



PHOTO/HOLLY HUTCHINGS

Teachers from around the state participated in workshops during the conference.

maybe those kids that are really into nature will go, 'Oh! Reading's got patterns like nature!'"

That's what it's about for Craig Rosen, community engagement and professional development administrator of the Desert Research Institute's Science Alive outreach program, which works with teachers in the state year-round. He started this conference six years ago with teacher trainings and has watched it grow into the contemporary event.

"It's those catches, those ways to get teachers excited about presenting the science through creative means," Rosen said. "It also allows students who experience this the opportunity to really get their hands on it in ways they might not normally do through a book or a story or a lesson or lecture. To really get their hands on the science, and that's where the creative piece comes in. Art is definitely an entry way into science. It's a great tool to be able to bring the science to life."

Those thinking-outside-the-box kids are who businesses in our state want in a future workforce. Chris Reilly—head of workforce development and education for lead conference sponsor Tesla—said that when designing a factory line from idea to reality, they're vital.

"You need to be able to think about those skill sets differently and I think the arts really bring that balance right into play with engineering together," Reilly said.

"We have to remember that arts education cannot be addressed through STEAM."

Pilar Biller,
Teacher



"So, we see creativity to being essential to everything we do across the board. Tesla's a very flat organization so you're constantly working with different subject matter experts and different teams, and the arts can also teach you to deal with that ambiguity and get used to it and get excited about it."

Putting the arts into the STEM mix is said to foster innovation and problem solving, but there are those that hope STEAM is not replacing traditional arts education. Pilar Biller, visual arts teacher at Damonte Ranch High School and the 2018 Nevada Teacher of the Year attended the conference to keep her finger on the pulse of what's happening in the field she loves. She wants people to understand that arts and STEAM are not the same and should be utilized in different ways. She worries that by bringing some of the art components into STEAM, we're not covering what arts education is all about.

"I value both of them," Biller said. "It's a concern that we are already struggling to maintain value for people and to say, 'We'll add art to STEM, and it'll be a thing.' No, it's not that thing. It is important, but we have to remember that arts education cannot be addressed through STEAM. It can't. The arts can enhance STEM, but it's not a replacement."

The conversation will continue when the Nevada STEAM Conference hosts a symposium for educators later this month in Southern Nevada.

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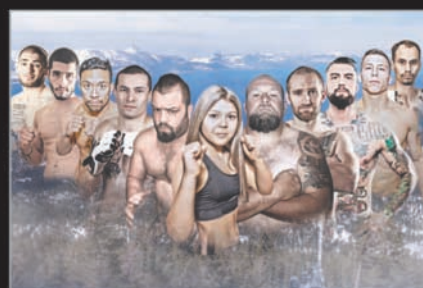
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