



norden

Nordisk Ministerråd

Innovation and Creativity

– in the Hands of the Young



FIND YOUR

PASSION

COMFORT ZONE

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

GET OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE
YOU CAN'T TEACH CREATIVITY
BUT YOU CAN LEARN IT
DO SOMETHING YOU
HAVEN'T DONE BEFORE
STIMULATE STUDENTS
DON'T LECTURE ■
LET PEOPLE WITH
ORIGINAL THOUGHTS
VISIT CLASSROOMS

Innovation and Creativity

– in the Hands of the Young

How can we support the creativity and innovative power of the young?

—With particular emphasis on how we design our educational systems in order to make this happen

This question set the scene at the conference “Innovation and Creativity in the Hands of the Young”. The conference was a contribution to the European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009 from the Icelandic Presidency of the Nordic Council. This pamphlet presents essential messages from the conference.

The three-day conference had 250 participants ranging from young people to industry and academia representatives as well as policy makers. There were presentations from scientists with expert knowledge on schools as a framework for developing innovation and creativity, and from businesspeople engaged in creating the right framework for innovation in a business context.

The conference was organized with dynamic dialogue within facilitated processes and with built-in performances.

The young students and creative performers from the Nordic countries were invited and put all their talents to good use—as moderators, performers and reflective dialogue partners. And their voices were heard.

The keynote speaker presentations and video from the conference are available at www.dialognorden.org.





Learning Throughout Life

The school of tomorrow must be able to embrace the open landscape of opportunity and thus also offer entirely new professional capabilities —capabilities that focus, in an integral manner, on the ability to identify new opportunities and connections. Students must learn how to act within a creative field, in which their own ideas and those of others are developed further. The starting point for all teaching must be the abilities of the individual student, and we must teach students to learn throughout life. “We must not only recognize that we should do it, we must actually do it,” as pointed out by Norwegian CEO and investor in social entrepreneurs Johan H. Andresen.

You Cannot Teach Creativity

”Creativity cannot be taught—but it can be learnt!” was one of the main points of the conference. And in order to support the development of creativity, it is essential to establish the right framework—a framework that must necessarily be made up of freedom, time and challenges while being conducive to commitment and active participation.

Professor Anna Craft from the University of Exeter emphasized the importance of our schools being characterised by possibility thinking —i.e. creating the best possible starting point for developing creative and innovative young people. The passion and wishes of the learner must serve as the basis, and from this basis the school must support the student in identifying his/her opportunities. Johan H. Andresen recommended teaching entrepreneurship in school as an approach to fostering a higher degree of innovation in the future.

Bringing Outside Forces into School

Among the young conference participants we saw a pronounced desire to involve professionals in teaching—creatives and businesspeople alike. I.e. letting writers teach reading and writing, artists teach art and actors teach drama. Businesspeople can further provide new angles on different subjects and identify new opportunities. External professionals can contribute with passion, authenticity and new perspectives in schools.

In this context, the keynote speakers all advocated stronger partnerships between the educational system and the creative industries and cultural organisations.

Creative Subjects Make a Difference

Professor Anne Bamford from the University of the Arts London also pointed out the importance of teaching creative subjects in order to develop students' ability to think creatively and innovatively. High quality in the creative subjects will translate into more creative thinking in the other subjects like reading and math, and studies show that students from so-called “art-rich” schools are more likely to enrol in higher education, get employment, vote, volunteer and form strong friendships than students from schools with a lesser focus on the creative subjects.

Creativity, Crafts and Motivation

Author and CEO Gordon Torr argued that the elements in an innovative process are creativity, craft and motivation. In order to create truly remarkable things, you must possess all the crafts of the trade, have a strong inner, driven motivation and be highly creative. Torr further emphasized the importance of being exposed to challenges that take you out of your comfort zone, if you are to be inspired to think and act innovatively—a point that clearly resonated with the participants at the conference.

**Paths not layed
Ways uncertain
Voices, sounds and rhythms
Ideas, imagination and initiative
Make me who I am
... my journey towards... away from... to me...**

(Author unknown)

