



The world of work changes with progress; it is no great revelation.

Just as mobile technology and email revolutionised the labour market, currently social media, automation and environmental imperatives present our children with yet a different picture.

The latter ingredients offer young people greater flexibility than we had: as working from home is ever more feasible and accepted, the workforce is increasingly international, less faithful, and consequently more demanding.

Access to work is changing, but so too is the nature of the work: clean technologies, ethical investment and artificial intelligence present opportunities for engineers, for digital consultants, and for anyone with the creativity to fill a new gap in the market.

Like all opportunities, however, the above come with threats: competition for jobs will be broader, and some roles will disappear while others will be partly performed by artificial intelligence.

And so the challenge is this: how do we prepare students to harness tomorrow's opportunities and to overcome its challenges?

From the point of view of hard skills, there is an established argument in favour of STEM subjects, and an expectation that, while manual labour and basic cognitive skills are endangered, highly skilled workers have little to lose.

However, even engineering tasks are increasingly performed by AI, and so the goal post will have to keep on moving. Where to? Toward those skills that computers will never master quite as well as human beings: the ability to create, to think critically, to communicate and to inspire, to read body language, and to exercise compassion and values that cannot be written in numbers or bytes.

According to the McKinsey Global Institute's paper on AI-led skills shift, the demand for social and emotional skills will rise by 22% in Western Europe between 2016 and 2030.

Entrepreneurship, empathy, passion, the ability to bring people on board and to do so with a sustainable world in mind are the preserve of human intelligence. As such, they must be cultivated and protected.

In supporting these traits, Life Education works in collaboration with academic subjects: children improve their language in English and MFL; their compassion by reading books; their self-expression through Drama; their ethics in RE; and their environmental awareness in Geography. In Life Education, each academic year revisits the two streams of "communication and character" and "social responsibility" from a different angle.

Communication and character

Social media is allegedly eroding language: young people use mobiles for anything but a phone conversation, and emojis, grammar-less sentences, and abbreviations are leaking into letters, emails, and face-to-face interactions. In response:

- Year 6 learn public speaking in the Summer term, learn about email etiquette in the Autumn term, and assertiveness in the Spring term.
- Year 7 revisit the above, with an added emphasis on listening skills and on identifying and making the most of what makes us different from each other.
- In Year 8 pupils discuss how to express emotions and how to respond to others.
- Resilience and making an opportunity out of failure are an essential part of entrepreneurship. As they define and discuss resilience and failure, Year 9 learn how both can help them find their own way.
- Year 10, for their part, hear several talks

on when to push the boundaries and step outside of their comfort zone. They also discuss how to prioritise on the basis of their individual values.

- Year 11, by this time clued-up, are reminded of how to make a good impression and present ourselves to others in the workshops by 2-3 degrees.
- The lower sixth have enjoyed the opportunity to meet twice already with our parents who have kindly volunteered to be Industry Champions and gain an insight into the skills and behaviours that are essential to tackling work-based scenarios. An entertaining talk helped them to see how maintaining a positive self-image in the face of social media is essential to confidence and success and they have been building up a profile of their competencies on unifrog to help with future HE and job applications.
- The upper sixth have had a talk on digital privacy and online reputation, on the concept of the portfolio career through a talk on 25 jobs before the age of 25 and a talk from Nottingham University on how to adapt to university life and protect wellbeing.

Social awareness

Entrepreneurial skills are essential, but in and of themselves are not enough: one could argue, after all, that history's most notorious villains were self-starters. The ideal combination would be between entrepreneurship and social responsibility:

- Year 6 discuss charity and outreach; how to reduce waste; the meaning of Fairtrade and why we honour Remembrance Day every year.
- Year 7 learn about democracy and British values.
- Year 8 identify the skills that are transferable to the world of work.
- Year 9 learn about equality and the meaning of community.

- Year 10 discuss radicalisation; right wing extremism; immigration and refugees.
- Year 11 consider volunteer work locally and abroad, as well as racism and stereotypes.
- The lower sixth considered financial self management.
- The upper sixth considered the impact of the criminal justice system and the role of conservation

This term we also hosted speakers to motivate the students, develop their critical thinking, and raise their awareness of the world around them.

Topics pupils have discussed

Year 6	Sleep, Fairtrade, Brexit, puberty, first aid and study skills
Year 7	Confident communication, assertiveness, self and body image
Year 8	Careers: transferable skills, study skills
Year 9	Mental health, disabilities, anxiety, depression, how to help
Year 10	Careers: interests and goals, teamwork, rights and responsibilities
Year 11	Equality and respect, study skills
Lower sixth	Entrepreneurial mindset, industry champions event, building up competency profile
Upper sixth	Digital reputation and safety, financial awareness

Parent talks organised this spring term

Study and revision skills for parents of Years 7-8

Specialist speakers in the pipeline

Anna Wille on Mindfulness (Years 8 and 9)

In addition to tutor-led Life Education, we have hosted the following speakers

Year 7	Rachel Musson, ThoughtBox: 'Becoming Me'
Year 8	Elevate Education: memory mnemonics, Jack Galsworth, (Atlantic Castaways), on resilience
Years 9-11	Anthony Bennett: saying 'yes', teamwork, resilience
Year 11	Elevate Education: Ace your exams

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