

CAM #22



Creativity @ Work

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Introduction to Creativity @ Work: From novice to expert & everything inbetween

Norman Jackson

Introduction

Creative Academic holds the view that creativity is a fundamental characteristic of human beings with the possibility of manifesting in all the environments and situations we inhabit day to day. Convinced that our creativity has the potential to be part of our practice at any level of expertise, we want to explore journeys of creativity at and through work from our beginnings as novice or newbie to more experienced oldie.

At its best, work can provide endless motivation and affordance for thinking, acting and behaving that lead to creative engagement and outcomes. But it can also stifle motivation to try to be creative without the autonomy and affordance, or perhaps the sheer volume of work, or the attitudes of colleagues or clients we work with. In this issue of the magazine we are going to explore what creativity means in the contexts of work. In addition to providing insights into our own understandings of creativity it provides us with an opportunity to revisit theories of creativity and to develop new theories grown from our individual and collective experiences. This introduction highlights a number of theories that we might draw on, test and perhaps develop in our inquiry.

Focus on work

Creative Academic Magazine #22 will explore creativity in work and through the work we do. The title, suggested by Paul Kleiman, can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, it implies that our creativity is integrated into purposeful and effortful activity to achieve the things we value: secondly, it shines a light on the particular social-cultural and often organisational context within we work. From a sociological perspective, work is anything that a person undertakes in order to be productive in a way that meets their needs - which may well be serving the needs of others. Work includes mental and/or physical effort usually but not always performed in the context of a paid job. But people also create work for themselves (paid or unpaid) or work for others on a voluntary basis. Work can be categorised into *Routine* - manual or cognitive, or *Non-routine* - manual or cognitive, and hybrids of these categories. Higher Education teachers, along with other professions, inhabit the non-routine cognitive domain. There is scope for creativity in all these categories of work but the creativity that emerges at and through work will be different. It's not a simple matter to define what work means so we leave it up to contributors to define what it means to them.



Focus on creativity

The standard psychological definition of creativity contains two ideas - originality and value which often takes the form of usefulness¹. The notion of originality/novelty has come to dominate western thinking about creativity which focuses attention on products. The idea of *originality* is dominant in artistic and scientific contexts and the idea of *innovation* dominates contexts such as business, industry, technology, engineering and education. But there is another way of thinking about creativity - namely as a situated, emergent, transformational phenomenon. This way of thinking about creativity emphasises humans activity in particular environments involving a person using and weaving aspects of themselves - their thinking, actions and relationships into situations to transform materials, ideas, people, activities and more into new forms that have utility or other forms of value.

Carl Rogers' concept of a creative process, "*the emergence in action of a novel relational product growing out of the uniqueness of the individual on the one hand, and the materials, events, or circumstances of their life*"^{2 p350} is a good fit with the transformational idea. I would however stress that product should not only be viewed as material objects, rather it should also be viewed as products of effort which could take many forms for example - a conversation, a dance or other performances.

Greg Bennick expresses similar ideas in a slightly different way but adds to Rogers' concept by showing how we weave ourselves into the environment and our creation and in the process we are changed. "*Creativity is the process through which we take elements of ourselves and the world around us and transform them into something new....In the process we transform the world and ourselves*" (adapted from Bennick³ 1min 20s). The power in the transformational concept of creativity is that it embraces products, processes and the uniqueness of human beings to the everyday lives of people as they interact with their environments. Through the narratives of creativity at work we can explore the relevance of these and other conceptions of creativity.

Categories of creativity

Kaufman and Beghetto⁴ proposed a 4c model for creativity which includes two mega contexts in which people, situations and physical and social-cultural environments are located.

4 C model of creativity

The **Little-c** meta context is the personal everyday life situations for creativity present in any and every aspect of a person's life. It contains many different domains of activity and experience that hold potential for imagination and creative action alongside and integrated with thoughts, actions and experiences that would not be considered creative. Creative actions and outcomes are judged by the creators and other people who are close to them. For example, a new dinner recipe could be deemed creative by family members.

The **Pro-c** meta-context contains a multitude of domains in which people with significant experience and expertise, practise and create. The word 'Pro' equates with professional but it is misleading. More accurately this is a domain in which people have invested significant time and effort in developing themselves through, education, training, experience and a commitment to ongoing development, to the point where peers would consider them to be expert in their knowledge, skill and performance.

The explanation of Pro-c is a little confusing. In a sequel to the original setting out the 4c model, Helfand, Kaufman and Beghetto⁵ provided these additional explanations.

"Not all working professionals have attained Pro-c status, as many people can do a fine job but not necessarily innovate....However, most individuals working with a professional level of knowledge of their field can be classified as Pro-c."

"Pro-c creativity takes time to develop. The creator must become competent in his field in order to make a groundbreaking contribution and even then what appears creative at that time may turn out to be merely average in the context of history. It takes approximately ten years to excel in a given field."

There appears to be a contradiction in these statements with the first suggesting that, "most individuals working with a professional level of knowledge in their field can be classified as Pro-c" creatives, while the second statement leans towards a Big-C notion of creativity in the idea of a 'groundbreaking contribution' and a 10 year commitment to developing expertise to make this contribution! Their explanation however fails to recognise the journey from novice to expert that all people working in professional fields have to make (see below). More recently Jackson and Lassig⁶ proposed a third mega context for the development and use of creativity, namely education (**ed-c**) to draw attention to the important role played by higher education in the ontological development of people in order to practise in a specific field in which creativity is an integral element of their competency.



Three mega contexts for creativity⁶

The three mega contexts are shown in the Figure. This exploration is concerned with the relationships and interdependencies of these mega contexts. The interesting feature of the creativity of teachers is that their Pro-c creativity is enacted in the educational environment and directly or indirectly it's concerned with developing the creativity of learners. This makes higher education teachers important agents for the development of creative potential of whole societies.

Levels of expertise

As mentioned in the previous section the concept of Pro-c does not take into consideration the journey people make to reach the level of expertise that the concept is intended to accommodate. The fact that we are on a journey to build our knowledge, competence and expertise raises interesting questions about our development and the impacts of such development on our creativity. Our exploration provides an opportunity to share stories and gain new insights.

Dreyfus and Dreyfus⁷ provide a useful conceptual aid to explain the journey from novice to expert (see creativity as work Figure). Their model contains five levels, novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient and expert and the characteristics associated with each level are summarised in Table 1. We can use this map to locate our-



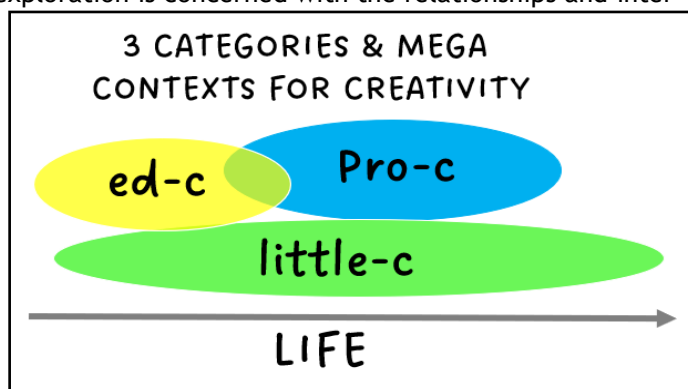
4C Model of creativity

James Kaufman and Ron Beghetto

MEGA CONTEXTS FOR CREATIVITY
little-c creativity - everyday creativity found in most people,
Pro-c expertise in any domain

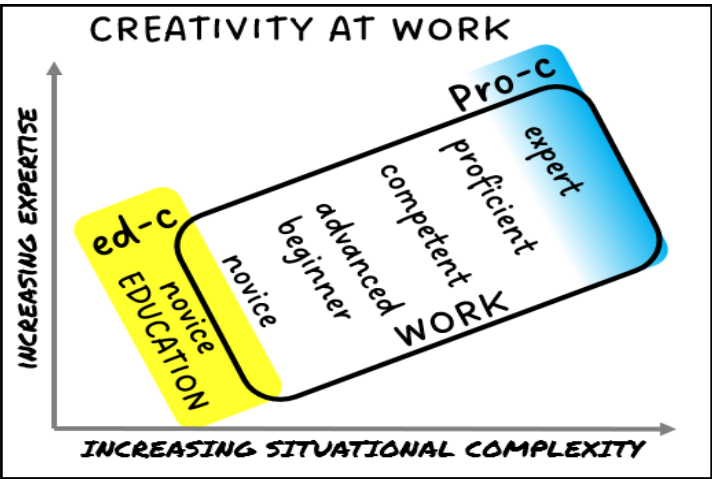
OTHER CATEGORIES
Big-c eminent creativity which is reserved for the great.
mini-c creativity inherent in the learning process

Kaufman, J.C. and Beghetto, R.A. (2009) Beyond Big and Little: The Four C Model of Creativity. Review of General Psychology 13, 1, 1-12.



selves on our ontological journeys. Clearly, people can be creative at all levels of the framework but the manifestations (activities, actions and outcomes) of creativity will be different even in the same work context.

The Pro-c concept of creativity focuses on creativity associated with expertise i.e. the highest level of the novice to expert framework. A key question for inquiry is *how do we explain creativity at work if creativity is only recognised at the highest levels of expertise?* The common sense answer is that it cannot be restricted to any level of expertise. There will be opportunities for creativity as any level of expertise but the affordances, actions and performances and outcomes will be different.



But perhaps the very notion of expertise is somewhat problematic (see Paul Kleiman’s article). As I look at my own life it is full of beginnings⁸ and I might draw the conclusion that the only expertise I have is in beginning something and then learning how to do it until the next beginning. *perhaps the very notion of expertise is somewhat problematic.* But far from seeing the state of being a beginner from a position of deficiency i.e. we don’t know and/or can’t do very much, experience reveals that it is advantageous to hold ourselves in a state of becoming, as if we are beginning. By that I mean seeing every new role, project, situation or experience as an opportunity and a motivation to create a better version of ourselves, we are in a sense creating a new beginning with the possibilities, uncertainty and likely emergence it affords. But the starting point for every new beginning is different to what has gone before and this perhaps is the richest environment for learning, personal and professional development and creative possibilities for people at all stages of their participation in work. It is fascinating to see just how many times this orientation to working life crops up in the contributions to this issue.

Table 1 Characteristics of different levels of expertise in work contexts based on⁷

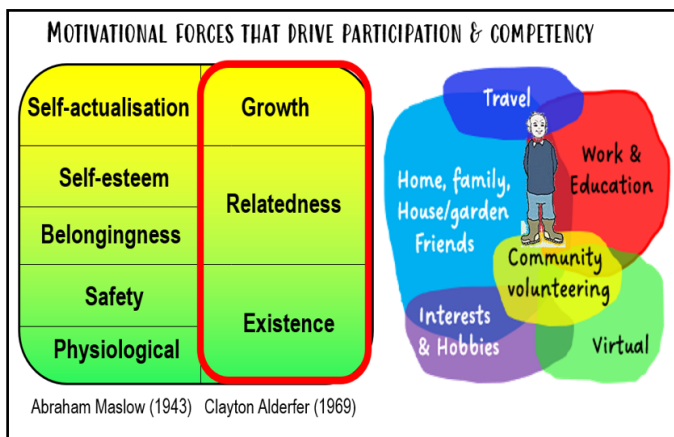
Novice-to-Expert scale					
	Knowledge	Standard of work	Autonomy	Coping with complexity	Perception of context
1 Novice	Minimal, or 'textbook' knowledge without connecting it to practice	Unlikely to be satisfactory unless closely supervised	Needs close supervision or instruction	Little or no conception of dealing with complexity	Tends to see actions in isolation
2 Beginner	Working knowledge of key aspects of practice	Straightforward tasks likely to be completed to an acceptable standard	Able to achieve some steps using own judgement, but supervision needed for overall task	Appreciates complex situations but only able to achieve partial resolution	Sees actions as a series of steps
3 Competent	Good working and background knowledge of area of practice	Fit for purpose, though may lack refinement	Able to achieve most tasks using own judgement	Copes with complex situations through deliberate analysis and planning	Sees actions at least partly in terms of longer goals
4 Proficient	Depth of understanding of discipline and area of practice	Fully acceptable standard achieved routinely	Able to take full responsibility for own work (and that of others where applicable)	Deals with complex situations holistically, decision making more confident	Sees overall 'picture' and how individual actions fit within it
5 Expert	Authoritative knowledge of discipline and deep tacit understanding across area of practice	Excellence achieved with relative ease	Able to take responsibility for going beyond existing standards and creating own interpretations	Holistic grasp of complex situations, moves between intuitive and analytical approaches with ease	Sees overall 'picture' and alternative approaches; vision of what may be possible

Motivational forces that drive our participation in work and all other facets of life

The mega contexts of work, education and the rest of life, provide the physical, social/cultural and psychological environments in which we enact our creativity. Everyday we participate in many different environments more or less simultaneously. It is in the multiplicity of environments we inhabit where our potential as a human being is being realised and what happens in one part of our life may connect with and influence another. We have the potential in our exploration to consider this aspect of our creative life.

Through our participation in the whole of our life we try to satisfy our psychological and physical needs ^{8,9,10}. Clayton Alderfer developed Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs into a three factor model of motivation known as the ERG model. In this model the letter E, R, & G each stand for a different human need: existence, relatedness and growth.

Summary of motivational forces that drive our needs



Alderfer's model says that all humans are motivated by these three needs and they are the most important forces that drive our participation in every part of our life. The most concrete and motivating of Alderfer's three needs is existence, which really relates to physical and psychological survival. The next level is the need for relatedness, a sense of community and a good relationship with yourself. The least concrete, but the most important, from the perspective of unlocking our potential in the ERG model, is growth, which relates to self-development, fulfilment and the sense of achieving our potential. Robbins has suggested another motivational force that forms around our need/desire to contribute to give to causes and purposes that are beyond ourself.

Creativity can be motivated by any of these forces but is particularly present in our need for self-expression as a means to self-fulfilment, the desire for growth which pushes us to take on new challenges and the need to contribute. We might ask ourselves, how does 'work' fit into our every day profile of needs and how does creativity relate to our motivations to meet these needs?

The @ work socio-cultural environment

It doesn't matter if we are a newbie or an oldie in a work setting, creativity emerges as we participate in work, in particular physical environments using tools that are designed for particular purposes, interacting with colleagues and clients, and our own organisation and the wider ecosystem as we try to work out what we need to do in order to perform and achieve. If what we are trying to do doesn't fit into existing practices, we need to work out what needs to be changed and how it needs to be changed. It is the organisational context and immediate social setting with its people, culture and structures that introduces complexity and challenge into the work process and demands attention to the situational knowledge required in order to perform. Culture is conveyed in the conversations, actions and stories of every member of the organisation. Culture affects the way people think and behave, the way people interact with each other and the way people want to belong to and be involved in the work of the organisation. The culture of an organisation helps or inhibits people as they perform their roles: it affects the extent to which people feel empowered to use their creativity and their willingness to take risks.



An emotionally nourishing environment helps people deal with the challenges, stresses, anxieties and frustrations of trying to fulfil their role and helps them to remain positive in the face of setbacks. Such an environment recognises the efforts and celebrates the achievements of those who are involved in change¹². Stress, anxiety and frustration are often associated with work and are especially associated with times of instability and change - a frequent occurrence in organisations. They are particularly apparent when people take on new roles or engage in challenging and demanding projects that take people into unfamiliar territory. Amabile and Kramer's study of the socio-cultural work environment¹² identified two types of event or condition which they termed catalysts and nourishers, that support what they term a person's 'inner work life' - the constant stream of emotions, perceptions and motivations that people experience as they go through their work days^{12 p29-39}.

Throughout the day, people react to events that happen in their work environment and try to make sense of them. These emotional reactions and perceptions affect their motivation for the work - all of which have a powerful influence on their performance, including their creativity. When people have a positive inner work life, they are more creative, productive, committed to the work, and co-operative toward the people they work with. When they have poor inner work lives, the opposite is true - they are less creative, productive, committed and co-operative. The catalyst factor includes events that directly enable a person to make progress in their work. Catalysts include such things as: having clear goals (self-determined goals are more motivating), having autonomy to determine how to work, having access to sufficient resources when you need them, having enough time to accomplish the tasks, being able to find help when you need it, knowing how to succeed, being encouraged to let your ideas flow. The opposite of catalysts are inhibitors; these make progress difficult or impossible. They are the

mirror image of the catalysts, and include giving unclear goals, micro-managing, and providing insufficient resources.

Amabile and Kramer^{12 p131-33} identified four factors that nourish a work culture in which people felt supported and positively influenced their motivation, productivity and creativity namely:

- 1 Respect - managerial actions determine whether people feel respected or disrespected and recognition is the most important of these actions.
- 2 Encouragement - when managers or colleagues are enthusiastic about an individual's work and when managers express confidence in the capabilities of people doing the work it increases their sense of self-efficacy. Simply by sharing a belief that someone can do something challenging and trusting them to get on with it without interference, greatly increases the self-belief of those involved in the challenge.
- 3 Emotional support - people feel more connected to others at work when their emotions are validated. This goes for events at work, like frustrations when things are not going smoothly and little progress is being made, and for significant events in someone's personal life. Recognition of emotion and empathy can do much to alleviate negative and amplify positive feelings with beneficial results for all concerned.
- 4 Affiliation - people want to feel connected to their colleagues so actions that develop bonds of mutual trust, appreciation and affection are essential in nourishing the spirit of participation.

It will be instructive to see what aspects of the social-cultural environment emerge as being important in personal the narratives of creativity at work.

Some questions to explore through personal narratives

Delving into any aspect of our life always interesting and exciting. There are many questions we might use to help us explore. Here are a few that come to mind.

- How have I come to be able to practise creatively in my work settings?
- How does my work encourage me to try to be creative? What are the deep motivations that drive me?
- What does being creative mean to me in my work? (both general and specific situations)
- How has my creativity evolved as I have journeyed from novice to expert in any area of work practice?
- How, when and where did I begin to develop my creative self?
- How do past experiences of me being creative in any environment contribute to being creative in my work environment where expertise is required?"
- How have my experiences of being creative in one work domain contributed to my being creative in another work domain?
- What aspects of the environment in which I work encourage and facilitate my creativity?
- What beliefs/concepts of creativity do I draw upon when I interpret my creative acts?
- Should the term Pro-c be reserved for the highest level of expertise in the work environment? If so, how do we recognise creativity at all other levels of expertise?

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to my friends and colleagues who repeatedly answer the call to share their perspectives on the questions or proposition I am posing. On behalf of the community I offer sincere thanks to Paul Kleiman, Chrissi Nerantzi, Alexandra Winder, David Goodman, Efrossini Paltoglou, Sandra Abegglen, Kate Grafton, Holly Warren, Angela Shapiro, Aidan Johnston and Kevin Byron for your contributions.

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In the Beginning.....

Paul Kleiman



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Just as the beginning is the start of the creation story in the Book of Genesis, beginnings are the starting point for creativity in any situation involving human beings. In this contribution I am posing the question, is beginning the most important state of being for creativity to flourish?

A few years ago, I was leading a two-day 'away day' seminar on employability in dance, drama and music higher education. The individuals attending - all leaders (experts?) in their fields - were all involved in the creative arts in one way or another: teaching, research, professionally, in some cases all three. I started the seminar by asking everyone to trace their 'employment history'. A fascinating array of diverse, non-linear creative paths emerged....and they included my own.

For fifteen years before I stumbled into teaching in higher education I worked in theatre: designing (I trained as a theatre designer), directing, performing and writing. I worked mainly in community and touring theatre and also, importantly, in Theatre-in-Education, working with teachers to create drama-based programmes that were directly related to the curriculum. We even created a play and associated activities for infant school kids about basic mathematic principles.

Along the way I also worked as an artist-in-residence in Welsh primary schools teaching the art of kite-making (and flying). Soon after that, having completed a Masters Degree in the mid-1980s I came very close to having a complete change of career. Having written my master's dissertation on how the media was tackling the HIV/AIDS crisis I was asked to undertake an evaluation of a major regional AIDS-in Education initiative. That led in turn to being asked to lead a group undertaking the evaluation of educational AIDS initiatives nationally. Only geography and domestic circumstances prevented me heading down that particular path.

All those examples might suggest that I have, or had, become some sort of expert i.e. one with the special skill or knowledge representing mastery of a particular subject, or at least had acquired a sufficient level of expertise each of those fields in order to practise in a reasonably responsible role and to be recognised and accepted as such.

Now, I certainly wouldn't claim to possess special skill or knowledge let alone mastery of a particular subject. But the question that occurs is: Can anyone? Obviously, over a long and somewhat varied career, I have acquired some skills and knowledge; some expertise, perhaps. I have also acquired some recognition for that expertise in certain areas. But expertise does not an expert make.

Several different notions are at play here. There is the acquisition of expertise (knowledge/skills/ understanding). Then there is the application of that expertise; claiming to be and/or being recognised as an expert; claiming to possess or, more usually, being recognised as having mastery of (or over?) a particular subject or skill.

We are now in the territory of the Myth of the Expert: the belief that a correlation exists between the depth of a person's knowledge and the quality of the work that person can produce. Readers will be familiar with the 10,000-hours rule popularised by Malcom Gladwell in his book *Outliers*¹ based on the research undertaken by Anders Ericsson which claims that 'expertise' happens around the 10k-hour mark of deliberate practice. The often-quoted example is the thousands of hours the Beatles played in Hamburg which gave them their 'expert' edge on their competitors. But, as Chaili Trentham points out in her blog on the *The Expertise Myth: Who is the expert here?*² I suspect we can all point at an individual, for example leaders and senior managers in our institutions and organisations, who clearly "lack 'expertise' (to put it kindly) and yet have maintained positions of authority for years".

Trentham goes on to state that "true expert leaders choose to lead with expertise, while they maintain humility, seek mastery, embrace curiosity, and develop an unwavering commitment to excellence within their field." The educator Adeyemi Stenbridge takes the debunking of the Myth of Expertise even further. He opens his blog post³ with the following: "Every so often—way too often, actually—some kind person will make mention of me with regrettable reference to the label of "expert" which I try my best to always correct. Maybe such a thing exists, but the thought of having to live up to the title of "expert" makes me cringe."

He describes being labelled an ‘expert’ as *‘the kiss of death, an invitation to abandon the very habits and attitudes which theretofore played pivotal roles in any meaningful contributions one may have made to the discipline.’*

His rejection of the label is based on two reasons. First that the label ‘expert’ implies a certain certainty whereas, especially in education, uncertainty is a driving force and a virtue. Certainty implies everything is fixed, that there is no room for expansion, that there is total agreement as to the what, where, why and how of the world. The unending quest and necessity to increase knowledge and understanding and our own natural curiosity about our changing world and the ever-changing universe in which it is located, means that the idea of expert or master is illogical.

Stembridge’s second reason for rejecting the label ‘expert’ is that “Experts must defend the facade of expertise”. He argues that, certainly as a teacher, one is, or should be, always learning and moving forward. So, as someone close to this publication wrote to me recently: *“I have come to the conclusion that the only expertise I have is in beginning and then learning how to do it...until the next beginning”*.

Far from it being a problem seeing and holding ourselves in a continual state of becoming, as if we are beginning, and the uncertainty and emergence it implies, is where true expertise lies. As Stembridge so neatly puts it. *“I am a teacher, and for the teacher, uncertainty is a virtue. Not only that, if one is fully engaged, uncertainty is inevitable. It is the necessary fuel that inspires artfulness. Uncertainty is the all pervasive companion to the desire to learn. To be certain means that there is no room for expansion... one’s cup is already full. How then can anything further be learned? What fun is there in believing oneself to know all that there is to be known about one’s subject?”*

What experience rather than expertise allows us to do, is to draw upon and utilise a wider and deeper body of understanding as we continually work with our perpetual beginnings.

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Lifelong-lifewide professional learning in higher education and beyond: The importance of experiencing the state of being a novice as a novel ideas generator in one’s own profession Chrissi Nerantzi and Alexandra Winder



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Free-range professional learning

Within this contribution, we explore the concept and practice of *lifelong-lifewide professional learning* through the lens of a whole human being at the heart of learning within self- and co-created ecologies of practice that are explorative, imaginative and full of curiosity¹. Such ecologies integrate the “lifelong” and “lifewide” aspects of learning, acting and being that are fundamental to an immersive, experience- rich life full of wonder and discoveries that will activate us and give us transformative powers to be a force for good in our world. Separating personal and professional learning is not something we understand. Humans integrate and utilise learning from all

their experiences, so boundary crossing learning is normal, it has happened since the beginning of time. We need to move beyond the narrative “nice to do” when a professional has the drive and desire to pursue learning paths that seem dis- or un-connected with their world of work - typically in response to a new and urgent organisational priority. This narrow way of defining who we are as a professional and where the inspiration and professional growth and transformation should come from, limits our personal and collective potential and the opportunities for discoveries we can and will make along the way if we are able and allowed to make novel connections by adopting a more explorative and curious way of being and becoming as a professional.

In this article we share some of our personal and professional experiences of professional learning and consider the role lifelong and lifewide learning plays in these experiences. We attempt to illustrate how dissolving boundaries has freed us as human beings holistically and as professionals, made us more curious about our profession and the world around us and boosted our confidence and courage to take risks and dare to do new things.

The article is in two parts. Part 1 includes vignettes from the two co-authors and these provide a foundation for a broader conversation in part 2 in which we combine and blend our authentic voices, perspectives and thoughts. Our aim is to trigger a wider conversation about the ways in which we integrate the lifewide dimensions of our life into our professional learning and the professional learning of others so that as we form ourselves, we help form others to form themselves and enable the world to form around us. Fingers crossed!

Stirrings of excitement by Alexandra

As a Primary School Teacher, when a CPD session is delivered I know there will be an expectation for me to include elements of it in my practice and to demonstrate I can do this effectively. All too often, I have found official 'CPD sessions' to be ineffective. This is not because they are not designed or delivered well, or because the content is irrelevant, but because there is simply not enough time to get to the heart of the subject and truly understand and analyse the process and idea behind it. When I consider the potential for 'lifewide learning' and what how it can transform my practice (everybody's practice!) I feel the stirrings of excitement and light bulbs of possibility beginning to go off in my head. I am a nosy and noisy creator. I like investigating and finding things out (I spend more time down rabbit holes than I do out of them) and then creating something entertaining, and hopefully helpful and informative, with what I have found out. When I found myself using different software tools to make online courses, something not required of me in my professional role, I decided to study for an MA in Digital Education.

The MA not only reframed my understanding of technology within the classroom, but also put me in the situation of novice, enabling me to understand how students and parents potentially perceive not only the digital landscape, but also the entire learning eco system. As pointed out by my co - authors, the position of 'student' is, in itself, valuable. By becoming a student and assuming the role of novice within my classroom, I have become a form of knowledge broker² encouraging increasingly rhizomatic approaches to learning. For me, applying lifewide learning principles is now a conscious undertaking that I set out to achieve³ which in turn enables wider, more open learning experiences for my students. Furthermore, there is potential for use of micro credentials within a rhizomatic approach. The idea of students or teachers being able to undertake a self-directed credential in any area of a curriculum that piques their interest, opens many opportunities. In their 2022 study Haigh and others³ stressed the importance of the need for micro-credentials to be integrated into curriculum design in order to mitigate some of the pitfalls of extrinsic motivation. If we are to apply life wide learning principles to curriculum development and design, could micro credentials be the answer to assessment?

As teachers, we are increasingly encouraged to be a 'guide on the side' when we consider our practice. It is my hope that by encouraging teachers to engage in life wide learning and bring it into their classrooms, we can also apply these ideas to our official continued professional development, making it a more personalised experience for everyone.

Freedoms by Chrissi Nerantzi

Ody (9): Mummy, when will you get a job?

Mummy: I have a job, Ody.

Ody: No, you are still at university.

Mummy: That is my job.

Ody: No, this is not a job!

The exchange described above is authentic and happened almost 10 years ago. Ody is now a first year undergraduate student and mummy is still at university. I am mummy. My curiosity keeps growing. I think the more I learn, the more questions, I have. The more I want to learn and the more I discover that I don't know very much at all. Being in a constant dynamic state of learning fills me with excitement. Herman⁵ is right when he says that professionals want to be in charge of their own learning (I think everybody does!). We all want to learn what

we want and what we think will be useful for us also to help others. This freedom is liberating for me. So, while being an academic developer and fully immersed in what we would call professional learning for some years now with a focus on the educational and technological domains my work belongs to, I regularly wander into different places and spaces. I always find these journeys fascinating and enlightening. I feel alive and re-energised and come back to my professional domains with fresh ideas and motivation for my work. Such an example is the Masters qualification I did not so long ago in Creative Writing.

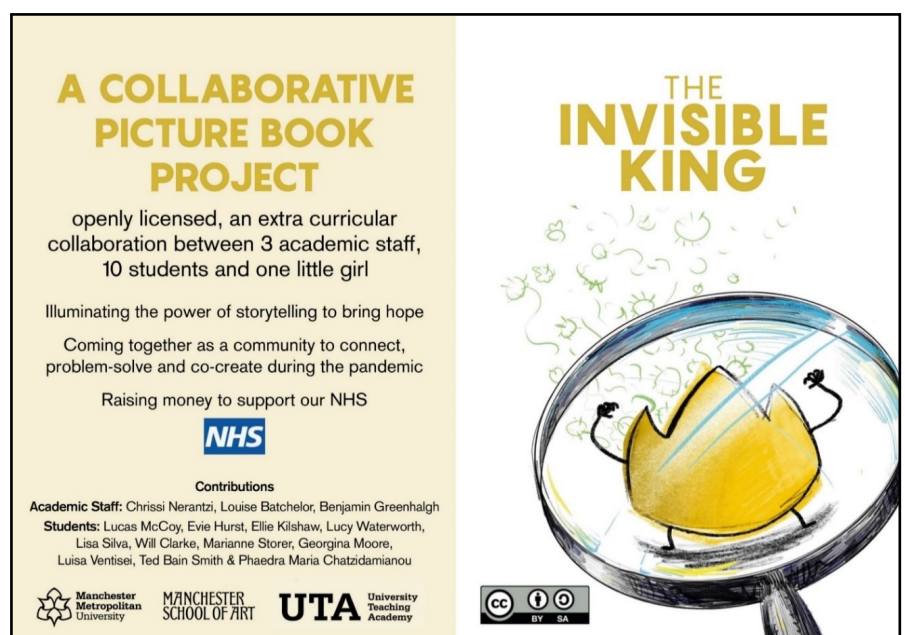
My love for storytelling and storymaking generated a strong commitment to learn more about it in a systematic way with others and experts in this area. Deciding to enroll on a course motivated me even further. I was a student again. I love being a student. That excitement didn't go away, even when I struggled. This is all part of learning, the highs and the lows. The dark clouds disappear when you keep going. And they did. The course opened whole new worlds for me professionally also as an academic developer and educator in higher education. I started believing in myself as a story maker and my special love for picture books grew even further. Being an educator and a student at the same time is such a privilege and this itself such an important place to be for any educator. Yes, I could just read a book or two or even more about creative writing. Would that be enough? Cronje⁶ makes the following interesting observation which made me think. *"It might be that practitioners situate informal tasks very low on the list of preferences when having to make a decision on continuous professional learning initiatives."* Perhaps, because I place high value on academic achievement, by engaging in a formal academic course for credits I evidence my strong commitment to an area and through the qualification I get a sense of satisfaction and achievement. I don't think what I am doing is collecting degrees or qualifications but it might seem like that to some at least.

As I said, I also see value in being a student, going through the ups and downs, the assessments and being with my peers, having again that feeling of being a novice which creates fears and freedoms at the same time. Freedoms to experiment, freedoms to fail, freedoms to pick oneself up again and keep moving. Isn't this what is also important for professional learning? Storytelling further penetrated by practice as an academic developer since completing the course. A picture book course followed. This was not an academic qualification and I am thinking now how useful it would be as a micro-credential and if I could have used it towards the MA I completed. It is too late now to think about this for myself but it provides a useful example of how an external course could be turned into a micro-credential and enable learners to work towards academic credits. These two courses on creative writing were invaluable for me as both an academic developer and as a creative human being search for new and more effective ways of expressing myself. The experiences provided so much food-for-thought and action which I took forward.

Since then, I have experimented with picture books for collaborative learning, inquiry and live projects with educators and students in my professional practice and it has been fascinating. For me this is a form of lifelong-lifewide professional learning. And it didn't take time to identify opportunities to use storytelling and particularly using picture books in academic development as a novel way to work with colleagues and help them inject new ideas into their practice. When the pandemic broke out and we were in lockdown, I initiated for example the fully online live picture book project "The invisible king"⁷ with students and educators at my institution as an extra-curricular activity on the foundation course in Art and Design using a story I had written (Figure 1). This activity became a way to do something exciting and novel that these students and educators had not experienced before in their course and all that at a very challenging and stressful time for all of us. It added excitement and a useful focus on something positive and creative. Our collaboration led to the co-creation of an open picture book which we made available under an open license also to generate funds for the Manchester Mayor's Foundations for those in need. Participating students and educators found this activity enjoyable and felt that the co-creation of the picture book brought them closer together and helped them learn who they are as illustrators⁸.

Figure 1 "The invisible King" Front and back cover ^{7a}

The "Together"^{7b} picture book followed thanks to a GO-GN Fellowship later in 2020 with a team of open educators and researchers from different parts of the world (Figure 2). We co-wrote a story about the values of open education as an open inquiry in which we involved the wider open education community and members of the picture

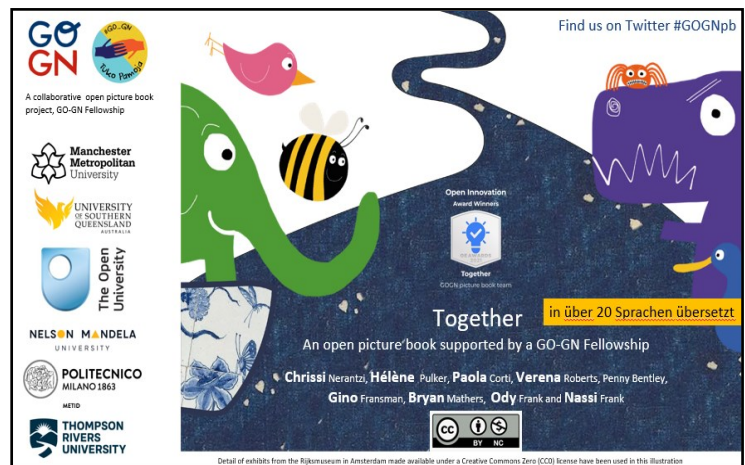


book team. The illustrations were also all done collaboratively re-appropriating openly licensed artwork from the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and fresh illustrations which in the end I did with Ody.

Figure 2 Picture book “Together” - cover and collaborators with institutions involved^{7b}

Despite the challenges we remained positive and started seeing potential for the wider use of a picture-book-based learning beyond art and design programmes. With a member of the team, I decided to co-author a paper capturing our ideas to help other educators consider this approach in their practice¹⁰. And all these activities have their seeds in the creative writing courses I did. These helped me generate novel ideas, experience new eureka moments and make surprising connections that can re-invigorate learning and teaching. Such cross-fertilisation of ideas is vital for professional learning.

I would like academic development in higher education to be seen with new eyes, as an opportunity to engage educators as students in lifewide professional learning, be really open to choice and open exploration into multiple directions as it will generate fresh ideas for educators that they will bring back to their profession. Investing in staff can make such a difference. We work at university because we love learning and helping others to learn. We choose this domain of work not only because it resonates deeply with our values and beliefs but because of its boundless affordance for intellectual, practical and creative self-expression. Engaging in development, especially in areas that are entirely new to us, demands that we become novices or students, and as a professional developer we must learn with our own students and try to co-create a vibrant and dynamic learning community united¹¹.



The lifewide and ecological nature of lifelong professional learning

Some years back now, Mishra and Koehler¹² proposed the conceptual Technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPCK) framework for digital educators based on the Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) framework by Schulman¹³ as a useful professional development tool. There is extensive research linked to both of these frameworks and numerous critiques¹⁴. We are mentioning it here as we had the opportunity to revisit it recently within the MA in Digital Education in the School of Education at the University of Leeds. The question that we have is around its currency. While the TPCK framework focusses on technology, pedagogy and content, their interrelationships and could be useful for framing specific knowledge needs for digital educators in fact all educators of today, it is perhaps limiting in broadening our understanding about the nature of being a professional and learning as a partly deliberate and partly emergent means of being and becoming a better version of ourselves - our very formation as a more complete person. The importance of cross-disciplinary and expansive lifelong-lifewide learning for example seem to be missing. Is professional knowledge enough? Knowledge of one's own discipline or professional area, pedagogy and technology? What about boundary-crossing learning? What about knowing vs being in a constant state of becoming? What about instead of educator as expert to educator as co-learner? And the educator as a novice too? Pablo Picasso said famously *“Learn the rules like a pro, so you can break them like an artist.”* But perhaps Kessels’¹⁵ words are even more powerful *“If you don’t know the rules, you don’t know not to break them. The amateur doesn’t fear failure.”* So perhaps when we are in entirely new processes of formation we are more likely to try doing things that are actually not allowed by the rules or the culture of the environment.

A podcast by the American Psychological Association in which Kounios¹⁶ speaks about creativity and eureka moments. It made us think about the importance of being a novice to come up with remote associations as creative ideas. Especially in the context of a professional domain, we think this is really important to be able to generate fresh ideas and make novel connections. These wild ideas and surprising connections are really what lead to new discoveries¹⁷. Kounios¹⁶ says characteristically when referring to a specific study around jazz improvisation...

“We looked at the best versus the worst improvisations for each subject, in terms of most creative versus least creative, and what we found is that, experts improvisation, their best versus their worst, activated the left posterior parts of the brain; for the novices, their best versus their worst activated the right hemisphere, mostly right frontal areas of the brain. We found this surprising. So looking around in the literature, there’s an old theory of the hemispheres and creativity that was first proposed by a neuropsychologist named Elkhonon Goldberg, and what he argued is that the right hemisphere processes novel—it’s stimuli novel experiences—when there’s something new for you, a new task, a new stimulus, it’s the right hemisphere that’s engaged. As you become more and more practiced at it, as it becomes more and more familiar, that activity moves to the left hemisphere.”

Stepping out of one's discipline and the state of the expert there, seems to create an untapped potential of learning through being a novice in this unexplored domain and working towards mastery that can have transformative powers not just for personal life but also professionally. Graham and Moir^{18 p.13} illuminate the importance of being in the world. They state characteristically

"... a truly valuable and meaningful experience for students and educators alike, is not one that prioritises belonging to the university, but one that sees the university as an emergent construct growing out of and existing through the interrelationships of those involved in the ecosystems and communities associated with our praxis."

We can interpret this as a recognition of an ecology of practice¹⁹ in which learning emerges as a whole caring and feeling human being, seamlessly immersed in his or her world with its past, present and future, connects and weaves together, aspects of themselves and their environment to achieve something of value. Such aspects include their values and beliefs, their imaginations, talents and skills and their broader *learnings* gained from experiences in diverse contexts, from anywhere and across time from the personal and the professional sphere, across all activities of life. What Jackson²⁰ calls the "lifelong-lifewide" dimensions of life¹. For the teacher, or any other person involved in work in which they interact with people and environment in complex ways, creativity, like learning and practice, emerge through this real-time process of weaving, interaction and the making of meaning, often in a highly unpredictable way.²¹

Integrating these and other ideas into a richer conception of professional learning

In higher education more and more we bring students together across courses and disciplines. In research we have seen the fruits of cross-disciplinarity and civic engagement research. The initial and continuous professional development of academics and other professionals who teach in higher education has become central to UK based institutions. Most institutions have central units that support the development of academic staff for several decades now. A variety of terms are used to describe this functional role including, educational development, academic development, academic staff development and academic professional development. Is there an argument for bringing all these terms under the umbrella of "academic professional learning"? Teaching and research present a plethora of opportunities for such development with professional development courses around pedagogy such as cross-disciplinary PgCerts including peer observations, workshops around learning and teaching as well as 'grassroots', 'faculty-led', 'strategic', 'community-building' and 'research-based' interventions²³. Often professional learning is seen as something we have to do to get better, something we need to learn because we are not good at it. It is true that it can have a deficit taste to it²⁴. However, we know that professional learning is not just a necessity but also a choice²⁵. Personal networks²⁶ for example and collaborative learning in cross-institutional professional communities and networks²⁷ increasingly play a more significant role in professional learning for higher education professionals and open up new and more diverse development opportunities.

These professional learning practices have something in common. They all seem to focus on the academic side of professional learning from the perspective of the profession and the need and the desire, of course, to keep our knowledge current, fresh and relevant. This makes me wonder and wander. What about professional learning that is curiosity-driven and happens in the wider ecosystems of life outside the discipline, outside our professional domain? Can we and should we bottle professional learning exclusively as something that we do that is explicitly linked to the profession we belong to or are part of? Is only academic professional learning what is needed to be a well formed professional?

Webster-Wright²⁸ suggests that we should move away from deficit models in professional learning. We need to learn because we have to get better at what we do. What about all the things we want to learn in order to become better versions of ourselves? What role can the lifelong-lifewide dimension of acting, learning and being play to inject professional learning with fresh ideas from other domains and excitement for learning in order to become develop ourselves as a whole human being? And what is its relationship to professional learning? While one would argue that we recognise the importance of the "lifelong" dimension of professional learning, "lifewide" seems to still stay in the shadows, somehow. An untapped potential? Untapped opportunities? Untapped needs? Enrichment and creativity, if you like, are achieved when we make novel connections, when we connect the things that seem unconnectable, if you like¹⁷, like knitting and academic development for example, or music and engineering. Seeing the professional as a person holistically who has a wide range of interests and hobbies will open up new paths for professional learning that are more diverse and take us to new explorations and discoveries not just in our private lives but also professionally. These thoughts generate a connection between lifelong-lifewide learning, open education and specifically what Deimann and Farrow²⁹ define open education as *Bildung*, something an individual does for self-cultivation and growth. For Humboldt^{see 31 p8}, the most important features of universities were:

- Die Einheit von Forschung und Lehre [Unity of research and teaching]
- Die Lehr- und Lernfreiheit für Professoren und Studenten [Freedom to teach and learn for academics and students]
- Die Gemeinschaft der Lehrenden und Lernenden [Community of academics and students]"

Is there really a connection? Do we need to embrace not only the “lifelong” dimension of learning but also the “lifewide” dimension in an explicit way? How can we re-define professional learning and what is valuable and valued? What can we afford to leave out?

We were excited to discover and read Cronje’s⁶ MA dissertation, action research project in academic professional learning in South African private higher education with four academic campus managers. Cronje’s findings illustrate that the individual academic is at the heart of their own professional learning in a holistic way. The approaches that seem to work according to this study are situated workplace learning, contextualisation, interesting and challenging tasks, formalised tasks, learning resources, tailor-made tasks, integrated tasks for professional practice, self-management capabilities, self-reflection, internal motivation and opportunity creation. While in this study these areas are all very much linked to the professional domain, they also illustrate, at least to us, the porosity and co-existence of the personal and the professional and the desire to pursue personal interests and aspirations. It is this porosity of professional learning that excites us as it enables cross-pollination of ideas and domains that seem at least on the surface to have very little or nothing to do with a specific profession. Challis^{cited in 31} seem to make the link between the professional and the personal and acknowledge that professional learning has wider reaching benefits. What about personal, lifewide learning and its wider reaching benefits too? Celebrating professional learning not only as something we do within our professional domain and throughout our lives (lifelong), but also as all the different things we engage in, such as hobbies, activities and wider interests at specific times in our lives (lifewide).

The government in the UK recognises the acute skill shortage and social inequalities that make higher education not accessible to nor affordable for all, while standard course structure and duration seem to be inflexible for the needs of today’s learners³². They see the introduction of micro-credentials³³ as a way to enrich and diversify the universities exit award offer and make it more attractive to the wider population. So, what are micro-credentials? Micro-credentials are bite-size higher education awards at different levels that are smaller than existing awards. They can be taken as stand alone introductory or specialised courses. They can also be used towards completing a traditional programme of study allowing for more flexible and cost-effective participation in higher education when we include open educational offers over a longer period of time and throughout life.

Micro-credentials are for anybody who would like to learn something they fancy or address a specific need at work quickly, affordably. Up- and re-skilling and developing new capabilities in a specific area is what characterises these. Micro-credentials are promoted as lifelong learning opportunities and could help the workforce re- and up-skill more rapidly while gaining an academic award that could open the appetite for more learning and development and lead to a full degree at some point. There are similarities between this idea and Professional Development modules that have been offered by universities for many years now. What differs is that micro-credentials are seen as awards and not just as simple modules. For us they also present opportunities for lifewide learning and associated credentialing and therefore are also welcome for lifelong and lifewide professional learning. McGreal and others³⁴ provide practice examples of micro-credentials from different parts of the world and explore the benefits and challenges of using them to create more accessible higher education in line with SDG4: Quality Education for all, also utilising open education.

The stories of the co-authors and practitioners that have been shared in this magazine, who are educators in different domains, about their experiences of lifelong-lifewide professional learning create a rich picture of experiences that have the professional as a learner at heart.

Kaufman and Beghetto³⁵ defined the 4C Model of creativity: little-c as everyday creativity and Pro-c creativity expertise individuals may have in a specific domain or different domains; mini-c is part of learning and Big-c seems to refer to something that is more rare and exclusive and perhaps unreachable for many. We don’t fully understand the distinction between little-c and mini-c and the need to differentiate. Considering Kaufman and Beghetto³⁵ as well as Jackson and Lassigs³⁶ attempt to argue for an educational domain for creativity (ed-c) which relates to creativity that flourishes in education and specifically higher education, we are putting the following proposal forward through which we conceptualise creativity in its different forms of the lived experiences as :

- **everyday-c** that is present throughout life and across activities and domains and refers to creativity that springs to life fuelled by curiosity, imagination and resourcefulness via lifelong and lifewide learning.
- **education-c** creates further enrichment opportunities and creativity boosted by education that has the potential to expand everyday-c and the discovery learning associated with this through inquiry.
- **expert-c** then could encompass creativity relating to a specific domain or multiple domains we have expertise in. While the term “expert” in itself may be problematic, it somehow better illustrates what this type of creativity relates to. We feel that “professional” is too narrowly defined. Expert-c may show more fully the depth and breadth of knowledge across domains and beyond a specific profession or job.

This then would leave us to explore the idea of discoveries, small, big or supersized and rare. For us these are breakthroughs or eureka moments we can all experience. While Kaufman and Beghetto’s framework³⁵ define Big-C as something novel that is reserved for the few, we believe what we call **eureka-c** is something all of us have the capacity to experience. It is not reserved for the few. Perhaps this is a more inclusive way of exploring crea-

tivity and positioning it within the fabric of everyday life instead of interpreting it as the cherry on the cake that can not be eaten by all (Figure 3).

Figure 3 Creativ-o-meter created using O'meter by Visual thinkery CC-BY-SA

Through our individual stories and this synthesis commentary we have illustrated what drives us to learn at work, the nature of that learning and what this means for us as professionals. We included specific examples of lifewide-lifelong professional learning that show the importance of curiosity-driven interests across domains and areas and the impact these have on creativity at work and life more generally. Pro-c seems to be elusive and focused on expertise. As that expertise is a lifelong and lifewide professional learning process that requires constant curiosity and inquiry but also re- and unlearning throughout our (professional) lives. Separating the expertise from learning may not be wise as the expert is required to be in the constant state of learning as our own stories have shown not only to keep-up with the speed of change but also be the change.



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From Expert (?) to Novice and Back Again...

David Goodman



As a Senior Lecturer in Leadership and Management at the University of Chichester I teach all undergraduate levels and on our Masters programmes. I am the Programme Coordinator for the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship Programme and Digital Marketing Apprenticeship Programme. Prior to this, I was at the University of Portsmouth in a range of different roles. The first part of my career was mainly in the private sector within the creative and cultural industries as a contractor and consultant. After a first degree in Fine Art, I returned to study and spent several years studying, as a 'distance learner', with the Open University resulting in Master in Business Administration (MBA) in 2008. My commitment to lifelong learning and further study resulted in an Accounting qualification (Open University 2013) and Postgraduate Certificate in Learning & Teaching in Higher Education (2017) and I am currently working on a Professional Doctorate in the area of work-based learning and apprenticeship.

Introduction

The call for articles suggested '...journeys of creativity from novice to expert...' but my earliest experience flipped the journey around i.e. it might be argued that I began with more expertise as a creative practitioner and then lost the opportunity to use my creativity before finding it again. This raises the question of what is more important to creativity - our level of experience/expertise or the affordances we have to act creatively emphasising and how much the wider context of our work matters.

I was an art student in the 1990s where creativity was central to my practice and those years provided a formative experience. But after graduating, my 'first career' slowly eroded much of my creativity, despite being in the domain of theatre, film and television (ironically part of the creative industries), because commercial pressures overwhelmed my ability to practice creatively. The nadir was reached during four years working in a small engineering business undertaking diverse projects, each holding creative potential but the daily reality was ensuring the business was not loss making. Thankfully, I created an entirely different career and I now find myself teaching leadership and management in which I am able to utilise my creativity as I attempt to work with students creatively beyond 'Powerpoint' and bullet points.

This short personal narrative is in two parts. First, I briefly highlight three incidents that re-energised my creativity, before discussing in part 2, three simple activities I use in my current classroom practice to encourage students to use their imagination and creativity.

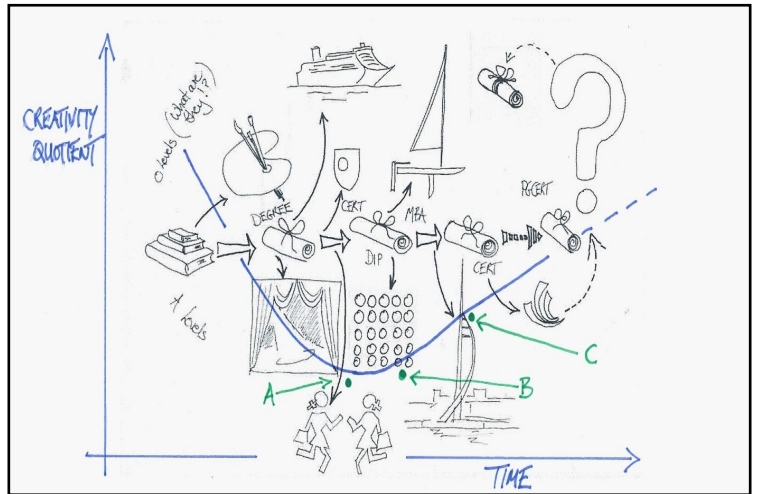
Part 1 – Incidents that rekindled my creative spirit

I use figure 1 to introduce myself to students during our first ‘contact’, it sketches out my timeline and immediately sets some expectations for students as I try to encourage them to consider the use of imagination and creative visual thinking.

Figure 1 My ‘Me-Map’ annotated with a creativity quotient curve.

My life map illustrates three specific incidents that re-energised my own creativity (marked A, B, C) and I think highlight the relationship and connection between our work and life identities. For this narrative I have also annotated figure 1 with two axes, and a ‘creativity quotient’ curve reflecting my introductory comments.

Incident A is very personal but, for me, a very important part of my journey. The low point in my ‘creativity quotient’, reflecting my lack of creativity at work and in life, was significantly and positively impacted by the arrival of two new family members. A deeper exploration of this is probably required but, suffice to say here, the impact on me of two new pairs of eyes looking at the world very differently triggered a shift in my perspective and I now reflect that this was the initial catalyst towards an upward curve.



My role in the small engineering business grew with the organisation and we were undertaking projects for cruise line companies which I was project managing. During these **incident B** added momentum; a regular daily programme meeting held by the client became very personal and provided the realisation that my knowledge of ‘business’ was, at best, slim. My conclusion at the time was to return to education.

Studying with Open University (OU) led to the third **incident C**. I took a module called ‘Creativity, Innovation and Change’ (CIC) and it made me reconsider how I thought about organisations and individuals within them. Breaking down ‘forms and norms’ typifying business management education I was challenged to think very differently and it coincided with the start of my ‘second career’ moving to the University of Portsmouth (UoP) as a research project manager. Here my first teaching opportunities emerged working and with an open minded faculty this role became increasingly ‘hybrid’.

A series of conversations culminated in the creation of a 5-day induction programme for level 7 architecture students. Typically, they had been in architectural practice for a year and often developed a particular mindset, so during the week we wanted to challenge them by working on a time constrained ‘live’ problem from an external partner. Borrowing heavily from CIC the programme attempted to expose students to alternative forms of creativity from their practice experience.

I was introduced to Min Basadur¹ during CIC and I continued reading around creative process and individual differences². We used his CPSP inventory to form teams and the four quadrants were used as ‘phases’ for different exercises, see Figure 2.

Figure 2 After Basadur¹ an annotated creative process

This is not radical and there are existing many ‘representations’ of creative processes to draw upon^{3,4,5}, but for 5 years we experimented, pushing students beyond normal practice approaches, and ultimately leading to me conceiving the framework: Explore, Generate, Create, Innovate, illustrated in Figure 3.

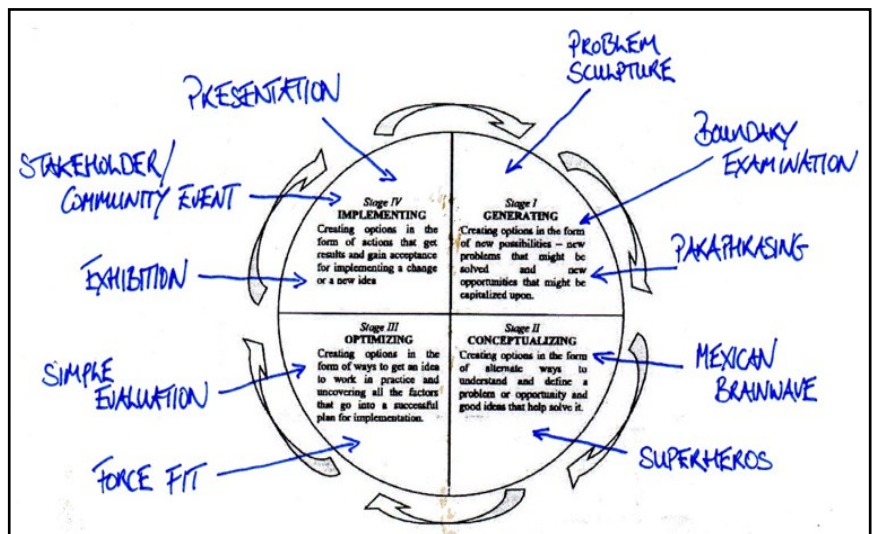
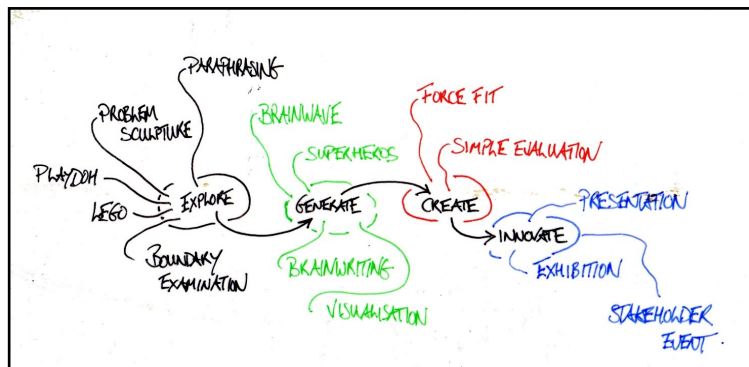


Figure 3 Explore, Generate, Create, Innovate



Part 2 – Re-engaging in creative practice

Arriving at the University of Chichester on a full academic contract gave further impetus to the journey I had started and provided new opportunities for my creative practice. Using my experience from the OU, I determined to go beyond the ‘bullet point’ in my teaching practice and now I discuss three small activities used to provoke management students to think about being creative in practice.

Activity 1 The Portrait

During semester 1 I teach most of our first years an introductory management module and it is one of the foundational modules. I aim to push them beyond expectations built in school and college of what University experience will look like from the very start. Having already introduced myself using figure 1, I try and to learn their names very quickly and not being a great fan of ‘ice breakers’ I wanted to use something quick but ‘different’, avoiding a form of ‘creeping death’ introductions. For me TED talks are increasingly like ‘marmite’ and increasingly I think recent talks tend to have lost the sense of inquiry and exploration from the early days. However, Tim Brown delivered a very engaging session at Serious Play 2008⁶ and used a task that met my criteria.



Figure 4 Portraits

The task is to produce, in 60-90 seconds (variations due to the atmosphere in the room at the time), a portrait of a partner and is met with a mix of groaning, laughter, apologies and justifications, ‘I can’t draw...’, ‘Sorry...’. I then ask students to present each other with these as a gift to be used as a name plate on their tables.

It is an early ‘intervention’, working in analogue, it is quick with lowish risk but I have a chance of learning names and they start to form connections. In a short debrief I emphasise the need to capture key details and the value of thinking in a visual mode, finally highlighting work need not be always mediated by some form of digital tool.

Activity 2 The Scroll

Within the same module as activity 1 this task is from the closing sessions, concluding modules might result in a quiz, or I could go review highlights (or lowlights...) using ‘Powerpoint’, but I wanted to use a visual approach, again opening the possibility for some creativity. I cannot remember how I arrived at the idea of a scroll, possibly a quest for cheap paper, or some media about the ‘ancients’, and I suspect a combination of both. Small groups (usually 4-6 works) make their own scroll capturing the entire module using their notes and Moodle (our VLE). Figure 5 shows two examples of scrolls which provide opportunities for creative expression while they reflected on what ideas have been explored.



Figure 5 Example scrolls

In the early days using this technique I made groups use collage and found images from magazines. The spectrum of results was often very good, but some groups struggled and my reflection was the constraint of using found images pushed the good students further but hindered the less confident students.

Activity 3 Storyboard

With second year students I continue using 'the visual' in my 'Leadership' module. Briefly for context this is a relatively theory heavy module, but much of the session is based on discussion, student led whiteboard exercises, debates, they have to read, they have to listen, they have to watch and they have to draw. Around week 6 we spend some time talking about the idea of vision and purpose. I find these two words very tricky to disentangle and I am never really confident of the best way to explore them. This year I produced a short manifesto about higher education and read it in class. Very performative, but too abstract for these students. I like visual planning activity, but will be delighted if I never see another Gantt chart again, so borrowing from Film and Television the notion of a storyboard exploring individual purpose provided a good exercise.

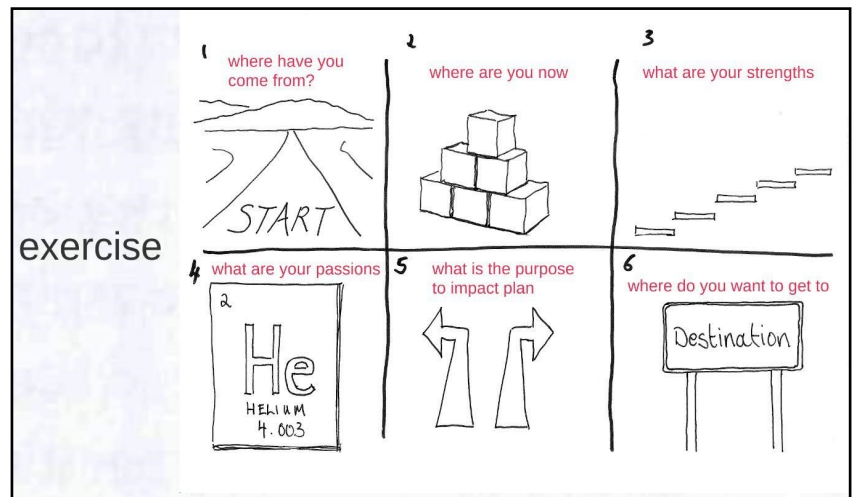


Figure 6 The Storyboard Exercise Brief

Figure 6 illustrates the task set as homework. Students are required to create a storyboard but consider it in the terms noted in each frame, ending by addressing 'where you want to get to'. Figure 7 shows an extract from the following weeks 'exhibition'.

Figure 7 The Storyboard Exhibition

What strikes me reflecting on this image is the diversity of responses: numbers 7 and 8 illustrated a much higher level of visual thinking and engagement in contrast to the much less detailed numbers 2 and 3. You might not be surprised to know there is a gender split that deserves some further investigation.

Integrating the two parts of my story

So, drawing things together, I have discussed a personal journey of creativity, a curve down and then back to my current level where I am, in a small way, bringing moments of creative practice into my teaching. Actively reflecting on the spectrums of creative practice I have experienced, including performance, role play, drawing, making and use of images, my sense is the task is to continue to experiment within the activities and affordances the world of work provides. It is clear from my narrative that some environments, roles and circumstances provided me with little opportunity to utilise my creativity while others offer much more. Context matters and perhaps greater or lesser affordances is a bigger factor in determining the extent to which one can be creative rather than the level of experience/inexperience one has of that environment. There is, for me, still scope in the classroom to devise and run activities with a sense of freedom which in my first career did not exist and so I argue I must provide those affordances to my students regardless of their level of experience.

In terms of my experiments with students: we will each value the outcome of experiments differently but for me the activities I describe above:

1. Allow students to connect with each other,
2. Provoke students to think differently about themselves and ideas enabling them greater scope to use their imaginations and express themselves creatively,
3. Show me the value of experimenting as a means of exploring who I am and what I am capable of doing,
4. Involve me in ways that mean I am more engaged in my teaching; thinking more deeply about active learning and participation beyond 'Powerpoint' and bullet points,
5. Ultimately, enable me to express myself more creatively and give me a greater sense of professional fulfilment.

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Creativity in Working Lives: How one generation's creativity sparks another Efrossini Paltoglou



My biography is contained in my story

Early years - learning the value of creativity from my parents : creativity born of necessity

I was born in a small provincial town in Northern Greece in the early 1950s. After WW II and a bloody civil war, Greece was very poor and children had suffered deprivation and hunger. Nevertheless, I was so happy when I started going to school and started to discover the wider world. In the school books I could find amazing pictures, songs and fairy stories that stimulated my imagination. I was good at writing essays and not having many books, I was making my own stories, using whatever information I could find in my schoolbooks. I suppose this taught me to be resourceful. At the age of 11, I decided to become a journalist, but I was strongly discouraged, as my family thought it was not a stable and safe occupation.

Before I was born, my parents had previously left a prosperous life as farmers in a mountainous village called Livadi Olymbou. My father, had a passion with farming and managed to escape a career as a builder and became a very successful farmer.

Figure 1 'The Greek agricultural society awards a diploma, in the year of 1937, to the farmer from Thessalia Nikolao Perdiki of Livadi, and an award from the Harokopion Agricultural competition of 1500 drachmas for the best and most systematic cultivation of his fields. Athens, 11/10/1937'.



However, due to complications created by German occupation and the civil war that followed, he and his family had to abandon everything and go to live in a small town nearby. More specifically, my parents helped lots of people escape hunger, and when civil war ended, they were poor, and it was no longer viable to continue farming. Additionally, the brothers of both my parents were killed, one by the Germans, and the other in the civil war. There were generally a lot of tensions and hatred between people in the village as well as bad memories to contend with. In this new town he became a builder again, and eventually the owner of a corner shop. This was initially started by my mother, who was making and selling yoghurt, and it slowly became a generic corner shop. So, my parents knew the challenges of being able to create a profitable business in Greece. I could see how creative my parents and siblings were, trying to think of ways to make a living in order to survive, and that had a great influence on me.

A dark age came in Greece in 1967 as a 7 year dictatorship started. As a 13-year-old child I lost good teachers that had to be exiled because of their political beliefs and lost their job. I was in the resistance by being a hopeless pupil. Nevertheless, I continued writing good essays. Finishing high school, I was encouraged to go to England for studies as my parents were worried about me getting arrested, because I expressed my opinion about the dictatorship. But they asked me to study something that would give me the opportunity to find a good job. My preference at the time was to study Architecture, as I was very fond of art. With very poor English a lot of courage and very little money I took a train to London.

Studying in the UK transformed my thinking

Studying at a UK university changed my way of thinking and understanding the world and equipped me with lots of skills that helped me become more critical and creative. I had to abandon the dream of studying architecture as it meant many years of study. In any case, I had become very enthusiastic about social science after the fall of the dictatorship in Greece in 1974. After 7 years of studying (including A levels), I returned to a more democratic Greece in 1980, with a second class honors degree in Economics and a family. My 3rd-year dissertation was on the problem that Greece would face in joining the European Economic Community (EEC). It was a 100 page dissertation that was used in the years that followed by my supervisor when he taught a 'European studies' module. The skills and experiences from the UK education proved valuable in the years that followed.

Working at a bank - finding new challenges for my creativity

Having already a family, I had to accept a position in the Agricultural Bank of Greece after sitting the entrance examination. Working for the Agricultural bank of Greece, I felt I lost my ability to be creative. I was in a very difficult position with myself and extremely unhappy. I started thinking how could I find joy from my situation? At the time I was tasked to explain to farmers what they had to do to repay their loans to the bank. I decided to do this in the most friendly and elegant manner. In my own time I was studying the directives that gave guidance about the loans, something that was very difficult to do as we were not using computers. I tried to find ways to improve my work by introducing some computerization.

Later, I was moved to the central office of the bank and among other things, I was given the challenge to handle the transition of the bank from drachma to euro. I was terrified, but I was also interested in the topic, as I had done my dissertation on Greece and the ECC. There were no clear guidelines and I tried to use my knowledge of currency exchange in which I worked on for many years. But it was also the time that I started solving problems by myself. Getting a position of full responsibility, I had to write new directives for colleagues in the front line. Suddenly I felt I was reaching my limits, as I found the work very challenging. To be able to do well at the task, I thought back to my childhood, to the time that I was writing essays for primary and secondary school. A time without internet and TV, with only my schoolbooks and my imagination.

In addition, I reflected on and learnt from my time studying at university in Bristol, and all the skills I learned about being critical and being able to communicate information clearly and effectively. This gave me more confidence in my own abilities. For example, I got the older directives and I got rid of the obsolete information and I also made sure I wrote the instructions in a simple and friendly manner. I also prepared notes for my colleagues and taught in seminars, so my colleagues could use the instructions I wrote effectively. Similarly, I tried to make the notes friendly and straightforward. The seminars included a combination of case studies and more theoretical issues. I was pleased to see that the directives and the accompanied notes were accepted with enthusiasm by my colleagues. That made me enjoy a job that initially seemed like a punishment. And my relationships with my colleagues improved too.

Creativity in retirement

After retiring I spent most of my time at home, enjoying reading books. I tried to engage in some painting and drawing, but to no avail. I even joined a class to learn to draw byzantine paintings, but I gave it up soon, as it felt very demanding and constricting. I was looking for something arty to do, but without too much discipline. But our creativity has an interesting way of revealing itself. I cannot recall how wooden boxes of fruits came to my possession and after I took them apart, I started drawing buildings on them. After some attempts, I started

making neo-classical houses that are falling apart all-around Greece, including Athens, Rethymnon and Kastoria. These houses were built around the beginning of the 20th century and were very elegant. The small surface I was using seems to give me great freedom and outlet for my imagination and the act of making these brings me joy. I hope to be able to do drawings and paintings in larger surfaces at some point.

Figure 2 Example of the houses I drew on pieces of wood from fruit boxes.

In some ways these houses I draw bring together my love for drawing and my love for architecture. Looking back at my life as a student and a worker, I feel

I did my best to use all the resources I was given to do my job as best as possible and try to be fulfilled by being as creative and innovative as the circumstances allowed.



Creating Poetry Through Work

Sandra Abegglen



Sandra is a Researcher in the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape at the University of Calgary where she explores online education and learning and teaching in the design studio. Sandra has a MSc in Social Research and a MA in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. She has extensive experience both as a social researcher and lecturer/programme leader. She has published widely on emancipatory learning and teaching practice, creative and playful pedagogy, and remote education. You can find her personal website at:

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Work context

Post-pandemic, online meetings - or as they are called, video conferencing - has become the norm. However, the 'practice' surrounding these meetings has still to evolve, especially when it comes to curating, distributing and utilising the many recordings that are created.

In academia, the 'norm' is to record any online meeting that might be of future relevance and interest, but in particular for people 'to catch up on what they (might) have missed'. This means, most online meetings are recorded. This includes any video conferencing that is held as part of a conference, symposium or workshop. The audio-visual recordings are then often shared through internal and external platforms.

In this process, the meeting chat is often forgotten although software used in video conferencing often enables the auto-saving of discussions. If the meeting chat is recorded, it is hardly ever shared; it stays with the host, safely tucked away in a folder somewhere on the hard drive. So, why bother saving video conferencing chat? And, if it is saved, what can we do with it?

My illustration of creativity at work

On June 8th 2022, together with Alex Spiers and Nathalie Tasler, I delivered, at the 4th Annual #creativeHE Jam, a quiet end-of-academic-year reflection. The event was free and open access, promoted through the #creativeHE network and social media channels. The aim of the event was to take 'time out' from busy academic life to reflect on the last couple of months. The first 30 minutes of the event were reserved for 'getting to know each other' before getting creative - calmly and quietly. The activities undertaken included a 'minute of silence', the creation of a 'sound cloud' and gentle, creative prompts to reflect on participants' experience of the past year.

During the event, a lively discussion emerged in the chat which was open during the whole session. As with most online meetings, where participants are allowed to use the chat, this is where the interesting 'stuff' happened. Hence, it appeared worth not only to 'save' the chat but to actively utilise it. But how? Chats are complex in that discussions overlap; several different things are discussed simultaneously. Plus, there are often extra comments that go 'off piste' or flag up technical difficulties ("We can't hear you, you are muted"). So, publishing the chat 'as is' does not really make sense, especially when the chat recording spans several pages. Yet, this chat was in parts so poetic that I felt compelled to do something with it. The choice of action was to extract the elements that spoke to a particular theme and curate them, so they loosely follow the order of the discussion held. What emerged is a poem in situ on quietness and creativity.

Selected, curated text snippets from the #QuietCreativeHE Event chat - June 08, 2022

In the #creativeHE Jam, we used the chat to help participants bond, belong and engage with us (the facilitators) encouraging participants to 'offload' and 'unload' when joining the jam, and contribute their thoughts and feelings throughout. We asked participants what silence 'feels like', what brings them calmness and joy, and what sounds (and other activities) help them to relax and unwind. Over the course of the session, a beautiful conversation evolved:

Before...

I am very stressed out!

I am tired, and discombobulated.

Trying to do too many things at once!

Still marking : (Bored, frustrated and disappointed with my own engagement with it - hope format can change in future to void this situation.

Exhausting - marking (to 15 working days), endless targets, tasks that don't shift for marking.

General pace of the year is exhausting right now!

Tired, joined a new department with lots of enthusiastic but overworked colleagues but not met many face to face.

Exasperating - uni admin - 'the ministry is interfering at Hogwarts'.

Must, should, could...

must / should / could

Maybe we could re-frame 'should' to 'could'. Needless to say I am not good at that, and I have lists of what I should do, and most of it by yesterday.

Let's abolish *should* !!

"I would if I could, but I can't...so I won't"

What about 'must'?

Must must go too.

More things to dump - the urgency of digital presenteeism! That sense that we are now and have to be online all day every day...

Silence

How do people feel with the silence right now?

The problem with online I think is that many people are multitasking... more than face-to-face..

Guilty as charged [...] - I've got my slides for my 3pm lesson open in the background :(

... so many are actually elsewhere...

I now prefer online meetings - love the Chat channel! (Really frustrated by online sessions with no Chat!!).

Agreed. The chat lets the online session 'live'.

BUT - I know colleagues who were on their phones/iPads during F2F - the best was a friend who just did cross-word puzzles all through F2F meetings...

I think in person meetings, you can look out of the window, let your eyes drift, but perhaps are more focused with listening. Online, it can be difficult to look away (unless you switch the camera off, but then it may be thought you are skiving), but also multitasking with emails pinging whilst in the online meeting. Sorry a bit rambley.

Being present online is hard - twitch inducing. Probably a great discipline like meditation, but not comfortable.

Wondering if it depends on the nature and purpose of the meetings [...]?

... and how many meetings are not really needed?

There are courses where participants have to completely be silent, no talking, no reading, no gesture, no drawing, no expressing your minds, really helpful to practice being present :-)

What brings people joy, right now?

my handcream that smells lovely

garden and flowers in my garden

I can see a lovely pink rose in the garden, and the breeze is blowing through the leaves of the buddleja.

The small perfectness of my caravan bedroom (where I am working right now).

My neighbours enormous rose bush that I can see out of the window, a candle flame on the fireplace, and the children (in between arguments) :))

Trees blowing out the window.

Our sleeping dog, curled up on his bed, who has been very ill - touch and go - but is now well on the way to recovery.

My lunch :) also a stone shaped by a glacier a friend brought for me from New Zealand.

Sat listening with three colleagues - the comfort of companionship and discussion! The smell of cake, the little houseplant, and our creative activity!

I can see strawberries growing in the garden.

looking at the sky, garden, tree, garden sculpture, flowers, cat, to rest my eyes away from the screen :-)

a shell i found in the outer hebrides

The tree in front of the window, which currently blooms pink.

And now, in the silence, a robin singing away outside in the garden.

Some paintings of the new mexico desert that help me remember smell of sun-baked cactus, dry sand, and the relief of a breeze to convert sweat into a balm.

Feeling warm as the view is not great (quite a bare office space), I can't see any greenery from where I sit and the light is too strong for my eyes. :)

the communal silence now

More on silence

How does the communal silence feel?

Since we're all doing the same task, silence feels like connection.

The silence feels nice, refreshing in a way.

Does it have a texture? A colour? Is it save?

the silence feels peaceful...unusual and lovely

Silence is good as a restful counter to the permission to acknowledge what we are preoccupied with before-hand.

definitely a warm and comforting feeling

It feels like a poem in the making for me.
Not sure about a colour - green maybe but that relates to outside.
We are being present in an online meeting
Within the silence
The soft breath of connection
We join together.

Calming, relaxing sounds

How could any of us use these sounds?
I think if everyone in a class shares a sound of their immediate environment that might be useful to create some community?
Maybe in class, while students are focussing on a task and to avoid the 'embarrassing' silence when students haven't yet started to share their ideas (in group work).
I like the idea [...] to have a coffee shop background while students work quietly on something... I wonder how this would change the energy in the room?
It's never occurred to me to use a coffee shop soundtrack when I'm struggling to focus at home (permanent home worker) - what a revelation!
Sometimes I just listen to white noise by plugging headphones into my PC speaker - basic but helps with focus. :)
I love aquariums! So relaxing. It never occurred to me to look for them on YouTube!
These are introduced at schools - GCSE/ A level stress removers - and we need them in HE.
I find instrumental film, video game soundtracks very good to work to.
Wondering if sounds could also represent feelings? A response to a task and observation etc.?
I also have songs - like Jerusalema, Down the River that I keep running in the background, totally energises me and yet still keep me calm - but depends on my mood, I might start singing too. 😊
hahaha songs like this I can only use in a break otherwise I end up dancing at my desk instead of working but I do 1-2 song dance breaks :D
I do dance song breaks also :)
They are the best! And energising indeed.
Love dance/song breaks - and have jumped in and asked a whole lecture hall of first years to get up and jump and sing and dance around with us... and they did!!
I think what works for me now has changed over the years....and depends on the work needed. Sounds capture my brain's attention differently now to what it did in the past.
Nature sounds are easier for me than music.
I often listen to music without listening to the lyrics... somehow manage to block them out.
One potential limitation to use music in class is that it may not be everyone's cup of tea and some might really dislike the use of music or distract them?
Piano or harp are my go to.
Fairly gentle classical music works for me - but nothing I could sing along to, or I get distracted and want to sing.
For me it's mood dependent on a really bad day I cannot find anything that works in the background, that's usually a call to take a break and go for a walk.
The sound of rain is also so soothing, but it has to be real!
It's funny, it's the same for me. Using 'fake' noise can also not work for me while I love hearing the sound of natural events (rain, tree tops swinging) in real life. But I can suddenly become obsessed with one song (e.g. Vivaldi's summer) and need to listen to it again and again and it helps me focus for a long time.
I am loving all the different approaches here and it seems more mindful approaches to aural stimulation is needed (and time is needed to make this effort).

Slow academia - and life

We need to move towards Slow Learning and Slow Teaching.
"take time to think and to do". oooh....love this!
Reclaim the quiet space!
Indeed - making the space to grow?
I am working on a project on assessment deadline and my title is - Skip your sleep, it is 23:59 - where I write about the unhealthy patterns of face paced academia [...]
Sometimes/often ideas come at inconvenient times [...]. It was 18 mins past midnight last night when I felt I needed to write something down...
One of the reasons there's always a notebook and a pencil on my bedside table....
Org pressures are not so tolerant of switching off, slowing down. For me it's a work in progress.
There's a wonderful bit in Kafka's diaries where he puts a blank sheet of paper in the typewriter. Stares at it all day. Finally writes a couple of sentences. Tears the paper out and throws it in the bin. He writes "A good day's work".

[illegible]

Work can often seem like a very uncreative space but sometimes affordance for creativity is all around us. We just have to look for it. Creativity can emerge in many ways and connecting a group of people who share an interest and care about what they are doing and how they are relating to their work and the people they are working with provides an environment that is conducive to the emergence of new affordances for creativity. Our workshop encouraged social interaction and the questions we posed encouraged people to express aspects of themselves and their own lives through words not just verbally, but also in the chat box in ways that resonated with others and caused further interaction.

Acknowledgement

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Background

In January 2022 I found myself unexpectedly back in the (temporary) position of Course Director at a time when the course needed to go through the process of both university and professional body re-accreditation in a short space of time. This would be my fourth time of going through this process so I was not approaching this as a novice, but having not been in the CD role for over 10 years I felt neither innovative nor inspired at the thought of this task. However a new course was looking at me, waiting to be imagined, reasoned, designed and written. Despite drawing upon all my previous experience, motivation and support from like-minded colleagues the process

wasn't without its challenges. In this account I hope to reflect upon those challenges and creative choices that led to the successful outcomes both personally and for the wider academic team and students.

My starting point

Previously the periodic review process has been necessarily strategic, led by professional and regulatory body content mapping requirements. Heavily influenced by the university paperwork deadlines and quality assurance procedures - a chore to complete, devoid of creativity and shackled by **what we have to do** rather than **what we want to do**. I was determined it would be different this time, my influences and perspective have changed since I last led this process, I am older, more educationally articulate, and less easily persuaded than before. Becoming a National Teacher Fellow and spending time with colleagues in our Centre for Learning and Teaching team rather than only being with my clinical (NHS) and Health based colleagues has opened my eyes to different ideas, encouraged me to try braver and bolder approaches and perhaps increased my confidence in my own decision-making processes.

Image: What Should a Great Physiotherapy Course Look Like? Word Cloud of student responses

Derounian's "Inspirational teaching in higher education: What does it look, sound and feel like?"¹ inspired me to FIRSTLY ask the current students what they thought a new course should look like rather than focus on what didn't work on the current course anymore. This group of students having been through all the massive changes associated with COVID, the online pivot, greater use of telemedicine, in fact every aspect of their learning and university experience was different throughout each level and placement experience - who

better to answer the question: What should a great physiotherapy course look like? **Inclusive, Innovative and Inspiring** was the answer. This emphasis on positivity rather than negativity led my thought process and my whole approach, which impacted positively on my own wellbeing - less a chore, more enjoyable². This positive frame of mind also encouraged me to be imaginative the first step in any creative mindset.



The question of assessment

Traditionally the diet of assessment on the course has been typically conservative for a health/science based subject. A mix of written assignments, practical viva exams, case study presentations and a final research enquiry-based protocol. With 'inclusivity' firmly at the forefront of my mind, my focus centred on how we could offer more choice and currency in our assessments. Assessment as a subject in itself frequently creates academic debate, questions of equivalence, marking time, effort, staff experience and resources were all highlighted. I am aware that my background in leading the University Learning Through Games and Play Network means that I am more comfortable with and open to VR/AR, podcasts, escape rooms and all manner of what might be considered innovative assessments compared to many of my academic colleagues. To help inform the course team, around moving away from the traditional dissertation, the work of Coon et al³, van Gaalen et al⁴, Pickford⁵ and Brown⁶ was useful in helping me establish the principle that assessments should be meaningful, current, and most of all useful to their future physiotherapy practice not just to ensure module learning outcomes have been met. The experiences of other courses using this assessment approach was helpful in determining word count/presentation lengths, equivalencies and achievable tasks for undergraduate ethical approvals in patient research studies.

No longer a pedagogical novice

I began to realise that in the 10 years since I last held the position of Course Director I had developed my scholarship in teaching and learning and I was no longer a novice in this aspect of my practice. My deeper understanding and expertise, together with the ideas I was able to access through my reading clearly influenced my recent curriculum choices and teaching practice thought processes. However, as a clinical practitioner, past experiences of patient led problem solving, working under extreme NHS time and resource pressures and trying to provide creative rehabilitation in some of the most challenging and heart breaking human circumstances will always be part of me and my teaching style. Engaging patients is no different to engaging students, there is no textbook formula, each situation is unique. If COVID has taught us anything we must have flexibility, the ability to think quickly on our feet and be open to ALL ideas however unusual they might be to achieve the best outcomes for all students, and ultimately for us, our patients.

Barriers or opportunities?

Institutional quality assurance procedures are often viewed by academics as a barrier to creativity and much needed change in curriculum design in higher education, and this is often compounded by the constraints of Professional Bodies that accredit courses in some disciplines. But 'where there is will there is a way' and constraints are a catalyst for human imagination and creativity underpinned by scholarship relating to the science of learning and teaching. The most creative teachers are those who see the affordance (opportunity for action) in the constraints they encounter and have the motivation to try to overcome the obstacle. Course Directors embarking on a Course Review are in a privileged position to bring about changes that will benefit learners for many years - they have a wonderful opportunity to make a positive difference if they have the courage to try.

Tobin and West-Burnham⁷ wrote a great piece about the challenges of balancing quality assurance and pedagogy in their article 'Here be Dragons' I read this at a time when I was most frustrated and being told frequently 'QA will say you can't do that' Periodic review documentation can be limiting and structured by requirement which felt in complete opposition to the emerging emphasis on inclusivity and flexibility. A conversation with quality assurance colleagues helped in clarifying just how far I could push the boundaries and ultimately the feedback and commendations we received internally and externally at the revalidation event all centred around our inclusive approaches to delivery and assessment.

Trying to be innovative in a culture of compliance requires courage and also knowledge. I would not have attempted what I did 10 years ago when I was a novice, in terms of my pedagogical knowledge and practice. Having a degree of expertise builds confidence and having access to the writings and ideas of great thinkers and practitioners in the field of education helps create a sense of empowerment.

Would I have been so innovative in my pedagogical choices if I hadn't been told repeatedly, 'no you can't do that'? I was taken right back to being told 'this patient will never walk again' by someone far more experienced and knowledgeable than myself and proving determinedly that yes they could and absolutely did. I learnt from this process that just because something has always been done that way and everyone says you can't change it.....sometimes it is worth trying, worth sticking to your guns, worth the eye rolling, trusting your creativity to be proud of the course you have designed and to hear the students say 'I wish I was starting on this physio course - it sounds ace'.

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Creativity at Work- A Very Personal Narrative

Holly B. F. Warren



Holly is an artist, emerging writer, atelierista, mind wanderer and imaginer. She works across two International schools in Italy. Her work celebrates the beauty of learning threading student's voices, ideas and art, the art of making the invisible visible. She holds an Honours Degree in Fine Art and an International Post Graduate Certificate in Education. She contributes to Imagined and The International Teachers Magazine. Her writings have appeared in New Perspectives in Mind Wandering By Nadia Dario & Luca Tateo and Era un' altro mondo. I nostri ragazzi e il covid19. Her projects are showcased on Early Childhood Art with Margaret Brooks. She has been a long standing and active member of the Creative Academic Community.

My journey of self-discovery

Creativity at work draws my mind to consider my personal reverse pathway to the essence of creativity as I search for its meaning in who I am so far, which lays the foundations for who I can become. Creativity in and through my work is very much an expression of the unfurling of who I am becoming.

'Cre-activity': to actively bring forth from the mind into the visible world. The process of growth of an idea into a tangible form that can be physically experienced and shared.

As humans, nature has selected us to use our creativity in multiple ways for multiple reasons. As an embedded attribute it weaves in our life constantly at various times in diverse ways with different intensity. I can see this as a pattern that creates the tapestry of life. The thread represents life experiences, propensities, and genes as primary colours that come together forming new colours. They move together in a constant flow. At times they are closely knit producing bright colours that squabble and shout other times they shyly touch producing pale colours. They can be far apart making holes and gaps or be so tight they get tangled and knotted. We paint our lives choosing from the colour palette of our creative force as we interact with a world that holds particular meanings for us.

I was born restless and curious. Was this creativity at first sight? Was nature pushing for a new pair of eyes? A quick and alert mind? One of many on the journey of selfdiscovery. To this day I have created the phrase, Curiosity is a Mental Wanderlust. I do not consider myself in the category of the Big C as my accomplishments are small and local: Pro c possibly¹. What I do know is that I chose education as the field in which I wanted to work in order to keep researching the origins and power of creativity by working with young students. This brought me to passionately celebrate and showcase the wonders of creativity of the students I work with and not only.

I have now spent 33 years in education as a teacher, student, mentor, artist and lately imaginer have made me move along with solid experience and sagacity. But what does this mean? Experience allows me to be fairly knowledgeable and flexible in my choices, sagacity allows me to choose, discern and filter seeking wisdom...the love of knowing and not knowing. Certain of my uncertainties willing to explore and knowing that learning never stops.

Every day I practice and practice and practice....thinking, relating, associating, pairing, separating, dissecting, collaging, mixing, stirring, calming, and resting my mind. How? In 2015 after many, many, years as a class teacher chasing a curriculum that was only partly meaningful to the students I managed to discover and create the Think Tank. What I mean by the "Think Tank" is...a state of mind, an attitude to life and learning. A mental and physical space that is open, flexible, and expressive. A classroom, a corridor, a sheet of paper, a story, a beginning. It replicates the mind's environment. A reflection of thinking and of the beauty of wonder that shines through us, like a prism. An ongoing journey. It threads the Montessori, Steiner and the Reggio approach together weaving creativity and imagination into the curriculum. Experiences unfold either in small groups or as a whole class when an idea, experience or concept is brought to the class by the students or the teacher. A partnership is formed. It draws out learning expanding its boundaries. A ripple effect. It reveals the invisible thoughts and ideas of those that come into contact through the visual arts. It celebrates the joy of learning through trial and error where error is intended as part of wandering.

Every day as I collaborate with the students I work with, who I interact with as unique individuals, I learn that no two brains are the same, no two fingerprints are the same, no two lives are the same, but we come together to create the tapestry of who we are in relation to each other in a moment in time and space. *"Each one of us is a unique thread woven into the beautiful fabric of our consciousness."* Jaeda DeWalt.

There have been dark moments where being creative was dangerous, irrelevant, expensive, deviating. Believers were supporting me while pragmatists were doing their best to overshadow and corner creativity demanding for it be stuck in a box. Demeaned, crushed, and stepped on I kept my head up high and although I was struggling I didn't let the circumstances taint the work I had done over the years. I owed it to all and to myself. The believers were of immense support and turned my tears into diamonds. I moved on and away onto safe ground ready to start anew with nothing but my experience, love of my job, and my sense of gratitude all packed in a suitcase. My values and principles held me together. I saw the challenge as a narrative, a steppingstone to a new dimension so sought and never accomplished. Uncertainty, fear, and loneliness walked hand in hand as I moved and learnt from my collaborators, young children that see each day a window on new experiences woven into the past and lit with wonder, surprise, and awe.

Figure 1 Some images of different environments I have created in and through the Think Tank to support exploration, learning, self-expression and development in the manner outlined above



Change is difficult, I was told, and I can't but affirm how true it is. Change challenges who you are, what you know, where you are at in life and where to place your next step knowing that you might find fertile soil, a swamp or the groundcover. My supporters dwindled as life challenged them too and with just a slither of encouragement I decided to hold strong. Here the creative force I so nurture kindled my positivity and helped me enter in a phase of growth. This phase, which is still in progress, is showing me that creativity demands flexibility, resilience, and belief in its power to create and curate our propensities. A work environment that supports creativity helps enormously but I think that the environment that is the foundation of creativity is the mental environment where imagination allows us to pursue our narrative combining it with and within our work environment. When these meet new possibilities unfurl. It is then up to us to acknowledge or change.



Figure 2 Garden Exhibition Kiddy 22

How can we define a creative mind?

Creative minds are always at work in every context and in most situations. They ask questions, challenge assumptions, test perspectives, concoct solutions, start and restart always considering that work is never really done. The difficulty of a creative mind is that of walking through a vision where the status quo or current vision is considered luminary. Creative minds at times struggle to fully embody the possibilities of their vision. A few qualities that creative minds manifest are shown on the right.

What next, where to, when to move and mainly why?

Letting go....Feelings. Experiences. People. Places.

It is difficult to let go and move away from familiar places and spaces ...the world isn't flat but at times looking at the horizon might give the impression of falling off. Sometimes we need our imagination and creativity to reinvent ourselves, to have the courage to venture forth into entirely new and unfamiliar places and create new circumstances within which to think and act.

**SOME QUALITIES OF
A CREATIVE MIND**
Resilient
Sagacious
Fragile but not friable
Flexible
Bendable
Dubious but not dubitable
Strong
Open minded
Stubborn
A believer
Curious
On the move
Embracing
Breakable and repairable
Dark with a constant
light shining through
Embracing
Optimistic
A deep thinker
Knowledgeable and
sometimes wise
With a sense of humour
Energetic and dynamic
Demanding

We need to use our imagination to be **C** - curious, **R** - resilient, **E** - energetic, **A** - adaptive, **T** - technical, **I** - introspective, **V** - vivacious, **I** - intriguing - **T** - transforming, **Y** - yearning at **W** - weaving, **O** - original, **R** - relational, **K** - knowledge

CREATIVITY AT WORK

Could creativity be the work of an alert and curious mind that blossoms like a flower unfolding each petal as the illustration of its inherited chromo-genes and is further nurtured by the environment which adds shades and hues?

A few wise words:

"The soul becomes dyed by the colour of its thoughts." Marcus Aurelius

"Nature always wears the colours of the spirit." Ralf Waldo Emerson

"Creativity is a natural extension of our enthusiasm." Earl Nightingale

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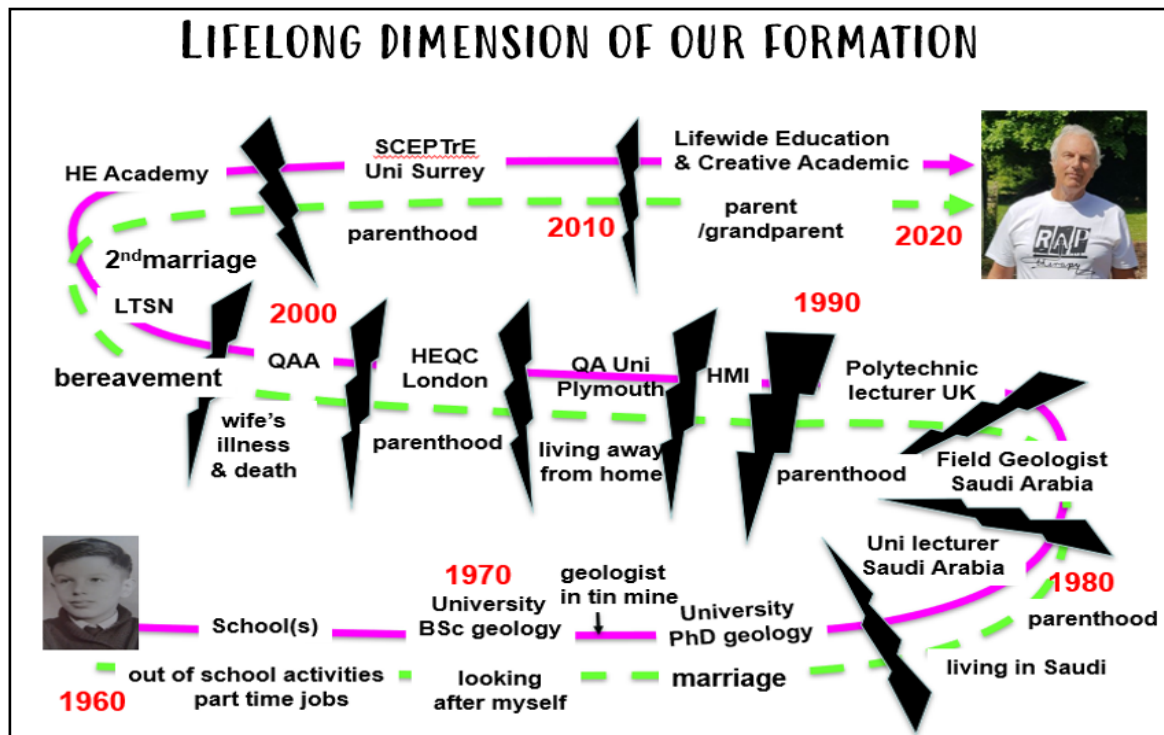
Life is Full of Beginnings: A Beginner's Tales of Creativity

Norman Jackson

Story of a lifetime of making meaning through work

I recently read that as a species we make meaning by seeing patterns. There are few benefits to being old but one thing I can do as an older person is look back on a lot of experiences and see patterns that I could not appreciate before. In one of my lives I learnt how to make maps as a geologist and maps are a great way to reveal patterns. By creating a map of our life, such as the one I have made below, we begin to see more clearly how events or relationships and circumstances in our life and the decisions we made, led to one thing rather than another. For example, a decision I made in 1989 took me from the world of geology into the world of education as a field of study and practice and that eventually opened me up to trying to make sense of creativity and to creating Creative Academic and our magazine as a meaning making enterprise. You will see from the jagged lines on my life map that I have experienced beginning many times. In fact I might claim to be an *expert beginner* having done it so many times. In this essay I am asking myself *how did being a beginner affect my ability and willingness to be creative?*

Figure 1 Rough and partial map of my working life (purple line) entangled with important aspects of my personal life (green line). The jagged lines represent some of my many beginnings.



I will try to avoid using the term novice as it smacks of having no knowledge and understanding of what the work is about. Rather I will use the term beginner, and by that I mean a beginner in a work (and possibly wider life) environment that is new to me. I will share four anecdotes of being a beginner in a new work role, in a new environment with new people and new contexts. I am using the wikipedia definition of work as - *intentional activity people perform to support themselves, others, [and] or the community*, as being useful and relevant to my experience of working. *Support* is a key word here suggesting that the activity must meet a need. According to Alderfer's theory of motivation¹ our needs are driven by concerns for, and interests in, three things. Firstly our *existence* - during most of our adult working life earning an income will be a prime motive here so that we and our dependents are able to have a home, clothes, food and opportunities. Secondly, our need for *relationships* that give us a sense of being cared for, loved, valued and recognised. Thirdly, our need for personal *growth*. Robbins² proposed a fourth area of need that I realise is important, namely the need to *contribute*: doing things that meet the needs of others and other things. As we act and perform across all these areas of need the desire to express ourselves and acts of self-expression where we find affordance to do so, contribute to our deep need to achieve our potential and contribute to our own identity.

What we do in the activities we call work, regardless of whether its for by others or donated by ourselves, has the potential to satisfy all these needs and all these primary and deep motivational forces can also motivate our creativity. My life map shows the many different work-related activities through which I have earned an income and which have satisfied my need for existence, relatedness and growth. My first work experience 12-15 years old

was doing a paper round 6 days a week with am and pm deliveries. That is where I learnt all about commitment. 60 years on, my work is almost entirely voluntary. Taking the map as a whole we can see how work has contributed to our own formation as a person as we have formed relationships with particular people, encountered different cultures, encountered and engaged in different challenges and fulfilled different responsibilities. Each of the black jagged lines on the map represents a transition I had to make - a journey into the unknown from a beginner in that particular environment and role to a confident knowledgeable practitioner in that environment and role.

The first think that is self-evident from the map of my working life is that as a 10 year old I had no idea what I was capable of doing or achieving. Clearly, I had potential but the competence I had was only for living the life I was living as a 10 year old in my particular circumstances. I felt I was pretty good at playing football and I had a good voice as a choir boy but that was about it. Any potential I had could only be developed through the opportunities (affordances) I was given or created for myself. As a child I had quite a lot of freedom to play and with my friends I was able to roam far and wide around my home, venturing into the unknown and having what I thought were adventures - which usually meant doing things that I shouldn't be doing. However, it was I believe, through this form of childhood play that I developed an orientation to life that encouraged me to be inquisitive and to put myself in new situations willing to take on challenges, in the belief that interesting things would surely happen. In fact, I chose to study geology at university in order to become a geologist, which I thought was one of the most adventurous jobs, working in remote inhospitable environments, that anyone could have.

Some experiences of being a beginner - transitions

Perhaps because of the freedoms I had in childhood to be adventurous, throughout my life I have relished new challenges and the pattern of my working life reflects this. Perhaps it is the thought of beginning a new adventure that I enter a new role with high hopes and bags of enthusiasm and although I know I'm a newcomer, a beginner or novice in whatever role I am playing I have, perhaps the naive but psychologically positive belief, that I can be productive, resourceful and useful in the role. I think its this attitude that encouraged me to try to be creative in some situations even when I felt like an absolute beginner.

ANECDOTE 1

In January 1977 I passed my PhD viva and within a week I was on a plane to Saudi Arabia where I took up my first teaching position as an Associate Professor in Geology. I'd had a little teaching experience but I had never taught a course before so I was a beginner or novice. Through my research training I knew how to conduct research as a geologist but knew nothing about the geology of Saudi Arabia so I was a complete beginner here too. But I had spent a year as a technician in a small geology department and had looked after the rock, mineral and fossil collections, which is relevant to my story.

There were no courses on how to teach I just sat down, prepared my lectures and delivered them in the way that I had experienced being taught as a student. There was nothing imaginative or novel about the way I tried to teach so I make no claims for creativity. But, as the most junior member of our small team of petrologists and mineralogists, I was given the job of building our rock and mineral collections alongside my teaching and research role and I set to this role with great enthusiasm. I quickly realised that I could use my new responsibility to justify making numerous field trips to collect specimens and this got me out into the adventurous wilderness much of which was quite uncharted. I also successfully argued that I needed an assistant and together we worked out how best to curate the materials I collected. I year or so after I started we moved to a new building on the University campus and I was given the biggest room in the building and told to create a museum. Well it was a blank canvas and although I had zero experience of setting up a museum me and my assistant enthusiastically set about creating one. Money was not a problem and we bought the best glass display cabinets we could find. I discovered I had a talent for creating displays that explained the geology of an area or a mine. My assistant and I were proud of what we had created but unfortunately, I do not have any photos of the museum. I left the University in 1980 and a year or so later I found myself back in the building. I sneaked into what had been the museum only to find that it was now a large open plan office!

Perspective 1 - In some situations being a beginner does not stop us from trying to use our creativity to bring something new into existence in fact tackling something unknown and big and challenging can be a great stimulus especially if we have the autonomy and support to just do it. In this story I undoubtedly had a supportive environment - I had the time and space to act, the resources to collect and display, management approval and practical help, and no interference on how to do what I wanted to do. This comprehensive affordance provided me with huge scope to learn and to try doing things I hadn't done before and never did again - although now I think about it, I have spent much of my life curating stuff!

ANECDOTE 2

In 1990 I had been teaching geology as a Senior Lecturer for 5 years at what was then Kingston Polytechnic. I had decided that I needed a change of environment (all my jobs through my career were 4 to 5 years long). Almost by accident I applied for the role of Her Majesty's Inspector of Geoscience education and got it. This took me out of the role of an academic geologist (geology teacher and researcher) and thrust me into working as an agent in the higher education system (inspector, reporter and synthesiser). Of course I carried with me my knowledge of

geology and my practice as a teacher, and that was essential to fulfilling the role, but the role extended well beyond my subject into all aspects of institutional practice and into other fields and phases of education. In this respect I was an absolute beginner without knowledge or experience. I felt totally illequipped a real novice and an imposter - yet I was expected to perform my role day in day out. During the first 12 months I was mentored and coached by many colleagues who took me with them on their visits. But I felt stretched and challenged and completely out of my depth and there were several points where I contemplated giving up - the only time I have ever had such thoughts. Somehow I came through that baptism of fire and eventually I learnt how to perform the role. But at no point did I feel I could be creative in the role.

Perspective 2 - in some situations of being a beginner where demands are high, and where knowledge, skills and experience are not matched to the challenge, we retreat into survival mode. There is no headspace or desire to be creative the priority is just to cope with and survive the next assignment. But having made the most difficult transition I ever had to make boosted my confidence in myself and I was able to make several more significant transitions in my career because of this experience. This change of career was motivated by the desire for change and new challenges. But I threw myself into the deep end so to speak and my very existence threatened to be overwhelmed by work that I was inadequately prepared for. Thanks to the support and encouragement I received I survived but never felt I was particularly creative in my role until I was given the job of synthesising a lot of information to produce a publication. Ultimately, almost without me knowing I grew into a more confident practitioner and this laid the foundation for future roles.

ANECDOTE 3

40 years after the my first anecdote I took on another role - this time as Director of the Surrey Centre for Education and Training (SCEPTRE) at the University of Surrey. It was a new beginning in a new institutional environment and it was very much a blank sheet of paper in the sense that this position had not existed before. I was expected to create an organisation where none existed to fulfil a set of general expectations. By this stage of my career I had experienced many different roles in higher education but this was the first as Director/Manager so in this respect I was a beginner. But over the first 6 months I had to develop a good understanding of my context and the culture and politics of which I was a part, recruit a Centre Manager and other staff. Set up a Centre and equip it with furniture and technology. Develop a workplan, publicise the Centre and make connections with other CETLs. It was challenging but very stimulating and satisfying. The management environment was very supportive as long as I successfully navigated the politics and culture of the institution and made myself fully accountable to my manager, steering group and various committees. Although I was a beginner in the role, because of past experiences I was able to complete the rapid learning trajectory. I had the autonomy, resources, challenges and opportunities to be creative and I most certainly took them and this was the pattern throughout my five years in the role, so that looking back it was probably one of my most creative periods in work - resulting in my most creative educational ideas and practices.

Perspective 3 Sometimes we are fortunate to be in the right place at the right time and have the background and experience, the vision and skillsets to enable us to hit the ground running'. Sometimes we are fortunate to have the resources, affordances, circumstances and encouragement and support in our work environment, so that even as a beginner, we are able to flourish in an inventive creative way. The motivations for moving to Surrey and taking on the new role were twofold. Firstly, they were relational I wanted a job that was closer to home. But they were also about growth - wanting a new challenge and having the ambition to apply in higher education some of the knowledge I had gained in previous roles. Thirdly, my motivation was also concerned with contribution - trying to discover new and better ways to support learning and learners.

ANECDOTE 4

It seems that only a short time has passed between the moment I stepped off the aeroplane in a chaotic airport in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia to take up my first university teaching post as an Assistant Professor in geology, to the moment 34 years later I stepped away from paid employment as a Professor of Higher Education at the University of Surrey. Early in 2011, I was made redundant for the second time in my career and had to make a decision as to whether to begin taking my pension or try to regain employment. My pension seemed to be enough to live on, at a modest but comfortable level, so I took the decision not to seek paid employment but to view my pension as the source of my income to support my voluntary work. This thought of being paid to do what I wanted to do by my former employers appealed to me.

I had always wanted to set up my own enterprise and that was how 'Lifewide Education' came about - as a community interest company. I was a beginner - in the sense that I had never set up and run my own business before. But the work I was doing was very much grounded in what I had been doing at the University of Surrey so in that sense I was building on a foundation of work and knowledge. Transitioning from paid to mainly voluntary work was an easy transition to make and like the previous transition I made it was full of affordance and incentives to be creative - co-creating a team of volunteers who shared my beliefs and vision, inventing a programme of work, branding, designing a magazine and website, facilitating engagement and discussion, and writing, editing and publishing. But one of my greatest joys and motivation for creativity remains creating images, illustrations and diagrams to convey the meaning of my writing.

My motivations for work were not about survival they were much more concerned with relatedness - to the people I enjoyed working with and to my subject, and with my own growth - trying to learn and understand and communicating my understanding to others. Ultimately, though I recognise my work is an expression of myself and it is founded on the desire to make a contribution to my field of knowledge and practice - education and to the practitioners in my field who continue to encourage and help young people to learn.

Perspective 4 Beginning retirement was, as the Japanese put it, a case of Ikigai, developing a new purpose or reason for living. I have many reasons for living and enjoying the experience but retirement gave me the time and freedom to continue exploring and developing my educational ideas, and continue and extend many of the professional relationships I had developed. The transition was not dissimilar to many other transitions I have had to make in the sense that it held a lot of potential and affordance for being inventive and creative because I was starting with a blank sheet of paper so to speak. Nearly 12 years on I can appreciate better that beginnings are relatively easy and are generally fantastic environments for enabling creativity to flourish. But moving beyond beginnings it is much harder to sustain enthusiasm and commitment, and to keep generating ideas and initiatives especially when some of the active professional relationships I had enjoyed, diminish. This is why we have to keep renewing our beginnings by taking on new challenges and pushing ourselves into what is unfamiliar.

At this point I remembered what I had written in my introduction to this magazine and it all became much clearer: "perhaps the very notion of expertise is somewhat problematic. As I look at my own life it is full of beginnings and I might draw the conclusion that the only expertise I have is in beginning something and then learning how to do it until the next beginning. But far from seeing the state of being a beginner from a position of deficiency i.e. we don't know and/or can't do very much, experience reveals that it is advantageous to hold ourselves in a state of becoming, as if we are beginning. By that I mean seeing every new role, project, situation or experience as an opportunity and a motivation to create a better version of ourselves, we are in a sense creating a new beginning with the possibilities, uncertainty and likely emergence it affords." It all makes a lot more sense to me now, my motivations to keep on creating new beginnings are driven by an innate desire for growth and self-expression within which my learning, development and creativity reside.

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Trying to be Creative in the Educational Environment

Angela Shapiro and Aidan Johnston



Angela Shapiro was a Senior Lecturer at Glasgow Caledonian University where she supported students in their critical learning and writing. She has retained an Honorary Fellow status and continues to collaborate with staff and students in the creation of resources for Gathering the Voices; an online resource containing testimonies from refugees from the Holocaust.



Aidan Johnston is an Educational Technologist and Digital Learning Systems Developer in Academic Development and Student Learning at Glasgow Caledonian university. He has vast experience and knowledge in the development of Virtual Learning Environments (VLE), Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), Podcasting, Vidcasting, Mobile Learning, Blended Learning, Blogs, Wikis and Web technologies to support teaching and learning.

Background

This article includes two reflective accounts; the first is from the perspective of a retired Senior Lecturer, the second from an Educational Technologist and Developer. The blend, experiences and perspectives of these two backgrounds in the creative approaches outlined in this article was developed over an eight-year period in which different, modern approaches and techniques were researched, implemented and evaluated successfully with different cohorts of participants of differing age ranges, aptitudes and educational backgrounds.

Angela's working career in adult education commenced in the late 1970's and she moved from teaching adults and young people in informal settings in the community to a further education college in a deprived area and then to

Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU), Scotland. Angela retired from GCU as an educationalist after a career that spanned 40 years between 1978 and 2018. Before commencing this article she did not think of herself as being creative, rather, as Gramsci^{1 p350} observed ‘every teacher is always a pupil and every pupil a teacher’.

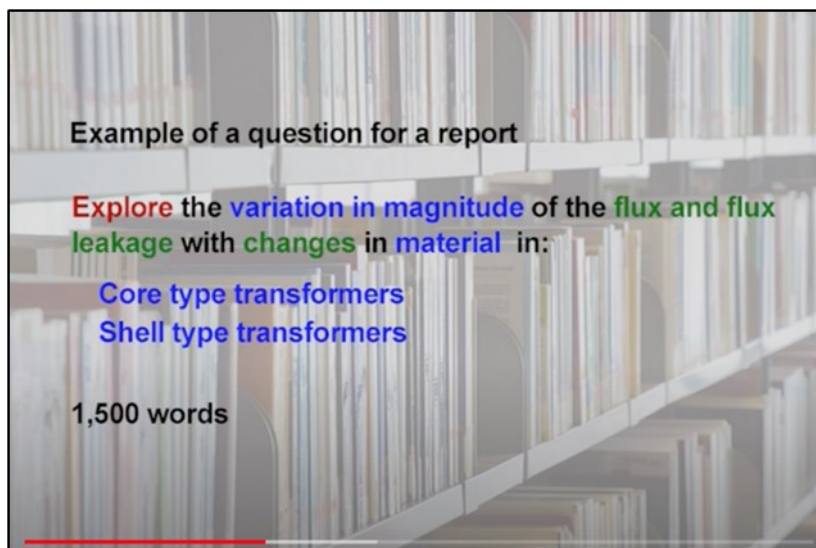
Aidan’s experiences have focused on the development, application and evaluation of new, emerging educational approaches and appropriate technologies that support and enhance the learning experience. He began his career at GCU as a learning developer on a 7-year, multimillion pound JISC, National Science Foundation and BBC Information & Archives international project called ‘The Spoken Word Project’. The Spoken Word Project aimed to transform higher education through the integration of digitised audio into learning and teaching. A collaboration and legal deposit agreement with BBC Information & Archives allowed Spoken Word to make use of audio and video programmes from the BBC’s extensive archive for teaching and learning purposes.

The Spoken Word project had extensive experience in producing podcasts and exciting interactive material collaboratively. This all occurred at the same time as the emergence of the new and popular mobile technologies such as the iPod and the advent and growth of the Podcast. The latter enabled anyone who had anything remotely interesting to say to publish easily and quickly thus reaching untapped audiences anywhere in the world. From the birth of the audio podcast came the next iteration, the vidcast, along with the introduction of the video iPod and similar popular technologies that supported the ability to play video. A vidcast or vodcast contains audio and images either moving or fixed².

Examples of creative innovative approaches in the work environment

We believe that we were encouraged to be creative / innovative by our social-cultural environment. Amabile and Kramer’s^{3, p131-33} four factors of respect, encouragement, emotional support and affiliation influenced our approach in the selection of the two case studies exemplifying creativity. The two examples of the creative and innovative approaches we will describe are from different time periods at Glasgow Caledonian University. The first took place in the 2012. Angela’s academic role was supporting students across the institution with their critical writing and reading skills. She worked as part of a small team called “The Effective Learning Service” (ELS)⁴. The university attracts students returning to education and from areas where there is low participation in further and higher education. The ELS was the central support hub and prided itself in being a developmental model working in partnership with the 20,000+ students. Workshops took place across the institution which were embedded in the disciplines and although were well attended, it was recognised that some groups of students were less likely to attend and that students wanted to be able to revisit the materials.

We were awarded an institutional academic research development grant to carry out a small scale action research project. The aim was to investigate, trial and apply innovative approaches to teaching and learning in Glasgow Caledonian University. We investigated and evaluated several popular and evolving forms of technology-driven approaches at that time and decided to use vidcasts, largely in part due to the popularity and universal appeal of the well-established podcast. We decided to focus on students studying in the former School of Engineering, Built and Natural Environment and Computing because staff in that School were very receptive to the concept and wanted to encourage their students to access resources online, as they also tended not to attend the workshops in person. Although there were already a variety of different vidcasts available on YouTube on the topic of report writing, there were few that were discipline specific and especially in the areas noted above. Several research publications provide more details about the project^{5,6}.



Screenshot from vidcast: Introduction to academic writing for STEM students.

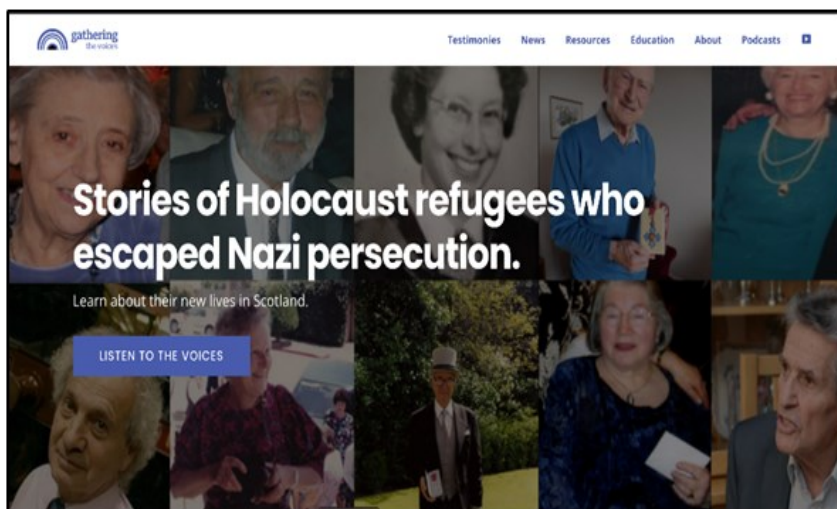
To overcome the many hurdles associated with the dissemination, delivery, and access of the vidcast materials, all the vidcasts are hosted on YouTube. Despite these vidcasts being developed over a decade ago, they are still being used with two of the vidcasts having been downloaded over 80,000 times. The vidcasts contain a complementary blend of annotations, diagrams, and voice and although they cannot truly be said to replicate the traditional face to face lecture, the vidcasts endeavour to relate the important points applying a clear and unambiguous approach.

Important lessons were learned In the initial stages of developing the vidcasts, the lecturer was videoed delivering a 45-minute face to face workshop on essay writing to students. However, once the video recorded output was

reviewed, it was felt that the lecturer's presence detracted from the recording, rather than adding to its pedagogical value. It was also apparent that additional features appeared which were not, such as the classroom environment and the visibility of students both inside and outside of the room. This meant too many non-essential visual cues were appearing at the same time. Furthermore, it was felt that the lecturer's presence on film would limit the 'shelf-life' and futureproofing of the resource. Other problems arose, for example, the questions from the audience during the workshop were not clearly audible on the recording nor was proper thought given to the audience contributors consent considerations. It also proved difficult to match the spoken voice to the pertinent sections of the recording as no prepared script had been drawn up. This meant that at times there was either too much or insufficient oral content. All these early research factors were catalysts that inspired us to take a creative and innovative approach to reengineering the vidcasts.

Considering these issues, the decision was taken to design and produce a shorter, 'bite sized' 20 minute vidcast that would still use the original PowerPoint slides from the essay writing workshop with oral voice and links to GCU's website. This decision was further influenced by the flexibility of the medium in meeting a diverse range of learning needs. Two formats were used: one for online access embedded within a webpage using a Flash-based video player and the other for students who prefer to download the material for use with their mobile video devices.

The second example of creativity drawn from our experiences of working together is ongoing and again the creativity is through collaboration. Since retiring in 2018, Angela remains connected to the Charity "Gathering Voices": she is an Honorary Fellow and trustee of the charity. This is an online archive containing over fifty interviews with refugees from The Holocaust who have connections with Scotland. The website has a podcast channel, a YouTube channel and educational resources. All are free to access and use and are hosted on the project's website: www.gatheringthevoices.com



Screenshot of the homepage of The Gathering the Voices website

The Gathering the Voices Association was formed in 2012. The charity is comprised of three couples; the men are all 'second generation' that is they are the children of refugees from the Holocaust who came to settle in Scotland. We have four main aims: to gather audio and video testimonies from Holocaust refugees about their experiences before and after they came to Scotland; to make these testimonies available and freely accessible on the world wide web; to educate current and future generations about the resilience of these refugees; and to use innovative teaching and learning approaches.

Despite the six trustees all being 'baby boomers' we are known throughout the world in Holocaust education, because of our innovative teaching and learning approaches. We have tried a range of approaches all in collaboration with creative and talented people; many of whom have generously given us their work free or at considerably reduced cost. A number of these activities are outlined in several papers^{7,8}.

Marion's Journey

In 2013, Marion Camrass relates her family's flight from Poland before the advancing German army and Luftwaffe, involving internment in a labour camp in Siberia, train journeys in freight cars across Siberia, escaping down a river in a homemade raft, being sent to an orphanage in Bukhara and her eventual escape to her mother, and finally her journey to Scotland where she still lives.



Screenshot with explanation of the serious computer game: Marion's Journey

Following on from the earlier successes of implementing technological approaches to disseminate the GtV resources, in 2013 we were presented with an opportunity to co-develop a serious computer game with GCU computing students which would embody the rich, authentic GtV resources with a role-playing game. This serious computer game is based on Marion Camrass' deeply personal journey from Poland at the age of 8 to Scotland. The first iteration of the serious computer game was first developed in 2013 by students at Glasgow Caledonian University

and is currently being enhanced and redeveloped by two graduates from Glasgow Caledonian University (Chimera Tales.co.uk) to ensure the longevity of the gaming resource will continue to be made available to educate the next generation of learners.

Another innovative approach to further develop the authentic resources was undertaken in 2021 when two digital comics were designed and developed free of charge as part of a development project illustrating Glasgow Caledonian University's 'Common Good' social vision.⁹ The Common Good comics initiative brought together Glasgow Caledonian University's Social Enterprise Collection, Magic Torch Comics, the GCU Archive Centre, and GCU's Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health. This project received funding from the UK's national Heritage Lottery Fund. The project supports social enterprises and community groups enabling them to develop heritage skills and re-tell their stories in comic book form.



Screenshot of the front page of the digital comic, Gathering the Voices / Common Good Comics

The Gathering the Voices Association is a collective example of creativity, through our collaborations we have all become experts, but the expertise is because of the enthusiasm and dedication of the three couples and the many partners who have helped in the creative journey. Both Aidan and Angela believe strongly in collaboration and that working with students and colleagues has enhanced their creativity. Angela feels that the process has helped her progress from what she considered to be a novice to being extremely confident and proficient. However, neither Angela nor Aidan feel comfortable with the term 'expert' as it sounds like one has completed the journey. We both feel that our creative selves are still travelling and continuing the journey.

We feel the four social-cultural factors of respect, encouragement, emotional support and affiliation are reflected in our two case studies³. In the first case study we were supported by our managers and though at times the production process was frustrating, we were given support both emotional and practical by our colleagues. Furthermore, Amabile and Kramer's four factors in describing work culture resonate for both of us in that the managerial actions supported and encouraged both of us to be creative 'and think outside the box' in developing vidcasts. We both work well together and even though Angela has retired from GCU we continue to collaborate and respect each other's talents and creativity. The second case study also afforded Angela and Aidan the opportunity to engage with new connections in different spheres from their educational backgrounds. Aidan has continued to be involved in Gathering the Voices which has also given him the opportunity of transferring his knowledge to a new group of practitioners encouraging creativity amongst all and Angela continues to benefit from continuing emotional and practical support from colleagues at Glasgow Caledonian University.

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#creativeHE Collective Wins CATE Award

Creative Academic is proud to be a member of the #creativeHE collective led by Chriss Nerantzi (University of Leeds) working collaboratively to encourage and support creativity in higher education. Advance HE has now recognised our work through the prestigious CATE Award **Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence** for our collective work as the #creativeHE team supporting an active community which has been sustained and grown since 2016.

We offer our thanks to Chrissi for her commitment, leadership and energy that has brought us together and helped us work collaboratively on many different projects enhancing our own learning and development in the process. You can find out more about #creativeHE by visiting <https://creativehecommunity.wordpress.com/> or joining the #creativeHE Facebook Group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/creativeHE>



(Left) Members of the #creativeHE collective



#creativeHE Events 2023

<https://creativehecommunity.wordpress.com/events-2/events-22-23/>

Festive makealong 7 December 2022 12:30-14:00	Community showcase 18 January 2023 12:30-14:00	(Re)imagining HE 22 February 2023 12:30-14:00
Community show 'n' tell 15 March 2023 12:30-14:00	Play, objects, models & stories 26 Apr 2023 12:30-14:00	Creativity & neurodiversity 10 May 2023 12:30-14:00
Compassion & creativity 24 May 2023 12:30-14:00	5TH ANNUAL #CREATIVEHE JAM <div> Creative Celebrations 6 June 2023 16:00-18:00 Online </div> <div> Creative Beyond Borders 7 June 2023 tbc 10:00-15:00 In person at University of Leeds </div>	

Creative Academic Resources Hub

<http://www.creativeacademic.uk/>

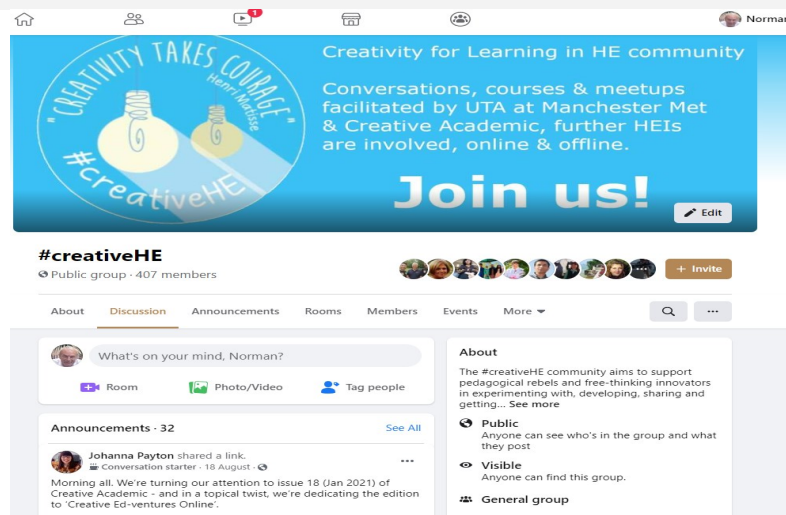


#creativeHE Facebook Forum

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