

Educating for Quality of Life

An inspiring quote on the primary purpose of education comes from Mary Parker Follet. Her profound insights in the 1920s & 1930s shaped the USA human behavioural school of management. So did ideas about teaching that resonate, given rapid advances in AI.

“Education therefore is not chiefly to teach children a mass of things which have been true up to the present moment: moreover it is not to teach them to learn about life as fast as it is made, nor even to interpret life - but, above and beyond everything, to create life for themselves. Education should be largely the training of making choices.”

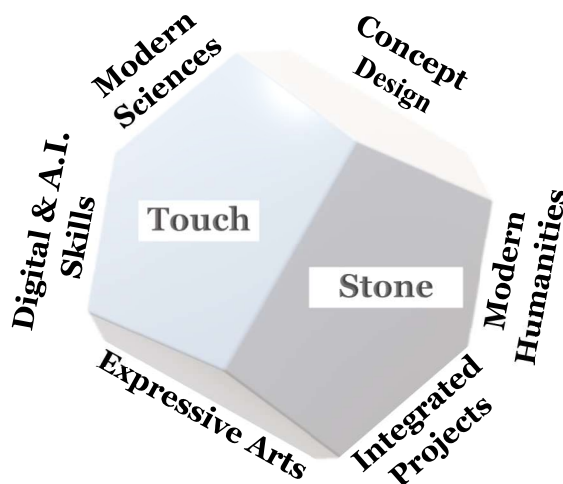
A Viewpoint

The main role of teachers, in my view, is to nurture agile and creative minds by laying foundations. Curiosity, questioning and not just acceptance of ‘facts’ came from Froebel trained Mum rather than the didactic methods of my Dad, Bristol University trained.

Friedrich Froebel stressed the importance of holism. “Great harm is done if, within the formative years, such sharp divisions and contrasts are made, such that sequence and connections are forgotten.” The guiding path for self-discovery was written precisely 200 years ago. Froebel strongly believed the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Nurturing Curious Minds

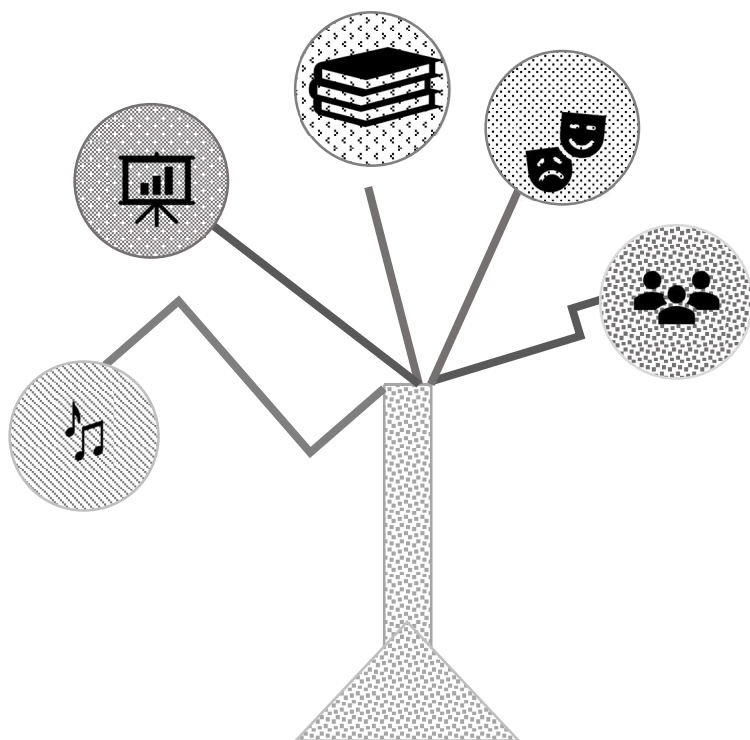
Touchstone resembles the Philosopher’s Stone in mythology, turning mercury into gold. Touch the stone before connecting with the curriculum themes of choice. The idea of Integrated Projects is to encapsulate and incorporate learning, using key related themes. Subjects don’t exist in compartments or silos. Economics is one example, bringing in psychology, sociology, philosophy, econometrics and much more.



The model aligns with Gestalt theory and Froebel as well. The emphasis is on holism. We make sense of learning by linking component parts to gain deeper understanding.

The Learning Tree

The base forms the root system of a topic and trunk the learning objectives and intended outcomes. This is nourishment for the fruit grown, comprising varieties of own choosing. though not too many maybe as overall quality may be diluted. Interpret each circle as a piece of hanging fruit. Each piece is different as it represents a core theme. By chunking down into themes or concepts, the learner gains a far better grasp of the whole topic.



The inspiration for this model owes much to my management and education studies and to a Cert Ed that focused on learning theory and a B.A. Ed, putting theory into practice. A powerful addition was experiential learning, espoused by John Dewey and the practical application of learning in real life, and David Kolb's learning cycle - inviting experiments.

The acid test is organization performance in achieving stated aims and none better than in Education itself. As a national Investors in People Adviser and also Assessor, the main focus in the Education sector was primary and upper schools. It was a privilege to work with outstanding schools and head teachers. Their "beacons of the future" testify.

As Sir Anthony Seldon points out in Britain's Greatest Education Opportunity, a recent report co-authored with Tim Bunting, AI is a wake-up call to grasp the nettle. "Put simply, education has not kept pace with how." Of alarm, only 9% of young people think that schools and universities are preparing them very well for a world of AI.

AI offers immense benefits to explore, delve, make connections and join the dots. The world is our oyster, if we use AI wisely. A major challenge is to inculcate tools for critical inquiry, analysis and reasoning – and action for value-adding careers. A final observation is about lifelong learning, pivotal in the desire for a fulfilling life.