructive leadership that led to World War 1 and decay of European civilisation. It also reflects the upheaval in his personal life the breakdown of his marriage and death of his father. The poem uses different literature styles including narrative, and mythical, as well as voices from times and places shifting perspectives on situations. In the narrative Eliot creates an orderly flow of life and stories emphasising the importance of stories as part of emotional regulation. The mythical creates a "continuous parallel between an ordered world of myth abstraction and a chaotic world of history contemporary or otherwise" and was deliberate on Eliot's part to highlight the importance of art in the modern world (Eliot, T. S., 1888-1965, p. 13-18).

The shifting creates the instability insecurity and uncertainty which results from poor leadership which ultimately ends in failure of leadership, community and love producing a Wasteland. Education, society today is experiencing this first hand with the handling of COVID. Whilst school leaders senior educators and society are struggling with lack of clarity leading to lack of trust and integrity of government in some cases it has enhanced community and an altruistic spirit. However, it has also highlighted the huge inequalities in our society and communities.

Interestingly Eliot uses a cyclical aspect by portraying the seasons to depict the hardships and need to build resilience and self belief to thrive. This is also present in Wintering Katherine May's work where she describes life as cyclical and the need to be able to Winter in preparation for Spring, but also as an analogy for building resilience and coping strategies for the challenges faced in life. Such are also required for efficient empathetic leadership.

The need to consider education as cyclical and not linear is ever more important now building in a curriculum that is both subject and subjective towards building leadership and citizenship skills. While The Waste Land has five different parts the first Burial of the dead and the fifth the appearance of thunder are the most pertinent here. The idea that death is a part of life and can be a form of regrowth and regeneration. While the appearance of thunder in the last section of the poem, could be seen as a "form of clearing the air" or analogy to society revolting for restoration. However, this is only a faint glimpse because it needs a willingness and almost an acceptance to construct or build

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"order" leading to meaning and conceptualisation/relevance to society and its people. This likewise depicts essential attributes required of an effective leader the ability to enact change. The need for integrity courage and vision ensuring staff are informed and their wellbeing/safety health prioritised.

In the last few months I have been reading what would not necessarily be classed as educational or pedagogy literature, including Phillip Pullman, Nan Shepherd, Tove Jansson, and more recently Wintering by Katherine May. It has however provided me through their writings much to reflect on how we can enrich, inspire and engage our students towards global leadership and citizenship through the arts philosophy and nature. So much of our education system today is controlled by targets "getting pupils through exams" teaching to exams accountability everywhere you look. However, this drive for learning facts after facts has meant we have totally alienated students not only from society but from themselves and more importantly their own autonomy/agency in learning and self-actualisation necessary qualities to effectively succeed at HE. However, such characteristics also contribute to leadership skills including the drive to want to learn and more importantly fulfil the notion that *"Leadership is an action, not a position."* To do this effectively you need to know yourself have the self-actualisation and ability to reflect research even rebuild with innovation and creativity, to be able to lead others with integrity trust and honesty. While these authors may not instantly be associated with educational pedagogy their ideas through different messages and writings support innovative evolving strategies and the arts. Pullman is a firm believer in the importance of exposing children to a wide range of literature, philosophers and religious voices. This not only enhances deep and rich experiences through stories which Eliot also demonstrated in The Waste Land. This not only supports diversity of cultural knowledge but also demonstrates its importance in emotional regulation and therefore creating a conducive human voice space. In many respects Shepherd and Jansson are very similar in their ideologies. Both had a deep love of nature and were independent spirits able to explore freely their surroundings, Shepherd the Cairngorms in Scotland and Jansson the beauty of a remote Island off the gulf in Finland. Both, in Shepherd's words "immerse themselves" in their environments mind body soul and senses. Shepherd states it is seeing the "world not just as we see it but as the world sees us." That for me is what true leadership is about thinking outside the box and continually questioning and reflecting.

In a Summer Book Jansson describes a Summer spent on a remote island with an elderly artist and her 6 year old grand daughter its beauty and relevance sings in how they discover/explore the island wildlife, birds flowers and grasses. It is however more, it is a journey of being and becoming through learning to respect and love each others attributes and fears nemesis and all. In A Winter Book Jansson has created a series of short stories which celebrate "the life of art." However, as with the Summer book the underlying theme of a spiritual and holistic journey is there lurking under the surface. The desire to face and self reflect on each life/time line as Ali Smith so succinctly puts it in her introduction to the book "The stories face age, youth and each of the dark seasons with the same determination to make something light of it all". There is that word seasons cyclical as both Eliot and May also infer in their writings. Life/people are not the same its not a one size fits all, education and leadership both need to evolve with ever changing times including environment, cultures, society and political these need to be incorporated into our strategies. As we have found out to our cost with COVID-19 and all the challenges it has brought.

Will this be a catalyst for change? Is this the thunder appearing roaring for change like a people/society revolting! Perhaps one of the necessary ingredients for this is the powerful message conveyed in Kalanithi's book is the key role of trust, communication and leadership *"trust comes in all aspects of life."* A statement which echoes a number of recent articles on the role of trust in

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educational leadership and management (e.g. Kezar, 2004). Education and leadership Writer Colin Lofthouse (2015) discusses the importance of trust and the challenges faced when trying to build it, in his blog *"Searching for Trust"*. He emphasises that with trust you can create a positive working environment that will facilitate changes and mitigate against risk citing benevolence, reliability, competency, honesty and openness as key elements of this trust.

Further evidence to substantiate this is in Kalanithi's book, his short life of decisions and responsibility for patient life or death is proof that *"Trust Matters."* His firm belief that "where there is no place for the scalpel words are the surgeons' only tool" together with his conviction that "human knowledge is never contained in one person it grows from relationships we create between each other". Paul Kalanithi (2016, p. 45) emphasised the extent to which he values the power of language and communication in building trust. The Waste Land is an excellent example and starkly describes what results from damaged authority and leadership during the First World War. The onset of COVID-19 in 2020 has meant huge challenges for society and education as a whole. Such it is that great leadership has never been more essential to get us through, but as literature explains, good leadership is not just a science but an art too. We as leaders, educators and parents need to fight for education for this generation and generations to come Modelling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others (and government and leaders) to act and finally encouraging the heart".

T. S. (1888-1965) p. 13-18. Whilst also avoiding like the plague the too pervasive mindsets that tell us to avoid critical thinking in our education practices and drive exam result data instead of innovation. So how do we combine the science/art of leadership with enhancing modelling cognitive and critical thinking skills and instilling curiosity?

The Impact of Art on Enhancing Cognitive Skills and Autonomy in Learning

Davinci's detailed anatomical sketches are widely used today to enhance the teaching of an otherwise "dull" topic anatomy in medical schools. Such techniques have changed the view of anatomy and allowed an overall different outlook and greater accessibility to the detail and beauty of the human body. It also enables students to see its beauty and conceptualise structures and textures, whilst identifying the various bones. Another way I have found to improve spatial awareness for students when studying Organ Systems is to use Candy Anatomy to build organ parts using sweets. This extends cognitive skills through "modelling" and supports students understanding the different structures and how these relate to function. It encourages and builds team working and social skills as well as creating space for student voice. Another useful way is to allow students to design their own you tubes while building a three dimensional biological process e.g. DNA translation/transcription. This deepens visual and visceral conceptualisation and broadens deep understanding. These can then be posted on remote learning platforms and used as a means of peer support and discussion topics.

It is also necessary to promote curiosity in the early years and primary setting so it can continue on during transition from primary to secondary. One topic that can be used for this is What is a rainbow? This could enable a fascinating journey linking physics, history, music mythology and could even be created into a play or assembly piece and simultaneously indirectly evidencing how different subjects and disciplines overlap which deepens understanding and curiosity.

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The Holistic Powers of art as an Alternative Form of Communication/Self-expression and Focus in Mental Health and SEND

The importance of not just physical but mental wellbeing is a huge and topical issue throughout the media/social media. This does not just refer to leaders, teachers and those in the education sector but also to pupils and students at all levels. The cuts to Children and mental health services (CAMHS) have left schools and education institutions trying to pick up the pieces and not only educate but also detect the warning signs of mental health issues and then try and support them on little or shoe string budgets! Add onto this the arrival of COVID-19 and a large problem has become snowball sized! Such issues can also impact indirectly on behaviour of all pupils but particularly SEN. Now more than ever we need to drive change for an inclusive holistic subjective curriculum that will enable all pupils to cope during and in the aftermath of this pandemic in particular SEN children. Some schools have tried to tackle this by training staff and sixth form pupils to act as "mentors" to help cope with mental health as demonstrated by Dr Pooky Knightsmith[*]. However, the need to include and not exclude these children is important not only for their own self esteem but it has been shown that "labelling" can bring confidence and other issues (Simon Gibb pers comm 2017). Moreover, from my own personal experience the contributions that they can bring to a "normal" class setting are not only rewarding but can indeed enrich the other pupils and provide ideas and skills that further enhance their learning journey. Additionally it encourages them to be respectful and learn to work with those that may have different challenges to themselves enabling diverse inclusion.

However for this to be successful and so that we can ensure that all children achieve to their highest level, alternative methodologies can and are sometimes needed as a way to communicate and or for SEND children to express their own feelings and views. Maslow's theory which is used as part of teacher education training and highlights the need for social wellbeing, pastoral and financial security to facilitate solid emotional foundations as essential contributors to high academic achievement and promote excellent effective and efficient leadership skills. Such can be achieved using other outlets to give these children a voice including art, music, poetry, drama and stories. These cannot only enable self confidence but also an alternative means of expression to allow them to regulate and control emotions in a conducive setting. The paintings depicted below (Figure 1) {AB personal communication and personal work 2018} illustrate the power of art done by one of my autistic students to help regulate her meltdowns which she assures me works and she has given me permission to share.

[*] https://twitter.com/PookyH

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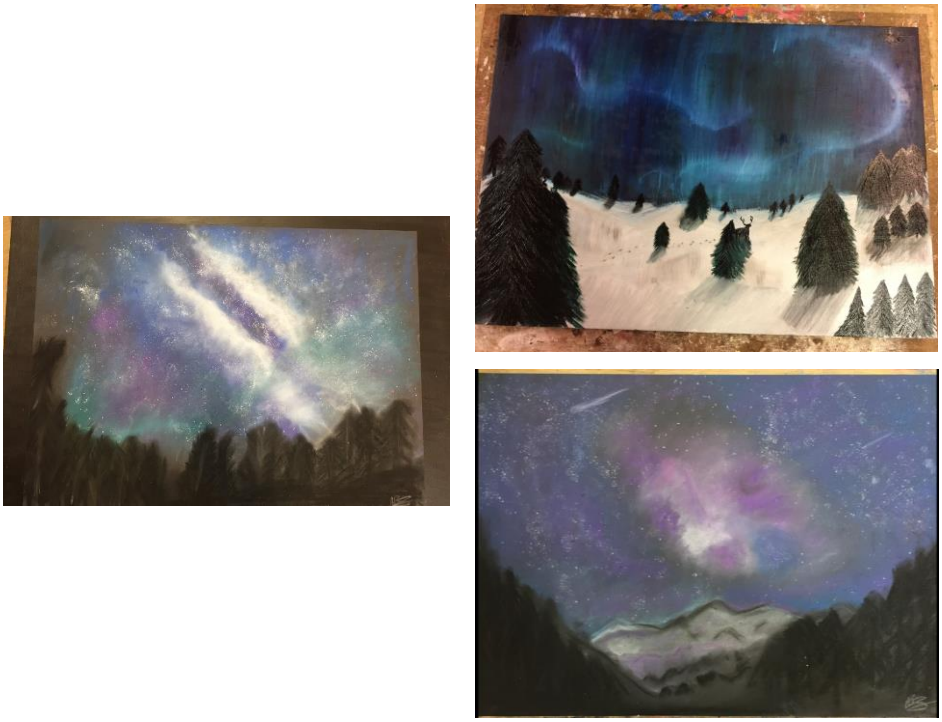


Figure 1: Illustrates drawing/art for wellbeing and to help with meltdowns and mood swings (Permission to use by a previous student of mine)

Conclusion

This year 2020 has been challenging in so many ways, but this aside it has given many people the time in lockdown to reflect and breathe. It has also more importantly been a space to get to know oneself the art of self actualisation what makes us tick. Whether this has been through a new hobby walking enjoying nature or others it is all a positive outcome of COVID-19. Although Eliot was deeply religious and thought Wasteland was a failure he did through powerful writing illustrate the devastation of poor leadership. Despite this and the need for powerful effective leadership to tackle the intellectual/educational and moral difficulties we currently face "a richer community demographic now contributes to our culture; more races, religions, and genders speak the peace of their fresh Eliotic perspectives to change culture as we know it and as Eliot knew it." (Weidner, 1992). I would like to think that other advantages of covid have been the importance of the arts reading diverse literature, crafts like knitting sewing crochet and it has also brought communities together and enhanced an altruistic spirit. As Weidner (1992, pp. 8-9) also says

> If the postmodern world seems morally bankrupt, human beings are becoming increasingly accountable to one another; if society has not embraced Christianity as a panacea for aimlessness, each individual is learning to follow his or her own path rather than marching on a unified path in a group; distinct perspective no longer indicates aimlessness. Even if the currently subordinate state of tradition might disappoint Eliot,

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a much more open, inclusive, and diverse human family, a unity in diversity he might have appreciated, will contribute to the tradition of tomorrow.

It is important that we also apply this to our education and curriculum. Children of all ages and stages have been impacted with COVID and need working with a holistic approach to rebuild esteem and confidence as well as enable being becoming and thriving. Therefore, education and leadership must evolve to embed strategies that will develop such skills and be subjective; it needs to explore the world through developing physical, spiritual and sensory methods that enable emotionally engaging experiences. This requires not just enriching creative curriculums but the ideology of Bildung *wherein philosophy and education are linked in a manner that refers to a process of both personal and cultural maturation."* Such strategies will enable students and educational leaders the opportunity to find out who they are as well as allow a journey of self actualisation and provide them with an education that they can truly thrive but more importantly effectively contribute to the evolving problems of an ever changing society and post COVID. As Ben Phillips who was interviewed by Forbes magazine says " We owe it to the younger generation to repay the hope they have given us not only by cheering them on, but by walking along side them, and making way for them to lead" (Pai, 2021).

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Dedication

This paper is dedicated to Professor Rachel Lofthouse who I first met in 2016, she got me started on my writing journal by getting me to write blogs and it spread from there. I am always inspired by her and will be forever grateful.

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Dr. Christine Challen has over 23 years research experience in the field of cancer research. She has taught at Higher Education, Further Education and more recently as a Supply Teacher in Secondary Schools. My areas of research interests include using case studies and the use of art, literature and film in science teaching as a means of enhancing cognitive and deep critical thinking skills. Rethinking Education and teaching through Creative curriculum as a journey for being to becoming to thriving towards global and innovative questioning citizenship. Dr. Challen has successfully published several blogs in Bera and Tes on different educational topics. She would like the opportunity to return to HE to pursue and develop her pedagogy interests, continue and expand her writing to include books. Additionally to enable her to have the opportunity to build more networks that will benefit teaching and academic practice across educational settings as well as her own personal leadership.

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