

# Employability and Enterprise

*Why the arts make us more employable,  
and why the creative industries are our  
international economic life-raft*

## Foreword

Our creative and cultural sector is an invaluable asset to our economy and society. Working with colleagues from education systems around the world has reinforced to me how much our heritage, artwork, theatres and craftsmanship are what we are known for on the world stage. As we seek to reinforce our identity as a nation this will become ever more important.

The UK creative industries are a real success story. They are growing at twice the rate of the economy as a whole, while employment in the sector grows at four times the rate of the UK workforce<sup>1</sup>. As we look to grow the economy post-Brexit, the creative industries are one of the crucial areas where we must secure a strong UK talent pipeline.

The joy of preparing young people for the creative industries is that they can't lose. There are growing numbers of jobs in these sectors, but equally the skills developed by studying arts subjects are the very ones that employers across the economy tell us are the most important for the future of their industries – 21st-century skills like decision-making, team-working, flexibility and originality<sup>2</sup>.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution will have an impact like none other because automation and artificial intelligence will lead to a significant reshaping of the labour market and a loss of employment in traditional areas<sup>3</sup>. This may hit industries like logistics first through driverless vehicles but it will impact professions like law, insurance and accountancy just as significantly. If we are to stay ahead of the 'rise of the robots', we need to develop a new generation of creative, resilient team players who think, question and collaborate. Studying the arts is an essential part of that process.

### Alice Barnard

Chief Executive, The Edge Foundation

*'Businesses are clear that the biggest drivers of success for young people are attitudes and attributes such as resilience, enthusiasm and creativity.'*

*CBI/Pearson Education and Skills Survey 2017*

*'Our creative industries are currently world class; if you look at the Oscars there are British entries in the craft categories every year. To stay at the top of the industry we need a steady pipeline of new talent from our education system.'*

Sir William Sargent, CEO, Framestore

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# As our national and international workforce becomes more fragmented, the lessons learned by the creative industries will be critical to the success of the future economy.

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## Engines of growth

The creative industries together form a key sector of UK industry, generating around £92 billion per annum and making up more than 5% of the UK's economy (DCMS, 2017). They are one of the fastest growing sectors of the British economy, growing at more than twice the rate of the economy as a whole. They directly employ some two million people and are responsible for nearly 10%, or £20 billion, of the UK's annual service exports (DCMS, 2016). They span many different disciplines, from video-gaming and product design, to music, theatre, film and fashion.

The Demos paper *Going It Alone* estimates that in 2020 there will be more freelancers in the UK than those working in the public sector. In the creative industries this has long been the norm, with the Creative Industries Federation reporting in 2017 that 47% of creative workers in the creative industries are freelance (Easton & Cauldwell-French, 2017).

As is highlighted in an essay in *Possibility Thinking; Reimagining the Future of Further Education and Skills*, 'Versatility, curiosity, creativity and a willingness to continue learning are now essential expectations in the changing world of work,' (Tambling, 2016) and, along with entrepreneurial and business skills, are essential to the success of individuals joining the wider workforce. The creative industries can act as a pathfinder to other sectors on how to create the right environment for a sector to thrive.

**'We look for people who can develop and implement creative solutions to challenging problems and work well with teams to do it.'**

McKinsey & Company: recruitment guidance

## Skills shortages in the creative industries

The creative economy, which accounts for one in 11 jobs in the UK (DCMS, 2016), needs a pipeline of talent to continue performing at its peak. Already the UK skills shortage list includes a range of jobs related to visual effects and 2D/3D computer animation for the film, television and video games sectors.

Studying the arts develops specific skills, needed by our very successful creative industries if they are to continue to be engines of growth and drive our soft diplomacy in a post-Brexit era. Most FE and HE courses that are part of the pipeline of talent into the creative industries require students to have taken school level arts qualifications. Arts subjects must be studied in school at GCSE, A and T Level to ensure the talent pipeline remains strong.

**'Arts-based education is much more than just a nice-to-have extra. It enhances cultural capital and develops flexible, marketable skills ... empathy, resilience and an ability to adapt. There is a huge and diverse range of job opportunities available in the creative industries, which is a successful and growing part of our economy.'**

Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall, Hansard HL Deb (14 September 2017)

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## Studying the arts develops work-ready skills

The evidence base is clear on this: studying arts subjects develops students' confidence, resilience and the soft skills in demand from employers<sup>4</sup>. Access to the arts in schools is particularly important for vulnerable young people who may not have access to the networks and support outside of school to develop these soft skills.

When compared to a control group, children in Canada who took part in regular arts activities showed significant improvements in social cohesion, cooperation and pro-social attitudes (Schellenberg, et al. 2015). Hong Kong research shows particular improvements in creativity and communication through studying visual arts (Hui, et al. 2015). A large and multi-faceted Australian study (643 children) found that even after controlling for other relevant factors, arts engagement was associated with increased academic and non-academic performance, measured by enhanced self-esteem, life satisfaction, motivation and engagement (Martin, et al. 2013).

**'Essential life skills such as confidence, motivation, resilience and communication are associated with better academic outcomes and better prospects in the workplace, and there is an increasing emphasis on their value, given labour market trends towards automation.'**

The Sutton Trust, *Life Lessons* (2017)

## Employers need work-ready school leavers and graduates

In the 2017 CBI/Pearson Education and Skills Survey, 86% of businesses said that the right attitudes and aptitudes were in their top considerations when recruiting graduates ahead of subject studied, and ahead of academic grades and formal qualifications.

## The arts deliver the skills needed for future jobs

In 2017 Nesta published *The Future of Skills: Employment in 2030*, which found that current occupations predicted to decline due to automation could instead adapt and grow if new skills were combined with the existing skill set. Nesta ranked the skills with the greatest benefits and broadly found they mapped to what are called 21st-century skills, developed by studying art subjects. The top five skills in the UK most likely to lead to job growth in combination with existing skills are:

1. Judgement and Decision-Making
2. Fluency of Ideas
3. Active Learning
4. Learning Strategies
5. Originality Abilities

**'The hard reality of soft skills is that actually these things around the workplace and these things around character and resilience are important for what anybody can achieve in life, as well as for the success of our economies.'**

The Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP, Secretary of State for Education, Speech to Education World Forum (January 2018)

## Good prospects

Creative careers offer good prospects. As technology develops, more and more jobs may be completed by machines, or simply become redundant; but research (Bakhshi, et al. 2015) shows that creative jobs will be more resistant to automation. In 2015 the Bank of England<sup>5</sup> predicted that 15 million jobs in the UK were at risk of automation.

**'Our skills results confirm the future importance of 21st-century skills – the combination of interpersonal and cognitive skills.'**

Nesta, *The Future of Skills* (2017)

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‘The UK’s future workforce will need technical expertise in areas such as design and computing, plus skills which robots cannot replace – flexibility, empathy, creativity and enterprise.’

Lord Baker of Dorking, *Digital Revolution* (2017)

‘Our creative economy now employs one in 11 of the working population. But we also have a talent crisis. We are failing to provide enough young people with the right mix of skills for many of the exciting jobs in the creative economy as well as in other sectors’

Creative Industries Federation, *Social Mobility and the Skills Gap Creative Education Agenda 2016*

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## References

- <sup>1</sup> DCMS (2017) *Sector Economic Estimates 2016: Gross Value Added*
- <sup>2</sup> Bakhshi, et al. (2017) *The Future of Skills: Employment in 2030*
- <sup>3</sup> Baker (2016) *The Digital Revolution: The impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution on employment and education*
- <sup>4</sup> Schellenberg, et al. (2015). Hui, et al. (2015). Schellenberg (2004). Lobo & Winsler, (2006). Martin, et al. (2013). Connolly, et al. (2011). Merrell & Tymms (2002). Catterall & Peppler (2007)
- <sup>5</sup> Speech by Andrew G Haldane, Chief Economist, Bank of England, 12 November 2015
- Bakhshi, et al. (2015) *Creativity vs Robots*
- DCMS (2016) *Creative Industries Focus on Employment*
- Easton & Cauldwell-French (2017) *Creative Freelancers*
- O’Leary (2014) *Going it Alone*
- Tambling (2016) ‘What if the development of learners’ creative capacities were put at the heart of all apprenticeships?’
- Full references available: [www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk/briefings](http://www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk/briefings)

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