

Special Character Articles

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Food for Thought from the RSST

The Art of Becoming: Creativity in the Age of AI

How Steiner education prepares children for a creative, human future in an automated world

By Jade Kelly, RSST Member

The world is changing quickly. Artificial intelligence now helps us design, write, compose, even dream. I find it extraordinary - and at times, humbling. But as these tools grow more capable, I keep coming back to what gives our work its soul: the human impulse to imagine, to care, to make meaning.

That's what I see nurtured so beautifully at Michael Park - an education that strengthens the inner capacities technology can never replace.

As both a designer and a parent, I often think about what kind of education will best prepare our children for the world they're growing into. Because if AI can replicate the *products* of creativity, it can't touch the *process* - that deeply human dance between imagination, intuition, and meaning-making that lives only within us. And it's this process - not efficiency or output - that Steiner education so beautifully protects and cultivates.

Creativity as a Way of Knowing

In design, creativity isn't just about expression - it's a way of *thinking*. It asks us to hold ambiguity, to observe deeply, to question, and to imagine what doesn't yet exist. That same quality runs through Steiner's philosophy of education.

Steiner understood imagination not as decoration, but as a form of knowledge - a bridge between the inner and outer worlds. Through art, craft, story, and movement, the child doesn't simply learn about life; they *experience* it. In shaping and making, they discover how to think, to feel, and to will - freely and in harmony.

This is what Steiner meant when he described education as an art - the art of awakening freedom through imagination.

At Michael Park, I see this daily: children shaping meaning through their hands, relationships, and curiosity. In the younger years, they learn through rhythm and story - through play that mirrors life. In the middle years, imagination matures into experimentation and collaboration. By high school, it becomes the ground where genuine critical thinking takes root - the ability to discern, question, and create with conscience.

Creativity is not the opposite of critical thinking - it's the soil it grows in. A child who imagines freely learns later to think freely, to weigh ideas, and to stand independently in a complex world.

What AI Can and Can't Do

AI can analyse and replicate. It may even simulate creativity. But it cannot *feel* its way to truth. It cannot wonder, or sense beauty, or choose with conscience. These are distinctly human capacities - and they are the very ones Steiner education nurtures from the earliest years.

In one Silicon Valley Waldorf school, about three-quarters of the students have at least one parent working in high tech - people shaping the digital future yet seeking an education grounded in creativity, play, and human connection. Perhaps they recognise that as automation expands, the qualities that will define the next generation won't be technical prowess, but empathy, adaptability, and imagination.

The Future Will Need Human Beings

As the world accelerates, the most sought-after skills are shifting. The next generation will need more than data literacy - they'll need *moral imagination*: the capacity to see beyond algorithms, to feel what matters, to question, and to care.

Steiner education has been cultivating these very capacities for over a century. The steady, human-paced learning that some might see as "out of step" is, in fact, what equips children to thrive in a world that values creativity, collaboration, and depth of thought. The future will belong to those who can imagine wisely - who can think with both head and heart.

In the noise of data, it offers rhythm; in the flood of information, it restores meaning.

Keeping Pace by Staying Human

Some may worry our children must "keep up" - mastering AI tools to stay competitive. And yes, they will learn to use these technologies. But before we hand them powerful tools, we must help them become powerful *thinkers*.

A grounding in imagination, empathy, and reflection ensures they approach technology consciously - not as passive users, but as creators guided by ethics and insight. When that foundation is secure, technology becomes an instrument of purpose, not a substitute for it.

Steiner education doesn't resist progress - it refines it. It ensures that as technology advances, humanity evolves alongside it.

The Human Touch

Every creative act bears the imprint of its maker - the trace of care, curiosity, and intention. Education is no different. What matters most is not how quickly a child can produce an answer, but how deeply they have journeyed in arriving there.

Steiner education slows us down just enough to remember what makes us human - that creativity isn't only about making things, but about *making sense*.

If we continue to nurture these qualities in our children, the age of AI won't diminish our humanity - it will remind us how essential it is.