stephen perse
foundation

Autumn Term 2012

Future Learning - What is learning for?

Our school has a great sense of history drawing as it does on the pioneering legacy of Stephen Perse, the founder of the original Free Grammar School in Cambridge in 1615 and, of course, the groundbreaking work of the girls' school's founders in 1881. Indeed, next year we mark the centenary of the death of Miss Street, the first ever Headmistress of The Perse School for Girls, a pioneer in her own right. Her work, and the endeavours of her successors, ensured the success of this innovative and forward-looking school, offering opportunities to girls in Cambridge previously denied them.

An insight into the somewhat quirky life of the school in the 20th Century is captured here through the memories of Perse Girls. http://youtube.com/watch?v=1WJVzi605jk

What is clear to me is that our school has always educated extraordinary individuals and continues to do so. The challenge for us is to ensure that our pupils today are engaged in a learning journey which prepares them for tomorrow. We are the educational pioneers in this century with all that that means, both the knowns and the unknowns.

Interestingly, whilst the educational debate being played out in the media in this country has become fixated on qualifications within all too familiar parameters, there are persuasive voices arguing that our fixation on measurement must not be to the detriment of learning in a more expansive sense. These voices come from a range of disciplines across the globe and are sounding the clarion call for schools to think differently.

As a leading independent school, we are of course keen to participate in the debate about learning and look forward to hosting our own conference entitled 'What is learning for?' next term.
http://stephenperse.com/futurelearning
For the latest information about the conference please follow our future learning Twitter feed - @_futurelearning

Stephen Perse Foundation sharing thinking on #futurelearning

Sir Ken Robinson PhD led the British government's 1998 advisory committee on creative and cultural education, a massive inquiry into the significance of creativity in the educational system. The two videos below highlight his very insightful perspectives on education.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9LelXa3U_I&sns=em
http://tv.adobe.com/watch/creativity-in-education/why-is-creativity-important-in-education/

Education innovators

Dr. Sugata Mitra, visiting professor at MIT; Sal Khan, founder of Khan Academy; and Dr. Catherine Lucey, Vice Dean of Education at UCSF, are redefining how we engage young minds for a creatively- and technologically-advanced future.
http://youtube.com/watch?v=qC_T9ePzANg

In November 2012, The Festival of Education took place. It provided an excellent forum for debate on the wide range of topics that are dominating the education sphere in the UK today. To view the highlights, please click on the link below.
http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLwX3wZX22uMyrV2LzP_QQ70HoHMQbS2B2

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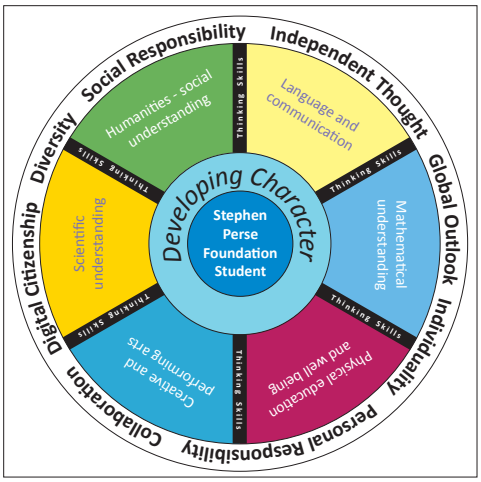
#futurelearning at the Stephen Perse Foundation

So, what does future learning mean to us? What is our vision? We take a view on learning that values both the immeasurables and the measurables, the unexamined life as much as the examined life. Our educational philosophy is represented in the Stephen Perse Curriculum Wheel.

Our transdisciplinary approach to learning, with the emphasis on nurturing character, is both distinctive and innovative, and offers a framework for the Foundation's educational journey.



Underpinning our curriculum is the importance of inspiration, a qualitative dimension which is a vital part of the aspirational ethos of our school. As many parents will know, our series of *Inspire Me* events, initiated last year, has added a new dimension to the life of the Foundation and proved to be very popular across the whole school community.

In our most recent *Inspire Me* occasion we welcomed, for a second consecutive year, 'Silicon Valley Comes to the UK' (SVC2UK) where four truly inspiring women, all very different but hugely successful, shared their life experiences with students in Years 9 and 10. This film produced by SVC2UK offers an insight into the impact of their visit on the students.
http://youtube.com/watch?v=ec7IGJsOb38

We subsequently learnt that our school was used as a model of best practice by the SVC2UK on their visit to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Our engagement with today's world is further illustrated by the 1:1 roll out of iPads in the Senior School this term. The key reason for placing a mobile device in the hands of our students is to educate them on the ethical use of technology. We have moved from the conventional school approach of blocking and banning to an acknowledgement that digital technology is an integral part of all our lives. By making the iPad a tool for learning we place it firmly in the context of education.

Interestingly, a recent survey of iPad use by pupils revealed that the vast majority of our students valued the learning opportunities this powerful device offers both in school and at home. Given how positive our experience has been, we plan next year to equip the Sixth Form with iPads confident that this device will enhance their learning.

There have been many great examples of how iPads have been used by students and teachers. This year we have seen Rob Percival, one of our maths teachers, write an app to help students with their GCSE maths revision; it is now available on the Apple App Store.
https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/gcse-mathematics-revision/id586548328?ls=1&mt=8

Digital activity has not been limited to apps. Alex Van Dijk, a biology teacher at the Foundation, has begun to use You Tube as a way to explain GCSE biology in bitesize films - epitomising the concept of flipped learning.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?gl=GB&hl=en-GB&client=mv-google&v=KBO3hZFLEV8&feature=youtu.be&nomobile=1

The final example picks up on the festive time of year; here is a film of Year 9 students learning about German culture by making gingerbread houses. It was filmed on an iPad and illustrates how this technology can be integrated into the classroom to enhance learning opportunities.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbftkODlVj0

This school boasts a history of innovation. Walking to the carol service last week, I was reminded where this all began as I passed the plaque marking the foundation of the Free Grammar School by Dr Stephen Perse in Free School Lane. The original founder was an educational pioneer striving to offer opportunities to poor boys to change their lives; the founders of the Girls' School in the late nineteenth century wanted to extend the academic education offered to boys to girls. The challenges facing the school today are posed by the changes in our world. We live in a century where exponential change is galvanised by a digital revolution.

It is, therefore, appropriate that we look back to our founder as a source of inspiration. Whilst he offered an education which transformed the lives of the pupils who attended the Free Grammar School in the early seventeenth century, the Stephen Perse Foundation offers a learning environment focused on educating our young people for the world they will live in tomorrow. It seems, therefore, only logical to capture the changes to our school community by completing the transition to our legal name, the Stephen Perse Foundation, across the Foundation.

From 1st September 2013 the Junior and Senior Schools will be known as the Stephen Perse Foundation Junior and Senior Schools, which will provide a coherent identity across the family of schools. To signal this change in a tangible way, we will be introducing a new school uniform for our students from September 2013. Further details of this will be provided in January.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year. There are many exciting opportunities ahead for the Stephen Perse Foundation and we are delighted to share our continuing evolution with you all.

Kind regards,

Tricia Kelleher
Principal of the Stephen Perse Foundation