



nsead

# A Curriculum of Curiosity & Hope: Rethinking Art & Design education. NSEAD President's Address Summer Conference 2025 Andy Ash



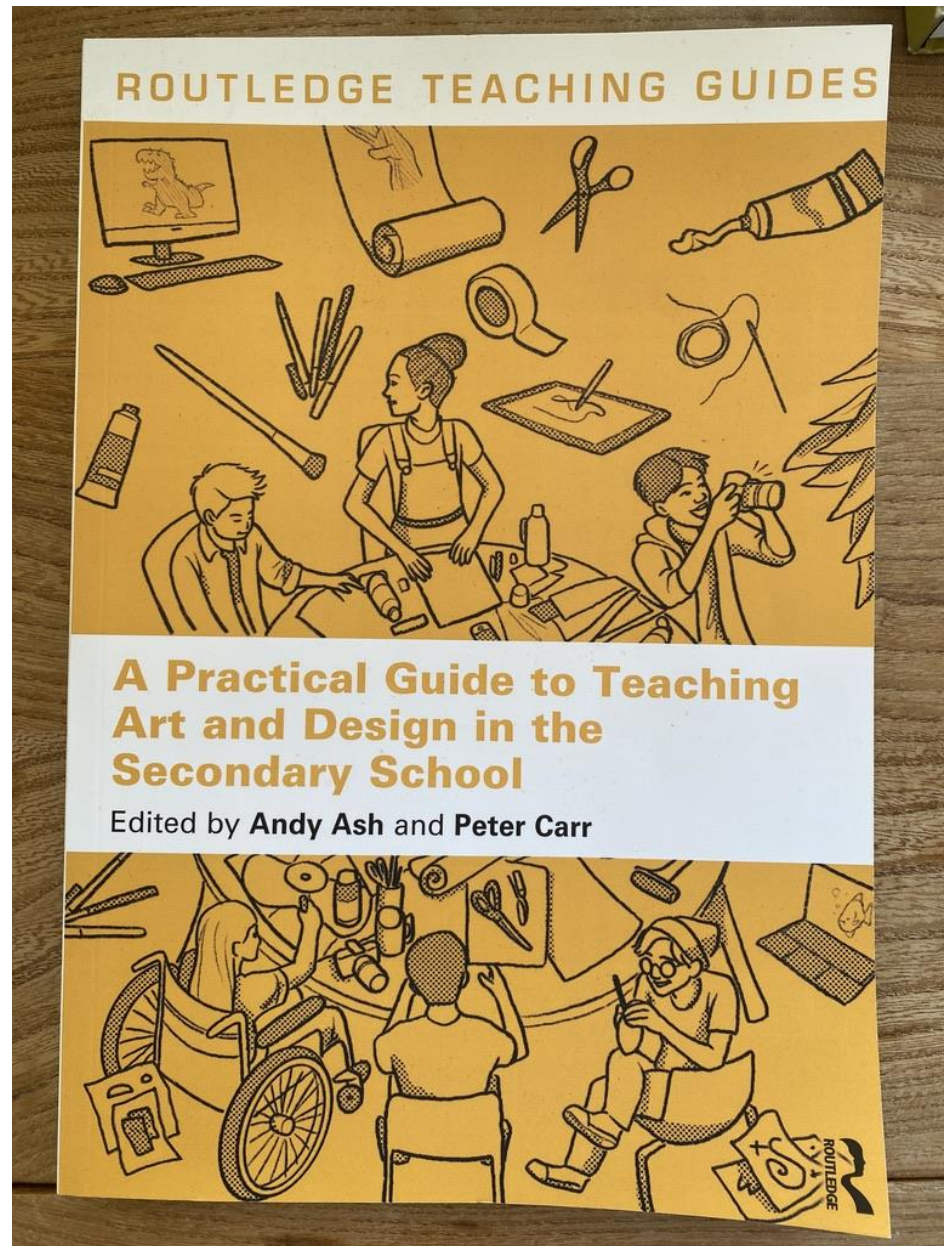


A. Ash, 'try again,  
fail again, fail better' (2025)  
WSP Thamesmead,  
Gallery No.32  
sculpture as performance





# A Curriculum of Curiosity & Hope



“Art  
Changes: We  
Change”  
Tate Modern  
(2016)

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Has Art and Design  
education in schools  
truly evolved with  
society?

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Are we preparing  
students for the world  
they live in—or the  
one we remember?

# Critique of Traditional 'School Art'

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**'School art'** (Efland, 1976):  
outdated, orthodoxy-driven  
teaching styles.

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Training often reinforces  
conservative approaches.

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New teachers feel tension  
between their creative beliefs and  
the constraints of the classroom.

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**Goal:** Rethink teaching from a  
modern, socially relevant, learner-  
centered perspective.



# Teacher Agency

- Empower Art & Design teachers with **agency** and **hope**.
- Promote **reflective practice** and **curriculum innovation**.
- Support teachers at all stages – from trainees to experienced educators.
- Encourage **personalized, relevant pedagogies** that reflect contemporary society.

NSEAD SE & London Art teacher  
Network, Whitechapel, Jan 2025



# Deconstruct your journey

- Introduced models (1980s) such as:
- *Free Expressives, Technocrats, Social Workers, Pedagogues.*
- Highlighted **conflicting values** and **blind spots** in teachers' approaches.
- **Message:** Teachers must move beyond rigid typologies and define their own value-led practice.

A. Ash 'The Art of Walking'  
2020 T+ Gallery, Japan



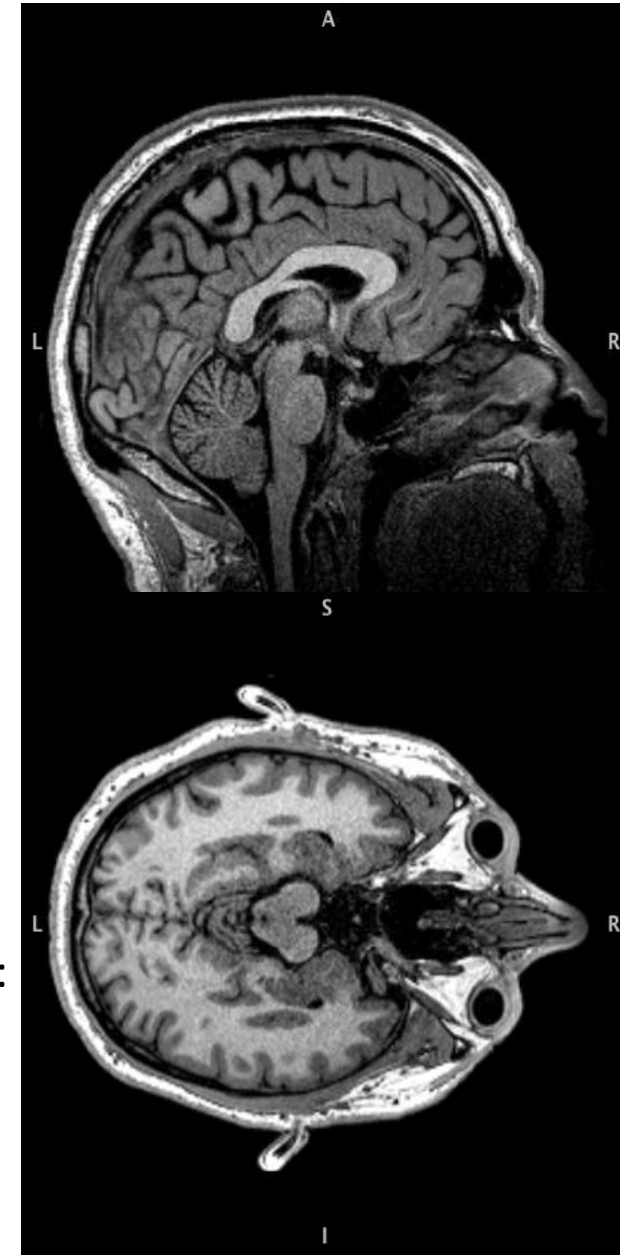


## Contemporary Typologies (Addison & Burgess, 2007)

- 10 curriculum approaches, including:
- *Perceptualist, Formalist, Critical and Contextual, Issue-based, Postmodern.*
- Departments often mix these; dominant types shape learning experiences.
- Encouragement to assess and reframe one's own departmental culture.

# The 'Psychic Prison' and ART Approach

- Teachers can be **trapped by old thinking** and norms.
- Use **A.R.T. approach** to break free:
  - **Acknowledge** unhelpful thoughts
  - **Replace/Reframe** them
  - **Take Action**
- Reflective practice leads to transformation.



'Dialogue:  
Artist &  
Scientist'  
Andy Ash  
2015



# Types of Curiosity

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## **Imaginative Curiosity –**

Creativity from lived experience.

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## **Epistemological Curiosity –**

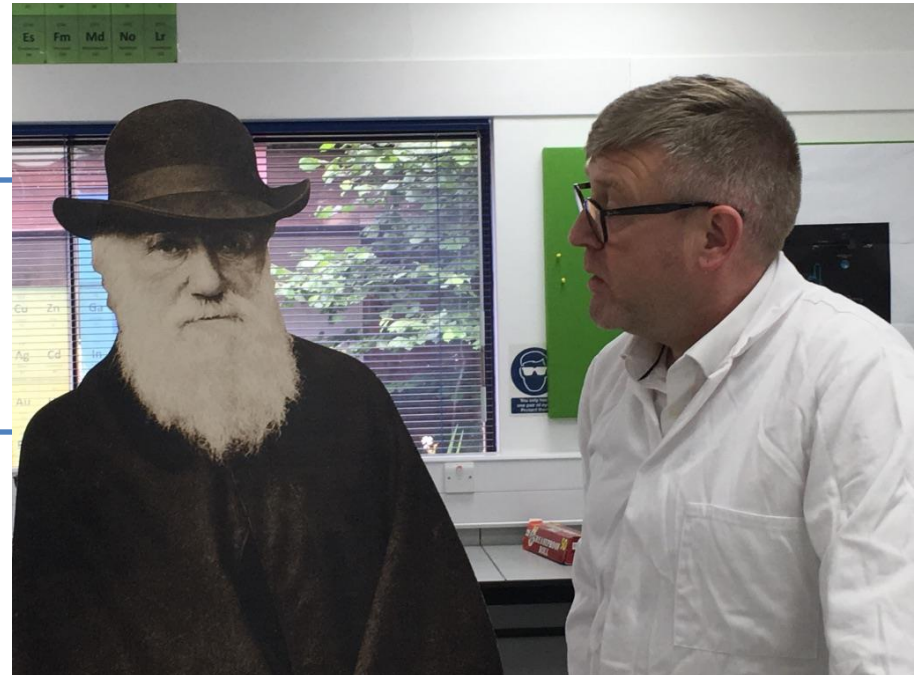
Deep knowledge-seeking, theory-informed.

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**Critical Curiosity –** Challenge dominant narratives, embrace cultural relevance.

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Curiosity is key to revitalizing teaching.



Andy Ash & Charles Darwin working together in Homerton College science lab June 2018.

This poster version sets out one layer of the NSEAD Big Landscape Website, as guidance which visually classifies and maps the scope of potential curriculum content. This has been created as an aide-mémoire to inform discussion and debate on curriculum design, planning, pedagogy and learning approaches, alongside supporting research for individuals and the professional development of teams.

## Guidance on curriculum design, pedagogy and learning approaches:

# Art, craft & design curriculum

An aide-mémoire guiding curriculum design, pedagogy and learning approach

Children working as & becoming

ARTIST	MAKER	DESIGNER
Artist Illustrator Creative Craft-Maker Product-Designer Architect Graphic-Designer Maker Designer		<b>Knowledge</b> Designing How knowledge functions  <b>Core Topics</b> Principles Processes Tools Materials

**BREADTH & BALANCE - How is this achieved?**

**CULTURE GENERATING & CULTURE USING**  
 Visual Literacy • Critical and Creative Thinking • Design • and socio-cultural understanding

Knowledge & Understanding

Attitudes

Cultural understanding

Curriculum & Design

## All also memorizing curriculum design, pedagogy and learning app

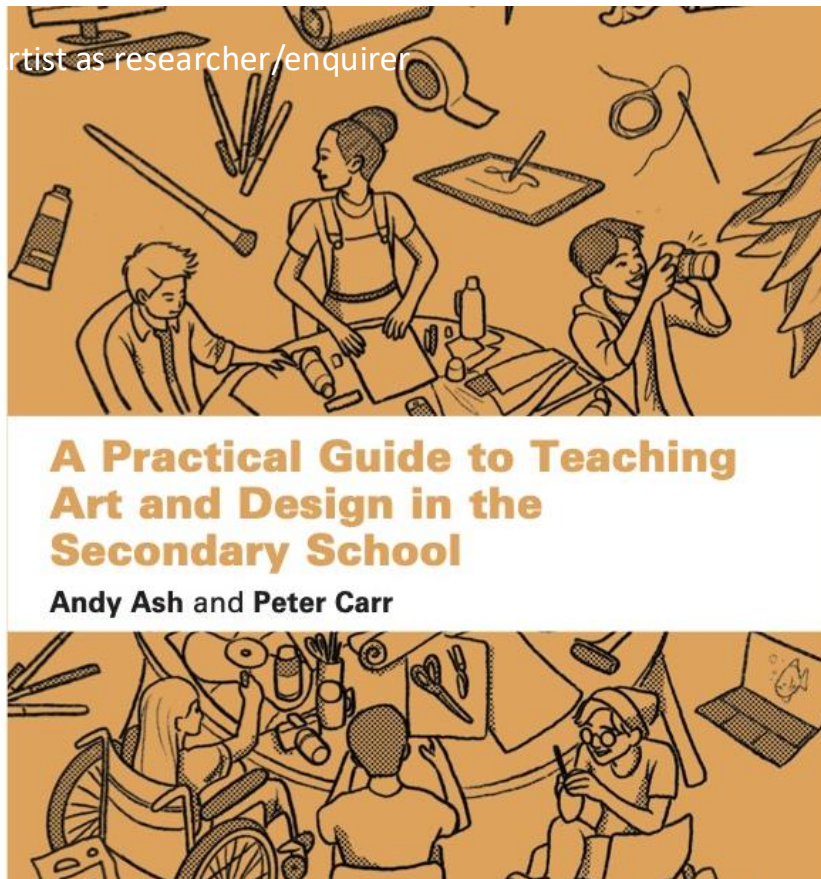


# Call to Action: A Curriculum of Hope


- Teachers must **reclaim curriculum design**.
- The future lies in *curiosity, agency, and transformation*.
- Hope as action: striving to co-create meaningful futures through Art & Design.
- 'Be the change you want to see in the world'



NSEAD Summer event, Workshop at Tate Britain (2024)



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## A Practical Guide to Teaching Art and Design in the Secondary School

Edited By **Andy Ash, Peter Carr**

A Practical Guide to Teaching Art and Design in the Secondary School bridges the gap between key themes in Art and Design education theory, professional practice, and the classroom. Designed to be used independently or alongside the popular textbook Learning to Teach Art and Design in the Secondary School, this book is packed with practical strategies, teaching ideas and activities in every chapter. It provides everything trainee and early career teachers need to reflect on and develop their teaching practice, helping them to plan lessons across the subject in a variety of teaching situations.

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Rules',  
T+  
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2021



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A. Ash 'To make  
concrete' (2024)

