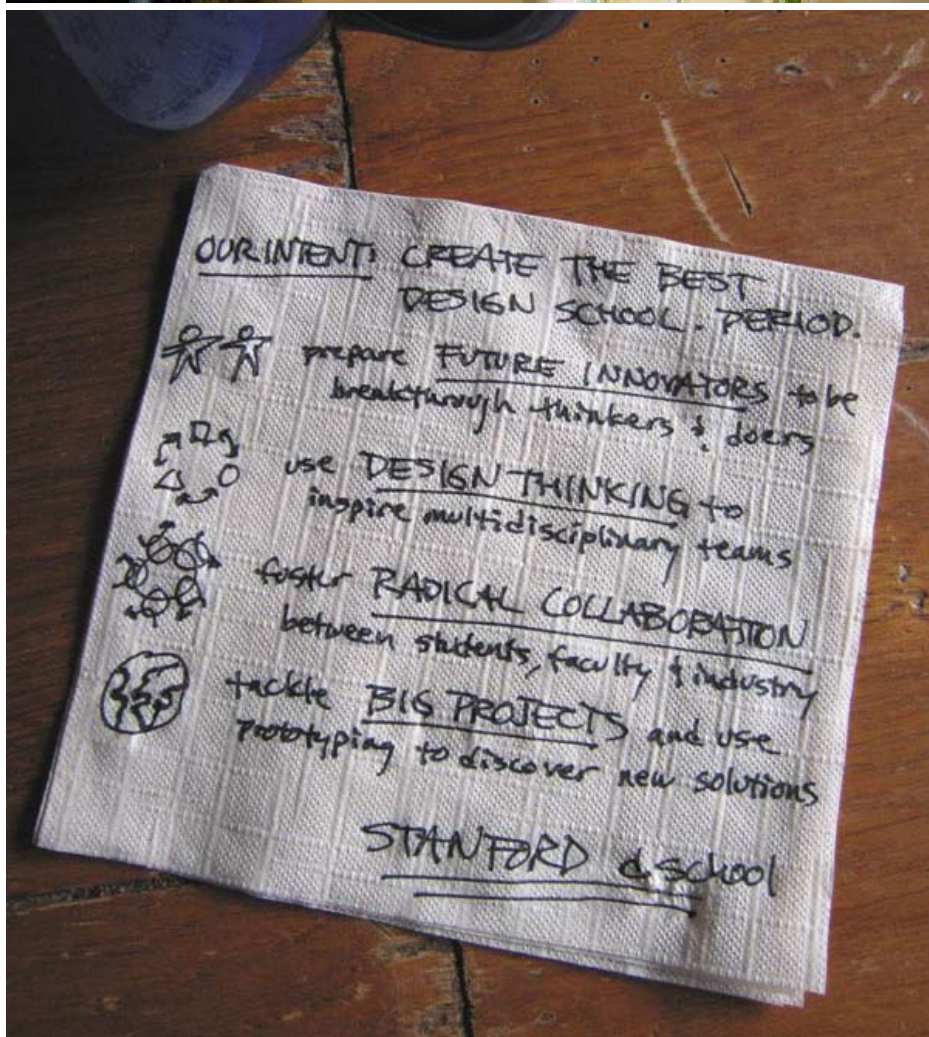


Art Moves into the 21st Century



Ralph Caouette

By now, you have probably heard of Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences, of Daniel Pink's six aspects of *A Whole New Mind*, and also of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills. Thinking of these strong aspects and skills, which seem to cross like a finely spun spider's web, leaves one wondering how anyone can *not* see how these attributes almost directly correlate to what happens in the art-room?

Current thinking paints students of the twenty-first century as critical thinkers, strong problem-solvers, good communicators, tech-literate, flexible and adaptive, innovative and creative, globally competent, and environmentally literate. While the overlap between these skills and what happens daily in the artroom is astounding, there has been slow to no gain in recognition of the importance of art in cultivating twenty-first-century skills.

IDEO and the d.School

Some time ago I had the opportunity to travel to Palo Alto, California, to visit and work with Stanford's d.School and IDEO, a design and innovation consulting firm. What an eye-opening experience! Though I knew a foundation of what these two organizations were doing and what it meant to art, design, and lifelong learning, feeling it made the difference.

Stanford's d.School, started by David Kelley (also the founder of IDEO) has a true learner-centered, totally hybrid, relevant approach to education, foundationally built on Kelley's "design thinking."

The energy levels, directions of focus, synergy, and optimism at a pure human level were astounding. How could more than 500 partners in design average eighty-to-ninety patents a year, manage high-level clients,



and flourish? I observed, talked to, and worked with many, and my questions revolved around what brought these people together.

Discoveries

What did I discover? I found that almost everyone working at IDEO and the d.School had a strong reverence for and appreciation of visual art and design. All spoke fondly and deeply of their grade-school and high-school art experiences.

Many were schooled engineers, mathematicians, and psychologists, but all operated as artists and designers.

It was very evident why IDEO is tops in its field, not only as a design consulting firm tackling all kinds of twenty-first-century problems, but also as a harbinger of things to come. What did I take away above all? We, as art educators, need to rely on our

own superb problem-solving skills to collaborate and tell this story through action.

Taking Action

What can we do? As visionaries and designers, let's work together and find ways to support and illustrate these qualities and skills. The irony is that many of these twenty-first-century attributes, when taken separately, are often indicative of an artistic pursuit

or nature. We need to bundle these skills, develop associations to where they most

often are found in education, and illustrate examples through action. This is where we need to share. Use grassroots, electronic apps, exhibits, and word of mouth, but also collaborate and share.

Become a resource or even further, a CCO (Chief Creative Officer) of your

school and/or district, or CPS (Chief Problem Solver), or PMI (Prime Minister of Innovation) or (you fill in the blank). Ideation and conceptualization are among our repertoire. The idea is that you, the art educator, become the example and resource of what it means to collectively operate in the twenty-first century, and to show how art has implications for all who want to be productive, relevant, and opportunistic in years to come.

Remember, now is a good time to take risks, put all (yes, all) your skills on the line, and exhibit a re-designing of the learning experience. The art-room and beyond is your lab. ☺

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WEB LINKS

dschool.stanford.edu

www.ideo.com

www.danpink.com/whole-new-mind