



## Introduction to Creative Thinking at King's

### Background

Education, like so many spheres of life, is undergoing change. If we were able to time travel to 2030 or 2040 and see what goes on in the schools of the future, there can be little doubt that we would see something significantly – and even radically – different from the way things are now.

It isn't clear which area of progress and innovation will have the biggest impact on the way teaching and learning will work in the future, but there are a few likely candidates:

- **Our understanding of the brain is changing**, and this is likely to continue influencing the way we approach enabling students to remember, think about and apply information.
- **Searchable digital content** has made the effort needed to find information dramatically lower than it has ever been before, which is likely to have an impact on how we will approach the (still crucial) role of memory.
- **Interactive technology** is likely to be developed and refined so that it has more of a role to play in helping students to learn, which will lead us to reconsider the specific roles that teachers have in aiding student progress.

In tandem with these changes, certain trends are emerging in the kinds of language that get used when people talk about education:

- *“The overwhelming focus on memorization without application at key national assessment points needs some kind of reform.”*
- *“Teachers add unique value when encouraging students to think discursively, to make links, and to generate ideas.”*
- *“Many of the jobs we are preparing young people for don't yet exist.”*

At King's High we want to take these changes and conversational trends seriously, and to be at the forefront of the ideas that are going to shape education in the years to come.

### **Creative Thinking at King's**

All of the above constitutes an overly broad set of challenges and things to think about. As teachers at King's High say to students who are completing independent projects: "Remember to sharpen your focus—it will make your goals more achievable and your work more useful."

The purpose of this blog, then, is to focus specifically on the role that the teaching of *creative thinking* has in contributing to education as we witness progress and change. There will be more detail about what 'creative thinking' is, and especially what it looks like in the classroom as we go along, but here is a starter definition taken from the work of Bill Lucas and Ellen Spencer:

*[Creative thinking is] the capacity to have good ideas and think divergently, to critique argument and opinion, to tolerate ambiguity and to synthesise thinking.*

In this blog we want to reflect on our own experiences of teaching young people how to generate ideas. We want to report on how teaching courses such as our 'Certificate in Creative Thinking' can help to break down the skills required to have good, knowledge-rich ideas and form considered, well-informed judgements. We want to reflect on how creative thinking can be scaffolded, modelled and assessed in a meaningful way.

More ambitiously, we also want to place our own reflections on creative thinking into a wider context. By way of a brief introduction, here are some questions that frame the connection between creative thinking and the wider changes outlined above:

- What role can the teaching of creative thinking have as part of a knowledge-rich curriculum?
- How can we equip educators to teach creative thinking, and therefore add unique value to student progress?
- How does the teaching of creative thinking prepare students to take up the as-yet uninvented roles that they will take up in the future?

We hope that this blog proves an informative and thought-provoking forum for King's High family, friends and online visitors. Please be in touch with us if you would like to be part of the ongoing conversation.

### References

Lucas, Bill, and Ellen Spencer. *Teaching Creative Thinking : Developing Learners*

*Who Generate Ideas and Can Think Critically.* Carmharten (Wales): Crown House Publishing, 2018.