

The Role of Imagination in Higher Education: Meanings, Ideas & Practices

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Human beings love to learn—we are emotional and imaginative beings and much of our enjoyment, fulfilment and achievement derive from our daily imaginings.

Unfortunately, imagination is often misunderstood and, as a result, neglected in education. All too often imagination is associated with young children playing, or the frivolous, the "imaginary", or anti-intellectual, rather than being understood as integral to learning in all subjects and at all levels of achievement. It is a challenge to bring a concept like "imagination" centrally to the practice of educators. What tools and practices can educators use to engage emotion and imagination more frequently? What ignites educators' own imaginations?

For thousands of years humans have wrestled with the questions and possibilities of the future, made stories of the past, and wondered at the present. It is within this miasma of possibility that the concept of imagination has salience... The challenge of making sense of the imagination has always been like trying to catch smoke with one's bare hands. How does one define it such that it isn't so amorphous as to slip through one's grasp, or so rigid as to become simplistic to the point of uselessness?^{1:ix-x}

A central theme of this issue will be consideration of "Imaginative Education." Originally created by Dr. Kieran Egan, and developed by the Imaginative Education Research Group (<http://ierg.ca>), Imaginative Education (IE) is an approach to teaching that centralizes emotional and imaginative engagement in the learning process. Articles will indicate how teachers in higher education can employ a range of "cognitive tools" to encourage and engage imagination, motivate learners, and maximize learning.

The issue is scheduled for publication in April 2017 as part of our contribution to the annual World Creativity and Innovation event. We welcome contributions from our readers. If you would like to share your ideas and practices on how you encourage students to use their imaginations please contact the Commissioning Editor Professor Norman Jackson (normanjjackson@btinternet.com) or Guest Editor Gillian Judson (gcj@sfu.ca)

Reference

1 Blenkinsop, S. (2009) *The Imagination in Education: Extending the Boundaries of Theory and Practice* Cambridge Scholars: Newcastle upon Tyne