

Exploring Creativity through #creative HE



 **creative academic magazine**

Issue Number 3 January 2016

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**Guest Editors: Roger Greenhalgh,
Nikos Mouratoglou &
Maria Rafaela Tziouvara**

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Jenny Willis

Executive Editor



The conceptualisation and production of CAM₃ provides a wonderful example of how creativity and technologies can connect people who did not previously know each other so that they can combine their interests and talents to achieve something much more meaningful than what they might produce individually.

As Norman Jackson explains overleaf, this edition of Creative Academic Magazine has been formed around our individual and collective experiences of taking part in an 8-week open learning course, #creativeHE. Designed and facilitated by Chrissi Nerantzi, this aimed to develop critical thinking and awareness of key theories related to creativity, and to consider how we can enhance creativity in the professionals of tomorrow. Interestingly, many participants spontaneously fell back on story-telling to illustrate their views and personal experiences. This was facilitated through on-line discussion at large group level (the 'community') and in two sub-groups ('collectives'). Many of these stories feature in the following pages.

As our interactions increased, we came to appreciate the input of several participants in particular, whom we have invited to join the Creative Academic Community, and three of whom have taken on the challenge of co-editing this edition of our magazine: Rafaela Tziouvara, Nikos Mouratoglou and Roger Greenhalgh. To them an especial thank you - it has been a real pleasure working with you.

Thank you, as ever, though, to everyone who has contribute to CAM₃. I believe readers will find much novelty and food for reflection in this edition. May it inspire you for the new year!

**WISHING YOU ALL A HAPPY
& PROSPEROUS 2016!**

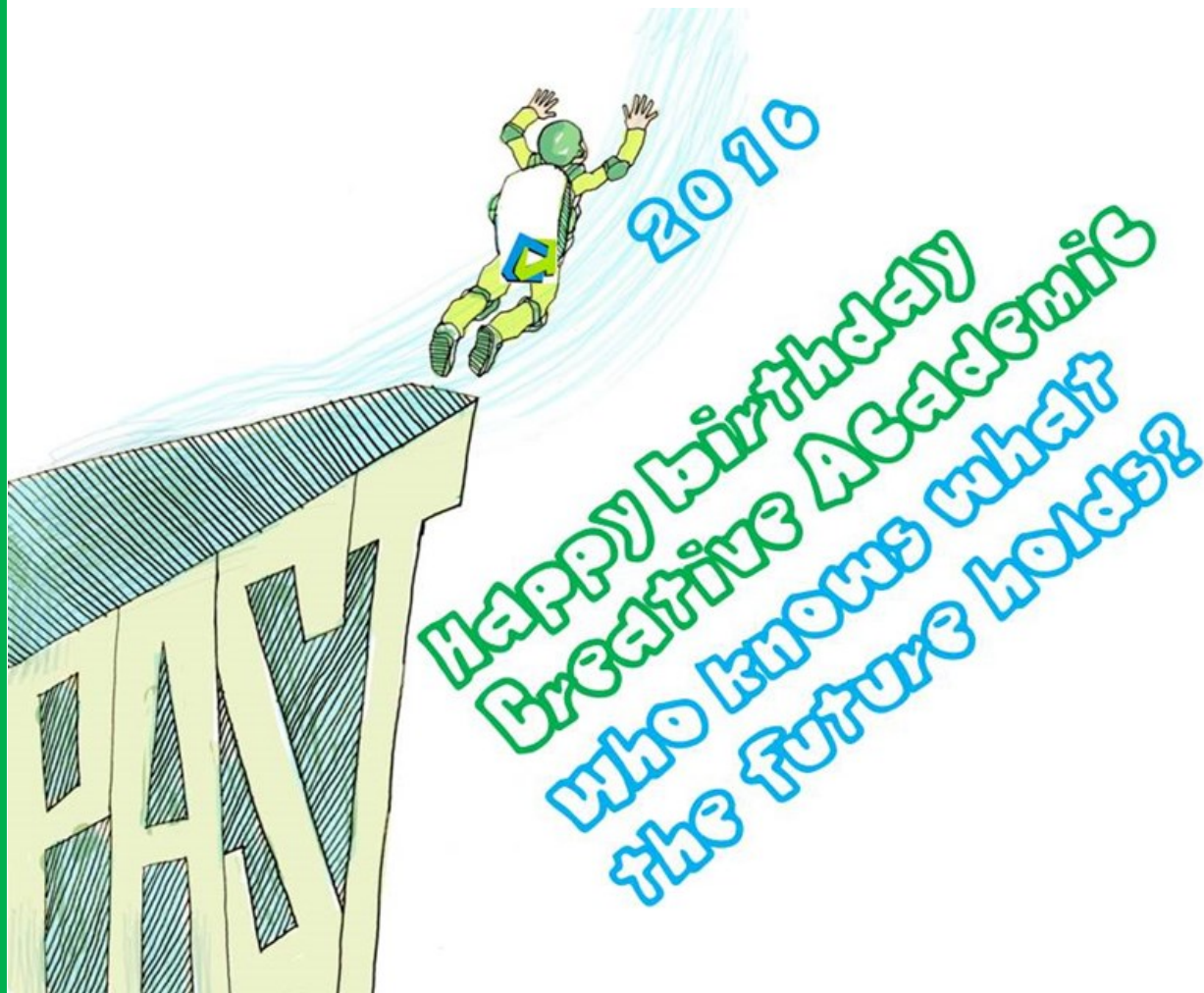
Jenny

JANUARY 2016

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

CREATIVE ACADEMIC

Creative Academic was launched in January 2015. One year on we have much to show for our efforts and much to be thankful for. Thank you to everyone who has signed up to our community of interest and for your enthusiasm for the thing we care about - the continuing creative development of students, ourselves and the organisations and societies we inhabit. The world is full of wicked problems and infinite opportunities and we need to harness all of our imaginations and talents to engage with them and make our lives and the lives of others better. Thank you to everyone who has visited our site, or read or contributed to our magazines, articles, blogs, tweets, surveys and projects. We have made a good start but our social enterprise will only be sustained with YOUR support and help. We look forward optimistically to the coming year and welcome your involvement.





COMMISSIONING EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Norman Jackson

The idea of how we might teach people to be creative is an idea that has bothered me throughout my career. I should come clean and say that while I believe teachers can, through their practices, inhibit their students' creativity, students will always find ways of using their creativity even if it means seeking opportunities outside their academic programmes. But my over-riding belief is that many teachers believe that it's important to encourage their students' creativity and find ways of doing this. The more I have thought about this the more I see the teaching project as one of creating affordance that students recognise and utilise for their own learning projects that demand their creativity and Issue 2 of the magazine provided some glorious examples of teachers creating affordances for experimenting and play in higher education. When it comes to mature learners with significant experiences of the world, education is much more about sharing these experiences and the insights that have been gained. Campbell Gardener captures this well when he talks about sharing wisdom ([Wisdom as Learning Outcome TED talk](#)). If a teacher can encourage a crowd of people to share their wisdom then they are likely to facilitate a great environment for learning and the development of new insights.

Over the last 12 months Chrissi Nerantzi, a founding member of the Creative Academic team, and a champion of open learning and education through the use of social media, has been developing an on-line course which creates the affordance for people to explore the idea of creativity through an on-line course - 'Creativity for Learning in Higher Education' which we shortened using the Twitter hashtag to #creativeHE. It has been one of Creative Academic's goals to facilitate professional development relating to creativity in higher education so I was delighted when Chrissi invited me to be involved as one of the facilitators in the second iteration of the course.

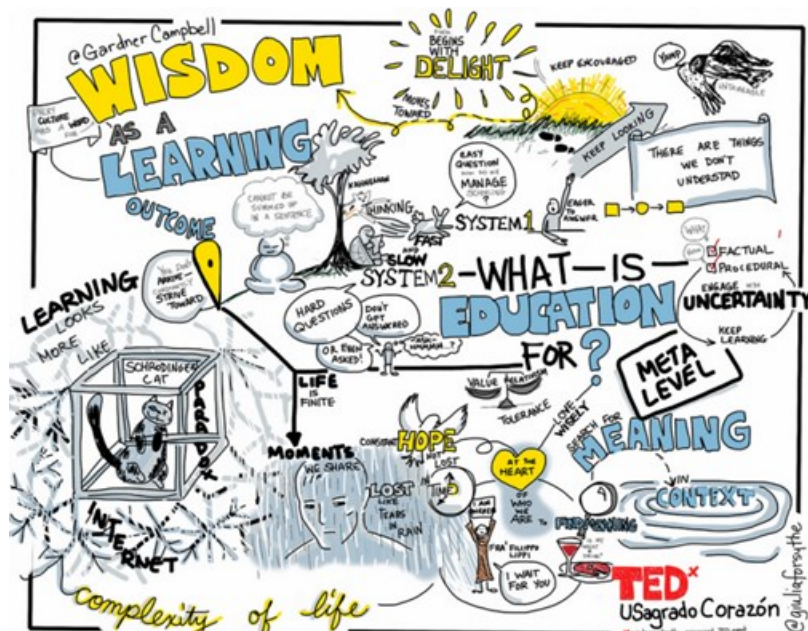
In fact, this was my first complete experience of

participating in an online course. I had joined a couple of moocs before but quickly became disillusioned and dropped out. This was not the case with #creativeHE and I'm very glad I stayed with it as the experience revealed to me the fantastic affordance for learning that a well structured and facilitated online course and a well connected community with a culture of sharing, can create. Over the eight weeks that the course was run I engaged in many productive conversations, met and formed good relationships with many people, learnt about and used new technological tools and generally enhanced my understandings of many things. Looking back I can see and appreciate this as a rich learning and relationship building experience. As the course came to an end in late November I had the idea that we might use the affordance of Creative Academic Magazine to consolidate and share some of the learning gained through #creativeHE and I'm delighted that Chrissi and Jenny thought it was a good idea. Furthermore, two of the most enthusiastic student participants, Nikos and Rafaela, also wanted to help produce the magazine so they joined our small editorial group, along with Roger Greenhalgh, as Guest Editors. So this issue of the magazine is very much the result of a co-

creative effort involving the editorial team and all the participants who shared their perspectives through the #creativeHE process.

The Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard once said, 'Life can only be understood back-

wards but it must be lived forwards'. I think the same is true of participating in an on-line course. When we view the curriculum laid out before us we can see the structure and a timeline for activity that was imagined by the designer, but the curriculum is a lived experienced, those who participate by sharing their thoughts and feelings, are the curriculum. Of course we are



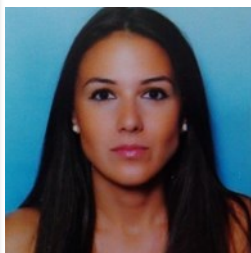
aware of what emerges as it emerges but its only when it's all over, if we have the time and inclination, we can look back and make more sense of it and create deeper meaning of the experience. In a sense this is what we are doing in this magazine. With hundreds of posts and comments it's difficult to see the big picture without some sort of reflective synthesis. So this is our ambition - to try and re-create a flavour of the experience and the rich variety of perspectives and insights that were shared through the posts and conversations that formed the #creativeHE curriculum.

We hope you enjoy this exploration of the idea of creativity and the sharing of participants' views and perspectives as much as we have enjoyed producing it. It cannot do justice to the dynamics and richness of the community-based learning process we were involved in, but it provides a flavour of participants' perspectives on creativity grown through the circumstances of their lives. As such it provides an interesting commentary on what creativity means in the everyday lives of those who have been brought together and connected through this affordance for social learning.

Norman

Guest Editors

This issue of the magazine has been a team effort involving the usual editorial team and three guest editors. All five of us were involved in one of the groups in the #creativeHE community.



Maria-Rafaela Tziouvara was born in Thessaloniki, Greece. After completing her Bachelor studies in the Faculty of Primary Education at the University of Thessaly in Volos, she continued her studies in the Master Degree Programme “Didactics of Mathematics and Physics with the use of I.C.T.” at the University of Western Macedonia in Florina. Currently she is attending her second Master Programme “Adult Education and Lifelong Learning” at the University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki, while at the same time working as a primary school teacher supporting students with special educational needs. Amongst her main interests are I.C.T. in the Educational Setting, Lifelong Learning and Adult Learning, Teacher Training, Educational Psychology, Robotics in Primary and Higher Education, Research and Voluntarism.



Nikos Mouratoglou is a Greek Language Teacher. After completing his Bachelor studies “Philosophy and Education” at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, he continued his studies by entering the Master's Programme titled “I.C.T. in Education”. This year he attends his second Master's Programme “Adult Education and Lifelong Learning” at the University of Macedonia of Thessaloniki, while at the same time he is a PhD. candidate at Aristotle University. His main interests include I.C.T., Higher Education, Writing Research, Lifelong Learning and Intercultural Theory.



Roger Greenhalgh works for Jisc and helps educational leaders make strategic use of ICT in the operations and development of their organisations. He started messing with computers in the mid-‘70s and was an early adopter of IT in the classrooms of the ‘80s. An entrepreneur in the ‘90s DotCom boom and subsequent Ed Tech enthusiast in universities and colleges, mentorship with IT innovators seems to be his forté.

EXPLORING CREATIVITY IN THE SOCIAL AGE THROUGH #creativeHE

Norman Jackson



Norman is Emeritus Professor at the University of Surrey, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and founder of two social enterprises, 'Lifewide Education' and 'Creative Academic'. He is Commissioning Editor for Lifewide Magazine and Creative Academic Magazine.

Learning in the Social Age

We live in the Social Age (1) which is characterised by our ability to connect anytime and almost anywhere to people, information and other resources through the internet via mobile communication devices and Web 2.0 technologies particularly social media. In this Issue of Creative Academic Magazine, the editorial team is using our recent experiences of participating in a Social Age learning environment that was created in order to enable people to explore what creativity means in the context of higher education learning, drawing on their own everyday life experiences.

The name given to this online social learning environment is #creativeHE and we might usefully connect the processes of participant interactions and relationships to the development and use of our own personal learning networks (PLNs)(2). In fact one of the conclusions I came to was that the #creativeHE open learning environment was designed to enable participants to expand and enrich their PLNs in order to both share their understandings and experiences about personal creativity and learn from people in the networked community. In this article I outline the main features of the course and learning environment. The interpretations are my own and not necessarily those of Chrissi Nerantzi who designed the course.

Open Networked Learning

#creative HE is an open networked learning 'course' and related discursive spaces and processes designed, organised and led by Chrissi Nerantzi at Manchester Metropolitan University and supported by Creative Academic, London Metropolitan University and University of Macedonia. It is based on a 30 credit postgraduate level unit provided by the Centre for Learning and Teaching (CELТ). The course is intended for people involved in teaching and supporting the learning or development in a higher education context but like all open learning environments anyone can participate.

The course was offered between January-March 2015 and again between 28 Sep until the 20 Nov 2015. It is the later iteration of the course that we are concerned with here.

The open learning course provides two different learning environments - the first is *institution-based* and face to face. Three of the facilitators Chrissi Nerantzi, Sandra Sinfield and Professor Nikos Fachantidis, provided opportunities for face to face learning events in their universities: the Manchester Metropolitan University, London Metropolitan University and the University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki, respectively.

#creativeHE is also an openly licensed course that extends opportunities for creative engagement beyond the physical classroom into more distributed spaces and places across the globe to connect individuals and groups to explore the concepts of creativity in cross-disciplinary, cross-institutional and cross-cultural settings(3)

The second learning environment is *virtual* using the framework of activities and resources offered through the P2PU on-line university and a Google+ on-line community space for communication and interaction. This article focuses on the virtual learning environment mindful of the fact that the virtual and institutional are connected. A summary of the technologies that I used to support my learning in the virtual environment is shown below in Figure 1.

Figure 1 The technologies I used in #creativeHE



Some of the most active participants in the online environment were a group of 13 students enrolled on the 'Adult Education and Lifelong Learning' masters course at the University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki, Greece. This group participated in the #creativeHE online course and also met face to face in the classroom in a series of weekly sessions that paralleled the course. In my view their involvement was critical to the success of the overall #creativeHE experience as participants who did not involve themselves directly in the course were able to comment on and interact with the students who were.

I have used the term online course but I felt that some of the pedagogic, technological and participant behavioural features made it a bit like a c-mooc/cMOOC (4), although its size (100 registered participants) would at best make it a very small mooc/MOOC which has at least 150 participants. During the 8 weeks there were 43 active participants who made over 350 posts and over 1000 comments (5 infographic p). Many of the posts contained links to personal blogs or e-portfolios, that's a lot of contributions and conversation and a huge amount of resource to stimulate thinking. But such statistics can never get at the heart of what is after all a process for sharing personal meanings and co-creating new meaning. The meaning is in the conversation and in the emotional responses that we make to the posts we read, the personal stories that are shared, the images we see and the videos we watch.

Scaffolded Social Learning

The course was organised around a series of weekly topics and activities supported by appropriate resources that were intended to encourage participants to think about a particular concept and reflect on their own beliefs and practices.

Julian Stodd provides a nice model (6) for understanding the type of learning enterprise that #creativeHE represents. He says that scaffolded social learning is built around two types of components: formal elements ('boxes') and informal social elements (*bubbles*). At the boundary between each, there is a gateway. The bubbles are co-creative, community spaces, places where we can share our experiences or resources, feed in questions, and responses to opinions. The boxes are formally defined learning eg classroom [or other prescribed activities] or the use of defined resources. The overall arrangement is defined by an overarching narrative with a defined outcome in terms of skills [knowledge] and capability.

The *overarching narrative* for #creativeHE is defined by both the organiser and the participants. It is formed around questions like 'what does creativity mean? And how can we apply it in educational settings? The emerging narrative is created by all the participants as they share their responses to the activities or open discussion around a topic that interests them. The learning process #creativeHE involves individuals participating in structured activities (the rectangular boxes) and the sharing of responses to those activities in community spaces and unfolding conversations that relate directly or indirectly to the inquiry themes being explored. Participants create portfolios to evidence their participation in the structured activities and they earn badges as they progress through them.

Julian Stodd's model of scaffolded social learning does not take account of what participants are doing in the rest of their lives or how what they are doing connects to their own learning projects.

Course Structure

WEEK 1: 28 Sep Introductions & orientation

Developing reflection; Tools; Collaborative learning opportunities

PORTFOLIOS and Assessment for MMU credits linked to the CfL unit

WEEK 2: 5 Oct Creativity in HE

BADGE: Introduction to Creativity in HE

WEEK 3: 12 Oct Peer led week

WEEK 4: 19 Oct Finding & solving problems through play & games

Sell your bargains game

BADGE: Introduction to play and games for learning in HE

WEEK 5: 26 Oct Using story for learning

BADGE: Introduction to story for learning in HE

WEEK 6: 02 Nov Learning through making

BADGE: Introduction to learning through making in HE

WEEK 7: 09 Nov Innovation project

WEEK 8: 16 Nov Peer led activity & reflection

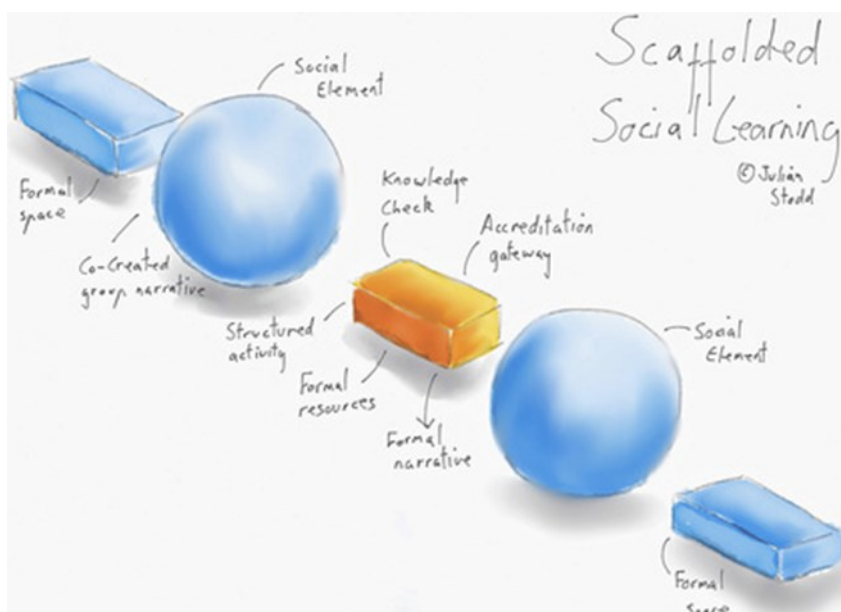


Figure 2 Julian Stodd's model (6) of scaffolded social learning

Ecological Perspectives

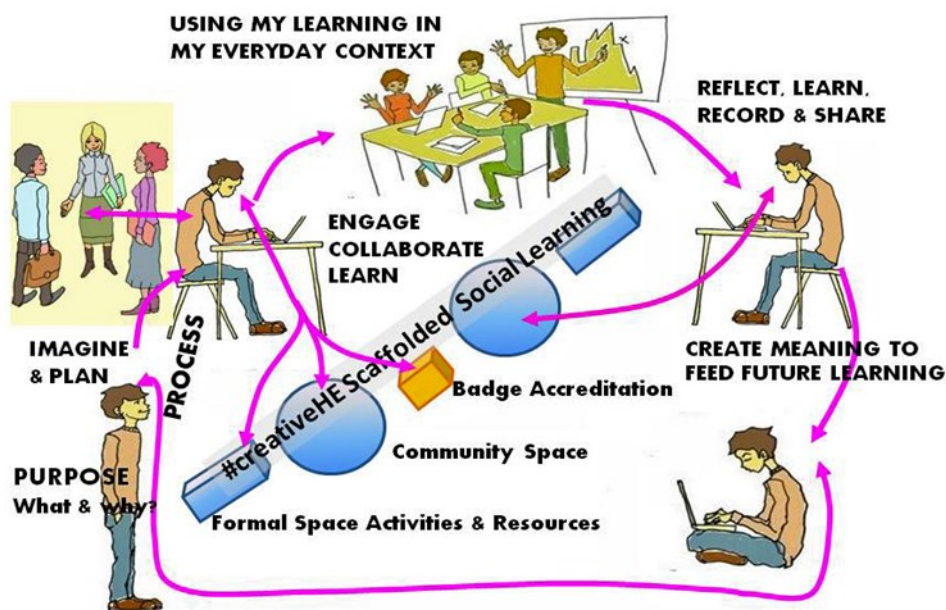
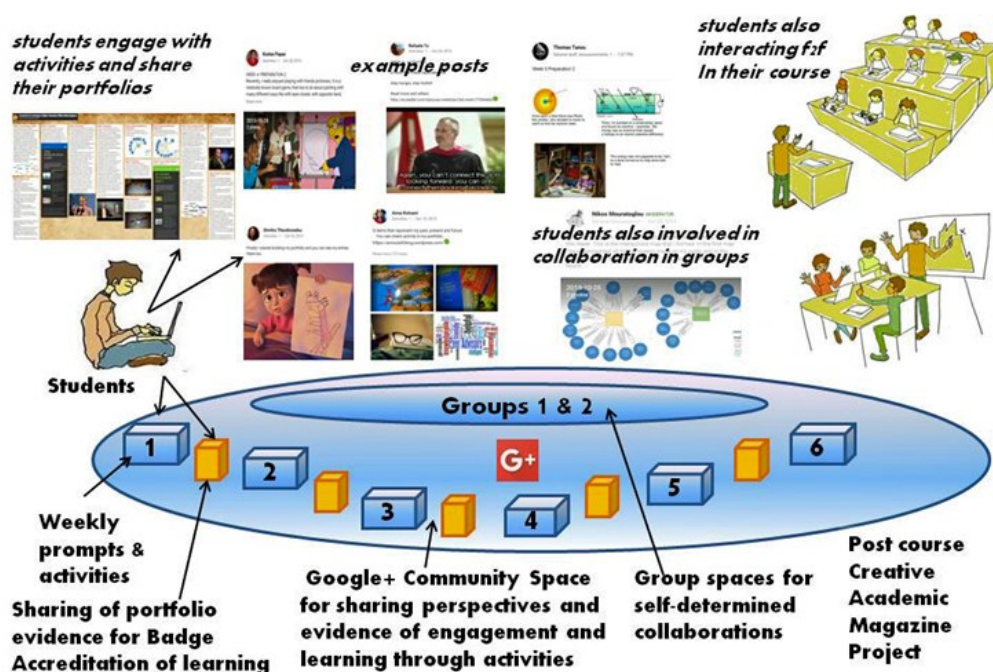


Figure 3

Figure 4



Those who design learning environments tend to see the world as a space that they have created. The reality is that the world is created by people who create their own ecologies for learning and achieving and sometimes these ecologies incorporate an organised and structured space that has been designed by someone else (7). Every participant had a life outside #creativeHE. Furthermore it was the most important part of their life in terms of time, effort, relationships and achievements, and most importantly it afforded participants the potential to discuss and put into practice what they were learning. What the designers of scaffolding learning environments create is new affordance for learning that a learner can incorporate into their own ecology for learning. Figures 3 & 4 show my attempt to connect these two environments to create a more holistic and integrated model for scaffolding social learning.

Spaces for Collaboration

There is one other sort of space within #creativeHE. This space afforded opportunity for social learning and collaboration around topics and projects that were determined by the participants themselves.

The Google+ space contained two 'group spaces' each with a facilitator. Anyone could join a group at any point in the course but there was an expectation that those admitted would participate. In this respect the groups were intended to behave like 'collectives' in the manner described by Thomas and Seeley Brown (8 and box right).

Activities undertaken by the groups are described elsewhere in this magazine (9&10)

A Journey

Participating in something that is unfamiliar involves you in a journey and if you are part of a group, as I was, the thing we share is the experience of a journey, although it will be a unique journey for each person. Like most participants I recorded some of my learning, thoughts and feelings in a blog and having completed the course I can look back on what I recorded. Like other participants I can see that my journey began with confusion and frustration with not understanding how the process and combination of technologies worked - you feel that you are the only one experiencing the course in this way but of course most people are. As I got more familiar and comfortable with the technology and I shared my thoughts and experiences with other participants my relationships with the environment for learning changed. I can see that a significant part of my journey was relational. Gradually new understandings emerged together with enjoyment and feeling part of something that was a meaningful part of my everyday existence.

In making this journey I was helped by half a dozen participants who joined me in a Google hangout every Sunday evening for a chat that focused on our experience of the course and how we felt about it (7). We shared our interests and we worked collaboratively to share our perspectives on questions we were interested in. This social dimension made all the difference to our individual experiences and out of it grew new relationships that ultimately gave birth to the project to produce this magazine.

An important part of any journey is recognising what you have learnt. After the course had finished Chrissi asked me about the effects of #creativeHE on my own creativity. While I don't feel more creative my experience of the course has enabled me to see affordances that I could not see before and I developed lots of understandings that I can apply to other areas of my work. But the best thing to emerge for me, and this goes to heart of the value in social learning, is the new relationships I formed with my fellow participants. Some of these hold much promise for the future - indeed they have led directly to the production of this issue of the magazine - and their value cannot be quantified, and that is the real value of social learning.

Acknowledgement: I am indebted to Chrissi Nerantzi for providing the opportunity for me to participate in #creativeHE and for Creative Academic to support course. I would also like to thank my fellow travellers especially Nikos, Rafaela, Jenny, Roger and Scott who made the course such an enjoyable experience. You can find out more and see when the course is being run again at: <https://courses.p2pu.org/en/courses/2615/creativity-for-learning-in-higher-education/>

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- 10 Sinfield (Group 2 activities?)

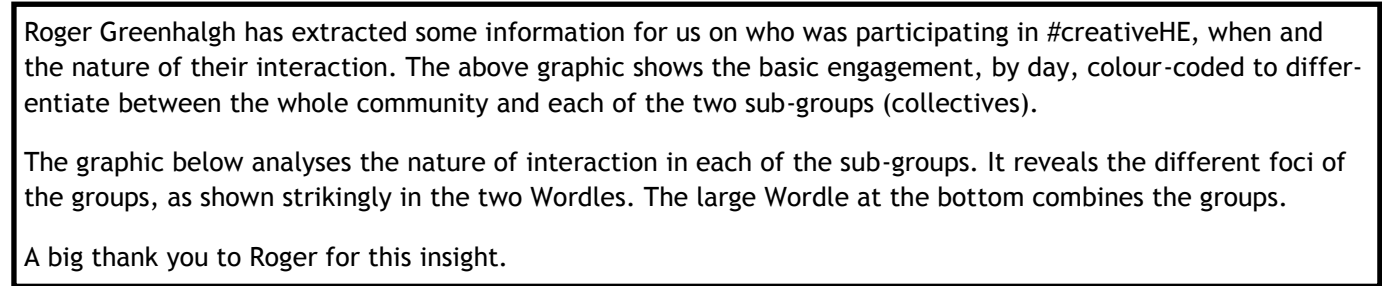
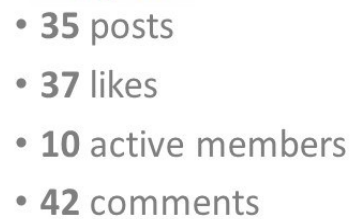
A Collective (8)

In the new culture of learning, people learn through their interaction and participation with one another in fluid relationships that are the result of shared interests and opportunity. In this environment the participants all stand on equal ground - no one is assigned to the traditional role of teacher or student. Instead, anyone who has particular knowledge of, or experience with, a given subject may take on the role of mentor at any time.

A collective is very different from an ordinary community. Where communities can be passive, collectives cannot. In communities people learn in order to belong. In a collective, people belong in order to learn. Communities derive their strength from creating a sense of belonging, while collectives derive theirs from participation.

The new culture of learning, is a culture of collective inquiry that harnesses the resources of the network and transforms them into nutrients within the learning environment, turning it into a space of play and experimentation.

#creativeHE INFOGRAPHICS



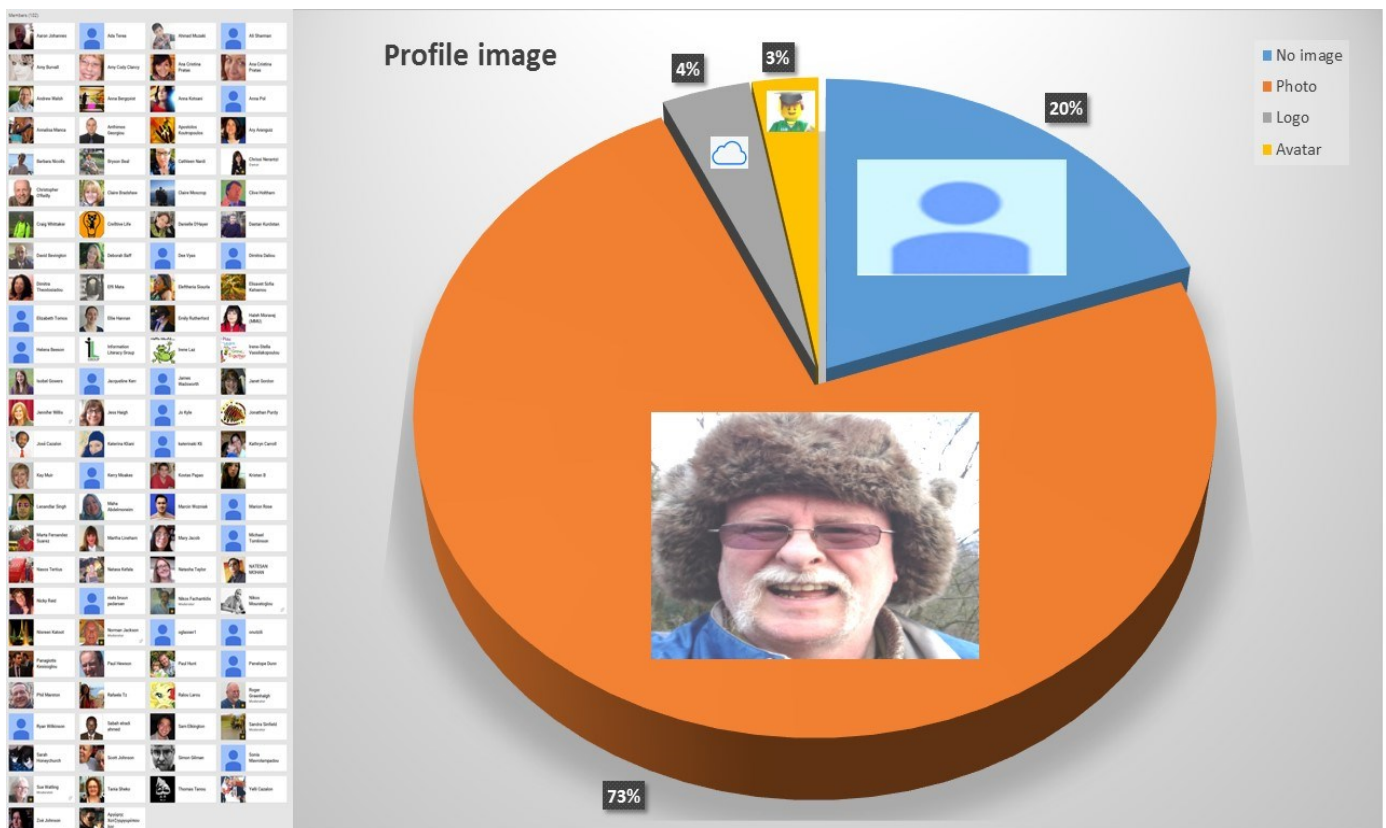
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INDIVIDUAL PROFILES

In the image below Roger Greenhalgh shares his personal photograph, superimposed on an analysis of the whole #creativityHE community. This photograph is the image Roger used in his profile. It appears as a thumbnail image alongside every post he makes. All participants had the option to provide a photo and three quarters chose to do so. As Roger says,

“Subconsciously I always find it easier to engage in dialogue with someone of whom I have a mental picture.”

The box of images to the left of Roger shows the names of the registered members of the community and their image



#creativityHE members

MAKING A START

The way you begin a course is important and Chrissi launched the course with a message that explained the structure of the course and how it was organised. Her choice of image - an allotment to symbolise the course was interesting as it opened up so many possibilities for interpretation around so many gardening and horticultural metaphors e.g. cultivating, growing, feeding, nurturing and caring.

Chrissi Nerantzi

Hello everybody,

A warm welcome to #creativeHE . It is lovely that you decided to join us. We hope #creativeHE will be valuable for you and your practice. Together we will learn how to transform learning and teaching in higher education into creative practice.

The course structure can be found on the course site, but we would suggest to access this community regularly and fully participate in some of the activities.

You will have the option to learn in small groups, some of which will be facilitated. If you are already familiar and confident in collaborative learning in the open and would like to set-up your own study group or identify a study buddy, go for it!!! We will, of course, also be around to support all of you when needed.

Week 1 starts today ;) This is mainly an orientation and familiarisation week

Please have a good look around the community where this message is posted and engage with Week 1 activities. Bring your responses into the community so that we can start the conversation. We can't wait to get to know you a bit better and start learning together.

We wish you all an enjoyable, stimulating and fruitful time at #creativeHE . Use this as an opportunity to reflect on your practice, experiment, play with ideas and connect with colleagues and students in this distributed community.

Any questions, please let us know, ok?
Let's open our minds to new (im)possibilities!

Chrissi, Sandra, Nikos and Norman



WEEK 1 ACTIVITIES

Part 1: Please introduce yourself briefly. Include information about your role and what you enjoy most about it. Consider creating a video introduction and share the link.

Apps (1991, 23-24) talks about different teaching approaches through metaphor which should help you to start thinking about you as a teacher:

"Lamplighters - who see to enlighten their students;
Gardeners - who seek to cultivate the mind by nourishing, enhancing and providing the right climate, whilst they also remove the weeds, and then they stand back and let growth occur;

Muscle builders - who seek to strengthen flabby minds;
Bucket fillers - who pour information into empty containers;

Challengers - who question learners' assumptions;
Travel guides - who assist people along the path of learning;

Factory supervisors - who supervise both the inputs and the outputs of the process;

Artists - for whom learning is an aesthetic process;
Applied scientists - who seek to apply research results about teaching to their own approach;

Craftspeople - who use a wide variety of skills"

WHAT SORT OF TEACHER ARE YOU?

We normally think of reflection as something we do at the end of something but this course began by encouraging us to reflect on our identity and practice as a teacher using Apps' approaches to teaching metaphors (right). It proved to be a helpful way of introducing ourselves to other participants. Overleaf are just a few of the responses

I see myself as a travel guide and crafts person, as my role at UWE is to help students to navigate their way through their studies and to help them to master techniques such as critical reflection, literature review writing and other things. The nature of this often taxing journey is that students may build mental muscle, so I am also a bit of a coach for that building of muscle.
Craig Whittaker

I think I'm betwixt metaphors for teaching approaches - I use art a lot, constantly, and the educator and trainer Jane Hart talks about "concierge learning" and given that my work is almost always with adults, I like that - and in hotels I now spend a lot of time watching the concierges. Everyone who comes to them wants something a little (or a lot) different so there's no pre-conceptualisation of a "curriculum" - just a friendly welcoming. *Aaron*

I think that the "gardener" is the teaching approach that best expresses my beliefs in the whole procedure of teaching. *Natasa Kefala*

I would describe myself as an innovator for techniques and strategies that help learners develop their skills for learning; enhance them, be a guide on the side during the journey *Barbara Nicholls*

Working with children of 6-12 years of age, one can stand as a Lamplighter, a Gardener, a Challenger and a Travel guide in parallel. Occasionally as an Artist too...I try to adapt myself and my role to the needs of my students not losing of course the role of communicating knowledge, but assisting them in living and growing through this knowledge. Does this make me an Artist hidden deep inside me? *Dimitra Theodosiadou*

I think that I belong in the lamplighters! My purpose and my effort is to try to illuminate students with the available knowledge. My personal joy is when students find their way on their own and come to a conclusion by themselves with my minimum guidance. I hope that this "journey" will have the best profits for our students and I will be as helpful as it can be. *Panagiotis Kesisoglou*

My approach to teaching and learning - I aim to provide an optimal environment but it doesn't always happen. It's rewarding when plants grow and flourish but this doesn't always happen either. *Sue Watling*

I find this activity really challenging, since I think it is difficult to classify any teacher into only one category. I believe that the teaching approach a someone uses depends on many things, like his/her personality and personal beliefs, his/her teaching experience, the needs of his/her students, the demands of his/her work and many other factors. I also think that it is possible for someone to move from one teaching approach to another as he/she gains experience, broadens his/her knowledge and meets different kinds of students and different subject areas...However, if I had to choose one metaphor, I would choose the "Challengers", because I believe it is very important for students to become critical thinkers and to consider carefully other people's views before accepting them. I also think that it is important for all of us to be willing to reconsider our beliefs about something, because that helps us to be more open to new ideas and be willing to hear opinions that are different from our own. *Ελισάβετ-Σοφία Κατσάνου*

SO WHAT SORT OF TEACHER ARE YOU?

Developing a narrative about yourself as a teacher is an act of creativity.

USING OUR IMAGINATIONS



How can you engage people in thinking about creativity without using their imaginations? All too often in higher education we don't give people the permission or encouragement to think imaginatively and express how they feel about something. One of the interesting features of the course was the way in which imagery was used to stimulate imagination and emotions. This type of mediating artefact was introduced in week 1 through the question **How do you feel about this picture?** Interestingly everyone seemed to view the image as a metaphor for education and learning, even though this context was not specified in the question!

Image source: <http://gardeningunlimited.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/watering.jpg>

Here are just a few of the responses that reflect the fertility of participants' imaginations.

Sonia Mavrolampadou: In my opinion, the "grass picture" represents the role of teacher and the process of learning. The teacher (watering can) give the knowledge (water) to students (grass). The knowledge, the ways of searching and thinking that the teacher offers to students are so important like the water for the growth of grass.

Anna Kotsani: the " picture of grass"... represents the significant role of a teacher. Plants cannot survive without water. They need water to grow up such as students; without receiving the suitable knowledge from teachers, they are not learning many things such as the role of communicating , all principles that education should focus on and creativity! the way to be creative in classroom and generally in whole life!!! Therefore, water (knowledge) is an integral part of grass (students).

Craig Whittaker:my feeling is that grass does not choose to grow or to turn away from the light which nourishes its growth. Human beings, however, have free will and can choose not to grow.

Eleftheria Siourla: Observing this picture many times I could see a different angle in which I can extract different conclusions. In the picture I could imagine the seeds to grow because they find the proper conditions. We can also observe, the clean atmosphere it also helps them. Another element in the picture is an active movement from someone, who waters the plants. Finally, we could add the nutrients from the soil. If we think that the growing seeds are the students, the environment is the place where knowledge takes place, we can understand that these basic elements react and depend to each other. Also I think that we could contrast the soil with the close family or friendly environment of the student. Additionally, we could say that watering is the action of the teaching. A plant couldn't grow if the soil wasn't proper and if the atmosphere wasn't clean. A plant needs water but specific quantity of water. So the education should adjust to the needs each student in order cultivate their personality and sharpen their knowledge. Also as teachers we should create the environment which the knowledge will flourish.

Anthimos Georgiou: The picture here represents the nurturing that students need. We need to give to all students the same attention and try to motivate them as much as possible. Not all of the students will grow and learn equally. Some will grow faster, some slower and some might stay at the same level. The point here is how we can eliminate the weed (obstacles that students face in the learning cycle) and how we can use fertilizer (Creativity) to motivate students to learn and eliminate those obstacles!

Αργύρης Χατζηαργυρόπουλος : The water represents the sum of knowledge, the basic principles and the methods that are considered to be necessary tools in order to become a creative teacher and interact with the students constructively. Without the water ,the plants will not survive. But there is something I would like to emphasize on, too. I firmly believe that the teacher should know at first that every single student is different and each student has his own special abilities and disabilities. The teacher should evaluate each one of the students and then, he has to organize a common form education which has as a result to cover the requirements of the classroom. Without teacher's creativity, evaluation and passion about the job, that he chose to do ,the "water" won't have the quality to eliminate the obstacles and disabilities of the ground (classroom).

Elisavet Sofia Katsanou: I think it is an over simplified way to look at education. From my personal point of view. the source of the water represents the teacher, the water represents the information that the teacher gives to the students and the grass represents the students. That way the learning process seems like a one-way process, with the teacher being the one that has all the knowledge and information and gives it to the students without getting nothing or getting affected from it. I find it similar with the metaphor about the "bucket fillers" teachers. Also on this picture all students are growing in the exact same environment, as the grass in the picture grows in the same soil and under the same sky, which I also think it is not true, as all students come from a different background and the way they process the same information is different.

Scott Johnson: Clearly, the little grass'lings are being nourished (and trimmed) from above in an effort to limit their growth and foster similarity over uniqueness. The fact that there is no illustrated root system indicates a view of individuals as devoid of history and the potential to individuate.

Marion Rose: Native Americans transform grass into corn. We can feed ourselves with corn but not with grass. Learning transforms homo sapiens into human.

Jonothann Purdy: The grass is just the surface learning. I'm much more interested in the deeper learning. Growth requires sun, water and good soil.

Sarah Honeychurch: I think that as an image for learning this is not good:

1. All of the blades of grass look the same, and they are all growing in the same way. Conformity of learners is a desire of our neo-liberal state, but this is not something we should promote,
2. The teacher is just pouring knowledge over the students. No independent learning.

Tania Sheko : ... if this is a visual representation of learning it's not the best kind of learning. If the blades of grass represent students they are clustered together to grow in a homogeneous mass. If the watering can represents the teacher then the students are passive recipients of top-down content delivery. Pretty much the way it works in many classrooms I've seen but definitely not the ideal concept of learning. Quite the opposite actually.

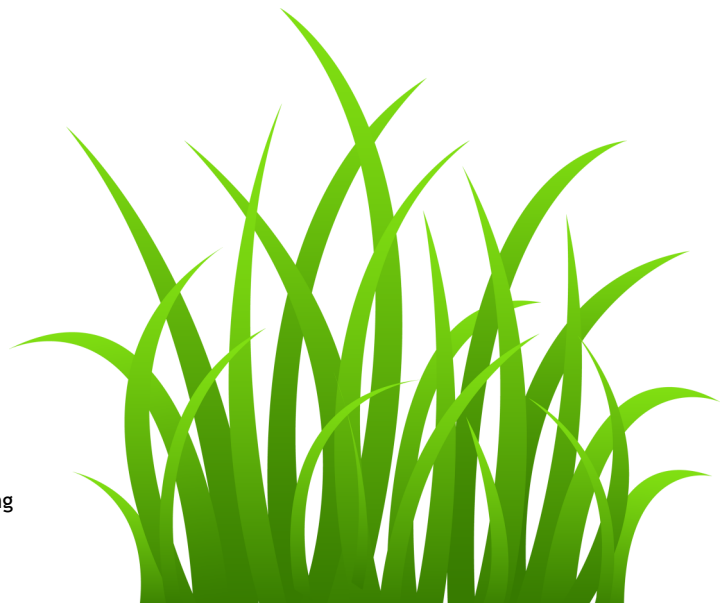


Image: http://pngimg.com/upload/grass_PNG4928.png

Using Imagination to Create Visual Metaphors for Learning and Teaching

Sue Watling Moderator: There are lots of comments that the grass image is too controlled - suggesting uniform students being watered/taught via traditional transmission pedagogies - but I thought of my allotment (and neighbouring plots) which celebrate individuality - no two plots are the same- and the fruit and veg are all different too :-). Gardening for me is about adapting to the environment (soil, weather, slugs etc) and being creative is about finding the best balance between my own ambitions for home grown food and the vagaries of nature.



Isobel Gowers The grass picture for me really highlights one of the reasons I am here. We should not be producing a homogenous pool of graduates but instead channel their creativity so they develop new ideas and their individuality. So some of my interest is in making students more creative but also making my teaching more creative too. Students who see themselves as customers may arrive thinking learning should be delivered rather than sought and I am constantly trying to evolve my practice to engage students and encourage their hunger for knowledge and skills.



Norman Jackson Moderator : the watering can image resonates with a 'sage on the stage' view of teaching and learning, which might be okay in some circumstances but will not enable students to develop themselves in all the ways they need to grow. So can you provide a metaphorical image that might convey the idea of encouraging learners' development in all its possible glory? Should education be about cultivating an environment in which everyone can flourish in their own ways?



FINDING AND SOLVING PROBLEMS THROUGH PLAY

Jenny Willis

Play has long been understood to be a natural means of learning. Indeed, we can trace quotations from Plato to the present day, through Carl Jung's observation that

The creation of something new is not accomplished by the intellect but by the play instinct acting from inner necessity. The creative mind plays with the objects it loves.(1)

to more recently, James and Brookfield's assertion that

Blending creativity and reflection, and infusing them with qualities of imagination and play, creates a powerful cocktail that enhances learning.(2)

Such comments indicate the drives for play and some of the outcomes that play can achieve.

The subject of play in learning seems to appeal to many: when we invited contributions to the second edition of Creative Magazine, we were so overwhelmed that the edition expanded to two complementary publications (3).

It is therefore understandable that the #creativeHE course should focus explicitly on the theme. In this article, we examine some responses to the activities of week 4, Finding and solving problems through play and games. Participants' words are reproduced unedited, in order to retain individuality.

The tasks for week 4: Finding & solving problems through play & games

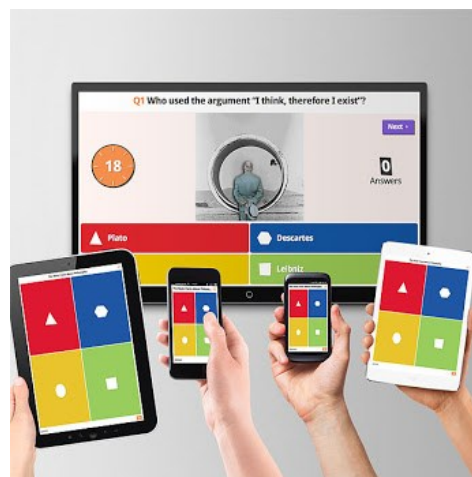
The preamble to this set of tasks explained:

This part of the course presents an exciting opportunity to immerse ourselves into learning through play and collaborative problem-finding and problem-solving, to generate innovative solutions that create stimulating learning experiences. (4)

The activities required participants

- (a) To think of a tricky concept that they had difficulty in explaining to their students, and
- (b) To play a board game at home

In response to both questions, participants were expected to reflect and record their thoughts on the course site and in their portfolio, and to use imagery to describe their feelings while carrying out task (b). As always, they were given background reading to develop conceptual understanding (5). The objectives and intended learning outcomes were stated clearly and for those who sought accreditation, there were options for gaining a badge by engaging with additional activities. An on-line tool, Kahoo, was also offered so that participants could devise a game of their own for their students.



(a) Explaining a tricky concept

Example 1: a literary problem

Dimitra Theodosiadou gives an insightful account of having to teach a variety of subjects to her primary school children. Some of the difficult issues she mentions are 'the supernatural in mythology/ancient history or theories and calculations like the Eratosthene's experiment for earth's circumference.' She explains how she uses the Net and other sources to see how others approach teaching such subjects. She takes us through her analysis of her changed role, from that of teacher to facilitator of her children's learning:

Common place is to put theory aside and proceed to practice. With my help, students break the problem into smaller parts and start working on each part trying to see how it works, analyse it and understand it. As soon as one part is figured out, we proceed to the next until we reach the end and finally approach the issue holistically. While working this way I see myself standing on my students' side, not a tutor role anymore but a facilitator, offering sparks, ideas, materials to work with and constant supervision in case they go totally out of focus (which I do not remember ever happened). (DT, 21.10.15)

To illustrate the process, Dimitra describes a specific, literary, class task.

To give an example, as regards understanding the historical line and understanding the meanings of a literature book with imaginary adventures and to real, and not, places, 3rd graders separated the adventures, examined and analysed them one by one, drawn a picture about each and decided on a couple of sentences explaining their content. When all parts were analysed, the drawings were placed on a cardboard, joined together with numeric scales creating a board game and rules were decided when the dices are to be cast. Needless to say, students made several board games with different topics on their own later on and the classroom became a play room. (DT, 21.10.15)



The classroom becomes a play room



Dimitra links her discussion to her portfolio <http://padlet.com/dimitra13sch/creativity> and illustrates her reply with images of her class in action.

Norman Jackson replies to Dimitra, bringing out the changed role the teacher plays in such interaction:

This is a powerful story showing how learning something systematically can be turned into a game that can be enjoyed and which was clearly motivating to students as they wanted to use the same technique to invent their own games... Perhaps the teacher is acting as a 'play maker' in this type of learning enterprise where some of the learning is through making and playing a game. (NJ, 22.10.15)

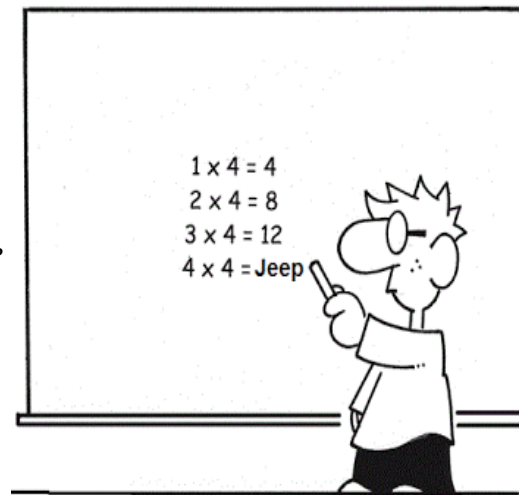
The conversation concludes when a third person joins in, to thank Dimitra for her contribution, and remind us all of the links between early development and higher education:

Thanks Dimitra - I have to say I'm finding these insights into primary education fascinating. I love the idea of the classroom as a Play Room - where play is learning while having fun! These children are the potential graduates of the future - we need to find the threads to link primary and higher education together! (Sue Watling, 22.10.14)

Example 2: teaching multiplication tables

Another example of teaching something difficult is given by Kostas Papas:

Hello, everyone! A concept that I find difficult to teach is the multiplication tables. Suddenly, a student in second grade faces a board with 100 multiplications, which he/she will have to memorize and use with relative speed and ease in calculations that will include small and big numbers eventually. As a result, the student is literally overwhelmed and after much time in practicing he/she might become frustrated, desperate or even indifferent. (KP, 27.10.15)



The experience chimes with many participants, resulting in an interaction of 13 posts, some offering practical advice and tools to tackle the issue, others raising differences between learning in children and in adults.

Example 3: pedagogical issues

A week later, Kostas Papas reflects again, here on the differences in pedagogy appropriate for problem-based learning, prompted by viewing one of the video resources offered. He highlights the emphasis on process rather than product, and expounds on the different role played by the teacher in such contexts, and the sensitivity required of the teacher. He writes:

To begin with, this method differs from the conservative teaching, as it doesn't include the usual information overload. Secondly, the emphasis is given not to the final product or result, but to the process, to the ability of the participants to actively know how to access knowledge, and not to be granted that from the beginning by the teacher. Surely, the most important benefit is that the learning process is self-centred, the participant self manages his/her work with the rest of the group and along with the facilitator.

A teacher in this method becomes a facilitator, who has to create a healthy environment for all the members. He/she ensures that all members are protected, he/she tries to help the teams to manage their possible conflicts as well. Also, the facilitator encourages everyone to participate.

Furthermore, he/she monitors the progress and provides feedback and recognizes progress. He/she never gives direct answers and solutions, but tips, advice. Also, regarding the necessary communication skills, the facilitator must show his genuine interest in the others thoughts and feelings. He/she must be careful of the nonverbal messages they send, such as body language, because there is the possibility of being judgmental and that would disrupt the function of the team. Also, the facilitator needs to make eye contact, to state his presence and interest. He/she has to be ready to handle any situations that might occur. In addition, the facilitator has to keep the team to stay on track by sometimes asking questions, summarizing, explaining. (KP, 1.11.15)

Kostas' thoughts provoke responses from Norman Jackson and Scott Johnson, who extend the conversation in consideration of the student's role, and different student environments.

Example 4: towards emotional aspects of games

Arguably pre-empting the second question in this task (emotions), Nikos Mouratoglou makes a posting addressing what he terms 'a hot potato subject': immigration. He uses a poster (shown below) to summarise his feelings about this. He has stretched the question to describe a difficult issue, rather than teaching it, and uses the word 'game' as a pun.

WEEK 5. ACTIVITY 2

F1


"THE IMMIGRATION GAME"

.....

- The present story derives from our everyday life....
- ooh i am sorry from the refugee's everyday life
- Yeah right, from the refugges everyday life...
- But wait a minute, is it our life and their life? Don't we all have the same rights?


.....

ONCE UPON A (TIME???) YEAR...



Thousands of people gave up their countries, their lives and their families in order to find a better future...


.....



But of course, Europe was not ready for that, or at least didn't know. Perhaps due to arrogance and economical lust she thought that she could handle the whole situation...

.....

THEREFORE



she stood up and raised her hands to help. And she did, by being an ostrich for not realizing the gravity of this matter.

.....

The story is spontaneous and is my personal opinion on this subject. The reason i chose this topic is not political rather humanitarian, in order to be cleared that many times the political authorities do not respect the human rights, which they supposedly should protect.

Clearly anxious about the sensitivity of this topic, Nikos apologises for referring to it as a 'game', but Norman Jackson replies with reassurance:

You are right to draw our attention to a serious humanitarian issue with your story and it shifts us away from reflecting on our own comfortable existence to thinking about the struggles of other people who are less fortunate than ourselves. Your story stimulates a range of emotions in me including empathy and sadness for the refugees, anger and frustration with the politicians, dissatisfaction and disgust with my own inactions. (NJ, 27.10.15)

Nikos come back with reassurances of his own:

I don't think that you should feel this way for your self. Dissatisfaction maybe, but disgust I don't think so. I think that it is really difficult to have all the time other people's problems in our mind. After all we engage ourselves with so many activities, tasks and informations which at the end reduce the degree of our responsiveness. I am in the same situation too! (NK 27.10.15)

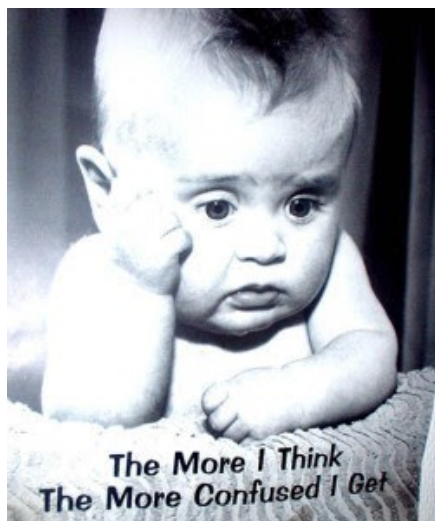
This fourth example has been included to illustrate how a theme can be developed by individuals to arrive at very different points from those perhaps envisaged by the question-setter. It also serves as a link to the second part of task 4, playing a board game and the emotions it stimulates.

(b) Play a board game and record your feelings

Judging by the larger number of responses to this part of the task, it is a more accessible issue for participants. Space does not allow for inclusion of all contributions to the discussion, but the following examples will give a sense of the debate.

Example 1: confusion

Katerina Kliani launches a conversation with her description of playing a card game, dixit. She explains the objectives so that we understand her emotions as she plays for the first time (and loses). Her choice of image is immediately revealing of her sense of helplessness and confusion.



I often play board games with my friends, so we like playing something different each time. Last week we played dixit! I really liked it because it is a game that combines imagination, fairy tales, poetry and storytelling. In other words, it promotes creativity! Using a deck of cards illustrated with dreamlike images, players select cards that match a title suggested by the "storyteller", and attempt to guess which card the "storyteller" selected. A large part of the skill of the game comes from being able, when acting as the storyteller, to offer a title which is neither too obscure (such that no other player can identify it) nor too obvious (such that every player is able to guess it). As it was the first time I played it, I felt a little bit confused and of course I lost! But, now, that the rules are clearer to me, I am ready to play it again! The picture shows how I felt when I was the storyteller! (KK, 08.11.15)

Scott Johnson is the first to reply to Katerina, and his words illustrate how a response may seize on one aspect of a post, here 'confusion', and go off at a very personal tangent - boredom. He writes:

I read a whole report on the value of confusion over boredom in learning. Confusion keeps people trying but even an interesting game with boring people might not keep your attention? Lucky none of us have boring friends:-) (SJ, 09.11.15)

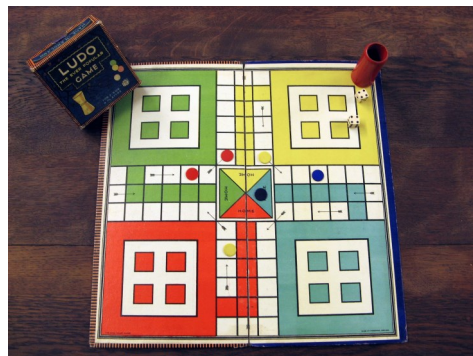
Katerina refocuses on the game itself, in her reply to Scott:

I believe that people make a game or something else be interesting! The most challenging task tends to be boring if the participants have not energy and positive disposition. So, I am really happy that none of my friends is boring! (17.11.15)

Example 2: excitement and frustration

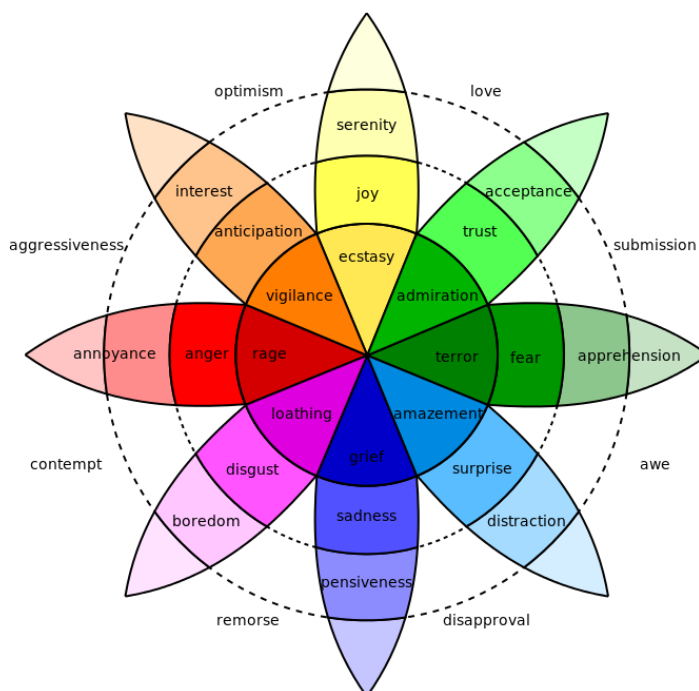
Elisavet Sofia Katsanou shares her childhood experience of playing a board game, Ludo,

A board game I enjoyed playing since I was five years old is Ludo. I used to play it with my mother, my sister and cousin. It is a classic and simple game and it is surprising how strong feelings it can create! I can still remember the excitement I felt when I was placing a token on the home column, or my frustration when I couldn't roll a 6 and pull a token from the starting column. Of course some times these strong feelings can be negative and raise conflict, especially between young players. Now that I am older I rarely play this game but I still like it. When I was working on an elementary school I carried Ludo there, so that students who finished homework early would have something to play with, and I found out that today's kids also love this classic game. One or two times that I had also some time I played with them. (EK, 04.11.15)



The discussion of emotions was so intense that it spilled over into the Group 1 forum and activities (see p.40), where participants examined Plutchik's wheel of emotions (5) and evaluated its relevance to their experiences.

Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions



Concluding comments

Task 4 was designed to encourage participants in #creativeHE to reflect on their personal use of play in teaching, and their own experiences when taking part in games. Their discussions were informed by respected theorists' work.

The level of engagement with the parts of this activity varied, with the question of emotional engagement receiving more responses than that on teaching through play. This may simply reflect the fact that some participants had not taught or were not teachers.

The way in which conversations developed shows how creative the interactive process is: unexpected tangents emerged, which in turn triggered further ideas. At the end of the task, participants appear emotionally engaged and have together taken forward our understanding of the value and application of play in our teaching. We are reminded that we should not let this rest in the primary school, but need to sustain it through into HE.

References

- (1) Jung , C. See <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/c/carljung125713.html#qfLLVCm1ggXhAcSB.99>
- (2) James, A. and Brookfield, S. D. (2014, page 55) Engaging Imagination. Helping students become creative and reflective thinkers, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- (3) Creative Academic Magazine issues 2a and 2b, June 2015 www.creativeacademic.uk
- (4) #creativeHE Task 4
- (5) Plutchik, Robert (1980), *Emotion: Theory, research, and experience: Vol. 1. Theories of emotion 1*, New York: Academic

STORIES AND STORY TELLING IN #creativeHE

Norman Jackson

Social learning, such as we experienced in #creativeHE is full of stories and story telling. Most of the posts and many of the comments tell a story or introduce a story. Narrative or storytelling provides a communication medium, often rich in metaphor, that links the domains of embodied knowing and codified knowledge domains. This magazine is telling a story about #creativeHE in order to communicate not just the content but the understandings we have grown through participation, observation and analysis. Through the story we are trying to make makes that which was experienced and understood explicit i.e. we are turning our knowing into more abstract, codified symbolic language. The act of making a story is therefore an important creative process.

Week 5 of the #creativeHE course focused on 'Using story for learning' *'From storytelling and storymaking to story-sharing, we will explore together the value of story in a higher education context. This will allow for the sharing of experiences to enhance collaborative knowledge building. Participants were encouraged to engage in three activities namely:*

1. *Find a story that captivated you..*
2. *Capture a short post about it in your portfolio and reflect on the magic ingredients.*
3. *Put a story together using 3 photographs, with captions.*

Read: Brabazon, T. (2015) *A self on a screen: Visioning community and context through digital storytelling*, available at <http://mediaejournal.org/a-self-on-a-screen-visioning-community-and-context-through-digital-storytelling/>

What follows is a selection of posts that illustrate the way participants responded. Their words are reproduced without editorial correction.

Story making and telling are the oldest forms of communication. The first thing people do upon meeting each other is begin telling stories. Stories are the medium through we can communicate meaningfully with each other. Our wisdom, our intuitive knowing is imbedded in the stories we tell. Just after our need for food and even before our need for love, we have a need for story. A wise teacher once said, "The shortest distance between two people is a story." Stories invest our lives with meaning, they develop and express our creativity. They help us to laugh at ourselves. They give us the strength to face life's difficult moments. They connect us more vitally with ourselves and each other and they turn ordinary moments into extraordinary ones. Through our stories we imagine what is possible, we make up a story about it. We bring that story into existence. Our words, our images are just that powerful.

We organize information in story form. It is how we make sense of the world around us. And it is how we communicate that understanding to another. Stories allow us to bypass the linear and access whole brain learning. When I tell you a story, I let you into my world. I cannot tell you who I am without telling you a story.

Stories illustrate the text of our lives. They go beyond facts into feelings. They engage the whole of us--our minds and our hearts. By storying my life, that is, by telling about the incidents that give my life meaning I make sense out of it. I begin to connect the dots of my experience and as I do, gracefully, artistically, memorably, I invite you to go inside and begin to connect your own dots to make sense out of your own experience.

Michale Gabriel

To earn a badge, participants had to engage with at least one of the following activities and capture the evidence in your portfolio.

1 Watch the following clip, reflect on the question and respond in your portfolio.

2 The following presentation will give you further insight into digital storytelling. Create an artefact that captures your understanding of story for learning and teaching. Capture the student or the teacher perspective, or both if you wish.

3 Critically reflect on using story in your own professional context. Briefly describe the current situation in your place of work. Identify opportunities for using story linked to a specific unit/module/programme, based on an informed pedagogic rationale that would be of value for your students. Capture your reflections in your portfolio.

Tools

[Storybird](#) (create a picture book)

[PowToon](#) (create an animation or two)

[Make beliefs comix](#) (create a mini comic strip)

Irene-Stella Vassilakopoulou

Responding to Carol Haigh's question: Ideas for stories can come from everywhere (movies, pictures, other stories, books, the internet, everyday life). The source of the story depends on the teacher's preference and according to students' needs. It also depends on the subject that has to be taught. For example to teach a moral value like empathy a movie might be more inspiring for a teacher to create a story than a picture. But the most important I believe is to make up a story that takes into account events from the everyday life of students, events that concern them, otherwise it won't trigger their interest.

The story that has captured me is a one called «Lucky and unlucky people». It is

about the life of two friends, one of them is regarded as lucky and the other as unlucky. Until the end of the story the reader believes that too when unfortunately the lucky one dies because of an unpredictable event (a flower pot falls on his head because of the strong wind). I like this story because it shows that we shouldn't judge someone or something from the beginning but we should wait to make our conclusions. Another thing that I like is that it makes you think not to take something for granted but always be prepared for the unexpected.

My [own] story is a about the significance of education for children from poor countries. In the first picture the kid is sad, alone and he wears ripped clothes but in the next picture the children are happy attending a class. Finally, in the last one they are playing with a music instrument they have constructed from a can.



Katerina Kliani

I chose something I read last week. It is a story about a bond between a 93 year-old woman and a bus full of students. This lady has waved to them every single day on their way to and from school for the last 5 years. One day, a few weeks back, they passed by "grandma in the window's" house and there was no one at the window. They learnt that she had a stroke a few days earlier, and was currently in recovery at a rehabilitation center. So, the bus driver and the kids decided to do something in order to show her their feelings. The young students posed for a photo on the bus, waving to their favorite grandma, and Mitzelfeldt, the driver, delivered the photo to Edlen (her name) at the rehab center. Now, she is doing everything in her power to get better so she can come home and resume her starring role at the window. I liked this story because it's about emotions that emerge every day during our life. It made me think about people's routine and how important is to make it happier through other people. I feel really disappointed when I



see the crowd on the bus I take every day and there is no one smiling. We all have problems, but our days can be better if they begin with a chat with someone who is sitting next to us, a smile or why not?... a wave from our window!

At first, I found it difficult to think and create my own story. So, I decided to be spontaneous! Last night, while I was drinking a glass of wine with some friends, I came up with an idea. The magic word was "wine". I remembered that a few years ago I read an assessment about a project in a nursery school relating to how people can use grapes in order to make wine. During the project the children wrote some short stories. Thus, I am sharing with you the following story which is based on them. The title is "From grapes...to wine!"



Elisavet Sofia Katsanou

Reflecting on the question in the video: I believe that the sources from which a primary school teacher can collect stories are countless. He can find stories in books, magazines, television shows, on the internet, other teacher's websites, from discussions with his colleagues, from his own and his students experiences, or even from his friends' experiences.

I remember that, when I was in elementary school, I had an English teacher who used to tell us stories about one of his friends who lived in London. He used these stories to help us understand differences in people's lives in different countries. I remember one particular story, where his friend, who was always wondering why do people in England carry big bags with them when they go to library to study, went to library a sunny day wearing a light shirt. Suddenly it started raining and the temperature was much lower. All the people around him started pulling out sweaters from their bags. From that day we all remembered that people in Britain are always prepared for rainy days. He also explained to us the reverse use of the decimal point and the dot in numbers in English and Greek by telling us a story where his friend, who had returned to Greece, saved a company from failure. People in this company were about to order a large quantity of material from abroad, thinking it was very cheap. He also told us stories about some American friends. I still don't know if any of these stories were true but I still remember them, after 13 years.



A story that captivated me: A story that captivated me is "Oscar and the lady in Pink", written by the theatre writer Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt. I randomly came across the title of the story while reading comments on a post on facebook. Ever since I have read it five or six times. The main character of the story is Oscar, a ten year old boy who suffers from cancer. He is at the hospital and although he knows that he will die soon, nobody openly talks to him about that, especially his parents, which he calls "cowards" and refuses to talk to. The only person he can be open with is aunt Rose an old woman with a pink shirt who comes at the hospital to visit sick children. She uses to amuse Oscar with stories about the time she was a wrestler. Aunt Rose advises him to start writing letters to God, so that he won't feel alone. Oscar, like his parents, doesn't believe in God, but he listens to her advice. Aunt Rose also suggests to Oscar to play a game, in which each day counts for ten years. This way Oscar can live 100 years in 10 days. Oscar describes each day of his life to God, as he falls in love with a girl

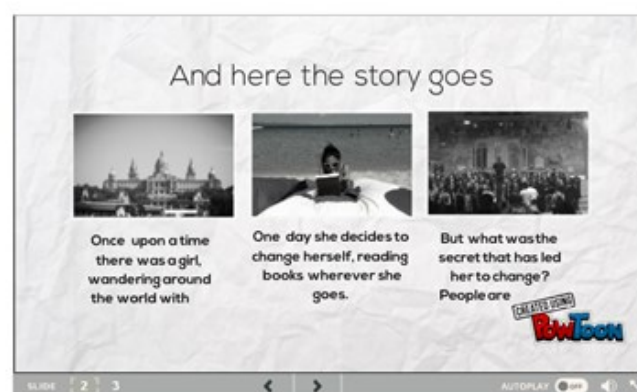
who is also at the hospital, enjoys aunt's Rose's stories and eventually comes to forgive his parents. For me it is a very powerful and inspiring story because it shows the importance of love and human connections and how they can make life beautiful even when death is so close and inevitable. Although the main character is about to die, he doesn't lose his sense of humour and he seems to enjoy and appreciate every second of life and finding it's meaning. It is also a story about the question of why do people suffer if God exists.



Natasa Kefala

Good evening everyone! This is the story I finally decided to share with you. It is a personal experience that I had last summer and I am really proud of! It was my first vintage vespa journey. To cut a long story short... 6 days, 7 countries, 3500 km, 177cc! Trying to reach our «Ithaca». After all in rust we trust!

Eleftheria Siourla (right) made use of PowToon animation web tool to tell her story relating to travelling and how it broadens your mind and builds self confidence and purpose



Rafaela Tz "The story of a girl called Rafaela"

A story that captivated me

I only recently saw Steve Job's speech at Stanford University that really captivated me. Every story, depending on the phase in your life you are in, moves you in a different way. Being in a phase in my life [when] I have no idea if this is the kind of job I want to do (given education as it [is] now), where I want to live and what really makes me passionate, I found myself critical about my current life, in a "wrecking ball mode". I just can't connect the dots. A friend of mine asked me to be patient and not just ruin everything. "You will see the connections, it just takes time. It is a good start that you are looking for it". The ingredients of this speech that captivated me are the originality of the story.

It is not a made up story to make a point. It is a variety of experiences expressed in a sincere and regular way for everyone the "american tale". It is a story about difficulties in life, about ups and downs, about personal fight that eventually end up in the fairytale passion (about a job & about life), intuitiveness or guts to trust your choices, trust in yourself, in your skills and competences, in your own worth explore your entrepreneurial skills and creativity: you have it, find it.

FIND YOUR PASSION AND FOLLOW IT

This was an amazing speech that really moved me and made me think and reflect about my life choices. Sometimes it is very difficult to leave security to chase the unknown..isn't it?



Anna Kotsani

A story that captivated me - I chose this video-commercial because it presents the story of a Thai man who he tries to help other people every day giving them money, food, his aid without receiving anything back . What he does receive are emotions and he feels love. Indeed, receives what money can't buy. I would use this story in my classroom to teach the selflessness which in Greece named altruism. It's a very important word because I believe that students must learn being selfless with others. My favourite part is when the old man does a double take and takes of his glasses when he sees the girl because he realizes that she is successful in school! You can see video here.



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studio my storytelling
By annikot92 | Updated: Nov. 2, 2015, 2:42 p.m.



Anna used the PowToon animation web tool to tell her own story about travelling.

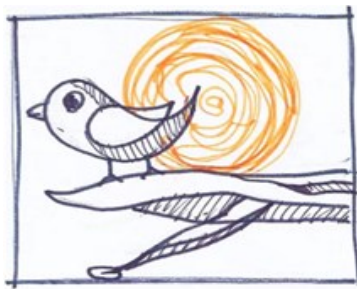


Effi Mata

This story captivates me because it depicts an everyday situation and a variety of ways to face this. The story shows that sometimes the person in a vulnerable position can influence even more can solve the problem, a problem that the others don't cope with sensibility. I also like the story because shows that some actions that we appreciate as dangerous end up to be beneficial for another person

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LfRqoV-bf_c

This is my own story:



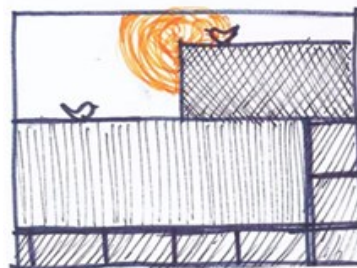
Once upon a time it was a bird who thought that the sun was a tasteful bean. One day he said "Today I will travel in order to catch and taste this bean, the sun". So, he started an adventure.



He went through a valley but the sun seemed to be as far as it was.



He laid off at the peak of a mountain but still couldn't catch the sun.



He arrived at the roof of a big building and he stared at the sun with amazement "The sun is very far".



He kept on traveling through infinite sea.



Finally he found a branch of a tree in order to take a rest and to eat a bean "the hunting of the sun is very long, but it has fun and interest, it is better to spend the evening over here, and tomorrow here comes the sun."

Learning from these stories

Because stories often go to the heart of what it is to be human, they are often emotionally engaging. When we share a story that has personal meaning we invite another story in response. I think I witnessed this in the comments to the story posts that were made. One post in particular by Eleftheria Siourla made me want to share a story that has deep personal meaning. Eletheria shared the story of "Oscar and the Lady in Pink" had said how it had moved her. It reminded me of a similar story that had a similar effect on me. It's called Spoonface Steinberg and it's about a young girl who is dying of cancer trying to make sense of the world. It's a beautiful example of creating meaning through a story containing profound truths that can be conveyed across time and cultures. I took great comfort from this story as I travelled through bereavement after my wife's death.



Spoonface Steinberg by Lee Hall: If you only listen to one little part of this 57min recording please listen to 41 to 45mins you won't be disappointed

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KzF4LOLyw1g>

So much of our creative effort is dedicated to creating and sharing meaning and I witnessed many examples in the posts made by members of this community as they interpreted an activity and gave it meaning in the context of our own life. This perhaps is the fundamental role of creativity - we use our imaginations, our capabilities and our particular talents to create things that have meaning and value to us and sometimes these meanings and values extend to people we choose to share these things with. Our creativity enables us to capture the timeless wisdom in some of our moments so that others might share our moments and how we felt in those moments.

The power of stories is in their ability to convey meaning and sometimes insights and wisdom that have been gained through experience. Because of this they are more memorable than much of our fact-based learning. The power of stories in the digital age is that they can be told through a multimedia experience which often enhances their capacity to engage us emotionally not just intellectually. Most of the stories that were shared by participants were accompanied or told through images - photographs, drawings, videos or animations and many included audio - voices, music or sound effects. YouTube provides fantastic resources for story sharing as do sites like TED which owe their existence to the power of story telling.



A recurrent theme in our reflective analysis of the #creativeHE process has been the extent to which engagement in learning activity has been an emotional as well as a cognitive experience. The stories reveal something of the emotions felt by participants as they told them: they reveal - empathy, sadness, joy, fun, pride, love, being moved, feeling captivated, feeling inspired and much more. They are also full of hope and optimism for a better world or a better future.

One of the ways in which an on-line community builds its sense of identity and people want to belong to it is through the stories that are told. #creativeHE utilised story telling as one of its core themes but much of its success as a social learning enterprise depended on stories being shared throughout the process. I suspect that most of my learning from #creativeHE came from this sort of content and the conversations that emerged.

Reference

1) Gabriel M (1999) Learning and Growing Through Stories

<http://education.jhu.edu/PD/newhorizons/lifelonglearning/early-childhood/learning-growing/>

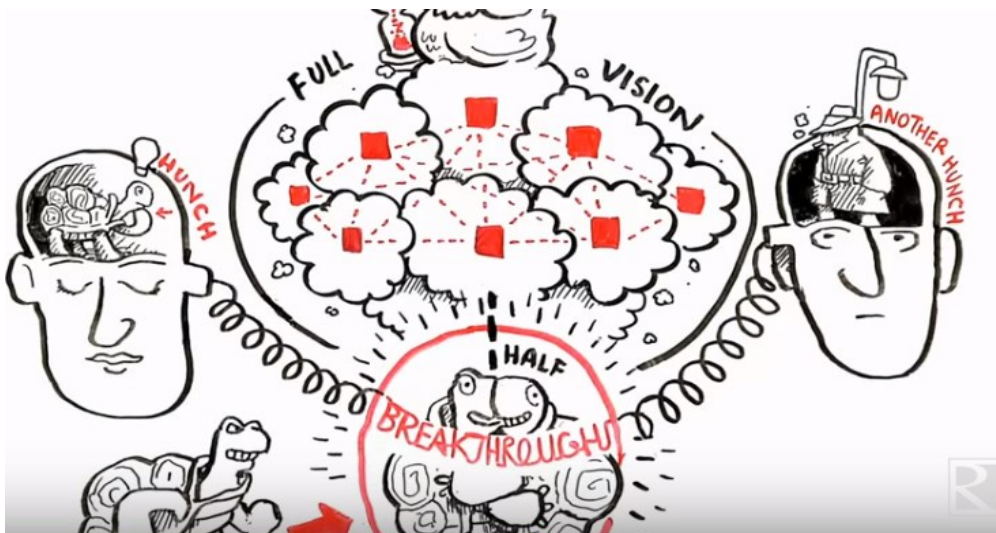
EXPLORING WHERE GOOD IDEAS COME FROM

In this article, we read the words of an actual conversation that took place in response to an activity's stimulus material, a Youtube video, on where good ideas come from. We are able to see how ideas build on each response to reinforce the notion of co-creation, a notion they discuss explicitly, and how modern technology facilitates this, and we view the images these thoughts inspired in participants. As we read this complex exchange, we should remind ourselves that these members are all expressing themselves in a language that is not their mother tongue, and congratulate them on their linguistic abilities.

One of the activities in Week 7 was to watch and reflect on the RSA Animate video of Steven Johnson's talk on where good ideas come from. The talk is posted on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NugRZGDbPFU> and it has received over 4million hits.

Steven talks about the environments that encourage creative ideas. Environments that enable half formed ideas to exist for a long period of time in a person's mind before colliding with another half formed idea that fuse to form something that is now complete and different to what has existed before. The following responses from student participants reveal their reflections on the ideas that were share.

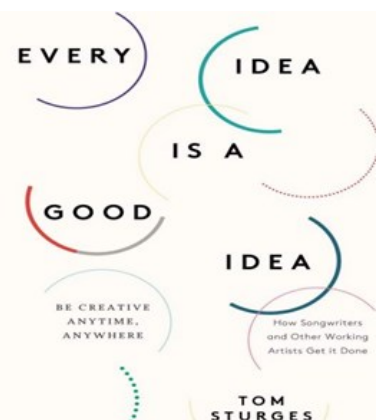
Activity week 7: 2-ILO2- Watch the following clip and then reflect on your ideas with peers



The 4 minute animated video encouraged students to think about where good ideas came from and where their ideas came from and how they formed from combining them with other ideas. But they also thought about the internet of ideas and the potential challenges of easy access to ideas. One thing is certain the animated talk inspired some students to think in ways they had not thought before.

Rafaela Tz Reflection on Steven Johnson's video. "WHERE GOOD IDEAS COME FROM" was one of the best videos I have ever seen. Inspiring, understandable, amazingly designed and sketched.

Anna Kotsani I agree with Steven's opinion that good ideas come after a long time and work. We take ideas from other people, from people we've learned from, even from people we run into in the coffee shop, and we stitch them together into new forms and we create something new. We gain knowledge of our environment which is chaotic, where ideas are likely to come together. Thus people are energetic and ready to create new things. Although we need time to create new ideas, many times we become more creative and our ideas are formed by connectivity as well. In our society, we combine different ideas from media, from our communication with others and when we participate in projects. If someone working on something for a long time is likely to find interesting ideas and then to search about usual rates of creativity and innovation!! So, let's create



good ideas !!! Have you ever been more creative? I have been when I started a lifelong programme about art ! I was wondering how I could be more creative with full of imagination!! We must believe that abilities, intelligence and talents are developed leading to the creation of new and better ideas!!!

Kostas Papas A few ideas about Steven Johnson's presentation. One basic opinion that's expressed on the video, is that good ideas, ideas that are innovative, or even groundbreaking are a result of a long process, that could take even years to come to that form. I partially agree with that, because I think that it is possible and probable for someone to have a "eureka" time and so to invent something, or think something extraordinary, that came up subconsciously. Also, [new] ideas usually [produced] by the collision, interaction, comparison with previous ideas. That happens, because every individual has a background of knowledge, experience, which along with the influence of the working or educational environment form the new idea. Furthermore, through internet and social media, everyone, in this modern age of information and connectivity, can have an idea that can be incomplete, or false, or in an early stage and he/she has unlimited opportunities to find new ideas, or complete his/her own by finding and using with any way other people's ideas from all over the work.



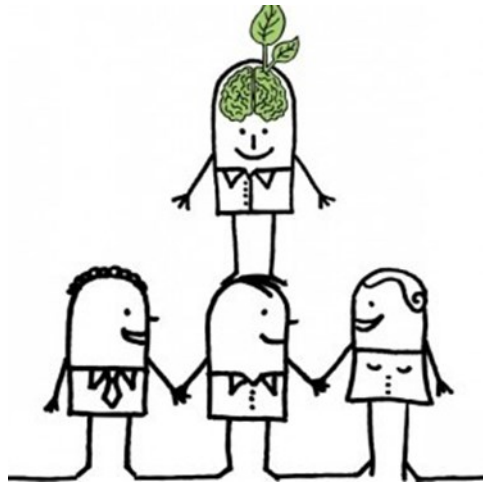
Commentary: Another student built on the perception that we can become lazy with other people's ideas and suggested that we use our creativity to do something new with other people's ideas. By connecting and combining ideas we distil them into a new idea.

Nikos Mouratoglou "Where good ideas come from?" Hmmm, I must say that this is a pretty much difficult question to answer as there is not a clear suggestion which would include the multidimensional term of creativity. Correspondingly, the video from Steven Johnson is based on the environmental perspective, a standpoint which delimits creativity in such a way that it's easier to be approached. I agree with the statements suggested in the video, as the communicative channels increase knowledge diffusion and therefore multiple opinions, ideas, information and interactions are easily accessible and available. As a consequence individuals face a larger exposure to inflows, something that of course broadens their cognitive horizons, but also provides them with the opportunity to reflect on their experiences, challenge their prior knowledge and perhaps lead them to new ideas. In my opinion, technological evolvement supports the whole procedure by increasing the external impulses, but the problem is that creativity is not just interwoven with those external impulses. By this, I mean that an individual should have developed such skills that could take advantage of the inflows and transform them into creative ideas. An idea, is just an idea, but a creative idea is a distilled idea. In other words, creative ideas are results of thinking, combining, accepting, rejecting, reflecting, editing and in general managing information-events-ideas. This differentiation is the key in which education should lay more emphasis, always according to my opinion. P.S. In this case, action research can be a valuable tool, as the spiral form provides this distilling dimension, in which the participants are being involved in a Tug-of-War process.



Commentary: Another reflection was that our ideas are simply building on the ideas of people who have thought these sorts of things long before us and the idea that we are standing on the shoulder of giants and perhaps ordinary people as well. This perhaps was a sort of collaboration and co-creation across time which complements the more normal collaborative activities we undertake in groups, teams and communities - such as this one.

Elisavet Sofia Katsanou I agree with Steven Johnson that good ideas usually come after a long time and work. I also completely agree that connectivity between people and ideas is very important for creativity. The video reminded me of Isaac Newton's famous quote "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants". In relation to that video, I interpret the "the shoulders of giants" as the prior work done in a subject by an individual, or the study of the work of others, which allows him/her to go a step further. Even the failed attempts can be used as a base for a person to move further.



About the importance of connectivity, it reminds me of a college professor who used to tell us about the importance of group work that it defies math logic, because if we have ten people, by whom each one can offer one, and we put them together in a group, they won't offer ten but eleven. I think that is similar with what is happening when some different ideas are combined and complete each other, and the final result is much greater than the sum of these two individual ideas. Connecting different ideas has definitely become easier in our days, as so many people have access to so many sources of information. Of course, in order for these ideas to be connected, one must look at them examining with what they could be connected. I have also noticed about myself, that when I am working on something for a long time, I can find interesting ideas that could connect with that in places that are seemingly unrelated with that subject.

Commentary: But students also expressed concern that the internet was making it too easy to encounter ideas and we have to be wary of being turned into uncritical consumers who are not prepared to do the hard work of thinking about and playing with ideas.

Rafaela Tz I agree with the ideas expressed. I just have one doubt. I think that social media, like Facebook, do get us distracted a lot. Plus, by getting everything ready, seeing lots of ideas, reading everything other's post, gets us a little bit "lazy". Everything is out there, easy for us to reach and see, so we don't have to think, we just receive and reproduce. Ok, we are involved into the combination and construction phase of the ideas, but it only happens in a small percentage. [But] How is that helping us evolve and develop our creativity?

Panagiotis Kesisoglou As far as the Internet concerns, it is my opinion that many times it fades us away from the purpose to share ideas and transforms us into passive creatures. All the devices that have a screen provoke this and effect our brains due to the light and the bright colours and cause our brain to be underactive but it is a necessity nowadays. It is our duty to try and link the traditional ways of writing down our thoughts and observations with the modern ways of communication. We should keep the measure in what we do which is excellent as the ancient Greek maintained.

Katerina Kliani Despite the fact that inspiration can come out of the closet in a single moment, I want to underline that a lot of hours of investigation, work and interaction with other people and the environment are required [to produce a good idea]. People need each other, so that new ideas could be shaped through different information, multiple opinions and experiences. In my view, technological evolvement can support the procedure of creating new ideas if it is used properly. What I mean is that the outcomes are positive if technology does not distract people excessively and if people are actively involved and do not get everything ready.

Sources

Johnson, S . (2010) Where good ideas come from RSA Animate

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NugRZGDbPFU> There is also a longer TED Talk <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0af00UcTO-c>

SHARING CREATIVE MOMENTS AND EXPOSING OUR CREATIVITY

Norman Jackson

We can learn a lot when people share their ideas or experiences in an open forum. Towards the end of the course, in week 6, participants were invited to share a creative moment in their life and through this develop their understandings about their own creativity and what encouraged it. A small sample of the posts that were made are included below together with some of the key themes to emerge.

Kostas Papas

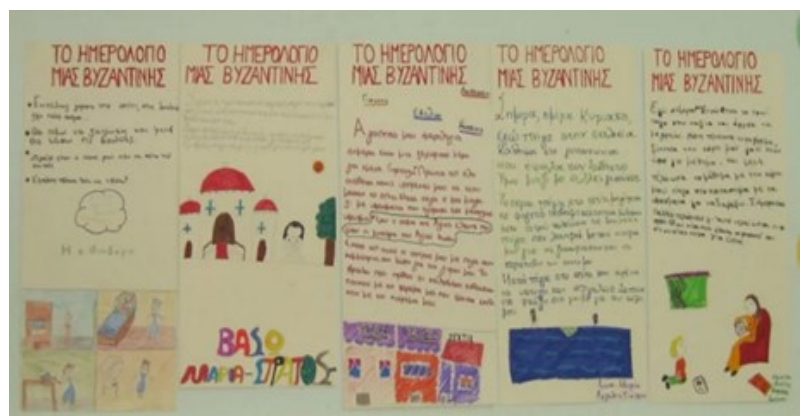
I know that the course is practically over, but being the last day, I am in the nick of time to share with the community a couple more things. So my most creative session was two years ago, when as a university student along with 4 other members, we had a project in a fourth grade class about cooking. Firstly, we decided the topic, which would be about learning and exploring the cuisine of 5 countries (5 teams of students), one of every continent and the organizing of a feast in the end of the week. The project began with the search for information about each cuisine (traditional recipes, traditional cooking materials, history details).



Furthermore, there was a professional chef in the class, who made a demonstration by making profiteroles, with result the enthusiasm of the students, who would make their own recipes at the end of the week and would organize a little feast presenting their creations in the entire school along with a beverage. In the next stage the students made their own cooking hats and brought some of the materials needed for their recipe. We had brought ovens and all the materials needed such as plates, cooking knives, pots. So in the next two days all 5 groups made their dishes and not one, but two rations each, because literally the entire school was invited to our feast. At the end, the students proved that they had a very good relationship with cooking, more than anticipated, so all our initial hesitations about the project, especially about the students' safety were gone. I think that [these pictures] give you a small taste of that "delicious" week.

Katerina Kliani

I think that the most creative session in my life was the years of my undergraduate studies. I chose to share with you the creations of my students during the subject of history. They were 11 years old - students in the fifth grade - and worked in teams. The lesson was about the role of the woman in Byzantium. The two other teachers and I were just the facilitators. Our children worked together without problems, they had fun and learnt through interesting and inspiring activities. Specifically, they made something like a biography of the most important women and a personal journal of an ordinary woman in Byzantium. In addition, we connected Byzantium with ancient Athens and Sparta and we did a debate. It was one of the best parts of the 4-hour mini project



because students (as women in Byzantium, Athens and Sparta) were involved in a case of argumentation about the role and the rights of women. I am really proud of this lesson and I will never forget it as it was the first time I was in a classroom as a teacher! Here (above and right) are our creations!

Last year I decided to start doing something creative and useful in my free time! So, I was influenced by my mother and learnt weaving. It is not an easy activity because there are a lot of different ways to create clothing, but the Internet and some videos helped me. What I really like is that weaving makes me feel relaxed and reduces anxiety. In addition, it is important that I can make something with my hands in or give it to people I want as a present. I strongly believe items have emotional value. I chose to share with you my scarves! I hope you like them!

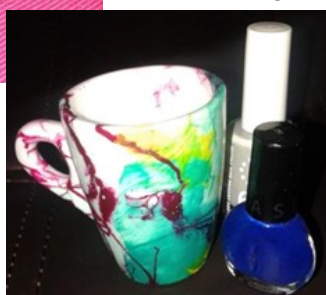


order to wear it that this kind of two favourite

Anna Kotsani



The last semester I had been participating in a lifelong programme about art which was organized by my municipality. We learned how to construct many creative things such as basket for Christmas, colourful smooth stones and jewelleryes!! However, the most creative things were a colourful glass and a small hedgehog made by ingredients which are difficult to distinguish them immediately!!! I will never forget the time that I realized that the back of the hedge-



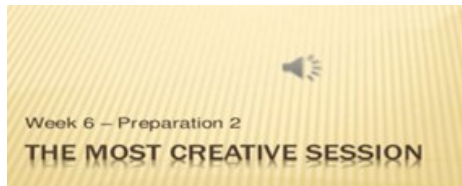
all ingredients that we used : a to stick themAfter the can decorate our office !! Do you No. We also made a colourful mini imagine how we constructed it ? that we used for painting was a water and we put different colours inside. Then we put the glass into the box and the paint decorated the glass!!

hog was made by a tennis ball and granulated coffee!!! To be more specific, our teacher who was expert in handmade things , she brought us tennis ball, granulated coffee, cord and silicone procedure we made a beautiful hedgehog which like it ? Is it difficult to make it? The answer is glass!!! WE did not paint it with a brush!! Can you My best friend didn't find it!! The only ingredient colour for nails (fingernail)!!! We filled a box with

Elisavet Sofia Katsanou

One of the most creative sessions that I ever participated in was during my teacher internship in a sixth grade, when we had a project about human rights. We were five student-teachers and twenty-seven students, and we were divided into five groups. Each group would deal with a different topic related to the human rights for four days, and, on the fifth day, each group would make a presentation about what they had been working on to the others. At the start a brief presentation of the history of human rights was made to all students. One of the groups was dealing with the human rights in general, another with the children's rights, another with the diversity among people, another with disabilities and equality, and another with migrants' and refugees' human rights. During the first days each team was doing some research about their topic, and reading some stories and articles. At the third day students started preparing power point presentations and rehearsing a short play about their topic. Plays were adjusted or written by the students. Also all teams made a poster about human rights, related to their topic. In the picture you can see all the posters on the class bulletin board.



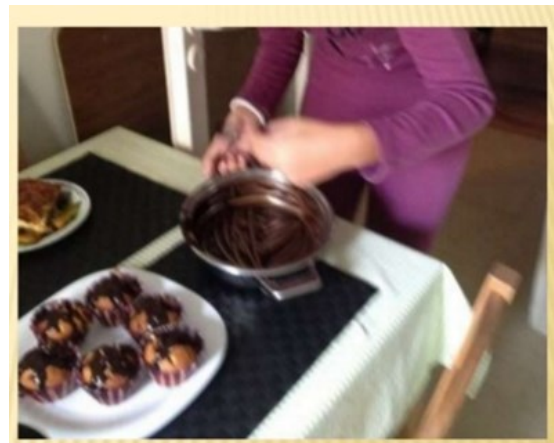
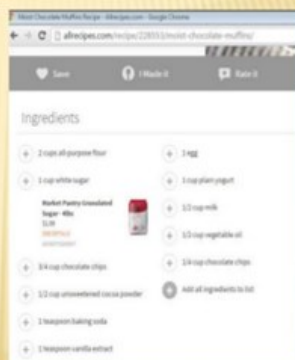


HOW THE PROJECT BEGANE

- ✖ My most creative session is during cooking with my niece. We do not meet a lot because we both have busy schedules (and she is only fourteen). So, cooking allows us to catch up.
- ✖ Not only is conversation very important in order to connect with a kid but also it is important to create something with your own hands and involve a kid with something that s/he loves. With that, you could achieve both benefits.

THE STEPS WE FOLLOW

- ✖ Step 1: We decided on "the recipe"
- ✖ Step 2: Divided the roles
- ✖ Step 3: We gathered all ingredients
- ✖ Step 3: Weighed the ingredients and kept them separately
- ✖ Step 4: Mixed them together
- ✖ Step 5: After mixing them, we let the ingredients "breathe"
- ✖ Step 5: Baked it at the right temperature
- ✖ Step 6: Washed the dishes
- ✖ Step 7: We let it cool
- ✖ Step 8: We ate it!!!



CAPTURING IMPORTANT ELEMENTS

SO COOKING IS A PLAY FOR US THAT GIVES US THE OPPORTUNITY TO BOND AND ALLOWS US TO GROW OUR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE.

- ✖ Listen loud music,
- ✖ We communicate without talking or
- ✖ Chitchatting or
- ✖ Having serious conversation.
- ✖ We dance and let ourselves to be silly.
- ✖ But except all these, when she was writing the ingredients she remembers again spelling,
- ✖ When we weigh the ingredients she realizes that math's are important and we use them in every fragment in our life.
- ✖ She learns to make mistakes and discovers solution.
- ✖ To take her responsibilities off the assignment she has.

HAPPINESS AND FUN!!!





The time has come to expose my creative side! First of all I should admit that I am a fan of jewellery and also passionate with the idea of creating something by your own hands. So, handmade jewellery is the combination of these two. Therefore, last year I met some people who are "experts" in handmade crafts, I took advice [from] them and also searched through the internet in order to be enlightened to this field. And these are the results! For me, making your own jewellery is a way to reflect your personality and also express your aesthetic point of view. I hope you like them

Nikos Mouratoglou

I think that the most inspiring and creative [period] in my life was between 9 and 14 years old. I remember that not only at school, but also at home, or even outside of it I was always eager on doing things with my friends. We were playing lots of "traditional" games, we were painting old walls with different kind of colours and shapes, we had even built a treehouse. However, I guess that all of these stopped as we were growing up and wanted to "get older", something we may regret now or later. To be honest, I missed that feeling of carelessness. As for the elements, I would say that imagination, energy, the feeling of carelessness, the innocence of the youth, friends were all characteristics of that period.

I made this small Christmas [bowl] from clay when I was 10 or 11 at school. My teacher was always trying to provoke us by making things and after that I remember him posing questions to us about "how we did that? why did we chose those colours or shape?" and lots of other questions. I think this was pretty much the reflective dimension of our work, but at that period we couldn't realise it. However, I made this [bowl] a few days before Christmas for putting my paper-clips inside.

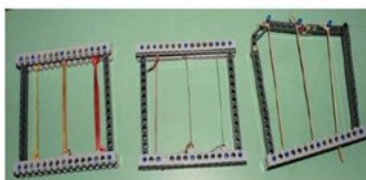


Rafaela Tz

1. The "harps" team



Εικόνα 29: Φάση Κατασκευής του Μουσικού Οργάνου Άρτας



Εικόνα 30: Ολοκληρωμένα Μουσικά Όργανα Τρες Άρτας

I would like to share the creations of my students during the implementation phase of my thesis. I was just facilitating the whole process and they were CREATING. My thesis was about the pitch of sound, so the project was to learn about the pitch of sound by creating artefacts such as musical instruments and experimenting with the variables that change the pitch. The project, which lasted 9 weeks, was an amazing experience of ideas, experimentation, playing, having fun, learning & the students were able to create a lot of musical instruments. Here I share their end products and the process they presented in a Science

Festival. I will connect this with the second activity, my most creative session, since I think that was the most creative, fun and enjoyable session for my students and me as well. The key things I learnt from this experience of facilitating creativity are shown in the infographic.



What do these illustrations of personal creativity reveal?

When Natasa says, 'The time has come to expose my creative side!' she is expressing the fact that most of us keep our creativity hidden away from public view. That so many students shared their creative moments is testament to their confidence in the #creativeHE learning environment. A number of themes emerge from the stories:

Contexts for personal creativity: Within the circumstances of our life, some contexts and situations provide us with more affordance for creative self-expression and deep satisfaction, than others. These contexts connect to our interests which motivate us to engage our imaginations and skills and our purposes e.g. I want to be a better teacher.

Participants chose to illustrate their creativity through one of three types of situation: the first as an artistic enterprise, the second in the context of their experiences as a teacher and the third as a project within an educational setting that they had experienced. These are the particular contexts that afforded them the opportunity to use their creativity. Some of the characteristics of these creative moments or events are outlined below.

A sense of enjoyment and fun. Although there were goals in the activities that resulted in a creative product - the process of achieving the goal was pleasurable. Coupled to this sense of enjoyment was a relaxed atmosphere in several stories.

Collaboration - most of the stories involved working / playing with other people to co-create something new, or involved cooperation in the form of gaining advice from people more expert.

Having the freedom to choose what to do and how to do it - most of the stories revealed that individuals had the autonomy, regardless of the context, to choose what to do and how to do it.

Having time to explore and create - there is a sense in all these stories that time has been set aside to enable exploration and discovery and for creativity to emerge from the circumstances in which it is being engaged.

Making or performing something - most of the stories involved the use of creativity in making something out of other things eg cooking dishes, making jewellery or a clay pot, weaving a scarf, making a hedgehog, designing and making posters, writing and performing a play, facilitating a teaching session

Being creative is a skilful process - all of the experiences required a level of skill and many described experiences where the development of a skill or new levels of skill were an important part of the creative process. Our desire to be creative often helps us develop and encourages us to master a skill.

Creativity is a visual experience - all the stories were illustrated with visual aids that captured the creative artefact. It's a multisensory experience.

Being creative is an emotional experience - strong positive emotions like happiness, pleasure, enjoyment, fun, pride, feeling relaxed and not stressed, feature in all these stories of creative experiences.

The facilitation of other peoples creativity: If we are to create a more creative society: a society in which every person's creativity is nurtured, encouraged and valued, then teachers have a crucial role to play in ensuring that the right sort of conditions, relationships, affordances and recognitions are available. It is instructive that five of the participants describe teaching and learning situations where they had either been a student or they have facilitated the creativity of other students. It is only through participating in such activities that teachers learn how to facilitate their students' creativity.

Rafaela's infographic captures well some of the features of educational settings that promote students' creativity i.e. building trust and having an environment where people feel safe to experiment and take risks without being judged. An environment that is playful and interesting that stimulates imagination and curiosity, and enables students to think for themselves with support and advice where necessary. Having the time as well as the freedom to imagine and explore.

Much more than codified knowledge

By sharing experiences we are sharing much more than the knowledge we find in a paper or text books - we are sharing our embodied knowledge or forms of knowing that we have come to understand through the practical and lived experience of doing something. Textbook knowledge is abstract theoretical knowledge, devoid of context and emotion. These stories of personally meaningful creative moments and events are full of contextual understanding and rich in the emotion that derived from the particular circumstances that gave meaning and purpose to the experience. As Nikos Mouratoglou (1) points out in his article, it is the sharing of personally meaningful stories that helps build trust and confidence in an on-line community and it is the mechanism for forming deeper relational ties between participants.

Reference

- (1) Mouratoglou, N. (2016) Sharing Personally Meaningful Experience: A Value-Based Approach to Community-Based Learning Creative Academic Magazine January 2016



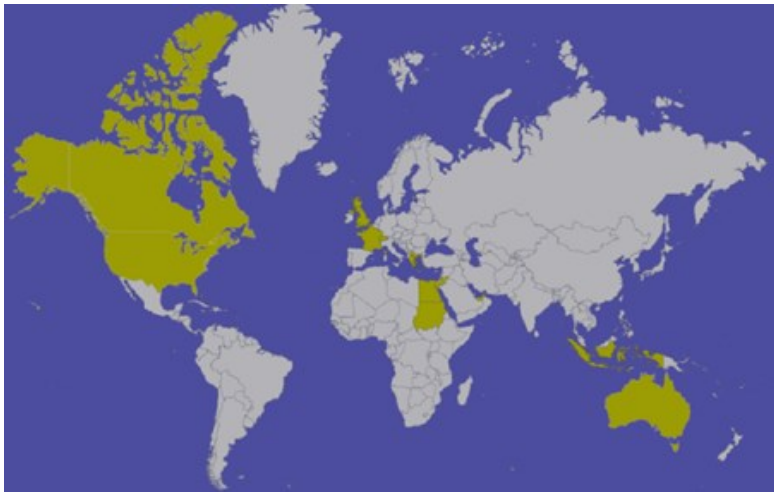
COMMUNITIES AND COLLECTIVES

Roger Greenhalgh and Jenny Willis

The authors were participants in #creativeHE and also members of one of its sub-groups, a collective named creativeHE_group1. In this article, they reflect on the differences between participating in the main community and in their sub-group, and on the nature of collectives, as they emerged through their experience of the #creativeHE process.

The #creativeHE community and its collectives

As the course proceeded, registration grew to 100. Whilst this is an impressive number, it is too small a community to be deemed a MOOC, which is comprised of at least 150 participants. In reality, only 43 of those registered were active participants in the activities and discussions, together making over 1000 posts, as Norman observes in his article (p.7). These were the active and visible people in our 'community': we do not know how many other people were invisible but still active in terms of reading posts and thinking and acting in response to what they learnt.



The community operated throughout with English as the common language of online participation, which is perhaps also reflected in the distribution of its participants. 30% of participants volunteered their location in their online profiles.

Figure 1:

International distribution of participants (based on derivation from profile or in community dialogue)

The community showed regular bursts of activity on a weekly cycle, with particular peaks midweek (Wednesdays) and on Sundays, and with Saturdays being consistently quiet (Figures 2 and 3).

Figure 2 (right)
Day by day activity of participants in the main community

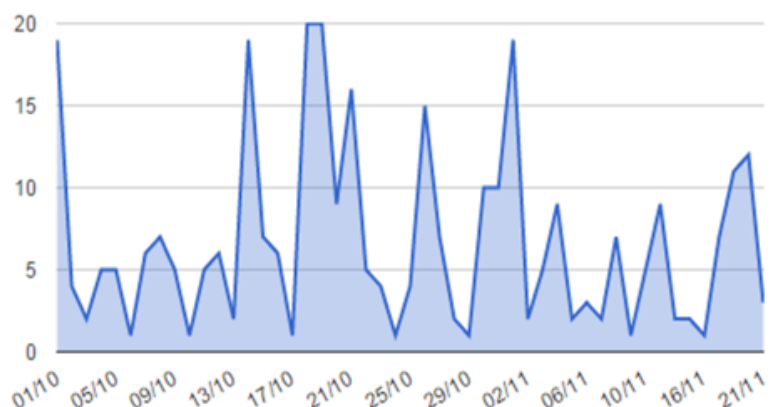
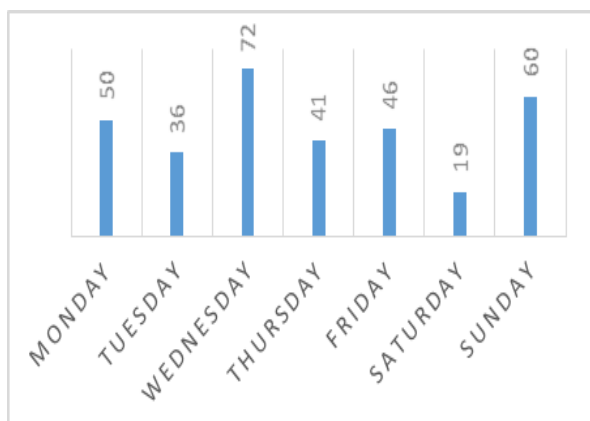


Figure 3 (left)
Peak days of activity

In addition to the main discussion and activity area of this community, the moderators set up two sub-groups in Google+, one convened by Norman Jackson, the other by Sandra Sinfield. These were closed groups, but anyone could ask to join them, otherwise membership was by invitation from the convenor. The groups were simply named Group1 and Group2, leaving it for the groups themselves to determine their agendas. Unlike the main community, where members could remain silent, there was an expectation (at least in Group 1) that members of these sub-groups - or 'collectives' - should be fully engaged in the discussions and activities of the group.

What distinguishes communities from collectives?

In *A New Culture of Learning* (1), Thomas and Seeley Brown set the context for learning in technological age, where individuals come together through choice, forming different relationships from those of the traditional learning environment. They write:

In the new culture of learning, people learn through their interaction and participation with one another in fluid relationships that are the result of shared interests and opportunity. In this environment the participants all stand on equal ground - no one is assigned to the traditional role of teacher or student. Instead, anyone who has particular knowledge of, or experience with, a given subject may take on the role of mentor at any time.

A collective is very different from an ordinary community. Where communities can be passive, collectives cannot. In communities people learn in order to belong. In a collective, people belong in order to learn. Communities derive their strength from creating a sense of belonging, while collectives derive theirs from participation.

The new culture of learning, is a culture of collective inquiry that harnesses the resources of the network and transforms them into nutrients within the learning environment, turning it into a space of play and experimentation. That moment of fusion between unlimited resources and a bounded environment creates a space that does not simply allow for imagination, it requires it. Only when we care about experimentation, play and questions more than efficiency, outcomes and answers do we have a space that is truly open to the imagination. And where imaginations play, learning and creativity happens.

According to their definition, then, the key elements of such a learning community, be it the large or a smaller group, are that:

- Learning relationships are fluid
- They are based on common interests
- They are non-hierarchical
- Anyone can take the lead according to their expertise or knowledge
- Collective enquiry draws on the network and the learning environment becomes a space for play and experimentation
- Imagination is an essential element for creation

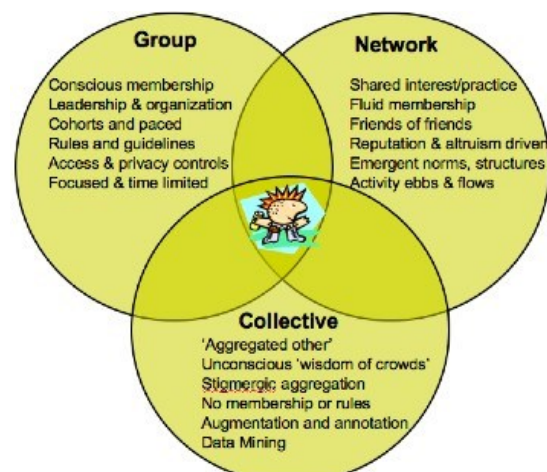


Image: <http://terrya.edublogs.org/files/2008/03/taxonomy-of-the-many.jpg>

The authors differentiate, though, between a community and a collective. Figure 4 summarises the differences.

COMMUNITY	COLLECTIVE
Can be passive	Must be active
Participants learn in order to belong	Participants belong in order to learn
Strength derives from belonging	Strength derives from participating

Figure 4 Characteristics of communities and collectives

#creativeHE-group1: how we worked together

Bearing in mind these theoretical characteristics, what was our experience of being members of Group1 as well as of the wider community?

As already noted, membership of Group 1 was initially driven by participants own curiosity i.e. *'I want to see what happens in a group!'* or by personal invitation from the convenor e.g. *'I think you might be interested in joining the group'*. Over three or four weeks a total of 12 people joined Group 1, a mixture of post-graduate students, educators and retired academics in the UK, Greece, Canada and Sudan. We had our own Google+ site, with spaces for different activities e.g. questions, draft articles. Each of us was designated 'moderator' thereby establishing the equality of status Thomas and Seeley Brown attribute to new learning communities.

Norman launched the group on 3 October, introducing himself and inviting others to do likewise. He explained

I have been asked by Chrissi to facilitate this group. The aim will be to work with the interests of the members of the group. So please introduce yourself and explain the things that you would be interested in exploring. We can create a strategy from the ideas that are offered.

He offered a link to his own blog, as an example of how we might organise our material for reflection. He was taking a practical lead but not assuming a lead role.

Each of us responded, with a brief outline of our interests, and we welcomed new participants, creating a sense of community and empathy. We confronted the question of how we should work together, recognising the difficulties of having access to technology, and across differing time zones. Potential obstacles were turned into positive opportunities as we agreed

Maybe this "pedagogy of uncertainty" can prove a really powerful theoretical basis in order to promote empathy and trust among the participants. (Nikos, 5 October)

We spontaneously established a pattern of interaction, posting thoughts, links, our responses to those of other participants and reflection on the week. An important element in bringing us together as a collective was our Sunday night video chats using the Google+ Hangout facility. It took a couple of weeks to get the hang of these hangouts as several of us experienced technical problems. In spite of these technical issues we managed to keep the chats going even though, during the 8 weeks, we were distributed through UK, Greece, Canada and Spain and on railway journeys and internet cafes.

The hangout enabled various individuals to take lead roles at certain points in our conversations, when either technology failed a participant, or an individual was clearly a greater 'expert' on a theme. Again, then, we were conforming to the nature of a collective. Jenny wrote

Group 1 has no hierarchy, we have all been designated Moderator. An example of how this worked was in the video conference in week 4 when Norman, who had convened the group, lost internet connection. We all continued our conversation, each person taking both a lead and sitting back. To this extent, we typify new, on-line communities. (Jenny, 23 October)

Evolving Conversation

Our collaborative project began through a conversation in the hangout space in which we shared our interests in emotion and creativity and this connected to a discussion about how emotions were involved in relationships in the on-line community and how creativity emerges through these relational interactions. Six of the twelve members of Group 1 (Nikos, Roger, Jenny, Rafaela, Norman and Sue) agreed to form a project around understanding their own involvement in the #creativeHE community and learning process. This proved to be a great opportunity to reveal our own creativity as every response took a different approach.

Nikos produced an image (Figure 5) showing the individual participants, the week of their engagement and the nature of their interaction, whilst Jenny (Figure 6) focused on the evolution of the conversation, how it brought in new people and how the themes developed.

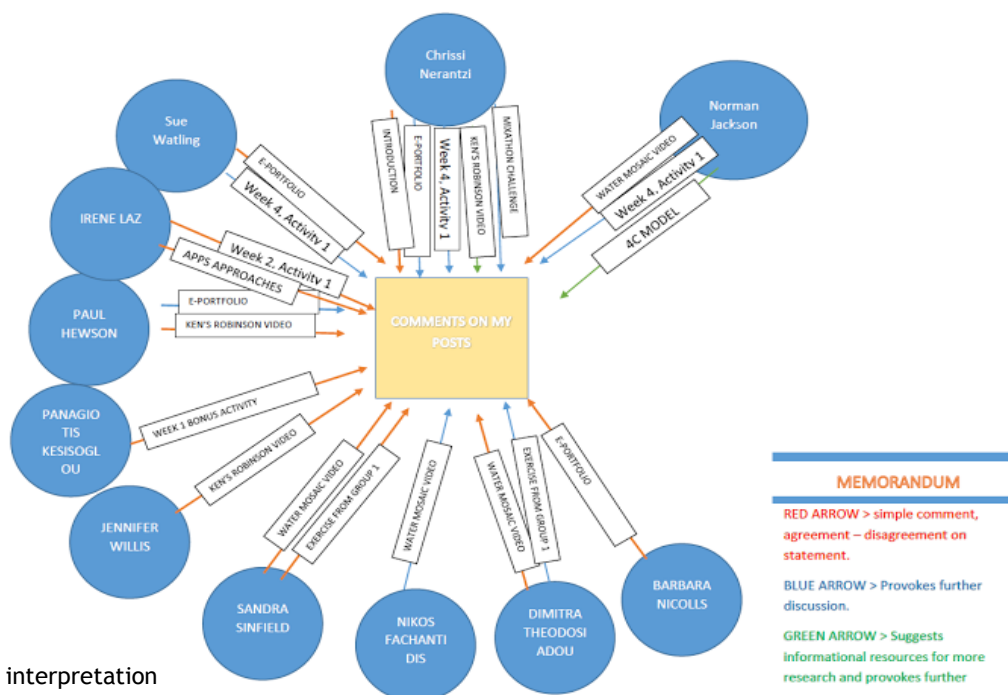


Figure 5, Nikos' interpretation

Model B, image of expanding network and themes: creativity and schools, technologies, motivation

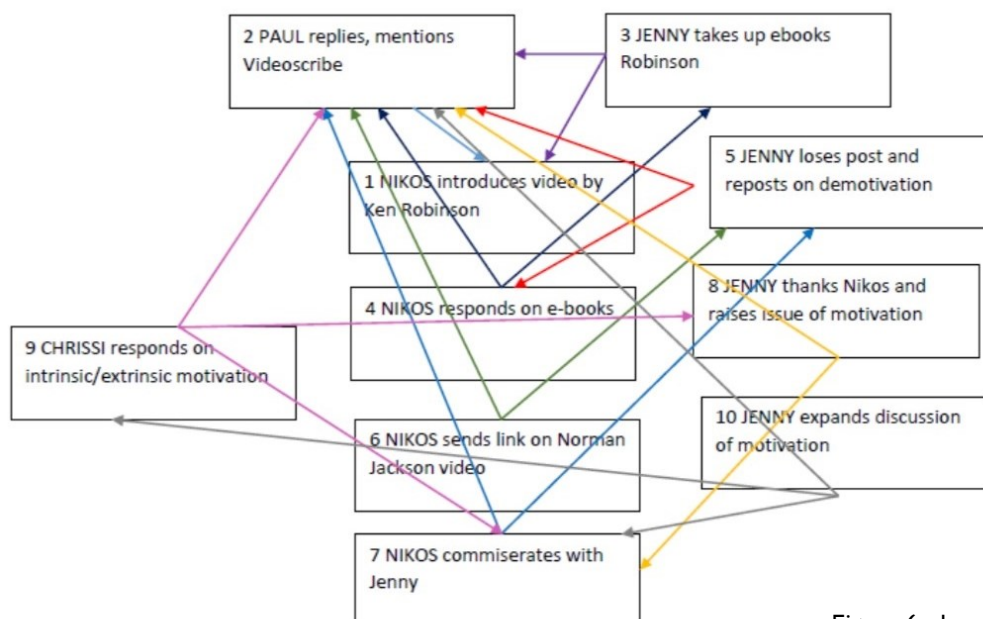


Figure 6, Jenny's interpretation

While Norman chose to use a framework showing the strength of his ties to different members in the community.



Figure 7 Norman's interpretation

Rafaela's approach was to try and understand the dynamics of a conversation.

I chose one of my posts and found out that during the conversation that evolved from this post there were a lot of suggestions of alternative resources for further reading and a lot of discussion provoking further reflection on the topic of creativity. After I posted SW invited me to reflection on how I felt the categories (red, green, blue) have made a difference to my learning experiences? I think the creation of the categories itself answers the question. The interactions and comments on the blue arrow provoked further discussion and made me see other sides/perspectives of the same idea/concept I didn't realize existed and evolve my thinking. The interactions on the green arrow helped me evolve my knowledge and understanding by providing me with resources to look for myself and expand my personal reading and growth. For me both interactions were equally important.

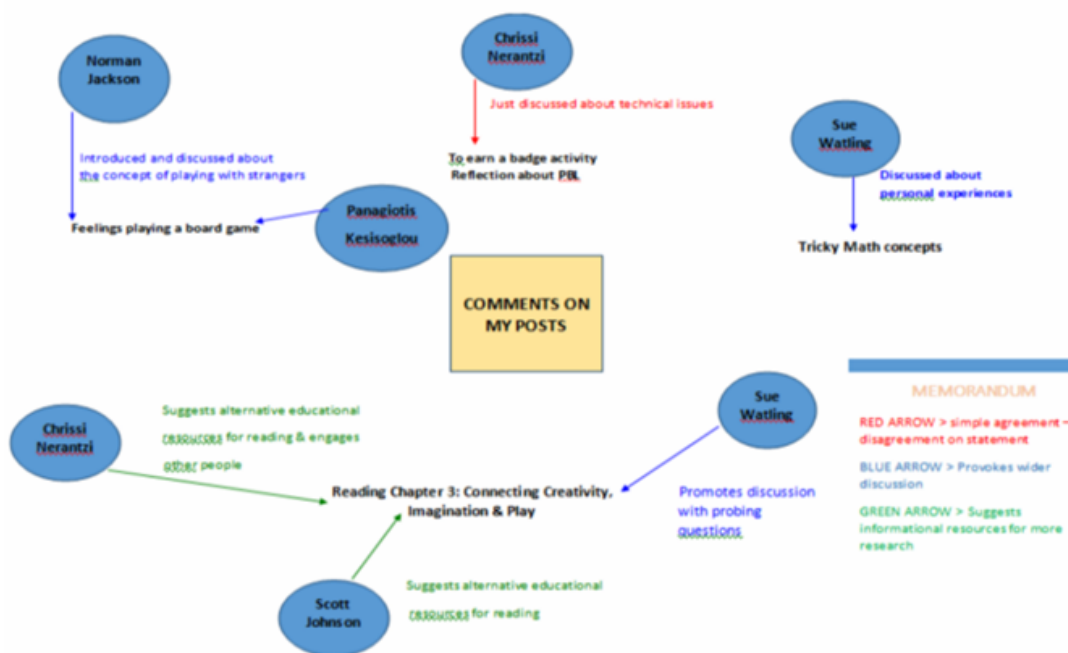


Figure 8, Rafaela's interpretation

This conversation and activity evolved over two weeks and it is just one example of how Group1 differed from the larger community: in keeping with Thomas and Seeley Brown, our interaction in the smaller group was task-centred. It involved us in finding questions we were interested in (interest driven learning) and then engaging in appropriate activity to try to answer the questions and share what we had learnt. We were participating in order to develop our understanding, but participation had an emotional aspect too. It was this emotional engagement with each other and with the things we were interested in that bound us together in a relationship the engendered commitment to our shared project. Ultimately it gave rise to our shared commitment to produce this issue of Creative Academic magazine

By contrast, our participation in the larger group was more diverse, being at times that of facilitator, a provider of information or offering additional perspectives on an issue.

We should also acknowledge that although Group 1 had a membership of twelve, individuals were not all active, hence in practice, the collective was smaller. Roger produced his own analysis of this (Figure 10), stressing its subjectivity, and with an explanation of the model:

It's the Gartner Hype Cycle diagram, with my perspective on where we are... There's a bunch of us who are ascending the Slope of Enlightenment towards the Plateau of Productivity. We're aware of some others who are currently less visible to us, who are deliberating somewhere one side or the other of the Peak of Inflated Expectations and perhaps haven't yet made the leap across the Trough of Disillusionment. There are (presumably) other invisible folks who have been triggered to step into the arena but not yet climbed towards the peak. (Roger, 25 October).

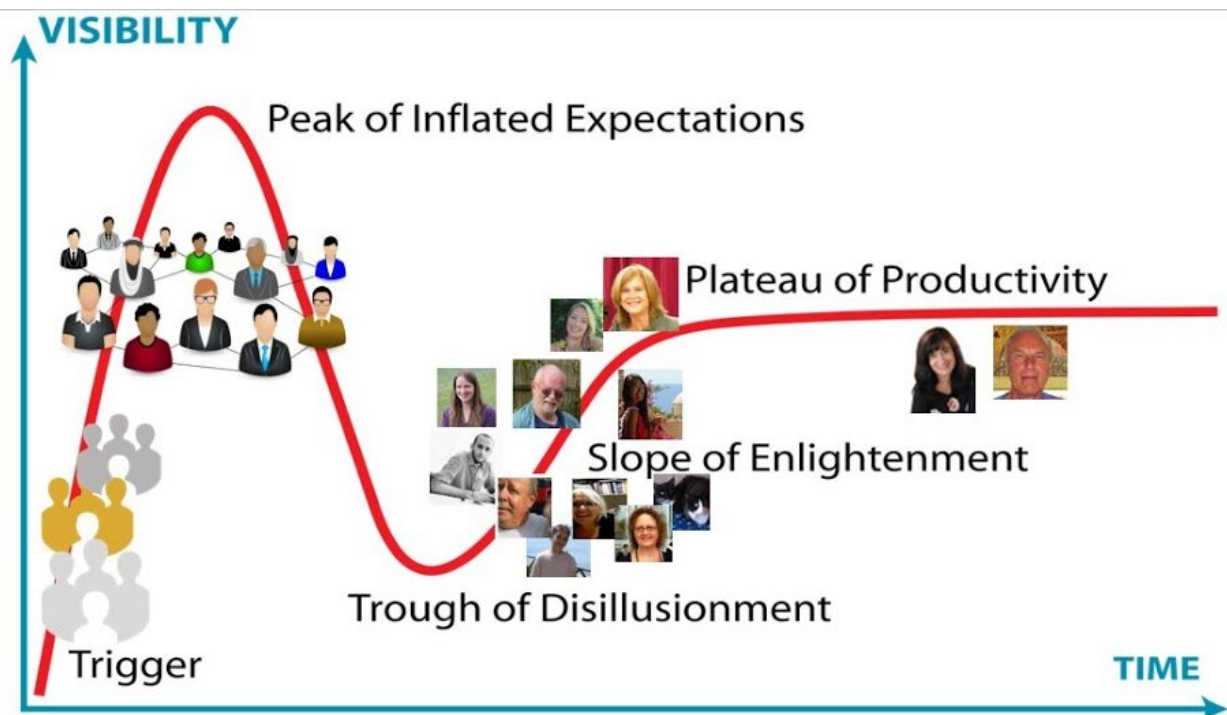


Figure 10, Group 1 collective activity after 4 weeks

Concluding thoughts

Thomas and Seeley Brown (1) propose that a collective establishes a space where members can take risks and experiment. The example of our evolving relationships and the creation of new meaning around the projects we were interested in and cared about seems to fit the idea of a collective very well. Thomas and Seeley Brown talk about a collective as being a content neutral platform with the affordance to be filled with activity and conversation which is effectively our dedicated space on Google+ which was accessible only by our members. We had taken time to establish personal acquaintance, both in the group and in the larger community, hence had a sense of safe relationships. There was no hierarchy, which reassured us (albeit unconsciously) that we would not be ridiculed for our suggestions or creations. In this atmosphere, we were able to follow ideas, build upon them and, collectively, produce creations that were far more than the mere sum of our contributions. Indeed, this very edition of CAM owes much to the relationships we formed and the outcomes of our shared reflection and creativity.

As members of both the community and collective, did we perceive any difference in our roles in each space?
Jenny replies,

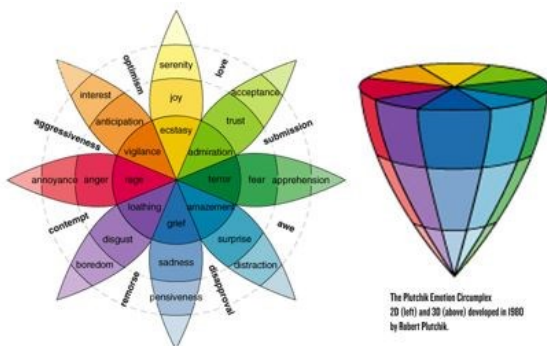
Definitely! I spent a lot of time in both fora and tried to stimulate other participants through my postings, but I would say my contributions in the community were more diverse, both in the subjects they touched on and in the nature of my communication. My contributions to the collective were much more formed around a specific question or issue.

In terms of the process, it was also important for me to have that video interaction with the members of the collective. They were real people, and as I read their words, I could hear their voices and intonations of meaning.

Both types of group are valuable, but they have intrinsic differences. If you want to solve a puzzle or address a specific task, you need a collective

Characteristics of Collectives (1) and Group 1 (our additions in italics)

- ✓ Learning relationships are fluid *and trusting respectful relationships between participants are crucial*
- ✓ They are based on common interests *and shared purpose*
- ✓ They are non-hierarchical
- ✓ Anyone can take the lead according to their expertise or knowledge *but someone has to take the lead*
- ✓ Collective enquiry draws on the network and the learning environment becomes a space for play and experimentation *and the sharing of ideas*
- ✓ Imagination *and commitment* are essential for creation



References

- (1) Thomas, D. and Seeley Brown, J. (2011) A New Culture of Learning: Cultivating the imagination for a world of constant change
- (2) Plutchik, Robert (1980), *Emotion: Theory, research, and experience: Vol. 1. Theories of emotion 1*, New York: Academic

USING BADGES TO RECOGNISE LEARNING IN #creativeHE

Chrissi Nerantzi

Introduction

The open course #creativeHE is an informal learning and development opportunity for all those who teach or support learning in higher education, and for anyone else who is interested in participating in discussion about creativity.

The open course also connects with formal professional development routes at Manchester Metropolitan (MMU) to enable members of staff to gain academic credits on the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education and the Masters in Higher Education. In this way the course embraces and connects open and informal and non-formal learning with formal institutional provision for learning and professional development.

Anybody participating in the open course who completed the minimum requirement for the key topics (1) had the opportunity to submit evidence of their work for peer review to gain recognition through an open badge for their related work carried out. Furthermore, participants who provided evidence of their engagement with the majority of course topics, were awarded the course badge.

Open badges are digital stickers with metadata that enables achievements to be recognised. Badges can be displayed and shared easily on digital and networked platforms and social media. Generally, they present a visual way to showcase engagement and development activities. Anybody can award a badge and this makes them so versatile and controversial at the same time. We are used to specific authorities to recognise learning and seem to devalue any type of recognition of engagement and development if it is generated from other sources. Does it mean because they might be valued less, they are less valuable? Open badges were discussed in a TLC webinar in October 2015 in a debate between Prof. Ale Armellini and myself. This discussion enabled me to gain an insight into Ale's thinking while also putting my ideas about the potential of multiple uses of badges together and attempt to create an open badges typology (2). The first version of this has been included below in Figure 1.

Usually we hear about open badges in the context of skills development and achievement. In my view, there is also the potential to award for various versatile purposes and further explore the ecological dimensions of learning - the what, the who, the how, the why, or why not of learning. I am sure, we will come up with further ideas for open badge applications as their use spreads further across informal, non-formal and formal, lifelong and lifewide, organised and practice-based learning, development and achievement.



While there are critical voices out there that don't recognise the value of badges and dismiss them because they regard them as extrinsic motivators, there are many others who have started using badges and carry out research into related practices. We need to actively listen to all of them in order to come to our own conclusions. I am proposing the use of badges as self-motivators (3) where the value is recognised by the individuals who receive them.

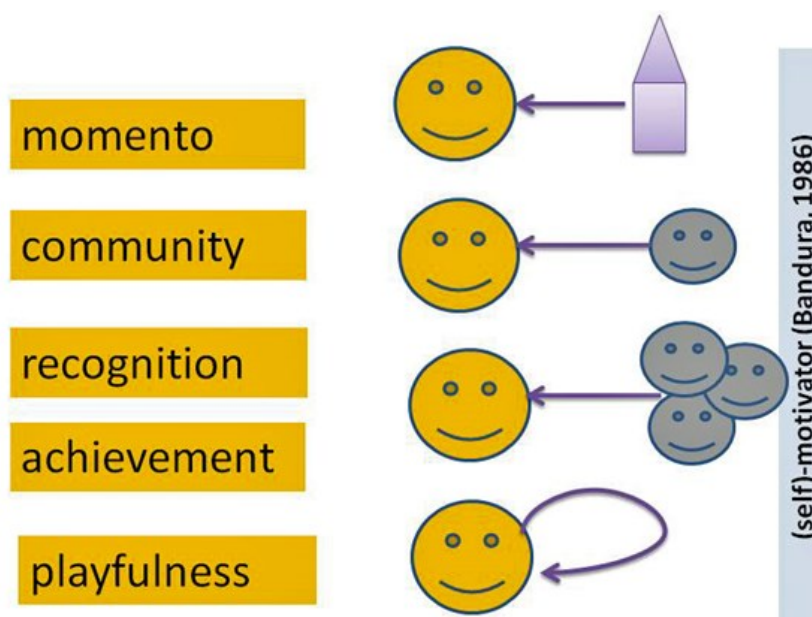
Towards a typology of open badges

Designed by J.P. Guilford in 1967, the Alternative Uses Test asks you to think of as many uses as possible for a simple object, like a brick or a shoe, a paperclip or a BADGE

Using Guilford's Alternative Uses Task (1967) technique developed to measure creativity, I have started synthesising the versatile use of open badges thanks to the TLC debate and propose the below **typology of badges**. This typology emerged out of practice and is the result of how we have used so far open badges in the context of non-formal, informal and formal professional development of academics and other professionals who teach or support learning in higher education since 2014 in the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching at MMU in informal collaboration with colleagues from other institutions and open education initiatives such BYOD4L, TLC, LTHEchat, FLEX, Greenhouse as well as #creativeHE etc.

- **Momento:** Badges can be evidence that we have been at a conference, at an event, a happening.
- **Community:** Badges can evidence belonging to a community. Something we are proud to display digitally
- **Recognition:** Badges can be used to recognise special contributions that evidence commitment and special qualities in the context of a course, learning activity, event, community etc. that stand out and benefited others.
- **Achievement:** Badges can be awarded for meeting specific criteria or standards in a variety of learning situations.
- **Playfulness (Gamification/Point system):** Badges can be awarded during playful learning activities as points and for marking milestones. They can be awarded to teams or individuals.

Figure 1 Towards a typology of open badges



Use of badges in #creativeHE

In the context of #creativeHE, we used the function of "achievement" which links to the more traditional model of higher education of assessment as well as of peer review (see Figure 2). Initially the badges were developed within the p2pu platform. However, after experiencing some issues awarding these, perhaps, more due to lack of my understanding, I decided half way through the course to move them into the credly platform (<https://credly.com/>) and award them from there as I had used this platform before in other instances and it seemed to work. Moving them into credly using our CELT account, would also mean that it would be easier to keep track of badges awarded overall for #creativeHE and other initiatives.

Figure 2. #creativeHE badges



A direct link to the p2pu page where the credly badges were displayed collectively (see <https://courses.p2pu.org/en/courses/2615/content/7440/>) was shared from within the #creativeHE community <https://plus.google.com/communities/110898703741307769041>.

From there participants could submit their evidence, in a portfolio, or linking to relevant posts in the community. I could then review any

badges claims from credly and make the award.

A small number of participants claimed open badges (see Figure 3). In preparation for the next iteration of #creativeHE it is important to further review the badges process and communicate from the outset in what ways badges could be used to evidence engagement and development as self-motivational triggers to scaffold engagement and learning.

Figure 3. #creativeHE badges and number of awarded badges

#creativeHE badges	Number of badges awarded
Introduction to creativity	3
Play and games for learning	3
Storytelling for learning	4
Making for learning	3
Linking theory and practice	1
Portfolio for learning	4
Course badge	3

Next steps

As developing a #creativeHE community was at the heart of this course, I am now thinking to develop a #creativeHE community badge and also to evaluate the use of existing badges and the perceived value of these for participants. I would also like to introduce the #creativeHE facilitator badge. In a similar way this badge was used during the Bring Your Own Devices for Learning (BYOD4L) course as this seemed to be an effective strategy to recognise facilitators input and also create a stronger sense of collective identity.

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Nerantzi, C. (2015) Towards a typology of open badges, 10 November 2015, available at <https://chrisnerantzi.wordpress.com/2015/11/10/towards-a-typology-of-open-badges/> [accessed 15 December 2015]
 Bandura, A. (1986) Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall

(1) <https://courses.p2pu.org/en/courses/2615/creativity-for-learning-in-higher-education/>

(2) Guilford's Alternative Uses Task (1967) <http://www.creativehuddle.co.uk/the-alternative-uses-test>

INSTITUTIONAL AND PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES

Becoming Creative: #creativeHE meets Becoming an Educationalist

Sandra Sinfield



Sandra Sinfield has worked as a laboratory technician, a freelance copywriter, an Executive Editor (*Medicine Digest*, circulation 80,000 doctors) and in the voluntary sector with the Tower Hamlets Research and Resource Centre and with the Islington Green School Community Play written by Alan, *Whose Life is it Anyway?*, Clarke and produced at Sadlers Wells. Working in the Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching at London Metropolitan University, she continues to develop learning, teaching and assessment innovations with a special focus on engaging praxes that ignites student curiosity and develops creativity, power and voice. Sandra was a facilitator for #creativeHE

Introduction

This article discusses the opportunities that emerged with the inter-twining of #creativeHE (1) and *Becoming an Educationalist*; a module taught at London Metropolitan University, focussing on the emancipatory and social justice work of creative practices especially when utilised with 'non-traditional' students in higher education (HE).

Tom Burns and I have been designing empowering practices on pre-university *Return to Study* and *Access* courses - and in our at-university *Master Classes* or *Higher Education Orientation* modules since 1983. As former non-traditional students and now 'outsider' academics, we have never believed that engaging in this work with students meant that we were peddling a deficit notion of the student (2). Indeed, we often taught our 'study skills' sessions so that our students far from being branded deficient would not find themselves at the mercy of tutors who either did not teach in engaging ways or perhaps had their feelings clouded by the taken-for-granted opinion that our students lacked the social and academic capital (3) with which the traditional white, male middle class student is supposed to arrive at university. Our students fed back to us that the ability to make creative and memorable notes, to choose what academic texts to read - and know why they were reading them, to understand the what, why and how of academic forms, conventions and practices... meant that they could act powerfully within academia regardless of what academia thought of them.

At the same time as working with students to develop their practices, with the increasing influx of so-called non-traditional students into university, it has not been unreasonable to hope that HE would eventually positively adapt to 'our' students. Consider, say, the

eventual welcoming of international students into the academy and moves to internationalise the curriculum. However, there has been no concomitant creative paradigm shift with respect to our students nor, as Jackson (4) argues, to develop more creative practice overall.

Can we have a #creativeHE?

We have long wanted that paradigm shift in academic practices not because our students find it difficult to succeed with traditional *praxes* but because we believe that it must be possible to develop approaches to learning, teaching and assessment that excite and challenge 'all' students - and in more ways than, say, the traditional lecture/essay can achieve. Arguably the lecture that 'delivers' information to the student and the essay that then delivers it back to the lecturer is recursive and constraining and rewards conformity and compliance. This does not allow students to showcase their learning and, worse in terms of diversity and social justice, it could be said to only reward those with already existing cultural capital. We wanted to develop practice that encouraged the generative and discursive engagement of students; practice that also took account of issues of identity and institutional relationships of power that surround, and are embedded within, traditional university practice. With *Creme* (5), we thought that it must be possible to de-stabilise the essay's monolithic power and 'dare to allow our students to be more creative' (5: 276).



[illegible]

By using the *Tackling the wicked problem of creativity in Higher Education* article as a reference point we wanted to foreground the connection with *#creativeHE* and to seed meta-cognition of the underlying principles and ethos of *Becoming* (a). To capture some of the flavour of activities such as this for *#creativeHE*, we have been filming small extracts of our workshop sessions - and posting these to the Google+ group (<https://plus.google.com/u/0/communities/110898703741307769041>) to seed discussion. It was really exciting for our students to realise that the Norman Jackson who had written *that* article had seen the notes that they had made - and had wished that he could have attended their workshop. These dialogic exchanges prove one of the benefits of wrapping a course such as *#creativeHE* around a real live university module, especially for a first year module.

At the time of writing this, *Becoming* students have had the opportunity to showcase their creativity in two Exhibitions - one in week seven (W7) of the course - and one in W12. The W12 Exhibition showcased the Posters and artefacts that the students had made under the title: Develop a Digital Me, the W7 Exhibition was a showcase of their multimodal representations of the formal and informal learning spaces as they had observed them around the university. To challenge the students we asked them to represent the findings from their observations as knitting, 3D objects, poetry, Cabinet of Curiosity, jigsaw, animation, video, collage... and we held our breath wondering if we were pushing them too hard - or if they would think that we were being frivolous or ridiculous. Some examples of this year's student work can be seen below and in their Poster Exhibition and Digital Showcase here: <http://learning.londonmet.ac.uk/epacks/posters-digital2/>. I include below three cameos to provide a flavour of the impact of the Exhibitions and of the sorts of project.

You can sample some students' responses to all this creativity by accessing some of their blog posts - and their pictures:

<https://example3679.wordpress.com/2015/11/12/exhibiting-my-creativity/>,

<https://wordpress2618.wordpress.com/2015/11/23/multimodal-exhibition-wk7/>,

<https://thesocialhandgrenadeblog.wordpress.com/2015/11/11/presentation-time-2/>

<https://thanarsana.wordpress.com/2015/12/16/week-12-digital-me/>

STUDENT VOICE 1

When I heard we will be having enhancement week, my head was filled with all sorts of random thoughts, what was it all about? I could not have anticipated how refreshing, entertaining and educating the experience was. ... The wait to meet my colleagues, seeing their work is killing me inside, knowing what we did as a group is making me bounce like a little girl with confidence.

As I walked in the room, I am greeted with smiley faces filled with love, joy and happiness. I don't remember this class as colourful as it was today, creativity at its best and I could tell with the mood inside the room that more was coming (b)

STUDENT VOICE 2

This was my hard work... it consumed a lot of hours and gave me many angles to consider regarding the formal and informal spaces in which learning takes place. Each section... made me consider why I was adding it to my presentation and how learning was happening



This is K's hard work portraying the classroom and the types of aids which are used to help assist in learning:



Once again this highlights the usefulness of working in a group environment, how successful collaboration produces such a brilliant learning environment. I hope

everyone was able to take away from our exhibition and to be quite honest... I look forward to next year's first years' exhibition

STUDENT VOICE 3

The time has now come. To present ... our digital me, WHOH0000000000!
Today was the day, where each group had to present their artefact to the rest of the class.

To begin the session, Tom and Sandra gave the beginning of the lesson to make finishing touches to our posters (if we had any), and to set up our artefacts...

Once this task was undertaken, I myself then viewed each poster which was produced by other groups. I then made comments from my perspective of what I thought the poster was about...

After this task, we had a quick break to refresh our minds and come back to present our digital me artefacts. One by one each group presented their digital me artefact. I enjoyed each individual's artefact, as they introduced different scenarios in the form of using Powtoon and Zeega. I thought it was a very unique and engaging method, as it kept me fully engaged and entertained.

Week 11, I informed you followers about the Digital Me project (<https://thanarsana.wordpress.com/2015/12/09/week-11/>), from this I know I got you readers enquiring about which digital method did I and my group consider.

Well the time has now come and I can reveal the digital method we used was PIXTON. Pixton is a digital comic generator which can be used for educational or personal use. We decided to choose this method, as we believed this was very unique and can challenge us with our creativity skills. To share or download a copy of our comic please click on this link: <https://www.pixton.com/comic-strip/rtimsfe9>

How did our digital artefact go? To be honest I thought our presentation for Digital Me went very well, as we engaged with our audience and got them to participate along with us. We did this by asking two members from the audience to volunteer and to represent the characters and read from the comic strip. I can gladly say other students enjoyed this as much as I did - as we even shared a little humour between us. I enjoyed this activity throughout and I hope you enjoyed our comic.

Thank you:)

Why it's important to share

As you can see, at the end of the different processes, students came together to share the results of their work; full of trepidation, yes, but also full of excitement and joy. A joy we never see when they are handing in formal essays. With the essay they feel that all the power and control is taken away from them, that they have to submit completely to hostile external judgement. With these Exhibitions, we see their pride and their engagement; and hopefully they realise that they are valued within the university. We firmly believe that it is important that they see that we value them for who they already are and not just for what they can become when they have been 'fixed'. We have opened up this creative space not to intimidate or control but to help our students to believe in the people they already are such that they engage in their HE experience from positions of strength - not of weakness or deficit.

Lessons we learned

In facilitating *Becoming* we attempt a creative shift in HE teaching, learning and assessment practice; in linking *Becoming* with #creativeHE we made academia and academic practice 'live' for our students in an authentic and very real way. In practice we have abandoned the traditional lecture/seminar format - and instead run each session as a workshop - with the students working together in class to solve problems, make judgements and produce artefacts. We introduce students to emancipatory practices through role play and simulation, question based learning and image- and topic mediated dialogue. We encourage our students to celebrate their learning and their achievements in Multimodal and Poster Exhibitions - and via their creative projects. Our students have produced rich pictures and collages, collaborated on videos and animations, produced Cabinets of Curiosities and 3D models of their learning - and experienced real joy in their learning. Our students are very much part of the #creativeHE 2015 story.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Tom Burns, Module Leader for *Becoming an Educationalist*, Sandra Abegglen, Module Leader for *Peer Mentoring in Practice*, whose second year students act as co-learners with *Becoming* students and Chris O'Reilly who took pictures, made the video extracts and built the website to showcase our students' work.

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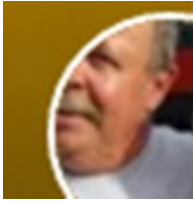
End Notes

- a) The visual notes of the articles can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQJTINd4kew&feature=youtu.be> (Students read and illustrated three different articles - but you can see the impact of Norman Jackson's one on creativity.)
- b) From: <https://passion4educationblog.wordpress.com/2015/11/21/week-7-enhancement/>

" It has been a wonderful
and
empowering experience."

SOME REFLECTIONS ON #creativeHE

Scott Johnson



Scott Johnson is a former construction worker who's had a life-long interest in creativity. As an art school drop-out he still never gave into doing the expected which led both to his last job, being an editor of online courses, and getting fired by the college president for thinking out loud.

What is it in an online course that transforms a topic? Not just presents material but reaches into an understanding that changes a student's outlook on a topic?

The course: Creativity for Learning in Higher Education, condensed to #creativeHE recently finished and left me changing my thoughts and previous assumptions around creativity. Most critically, the course bridged a barrier to my seeing the potential of creativity to be more universal, practical and shareable. Maybe even contagious. For me, beside the enjoyment of making art there's always been an allegiance to being different that comes with taking on the identity of "artist." This is not to be mistaken with a sense of greater purpose or rare or exceptional talent. More a preference for being an outsider and running my life as suits me. And throw in an impatience here for always having to explain why things that are "obvious" to others fail to persuade me for no other reason than they "sound right."

So there is this course on creativity that's populated with people who appreciate questioning anything that might come up (teachers you know?) and there's nothing in particular to resist or rebel against and it isn't very comfortable to defend a difference that used to shoo people away when being part of this is important and it's time to chuck the grand theory of creativity as a means of disengagement and separation and accept some other outlook and it makes sense to try and figure this out.

Besides, creativity presented as a natural human attribute that IS so ready to be accepted into people's lives was an unavoidable message from this course. Holding creativity as exclusive and beyond our reach without special training runs against the demonstrated notion that people slip easily into being creative. How else to explain a group of people who had never met conversing comfortably on a topic that really isn't spoken of as a "subject"? The tone of the class felt natural as if we often spoke of creativity. Is it possible that creativity is a natural ability? Almost an inner literacy?

We are an adaptive animal so it does make sense that ideas could come and go in a fluid manner. Maybe decisions and enduring solutions don't suit us? That our

real skills are not in building mental resting places but in changing? New versions of old ways of doing things don't disturb us as much we expect. We are not so permanent or made to be still as to impatiently try everything? To reinvent ourselves slightly faster than we can get ourselves in trouble would certainly be a useful adaptation for us.

Practically, creativity could help us realize new versions of old ways of doing things. Things that may go unquestioned, not from being the best solution, but from being simply the most often done. Also, the awarding of one choice over another is often taken from a selection of preferences made under circumstances that emerged when a slower rate of change was the norm. Do we live in a more dynamic environment now? It feels that way. Creativity as a generator of new ideas to explore makes sense in our current climate. As a common feature of everyday life, creativity can emerge from the rarified thoughts of the gods to the familiarity of a grocery list. It only takes a small twist to initiate great changes in understandings--the more familiar, the easier it is to alter, improve, or just fool around with.

To me one of creativity's greatest potentials is freeing the mind from stories that diminish our expectations, and leave us in a rut. For me, one of those stories was an odd reversal of logic where LACK of creativity was so common that it couldn't possibly be nurtured in the openness of a public educational system. And, to an extent, I still believe creativity is considered to a side-show amusement of little use for practical problems.

In #creativeHE I was exposed to a notion of creativity as a driver of learning suitable for any topic. Trying to demonstrate this is still a difficulty for me. It speaks to our adaptability that we as active people can generate alternatives in a free and fluid manner. My question is where can we practise creativity as a genuine way of solving problems where it will be noticed? First thing might be to show an alternative solution to a current

problem using creativity. Ideas on this?

Image: <http://cached.imagescaler.hbpl.co.uk/resize/scaleWidth/620/offlinehbpl.hbpl.co.uk/news/OVE/>



REFLECTIONS ON #creative HE

Chrissi Nerantzi c.nerantzi@mmu.ac.uk @chrissinerantzi



Chrissi is a Principal Lecturer in Academic CPD in the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching at Manchester Metropolitan University. Her interest in creativity started in her childhood and has never left her since. Chrissi has initiated and participated in a number of creative and open collaborative learning projects and is currently a PhD student in open education. She is also a National Teaching Fellow, a co-founder of Creative Academic and the leader of #creativeHE open learning process for exploring and developing understandings of creativity in the higher education learning and teaching context.

I never imagined when I designed the Creativity for Learning in Higher Education course that one of the outcomes would be the production of this issue of Creative Academic Magazine by several of the participants. It means that the course helped create the conditions through which new collaborative relationships formed and the unanticipated could flourish, an achievement that delights me.

My vision

Creativity for Learning in Higher Education, shortened to #creativeHE, was born out of the need and desire to create a safe space for pedagogic experimentation and creativity in the context of developing teaching practices in higher education to encourage and support students' creative development. Like any educator my goal is to bring people together and to support them in the process of learning where needed. I am really keen to make them think differently, stimulate their imaginations and empower them to become confident experimenters and practitioners with a purpose.



The course was brought to life in early 2015 and is an optional module offered as part of the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching and the Masters in Higher Education at the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching at Manchester Metropolitan University. At the same time #creativeHE is also an openly licensed course that extends opportunities for creative engagement beyond the physical classroom into more distributed spaces and places across the globe to connect and encourage individuals and groups to explore the concepts of creativity in cross-disciplinary, cross-institutional and cross-cultural settings.

In this article I share my reflections and observations of the #creativeHE course which was offered between September and November 2015 over eight weeks and involved colleagues from MMU, London Metropolitan University, the University of Macedonia and the Creative Academic Community Hub.

Past experience in the design, organisation and facilitation of open courses with others has shown me that establishing distributed institutional focal points and involving facilitators from different places can make a big difference to participation, motivation and learning. I am interested in creating high quality learning experiences that are personal, caring and supportive, and create new and exciting opportunities for collaborative learning in open settings enabled through digital technologies. Such supportive environments are co-created by the participants themselves and by facilitators presence and engagement.

Within my PhD research I am exploring informal cross-institutional professional development provision with collaborative learning features. CreativeHE became the second case of my phenomenographic study and I have been collecting data from participants who gave me their consent to become study participants. My study includes survey data as well as a series of semi-structured interviews. But I will come back to this later.

Community building is an important feature for me for open course design and I wanted to push this one step further building a course around a community instead of a community around a course. It's a bit of a 'chicken and egg' situation: people are attracted to the course then somehow they have to become a community and out of the interactions, conversations and relationships the curriculum is brought into existence. In other words the community becomes the curriculum.

When promoting the course, I pointed potential participants into the #creativeHE community space which was in Google plus and decided that the course site in p2pu would blend into the fabric of the community and become something like a web-book. This hosted the open curriculum based on specific themes or concepts I could say which became the backbone combined with resources and activities that needed to be contextualised by participants. Part of the design was to provide participants with the opportunity to learn and collaborate in small facilitated groups.

Role and Engagement of Facilitators

#creativeHE was facilitated by a small team of colleagues from collaborating institutions and networks. I had worked with these colleagues before on other projects but they didn't know each other. It was important for me to create a sense of community among facilitators and have a support space, in the form of a Facebook group, where we could share questions and concerns, seek help and troubleshoot together and consider new ideas. I wanted facilitators to share my vision for the course but empower them to act autonomously in the way they interpreted my vision. Without their active participation I realised it would be difficult to develop and sustain the community. At the same time they had to be mindful not to overwhelm the conversation. For most of the facilitators, if not for all of them, this was their first experience facilitating an open course and while I suspect that it was an exciting opportunity for them, it also posed challenges and dilemmas. But then that is the same for everyone who was involved.

Facilitators were co-learners and co-creators of the narrative that emerged from the course. Some of them also supported one of the small groups and worked closely with participants who were members of these groups. I could sense that they were initially unsure and had questions linked to how to work within the groups and what to do. For me it was important to keep it organic and enable practices to emerge and agree them between the facilitators and the group itself. Choice is important. My guidelines to the facilitators were to follow the course loosely and be responsive to the group's interests and needs. This increased flexibility and shifted responsibility to the facilitator to make this work with the members of their group. I noticed that progressively, facilitators relaxed or grew into their role, connected with active group members and established ways to engage in synchronous and asynchronous activities that were of value to the group and to them. This situation highlighted new opportunities for me and is taking me on a new path I would like to explore further.

Participants' engagement

As the course progressed the number of individuals who asked to join the #creativeHE community kept growing. In week 5 we reached 102 in total and we had 5 facilitators. This meant about one facilitator for every 20 participants. A healthy ratio, I would say, if all 102 participants were active in the community. But this wasn't the case. In common with other open learning courses, many signed up to the community but didn't participate. The number of active participants was 43 and this number was reduced to the low 30s after week 2 when a

number of people who joined did not to participate any further.

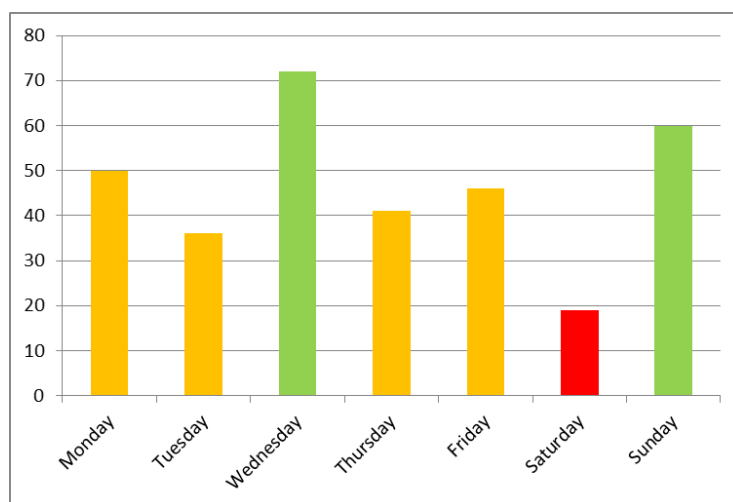


Figure 1. Engagement distribution, data collected by Roger Greenhalgh

Thirty percent of all participants for whom there were publicly available data were from the following 12 countries: United Kingdom, Greece, Canada, Australia, France, Jordan, Egypt, USA, Switzerland, Iraq, United Arab Emirates, Sudan. Actions were recorded in the main community. This translates on average to 52.4 actions per active participant per week. The daily distribution of these activities are shown in Figure 1. This shows that the highest volume of activity was Wednesday while Saturday was the lowest. It might be interesting and useful to explore further this pattern of engagement and compare with other iterations of #creativeHE and other courses.

Participation observed in the community started slowly but steadily and a core group of regular contributors was established in the first few weeks. The contributions were mainly responses to specific course activities. It was lovely that participants set-up digital portfolios and captured their learning journey in these spaces. Communication extended beyond text as encouraged through the course activities. Many participants embraced the opportunity to express creatively using visual language. This resulted in the community conversation turning into a colourful potpourri of visual delights and really tickled our imagination and possibilities for creative expression.

While there was a course website on the P2PU platform it was used more like a course-book. It provided the pedagogic and thematic scaffold for the course. The lived curriculum - all the conversations and the reporting of actions and learning took place in the google+ community space. Getting participants to join and participate in the conversations and collaborative activities within the community was from the outset vital. To what extent was this clear? As these two spaces were loosely stitched together, participants will have travelled between the two sites. I suspect some more regularly than others. I think, especially all those who participated less in community interactions, might have found the course site useful for autonomous learning - although this is a matter for speculation.

Important lessons I learned from #creativeHE

It takes time to digest an experience and draw from it the important lessons. At the time I am writing this it's only two weeks after the course finished so my perceptions might change but I offer in Table 1, a list of points that seem important to the success of #creativeHE.

Table 1 Important Learning Points from #creativeHE

- Learning in the open is personal and emergent—it's about searching for and creating new meaning
- **We are sensitive and engage emotionally** in the learning process and this has an impact on our presence and interaction with others
- One of the attractions of social learning is that it enables us to feel a part of something bigger than ourselves
- Relationships are important. Relationships between people and course activities, between people and resources and most importantly between people. Without these sorts of relationships there is no commitment
- Working in small groups using an interest-driven approach can make a big difference to the learning experience of participants
- Focusing more on the process of learning might be a valuable strategy for group learning projects
- Time is a real challenge and we need to be realistic about what can be achieved - but people somehow find a way in their busy lives to if they develop deep and meaningful relationships
- Freedom and choice needs to be balanced with a flexible structure and support. I am still searching for answers how to achieve this. Through my PhD research I aim to develop a framework for learning in such settings



Future development

Teachers are rarely satisfied with what they have achieved. There is always room for improving what has been done and adding to it. There is something about experiencing something that enthruses us to do more or to try out new approaches next time. As my experience is still fresh in my mind I am looking at how the #creativeHE web-book can be integrated more naturally into the fabric of the community to limit confusion that multiple platforms bring and maximise use where desirable. I am planning to offer a mini version of #creativeHE as a block course during Open Education Week 2016 and seek facilitation support from the community and possibly working with Creative Academic to host an event in World Creativity and Innovation Week in April 2016.

At the same time I will be completing my research transcribing all interviews linked to #creativeHE and carry out my phenomenographic analysis together with data collected from my other case to gain a deeper understanding of the collective experience in both cases and what we can learn from these.

Wondering & and wandering

Copy and paste courses is not necessary if we can work together and focus on the collective good, collective development and establish collective capacities. We will save resources, effort and time, share expertise while enriching our experiences. How can we share and co-develop flexible open courses so that they become sustainable hubs for collaborative learning and inquiry? This is one of the big questions I am asking myself and am experimenting with different ideas to make it happen in different open contexts. For example within the Teaching and Learning Conversations (TLC) webinar series we introduced a rotating organising group; within the #LTHEchat initiative, we are moving towards a rotating decentralised and community-led model; while it is also planned that the next iteration of the open course Bring Your Own Devices for Learning (BYOD4L) will adopt a similar approach. What discoveries will we make when we learn to let go and free ourselves from tunnel vision and establish distributed democratic collaborations?

Useful links

#creativeHE community is available at <https://plus.google.com/communities/110898703741307769041>

#creativeHE course site is available at <https://courses.p2pu.org/en/courses/2615/creativity-for-learning-in-higher-education/>

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all learners who joined us on the #creativeHE journey and embraced playful learning; study participants who made the time to be interviewed for my PhD research; Roger Greenhalgh our tech wizard for pulling some interesting data together based on social media engagement, as well as my dear colleagues and friends Prof. Norman Jackson, Sandra Sinfield, Dr Nikos Fachantidis and Sue Watling who supported participants and groups in their capacity as volunteer facilitators over eight weeks and the commitment, creative input and care they displayed throughout. We wouldn't have been able to do this without them. I am extremely grateful to them.



The banner for Open Education Week 2016 features a central illustration of a lightbulb with a globe inside, surrounded by various educational icons like books, a magnifying glass, and a person. The text 'Open Education Week 2016' is prominently displayed in a stylized font, with 'MARCH 7-11, 2016' below it. To the right, it says 'Organized by OPEN EDUCATION CONSORTIUM'. Below the banner is a circular logo with the text 'CREATIVITY TAKES COURAGE' and '#creativeHE'. To the right of the logo is a list of five days of activities: Day 1: Making a start, Day 2: Creativity in HE, Day 3: Play and games, Day 4: Using story, and Day 5: Learning through making. At the bottom, a yellow bar contains the text 'We will be looking for volunteer facilitators'.

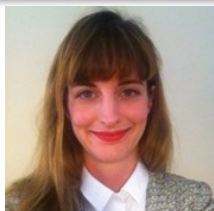
- Day 1: Making a start
- Day 2: Creativity in HE
- Day 3: Play and games
- Day 4: Using story
- Day 5: Learning through making

We will be looking for volunteer facilitators

Editor's comment - most of the articles in this magazine are concerned with Creativity for Learning in Higher Education on-line. But there was also a face to face course taking place at Manchester Metropolitan University. In this article Martha Lineham describes how she participated in a workshop that provided her with insight, inspiration and confidence to try out a radical new approach in her seminars. The final article in this section comes from Anna Bergqvist, who discusses a creativity-based pedagogy. Both writers will report further in the next edition of CAM.

TOWARDS A MORE CREATIVE SEMINAR

Martha Lineham



Martha is Resident Artist, Digital Marketing & Social Media Co-ordinator at Bankley Studios & Gallery. She is also an Associate Lecturer and Teaching Assistant: Foundation Diploma in Art and Design and Associate Lecturer: Contextualising Practice for art and design degree courses at Manchester School of Art.

As a professional in the early stages of my career in higher education teaching, I came onto the Creativity for Learning in HE course with the desire to explore innovative teaching practices and to develop my confidence in taking risks in my approaches to teaching. I am a tutor in Art and Design (foundation level and contextual studies across art and design subjects at degree level): disciplines that are inherently based on creativity. In contemporary Art and Design education it can be seen that the tutor's role is essentially that of a facilitator to encourage students' creative thinking and development, recognising and nurturing their imagination and attempting to develop confidence in learners' individual interests, opinions and expression. This along with equipping learners with knowledge and skills that form the foundations of creative development. Learners in Art and Design are often visual thinkers, understanding and responding to the world through images, objects and other aspects of visual culture.

I am fortunate that the positions I currently hold at Manchester School of Art provide opportunity to teach in a range of contexts, including workshops, tutorials, lectures and seminars. The seminar (as in a seminar group that directly follows on from a lecture) was my focus for attention on the Creativity for Learning in Higher Education course, as recent experiences as a student and as a tutor in the seminar setting had left me convinced that approaches could and should be rethought and improved to support creative participants more effectively. My recent seminar experiences as a student were often arduous and awkward affairs; the seminar tutor's challenging questions opened up to a room full of unsure students, many of whom had either not read the reading or had over-prepared with annotations yet lacked the confidence to voice their opinions. All eyes looking down to desks. The clock ticking in place of a critical response from somebody. Tumble weed etc.

Right my visual metaphor for seminars in enclosed/ same spaces?!



Week on week my anxiety about my lack of confidence and engagement as a student in seminars grew. Over time the same few student voices would dominate in small weekly debates within a large group. I can recall the environment of many seminars past, small stuffy rooms often with no windows, strip lighting and horseshoe style table and chairs layout.

Faced with these experiences of a seminar, I have since pursued reading on 'the seminar' and discussion with senior colleagues about them in the Art School since being employed to run them. My personal student experiences fuelled my commitment to a broader and more varied approach to how to tackle these sessions in my own teaching practice, with the key objective of increasing student critical engagement with ideas and concepts whilst developing all of their confidence in making valid contributions. As a tutor, I then had initial discussion with each new seminar group to find out their idea of and expectations for seminar groups, which highlighted them widely being familiar with the same format and experiences that I had (being verbally asked questions on texts in a group setting, many lacking in confidence, some confessing to finding seminars dull and unhelpful). The learners struggled to think of expectations for the sessions.

My inspiration

My inspiration and creative insight into how I might tackle my challenge came through the 'Creativity in action! Learning happens everywhere,' a workshop on the Creativity for Learning in HE course, that took place in Manchester city centre. The session involved game-based learning meets problem-based learning through an individual yet group supported task. The reinvigoration of learning that I and my peers experienced, through a site specific task beyond the university classroom caused me to think about the possibilities of alternative learning environments outside the environs of the weekly designated seminar room. The spatial context of the learning environment was clearly influential on our creative behaviour, as was the utilisation of imagery and objects sourced and justified by the group of learners involved. Whilst the session was largely based on independent exploration and discovery, there was clear direction and opportunity for discussion based on our individual discoveries and sense making.

Bringing my ideas into existence

With new confidence in challenging the traditional seminar setting, I scanned my seminar teaching timetable for up and coming lectures that covered subjects that might lend themselves well to an active seminar task beyond the seminar room. Scheduled for January 2016 as part of the Thinking about Art unit for Level 4 was a lecture entitled 'The Everyday: What happens when nothing happens?' This lecture was aimed at encouraging learners to rethink and examine their day-to-day environments, with 'the everyday' being what we do when we don't notice it.

This seemed a fitting subject with direct links to accessible space beyond the seminar room. My intention is to conduct the seminar remotely with all learners being directed to engage in the activity through written and visual responses. To further explore ways of learners reporting their findings remotely, this will be achieved via a 24 hour Facebook event, introduced to the learners via Moodle message and brief 10 minute introduction in our usual seminar room, before they use the remaining seminar time to complete the task and report their findings on the Facebook event page. The session will be based on three key tasks posted to the Facebook event at the start of the seminar: an image/object based response to a quote, a critically engaged response to an aspect of the everyday and direction to respond to another learner's image or comment. The objective is to create an opportunity for responses to the everyday environments of learners through an active task drawing on the content of the lecture and reading, whilst also making it mandatory for learners to respond to the contributions of others. Using Facebook, a digital platform commonly embedded everyday life and more familiar than the seminar room to learners, I hope to encourage confidence and ease in their contributions which will lead to their ability to contribute more confidently in future seminars. I will monitor the 24 hour event asking additional questions and making connections where there is potential to develop learning through doing so. The findings of this active task are then be discussed at the start of the next seminar, through exploration of the Facebook event page content and generated discussion. I look forward to sharing the results of my experiment in the next issue of Creative Academic Magazine.

PHOTOVOICE AND CREATIVE VALUES-BASED PEDAGOGY: NARRATIVE AND PERSPECTIVE IN TEACHING PRACTICE

Anna Bergqvist

Anna is Lecturer in Philosophy at Manchester Metropolitan University, where she also directs the Aesthetics and Creativity network and the Particularism in Bioethics, Professional Ethics and Medicine network. She is also Director of the Values-based Theory network at the Collaborating Centre for Values-based Practice in Health and Social Policy at St Catherine's College Oxford.



Background

Creativity is an area that many research councils and funding bodies recognise as a focal point for transformative research across traditional subject boundaries. As an academic philosopher specializing in aesthetics, ethics and medical humanities, I have used creativity as a platform to build research networks in a number of contexts during the past few years bringing together practitioners and theorists from different disciplinary backgrounds across the humanities, arts, medicine, health and education. I was fortunate to come to the Creativity for Learning in HE via the PGCert as part of my professional development with a strong commitment to innovation and change.

My inclusion of creative techniques in learning and teaching not only challenges myself as a facilitator in the transfer of knowledge and in engaging with different points of view, but also supports important notions in research-based teaching more generally such as active learning, co-creation and peer-learning, openness and confidence building. Philosophy teaches you not only how to think, but also how to think critically. Having recently designed a new third year undergraduate unit, *Bioethics and Moral Dilemmas*, drawing on my current work into narrative, values-based practice and creativity (in ethics, medical epistemology, philosophy of psychiatry, philosophy of science, and mental health care), I seek to incorporate participatory and person-centred methodologies in curriculum planning to introduce peers and students to the stances of 'values-based' education (1) and 'transformative learning' (2) to encourage learners' creative critical thinking in relating to abstract concepts such as autonomy, moral conflict, regret and forgiveness.

#creativeHE : My creative inspiration

Nurturing creative critical reflection in philosophical teaching practice enables learners to appraise which beliefs that have inevitably been passed down are worth holding onto, and on what grounds, and thereby take ownership of ideas in engaging with other points of view. My initial inspiration for how I might tackle my creative innovation challenge as a theorist trying to communicate abstract philosophical concepts through narrative creative techniques, came from the 'Using story for learning and teaching' session', a workshop on the Creativity for Learning in HE course, which used a text-based narrative (in nursing education) with a clear application to my local teaching practice. Text-based approaches to narrative is a format I am confident with, but also one that is helpfully developed through the inclusion of other problem-based individual and group supported tasks in learning outside the classroom that worked so well on the Creativity for Learning in HE educative journey such as online forums, creative peer-learning and social media. Following a recommendation from an academic colleague and close creativity network partner in Wisconsin, Sheryl Tuttle Ross, I will incorporate the 'photovoice' (3) concept as a student-led participatory methodology for telling a story relating to the abstract notions of conflict, regret and forgiveness.

Photographic images establish a specific context, framings, bounded horizons of legible selectivity that distinguishes them from viewing the world face-to-face. One striking aspect of the use of Photovoice in learning and teaching is that it echoes and transforms the limits of its own frame as a visual anthropology in telling a story in meeting with its audiences. As Caroline Wang puts it, the term "photovoice" refers to *participatory* photography such that the typically photographed become the photographers. (4) New technologies and shifts within social environments have given individuals new ways by which to access the world and project their

pieces of it- through images anyone can make and acquire using an iPhone and related media in an age of seemingly unbounded communication. While the need to direct oneself outwards to anchor the self is as strong as ever, there still exists for many a paradoxical sense of dislocation, frictionless spinning in the void: a shady fear that the world does not answer; the nightmare that the meeting with a mirroring other is a fiction.(5) As such it presents a powerful tool for critical re-assessment and re-evaluation of preconceived ideas in relating to difficult moral concepts.

Narrative & Photovoice as pedagogy: realising my creative innovation

My humanistic approach to learning and teaching aims to give students the opportunity to take ownership of ideas by thinking about the ways in which abstract philosophical ideas can bear on everyday life, to engage with different perspectives, and to feel confident in independently reaching conclusions and articulating theoretical solutions to complex issues. This is a key principle that informs all my work and, I hope, also serves the interests of participatory learning in HE to encourage creative imagination and expression in the interests of growth and self-direction. Inspired by the photovoice concept, I will implement the narrative teaching innovation using a collaborative student-led and peer-monitored online forum on Moodle during three weeks of the Spring term leading up to reading week. This strategy will sit alongside the standard lecture-based teaching course with content devoted to the target themes of moral dilemmas, regret and forgiveness. Learners will be required to engage in the activity through visual photovoice posts on three occasions relating to imaginative or real-life instances of dilemmas, regret and forgiveness. The objective is to create an opportunity for responses to the everyday environments of learners drawing on the theoretical content of the accompanying lectures in an interactive and participatory way. Students will also be required to provide brief written responses to a) initial conceptual tasks set by the tutor, and b) constructive positive responses to peers' posts. A threshold system will favour quality over quantity of post. Abuse or negativity in engaging with the contributions of others shape or form will not be tolerated in any shape or form.



The findings of this interactive activity will be discussed at the start of the next seminar on a weekly basis, with a view to incorporation into the formal assessment structure. To motivate smart finalist learners even at this experimental trial stage, students will be invited to co-author a collaborative research poster-presentation and, if possible, a collaborative research paper, which I hope to share in the next issue of the Creative Academic Magazine.



In conclusion, the framing of the experiment takes over part of the function of the title. It preserves an integral emphasis on self-direction and empowerment of peer-learners to have control of the learning process where awareness of its possibilities is suspended, allowing activity at its edges that imply something that can be filled. Perhaps this is all you ever really need in the usually murky traffic between art and truth in HE: a ground for openness, a willingness to be impressed in the transfer of knowledge and lived experience of others.

Sources

- 1 Values-based education <http://valuesbasededucation.com/vbe.html>
- 2 Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- 3 Sheryl Tuttle Ross, 'Show and Tell: Photovoice as International Travel Pedagogy', *Analytic Teaching and Philosophical Praxis*, vol. 32, issue 1 (2011), pp. 1-10.
- 4 Caroline Wang, et al, "Photovoice as participatory health promotion strategy," in *Health Promotion International*, vol.13 (1), (1998). As noted by Tuttle Ross (*op cit.*), the concept 'Photovoice' as two main origins of location, one in the USA associated with Wang and the other in the United Kingdom, where 'PhotoVoice' (referred to with capital "V"), is a charitable foundation founded by Tiffany Fairey and Anna Blackman whose mission "is to build skills within disadvantaged and marginalised communities using innovative participatory photography and digital storytelling methods so that they have the opportunity to represent themselves and create tools for advocacy and communications to achieve positive social change." (<https://photovoice.org>; accessed 2015.01.05). While the general research method as developed by Wang as well as the PhotoVoice charity mainly serves to influence public policy, the Photovoice methodology itself can clearly serve multiple purposes across a variety of contexts (listed on the PhotoVoice website are: artistic, educational, therapeutic, research-related community development, policy change or a means of social activism.)
- 5 Photographs, Sontag wrote, "are perhaps the most mysterious of all the objects that make up, and thicken, the environment that we recognize as modern. Photographs really are experience captured, and the camera is the ideal arm of consciousness in its acquisitive mood.' Susan Sontag, 'In Plato's Cave', in her *On Photography* (Penguin, 1977), pp. 3-4. Essay originally published (in a slightly different form) in *The New York Review of Books*, 1971. Sontag's concerns regarding the problems, aesthetic and moral, posed by the omnipresence of photographic images for us moderns were focussed on her archetypal conception of photography as way of taming nature, of packaging the world by appropriating the thing photographed.

Image credits

- 1 <http://www.web-kids.org/photovoice.html>
- 2 What matters to me <http://www.ardn.ca/ardn-initiatives/photovoice/>

MAKING SENSE OF IT ALL

The Nature of Engagement in the #CreativeHE Online Learning Community

Nikos Mouratoglou & Maria - Rafaela Tziouvara

Introduction

According to Kuh (1), the term “engagement”, in the context of learning, means the time and the physical energy that is demanded and that students are expected to expend on activities during their learning experience. The personal “strategy” that each learner develops in order to study a subject, practise with activities, reflect on his/her own thoughts, analyse the learning content, discuss with other participants, share his/her ideas, concerns or experiences and eventually learn, are some of the substantives of learners' engagement in an educational course.

In the #CreativeHE learning community, learner's *engagement was indicated by three factors*. Firstly, the main indicator was *participation in the Google+ community*, where learners were posting, commenting, sharing and interacting with other participants. Also, the completion of *the course activities* as they were outlined in the P2PU platform was perceived as the second factor, while *submission of evidence* of learning for badge accreditation might be deemed a third factor.

Furthermore, during the #CreativeHE course emerged a common interest for forming two groups with a more specific orientation. As a result, the participants had the chance to discuss specific topics or aspects of the course *within a small closed group*, either through asynchronous on-line exchanges or synchronous conversations in Google hangouts. Such activities provided the possibility for engagement. Finally, participants had the chance to join *three webinars* during the 8 weeks of the course. This was a fifth possibility for engagement.

Analysis

In order to examine the levels of engagement, a questionnaire (1) was created by the authors and posted in the Google+ Community after the completion of the course. The questionnaire was available for sixteen days and was answered by fifteen participants, who were the postgraduate students from the University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki (Greece). It included two multiple choice questions (Q1 & Q2) which investigated the weekly time demands and the ways in which the participants were engaged. Two questions (Q3 & Q4) sought levels of agreement and disagreement for some statements relating to the nature of engagement. In those two questions the respondents had to choose an answer from a five point Likert scale for fourteen statements divided into two questions. The last question (Q5) included three sentences, which were expected to be completed. The first one referred to the most important things that the respondents had learned during the course, the second one investigated why their participation in the course was valuable to them and the last one included possible suggestions for how the course might be improved for the next group of students.

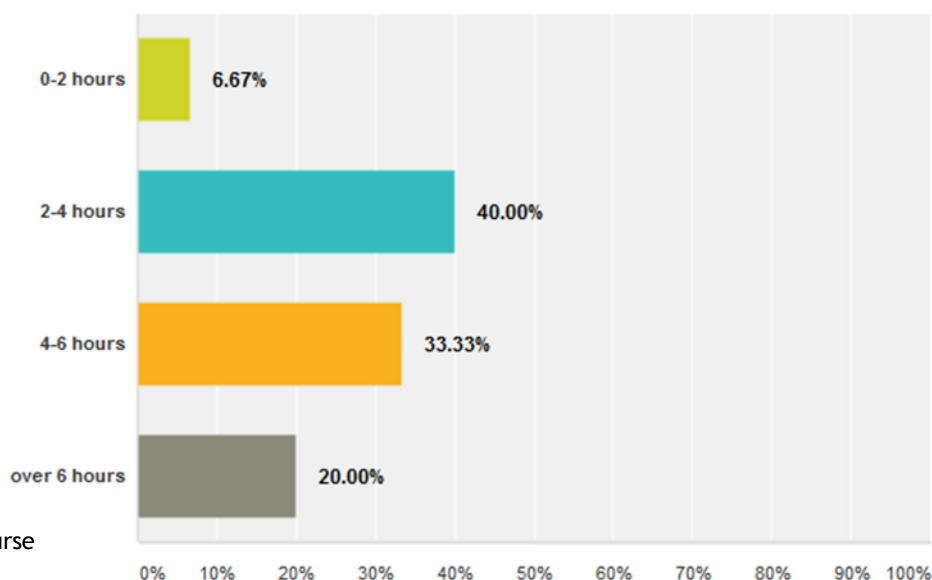
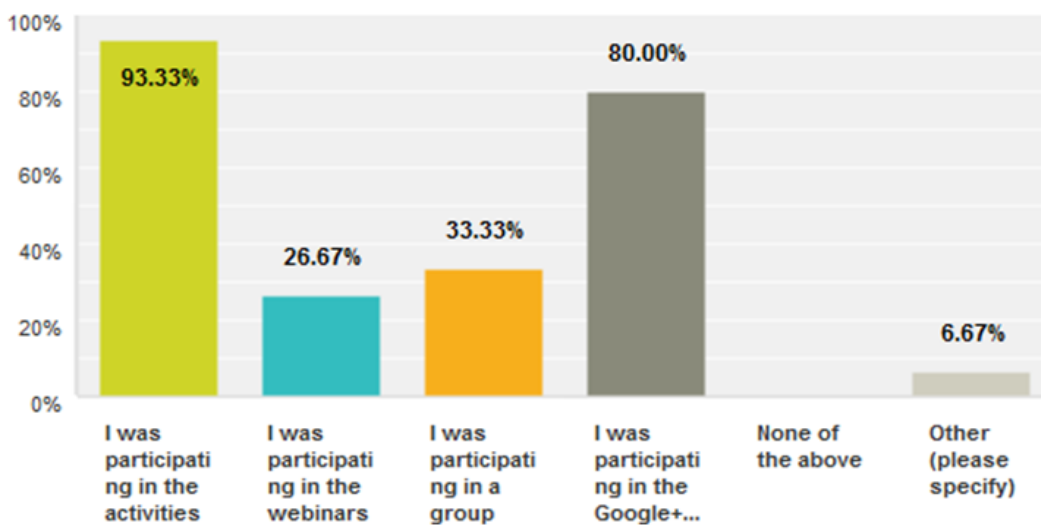


Figure 1: Amount of time spent on course related activities (n=15).

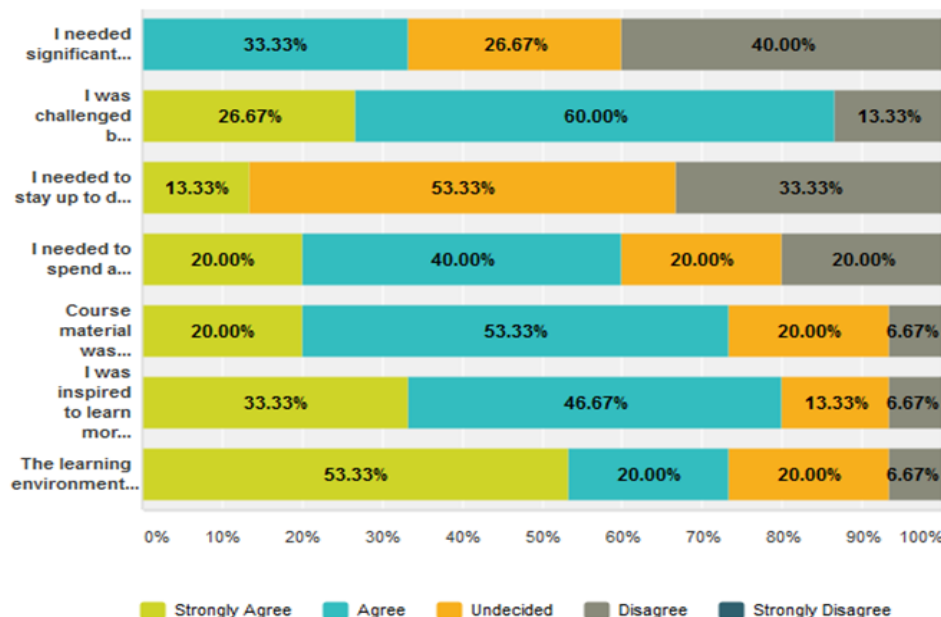
Figure 1 shows the amount of time respondents invested in the course. Specifically, 40% of the respondents (n=6) needed at least two to four hours per week in order to keep up with the learning content, while 33% (n=5) spent four to six hours. Three participants (20%) stated that they devoted over six hours and only one (7 %) declared that his/her participation corresponded to zero to two hours. So over half 53% (n=8) of the respondents spent more than 4 hours on course-related activities, and devoted enough time and a satisfactory level of presence in the online learning community.

Figure 2 reveals the ways in which respondents engaged themselves in the #CreativeHE course. As mentioned earlier, the respondent's engagement was perceived as the combined sum of the participation in the activities of the course, as outlined in the P2PU platform, the participation in the scheduled webinars, in the groups formed and in the Google+ community. Relatively, 93% of the respondents (n=14) claimed that they have participated in the activities, while 80% (n=12) were participating in the Google+ community. At this part, it must be noted that the respondents could choose more than one option. Only five participants (33%) of the present study participated in a group and four of them (26,7%) in the webinars. Interestingly, one participant (7%) stated that (s)he "cherry-picked just some (not all) of the activities".

Figure 2: Ways in which respondents were engaged (n=15)



Consequently, it is easily understood that the core practices of the course were the required course activities and the Google+ community, whereas the optional activities e.g. participation in groups and the webinars accumulated lower percentages. There might be a number of reasons for this. Firstly, the fact that there is a different time zone in Greece (+2 hours compared to the UK) combined with the different linguistic background of participants, may have discouraged participation in the webinars. Also, the majority of the postgraduate students entered the course in the third week of the course. As a result, they had no time to explore the whole interface, philosophy and content of the course. It took a while to gain familiarity with the technologies and approaches being used and perhaps this feeling of unfamiliarity led to a hindering attitude towards the participation in the webinars and the groups.



feeling of unfamiliarity led to a hindering attitude towards the participation in the webinars and the groups.

Figure 3 and Table 1 (overleaf) show respondent's level of agreement and disagreement on statements relating to the amount of effort, the course material and time.

Figure 3: time and effort required

Table 1: level of agreement and disagreement on statements relating to the amount of effort, the course material and time

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
I needed significant effort to learn the content in this course.	0.00% 0	33.33% 5	26.67% 4	40.00% 6	0.00% 0	15
I was challenged by the overall amount of material to be learned.	26.67% 4	60.00% 9	0.00% 0	13.33% 2	0.00% 0	15
I needed to stay up to date with class readings in order to understand the upcoming topics.	13.33% 2	0.00% 0	53.33% 8	33.33% 5	0.00% 0	15
I needed to spend a significant amount of time to complete writing assignments.	20.00% 3	40.00% 6	20.00% 3	20.00% 3	0.00% 0	15
Course material was presented at a pace that helped me understand it.	20.00% 3	53.33% 8	20.00% 3	6.67% 1	0.00% 0	15
I was inspired to learn more about course topics because of the instructors.	33.33% 5	46.67% 7	13.33% 2	6.67% 1	0.00% 0	15
The learning environment created by the instructors was safe and supportive.	53.33% 8	20.00% 3	20.00% 3	6.67% 1	0.00% 0	15

As it can be observed from Table 1, none of the participants have strongly disagreed with the statements presented in question 3. The majority of the respondents agreed with the items of the question, while a noteworthy number remain undecided. Additionally, 53% of respondents (n=8) remain undecided with regard to the necessity of staying up to date with the course readings in order to understand the upcoming topics. This might reflect the fact that the postgraduate students entered the course with a two weeks delay. Consequently, they had to catch up with the rest of the participants, something which probably influenced this attitude.

The effort required to learn the content of the course was not perceived as high, since 67% of the respondents stated that they disagreed or were undecided. Curiously, this finding might be seen as contradicting the statement, which describes whether the participants felt challenged by the overall amount of the learning material. 87% of the postgraduate students said they were challenged by the amount of the learning resources which were utilized during the course. We might infer from these responses that although the volume of work expected was significant, especially given the late start of students, the cognitive demand to master the content was not.

A possible explanation for this could be the prior knowledge that some of the students had, which definitely reduced the cognitive load. Nevertheless, nine students (60%) suggested that they needed a significant amount of time to complete the writing assignments. This outcome could be interpreted in three ways. First, the generating nature of the assignments demands more time than the comprehensive or reading time. Also, the linguistic difference increased the time needed in order to synthesise a writing text and finally in some occasions the producing mean was a multimedia tool (e.g. info graphic), something in which either prior knowledge or extra time for discovery was needed. Another important aspect was the formation of a safe and supportive environment. In fact, 73% of the participants (n=11) stated that such an atmosphere was present. In support of the above, 80% (n=12) of the respondents claimed that the instructors-supervisors inspired them to learn more about the topics discussed, whereas 73% agreed with the fact that the course material was presented at a pace that helped them to understand it. We use those two dimensions, the interpersonal and the organizational, in order to verify the supportiveness and safeness of the learning community. Obviously, those two factors reinforce the concept that the environment provoked a steady and authentic type of engagement, a conclusion which amplifies the value of this learning experience.

Table 2: illustrates participants' views to topics which were of special interest, including participation, reflection, collaboration and sociability.

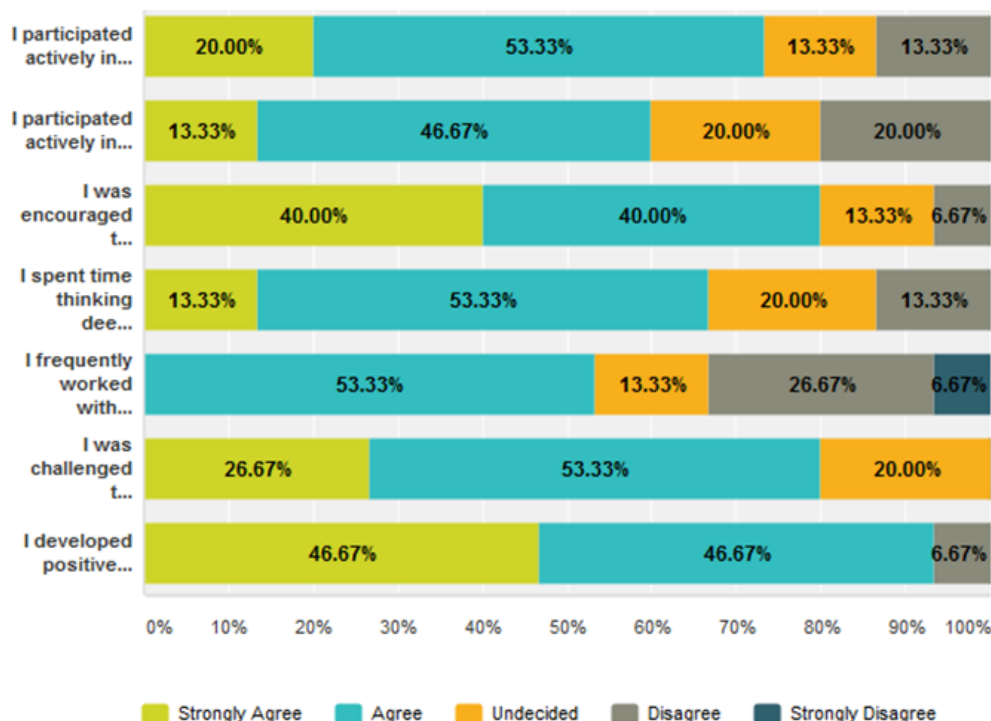
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
I participated actively in most class learning experiences.	20.00% 3	53.33% 8	13.33% 2	13.33% 2	0.00% 0	15
I participated actively in discussion boards for this course.	13.33% 2	46.67% 7	20.00% 3	20.00% 3	0.00% 0	15
I was encouraged to make use of my personal experiences to learn the content.	40.00% 6	40.00% 6	13.33% 2	6.67% 1	0.00% 0	15
I spent time thinking deeply about a number of course topics.	13.33% 2	53.33% 8	20.00% 3	13.33% 2	0.00% 0	15
I frequently worked with other students to complete class projects or assignments.	0.00% 0	53.33% 8	13.33% 2	26.67% 4	6.67% 1	15
I was challenged to reconsider my point of view on some course topics.	26.67% 4	53.33% 8	20.00% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	15
I developed positive relationships with other students from this class.	46.67% 7	46.67% 7	0.00% 0	6.67% 1	0.00% 0	15

The table suggests that only one participant has selected the “Strongly Disagree” option, whereas the majority of the respondents (over 50%) have at least agreed or strongly agreed with the above statements. However, a respected number of participants (two to three) remained undecided. In particular, 73% of the participants (n=11) stated that they have participated actively in most learning experiences, while at the same time 60% of them attributed their participation in the discussion boards of this course (mostly the Google+ community).

An interesting and important observation is that 80% (n=12) of the community members noted that they were encouraged to use their personal experiences in order to support their learning (b). This practice is consistent with an environment that encourages personalisation of learning, openness and reflection as each person is invited to use his/her own personal experiences, ideas and “wisdom” to fulfill his/her learning goals. Also, the fact that 67% of the participants indicated, that they spent time thinking deeply about some concepts of the course, could result in the “challenging” characterisation of the course. If these data are connected to the fact that 80% (n=12) of respondents said they were challenged to reconsider their point of views on some topics of the course, it is obvious that the reflective and critical thinking skills of participants were involved in their active participation.

Furthermore, although only a small number of participants (n=5) took part in a group, eight students indicated that they have worked with other learners in order to complete class projects or assignments. This finding might be connected with the face to face meetings that the postgraduate students had in the framework of their Masters Programme that they attend. If this is the case, it is really delightful that students had overcome the territorial limitations of the online community and shared their learning experiences with the rest of the students during their master course at the University of Macedonia. Last but not least, fourteen participants manifested that they had developed positive relationships with the rest of the students during the #CreativeHE course. This finding implies the friendly and supportive atmosphere that characterised the learning environment in which they were involved, something which was stated already earlier. Figure 4 presents a graphical representation of these data.

Figure 4: Behaviours encouraged by the course



The last section of the questionnaire included three open sentences which were expected to be answered by the respondents. Fourteen (14) students answered the fifth question, while in the last section of the fifth question only nine participants suggested a possible improvement for the course. The first sentence was investigating what were the most important things that they learnt. These answers are included in the table below.

Table 3: The most important things that I learnt were:

1.	How creativity works and why this is important to provide happy people.
2.	Everyone has something important to teach you or you can be inspired from their experiences.
3.	I learnt that I can be more creative as a person and a teacher when I use my personal experience and express myself through different ways.
4.	A new way of teaching.
5.	Ways to be creative.
6.	Thinking in a more creative way.
7.	Everyone is creative with the right conditions; creativity can take place nearly everywhere.
8.	That all people are creative, even though some of them don't know it.
9.	To interact in a cyber community.
10.	Team work, learning by doing.
11.	I learned that participation in an online group can as be equally fulfilling as a real-world group.
12.	How to use new web tools for educational reasons.
13.	The use of the technology rather than the content.
14.	New technologies.

A conceptual categorization of the answers shows that even though different views are mentioned, some opinions oriented towards a common topic. Specifically, the first answer states that this participant learned how creativity can be unfolded in such ways that it can form happy people. A really inspiring statement as creativity is being connected with positive emotions which eventually affect people's general attitudes and dispositions. The next two answers give prominence to the role of experiences and expression as well. Leveraging our personal experiences in the learning process seems to be an important dimension of the #creativeHE course, as it has been highlighted often by the participants. However, expression is also an important factor and is connected with the next three statements (four, five and six), which point out the cognitive and comprehensive functions which are being enriched by creativity. Two respondents highlight the fact that the most important thing that they learned is that all people are creative, if the right conditions exist. A really important outcome as creativity is acknowledged as a substantive characteristic of people's personality which needs to be cultivated and encouraged. The next three participants (eight, nine and ten) emphasise the social-interactive dimension of the course and report that the participation in an online group/community was the most important thing that they learned. However, a hidden gem can be traced in the "learning by doing" phrase (tenth participant), as the #creativeHE course promoted this philosophical concept and differing from the traditional theory-based approach. Finally, the last three respondents pointed out the technological aspect of the learning process, which is also an interesting finding (c). Learning to use some web tools can be really productive, as these tools can facilitate future learning procedures. Though, one student argued that the use of the technological tools overshadowed the learning content. Unfortunately, this is a common incident in online learning environments, but it must be acknowledged that in shared responsibility models of learning [2], the responsibility for the learning content and the tools used, doesn't only lie with the instructors, it also lies with the learner.

♦

The second sentence of the last question referred to the value of participation in this course. The respondents' answers were conceptually categorized and are illustrated in the next table.

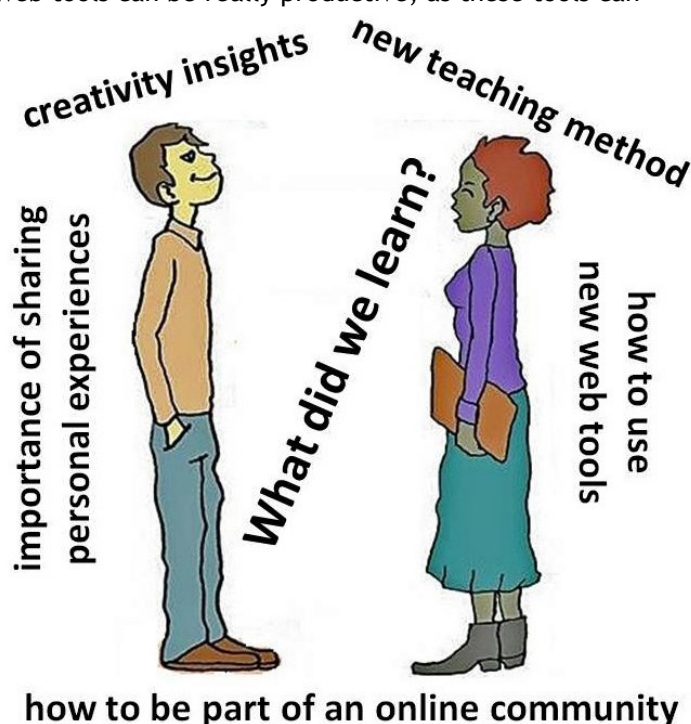


Table 4: Participating in the course was valuable to me because:

1.	I met new people, I was involved in interesting activities, I had the opportunity to share my opinion and get a variety of ideas.
2.	I learnt things through exchange opinions with the others.
3.	I exchanged opinions with experts and other students and teachers.
4.	I interacted with new people.
5.	I came into contact with and learned from others through collaboratively participating in the construction of new knowledge.
6.	It encouraged me to explore issues which previously I had let fall by the wayside; this is because there was continuous encouragement and feedback - which I would not have had if pursuing these issues independently.
7.	I had the chance to discuss with people I may never meet about a very interesting topic.
8.	I met new people, I shared ideas with others about education, I improved my English and my skills in using computer programs and tools.
9.	It made me comprehend that I can be creative.
10.	It helped me to change the way I was facing creativity and be more open to it.
11.	I wanted to keep abreast of new initiatives.
12.	I was able to deal with a new learning environment something that inspired me.
13.	Of the knowledge in different fields and areas.
14.	I used other programs.

The common characteristic that emerges from the first three statements is the value of exchanging ideas and opinions. As a result, the participants in the community had the opportunity to discuss their opinions and thoughts relatively to the course topics and reflect on them. Sometimes there were, also, incidents of reconsideration of the original thoughts as the discussion which was generated proved that there were some wrongheaded conceptions. By this, we do not imply that there were correct and false opinions, but the fact that some conceptions, beliefs and ideas contained misjudged elements. The next five views reflect the interactions that took place during the #CreativeHE course. These interactions were not simple statements of agreement and disagreement. A purposeful complexion formed the whole interactivity that took place in the Google+ community, something that was not only confirmed from the above opinions, but also from the instructor and supervisors of the course. The creative and generative nature of the interactions encouraged the sharing of ideas and practice, something that really raised the levels of engagement. Furthermore, two respondents highlighted the fact that the value of this learning experience was connected with their creativity and especially the realisation both at an individual and collective level. By this, we mean that the respondents not only realised aspects of creativity in their own life, but also the fact that they were also able to recognise different expressions of creativity in others, something, which they could not do earlier. We believe that developing a deeper understanding of creativity and its personal manifestation was one of the main goals of this course. By this we mean that the learning experience aimed not only to develop cognitive understanding about creativity as an abstract concept but also an appreciation of how individuals understood and used their own creativity in the circumstances of their own life - for example in their teaching.

Finally, the last four answers include various opinions such as the desire for new initiatives, a new learning environment (perhaps something challenging as a new way of learning was introduced to this participant), the interdisciplinary character of the course (as creativity provokes thinking out of the box in multiple contents) and the use of other technological tools. Those answers correspond with the individual filters that each participant uses in order to take part in a learning process and definitely resonates with the principal that each learner tries to fulfill his/her own learning needs and interests.

The third and last sentence of the fifth question referred to possible suggestions/ improvements that could be taken into account for the next groups of students. The respondents' answers were also conceptually categorized and are illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5: The course would be improved for the next group of students by:

1.	Participating and getting feedback in a more active way.
2.	More participation of all members.
3.	Early "ice-breaking" activities, and regular reinforcement (encouraging responses) are important in getting people's involvement; I think the course does this, and it is important to maintain.
4.	Adding more activities or preparation exercises which have to do with the personal experience of each participant.
5.	Making an introduction of the learning content and the whole process of the learning environment (use of tools, explanation of the community and the e-portfolios).
6.	Better time organization, so that everyone is at the same point.
7.	More videos.
8.	A better theoretical explanation of the concepts.
9.	Following some of the suggestions I made in my evaluation of the course and in my interview with Chrissi.

Only nine respondents answered this question. Their suggestions may be categorised in two domains. The first one includes the participation, which according to the students, should be higher from all the members of the community. Additionally, the first participant also highlights the need of a more active feedback, but without suggesting a possible way to do so. The second domain refers to organizational aspects of the course. Namely, there is a need for introductory activities and a descriptive outline of the course. As the third participant suggests, the activities and the reinforcement were present in this course and need to be maintained. However, an introduction of the whole process can be possibly correlated with the delay of the postgraduate students entering the course due to the fact that the first semester of the Master Programm did not start until after the course had started. This explanation corresponds with the sixth participant who highlights the need for a same beginning date. Furthermore, a better theoretical basis and more videos are being proposed by the students in order perhaps to better approach the subjects/topics that are being studied.

Conclusions

This article aimed to explore the role of engagement in the #CreativeHE online learning community. Engagement is the vital element of in the building and working of a community, not only in online settings, but in natural communities too. Engagement with the concepts, content and activities of a course is also essential for learning. Therefore, it was important to examine the level of engagement and ways and means in which postgraduate students were actively engaged in the #CreativeHE course or not. Their presence in the Google+ community was undoubtedly high, while their interactions with the rest of the participants could be described as direct. The nature of these interactions was mainly directed at the course content and activities and many sought accreditation through badges. In addition many students participated in more general discussions, exchanging opinions and ideas on a wide variety of other topics. The safe and supportive environment promoted the practice of sharing personal experiences in order to support their point of view, but also it must be noted that this was an intention of the instructional design of the course and the modeled behaviour of the facilitators (b). The diversity of views expressed about the value of the experience reflected the particular needs and interests of participants and the success of the course in fulfilling their particular goals.

References

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- (2) Van Merriënboer, J. J. G., & Stoyanov, S. (2008). Learners in a changing learning landscape: Reflections from an instructional design perspective. In J. Visser & M. Visser-Valfrey (Eds), *Learners in a changing learning landscape: Reflections from a dialogue on new roles and expectations*. Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Springer, pp. 69-90.

Notes

- a) The questionnaire can be accessed at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FHCL7Q9>.
- b) This dimension of learning is considered in another article in this magazine titled "Sharing Personally Meaningful Experience: A Value-Based Approach to Community-Based Learning".
- c) Exposure to and use of digital tools is considered in another article in the magazine titled 'Use of web tools in promoting engagement in the ##CreativeHE community Maria-Rafaela Tziouvara& Nikos Mouratoglou

SHARING PERSONALLY MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES: a value-based approach to social learning in #creativeHE

Nikos Mouratoglou

As a student learner on the #CreativeHE course I observed that not only did the learning activities encourage participants to share their personal experiences, but also the participants felt that by sharing their experiences, they could explain, describe or even justify their personal opinion. In other words, instead of presenting a logical argument or an example for a situation, the participants chose to share a personal incident to support the point they were trying to make. I interpreted this to mean that participants felt a keen sense of belonging, trust and emotional connections with other participants.

This situation raised a question in my mind, "How easy is it to share a deeply meaningful personal experience?" From conversations I had with some of the participants, I concluded that sharing an experience is something deeper and more value-based rather than just expressing an opinion. I would say that sharing a personally meaningful experience resembles sharing a part of who you are. As a result many

Experience Sharing



members of the community shared an experience, commented on others and eventually find out that some experiences held a deep resonance and significance for them - perhaps they had encountered and been through something similar that brought back complex memories and emotions - for example illness or bereavement. I found it really interesting that people who do not know each other, with a different cultural and linguistic background had common experiences and some of them even a common sense of understanding. Recognising this has been something significant that I learnt through #creativeHE and I think that it is really powerful if it can be cultivated in online communities as it helps offset the absence of physical face to face interaction. Perhaps, this time of personally meaningful experience sharing could be described as the mechanism for forming deep relation-

al ties between participants who do not share the same physical or cultural space.

Illustrating my proposition

I would like to describe two situations which took place in the #CreativityHE course to illustrate my point. In



week 1, participants were expected to reflect on a picture that illustrated a watering can pouring water on grass. Specifically, they were expected to

reflect on this picture in relation to learning. Many different interpretations were posted. The interesting fact, though, was that some of the community members shared a personal experience in order to support the way they related their interpretations to the picture linking their everyday life to the concept of learning they were describing. Such an example was

Sunday morning musings

We have family for lunch today and my wife, who is preparing lunch, told me to cut the grass. So I did and given the metaphorical discussion this week I mused over my grass. I have a lot of it but apart from cutting it I do nothing for it. It grows well because of the environment its in - well drained chalky soils, mild wet weather, sunshine, and all the animal life that lives on it and in it. At the moment its thick and green because of the coincidence of optimum conditions. My contribution is simply to cut it every few weeks. In inhibiting its growth it tends to grow more.

If we were to apply this to education then its about creating the optimum conditions for people to grow and that is more than feeding people with the metaphorical water. But in cutting my grass I am making it comply with my ambition to have a nice neat lawn. By analogy much of education does the same thing through standardised content, delivery and assessment.

I have a rough area of grass which is not lawn it's more like meadow.. I often leave it for several years before I cut and it behaves in a very different way. It supports a very different ecology, lots of different grasses and wild flowers, lots of things that we call weeds including brambles and even small trees when I leave it for several years. The point is, the same environmental conditions, without the constant cutting, creates diversity which ultimately is more resilient and more sustainable. So what does this mean for standardised education?

Εμφάνιση λιγότερων · Μετάφραση



Norman Jackson who transferred the metaphorical aspect of the “grass” photo and shared with the rest of the community a post about cutting his grass. Not only the personal picture, but also the correspondence of his personal opinion with the community’s activity, formed an interesting reflective post. By connecting his own experiences on that particular morning to the learning content, Norman explained his concept of learning. This reminded me that each person “translates” the incoming information based on his/her own empirical and conceptual basis. Furthermore, this kind of sharing provoked discussion on the topic and some interesting thoughts, ideas and opinions were shared.

Another situation included a post from Katerina Kliani, in which she describes a personal creation that she completed last year. Her mother taught Katerina how to weave, but she also needed some extra help, which she found on the Internet. However, the meaning of this post is that Katerina felt “safe” to share her personal experience, without being afraid of being judged or criticised.



Katerina Kliani
 Activities · 11 Νοε 2015

Week 6 - Preparation 1

Last year I decided to start doing something creative and useful in my free time! So, I was influenced by my mother and learnt weaving. It is not an easy activity because there are a lot of different ways to create clothing, but the Internet and some videos helped me. What I really like is that weaving makes me feel relaxed and reduces anxiety. In addition, it is important that I can make something with my hands in order to wear it or give it to people I want as a present. I strongly believe that this kind of items have emotional value. I chose to share with you my two favourite scarves! I hope you like them!

Εμφάνιση λιγότερων · Μετάφραση




+6




This is exactly my point of view, the fact that participants can feel free to share and utilise their personal experiences in order to support their learning, reflects the way that such behaviour is supported by the learning environment. In response to Katerina’s post, one participant (Jenny Willis) was reminded of her parents and her grandparents who taught her how to weave. By connecting her experience to Katerina’s she was sharing her understandings in a relational way - *‘we have had a similar experience and I can relate to you and your experience through it we can share how we felt as well as what we think.’*

Norman seized the opportunity and highlighted the role of emotions and imagination in such creative situations. Finally, Katerina pointed out the fact that in Greece, such crafts are usually being ignored or not appreciated by young people. However, the Greek economical and social crisis has changed a little bit the whole situation, as more and more people are returning to such activities.

Both the reflective posts outlined above included a behavior of sharing a personal meaningful experience in order to support the learning process. It was not only the publishers of the post, but also the rest of the participants who benefited from this practice, as they had the opportunity to reflect on memories and connect their own experiences which triggering emotional as well as cognitive responses. Moreover, sharing an experience can be perceived as a starting point for a discussion, which at the end may include a set of very different dimensions, characteristics, views and opinions.



Jennifer Willis
 12 Νοε 2015

Απάντηση

+1

These are beautiful, Katerina. You should be very proud.

Two comments: I find it sad that we have lost these skills. As a child growing up in the 1950s and 60s, I learnt how to do all these sorts of needle craft from my parents and grandparents. So, my hobbies were always creative. Why do we not value these crafts now? Why do young people need to go to the internet to discover what was once part of our package of skills?

Second point: you mention how therapeutic it is to weave. Yes, it is the same with knitting, embroidery and other such crafts. There is something hypnotic in the repeated movements, but I also find it a great opportunity to reflect when I am doing these things.

Jenny



Norman Jackson ΕΠΙΟΠΤΗΣ

13 Νοε 2015 +7

you are so right +**Katerina Kliani** when we design and make something with love and care we are investing huge amounts of emotional energy as well as imagination and skill - making something from the resources in our environment is what makes us different to other animals and appreciating what we and others have made also makes us different.

Εμφάνιση λιγότερων · Μετάφραση



Katerina Kliani

17 Νοε 2015

+1

Απάντηση

+**Jennifer Willis** It is really sad that nowadays young people do not value crafts like weaving or knitting as much as our grandparents used to do. However, I realize that in Greece things have changed during the last years maybe because of the economical and social crisis. People tend to return to activities that were completely forgotten, such as making their own clothing or cultivating fruit and vegetables. Sometimes in order to save money or more often to feel useful and creative.

Personally, it is my firm belief that such initiatives should be supported and reinforced in online communities. The very act of sharing personally meaningful experiences encourages the formation of a sense of community. I think that it is an important component of a social learning process in which relating to each other is as important as relating to the activities and resources that are provided. But, in order to share what is personally meaningful, individuals must feel the environment is safe, discreet and supportive and they must feel that culturally it is acceptable to do so without fear of judgement or criticism.

Relating my observation to theories of learning

I have tried to relate this phenomenon I observed to the theories I am learning in my course. Adult learning can be described as a self-directed process, in which learners take not only the initiative, but also the responsibility for their own learning (1). As a result the differentiation that occurs doesn't only affect the role of the learner, but also the teacher's role, which is transformed in a facilitator, mentor and advisor. Generally, the whole nature of the learning process is being changed.

Moreover, adult learning is being described as selective. This selectiveness may have two different dimensions. On the one hand, learners are interested in meaningful topics and subjects which are related to their everyday life, while on the other hand, selectiveness may refer on the personal perspective expressed (2). These personal filters, which each person-learner activates either on receiving and interpreting information and knowledge or on thinking, reflecting and producing his/her own meanings and ideas can provide the opportunity for discussions, multiperspectivity and

reflection. A situation which could be described as a process of enriching, upgrading and altering someone's conceptual framework in order to construct new meaning. In fact, according to Rodriguez (3), we are cultural beings, constantly constructing and deconstructing cultures. Proportionally, we are constantly constructing and deconstructing meanings and as a result our own perception of the world. Last but not least, I believe that the most important characteristic of adult learning is that the learners are not "tabula rasa" as John Locke suggested for the human being, but formed personalities with previous knowledge and most important with previous experiences. I am not implying that younger learners have no prior knowledge or experiences, but the fact that the amount or the variety of experiences differ significantly among those two age groups. This theoretical and empirical background may be perceived as an established system of values and beliefs which can result in a highly creative aspect of adult learning. However, even though the above mentioned characteristics can be present in an online learning community, sometimes the outcomes are inadequate. This is probably happening due to the influence of different environmental conditions (4), which undoubtedly affect the learning process. Therefore the community needs to create a safe, welcoming learning environment and a culture of empathy, respect, approachability and authenticity (5) Transferring this theoretical basis on the #CreativeHE community, the participants state that the above conditions were present. Therefore, the environment inspired and provoked the participants to share their thoughts, ideas and experiences.



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INTERPRETING #creativeHE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A NETWORKING CONVERSATION

Norman Jackson and Kamakshi Rajagopal

The power of a network

In her article entitled 'The Power and Potential of Networking Conversations Kamakshi Rajagopal' (1) examined the social practice of networking, in particular the conversational perspective of networking associated with an event in which participants explored an issue or complex problem. I was interested to use her insights as a tool to consider #creativeHE from the perspective of a networked conversation formed around the idea and practice of creativity.

One of the ways that we seek out spaces for professional conversation is through participation in networking environments and events, a gathering of people or even a community interested in conversation about particular topics: in the case of #creativeHE the topic is creativity and creativity for learning in higher education.

Networking is the most natural way of extending and re-establishing a personal (learning / professional) network. A networking event becomes one defined period in time when conversation on this topic, with the people who are interested in it, is focused and intensified. In such situations, networking can become a sensemaking activity or learning enterprise associated with democratic engagement with a complex or 'wicked' problem. In a networking event, the participants in the network try to articulate their own understandings about the issue, problem or other focus for discussion, in order to come to collaborative, shared understandings and through this process co-create new meanings.

Factors that influence participation

Each participant in a networked conversation shares their understanding of, and response to, the complex problem in a networked conversation is (implicitly and explicitly) influenced by five factors. These are: the context in which the individual is situated, the strategies (methods of working and learning) that the individual generally uses, the domain that the individual is interested in and has knowledge of, the network that the individual has access to, and the individual's implicit and explicitly formulated goals and motivations. The latter are influenced by emotions generated by the conversations themselves and or the relationships that are formed within the network.

These factors influence the networker's willingness, and capability to participate in the conversations of the network. They are the unexpressed or hidden influences that the networker carries in every networking situation or conversation that he/she participates in (Figure 1).

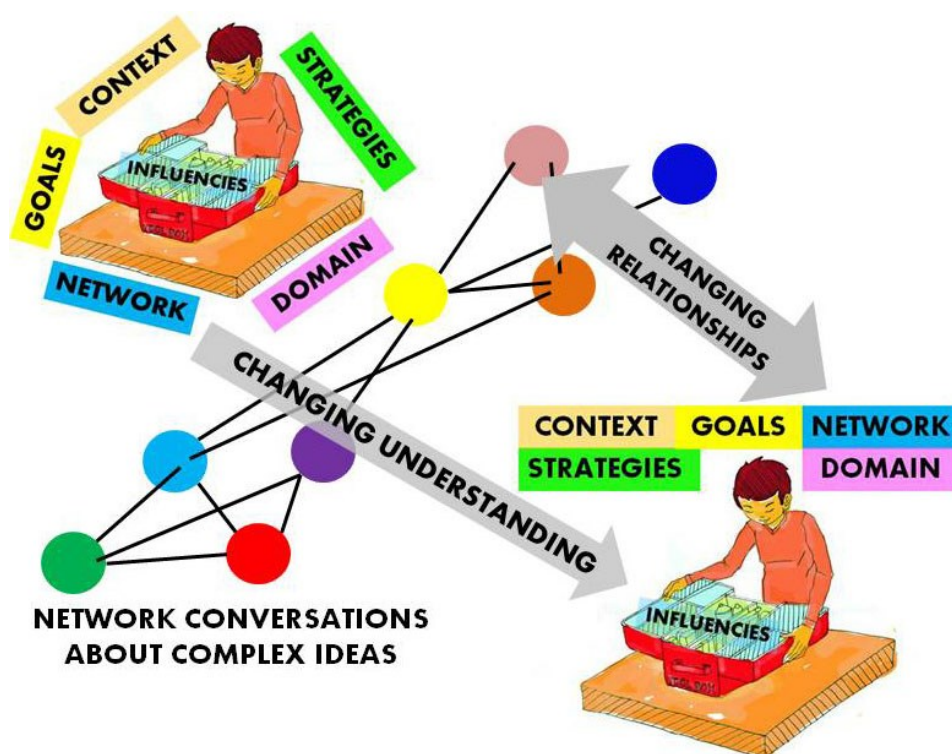


Figure 1 The cognitive and relationship development process in network conversations that lead to the co-creation of new meanings and understandings and strong relational ties within the network of participants.

Each networking conversation affords individuals the opportunity to explore complex ideas or problems, particularly their social and relational complexity, through interactions with others who share an interest in the idea/problem. Through explorative dialogue, they discuss their personal beliefs and interpretations of the problem in ways that are influenced by these five factors. If the conditions in the network are emotionally conducive participants may share experiences that are personally meaningful as was the case within the #creativeHE community. In such situations conversations are sharing more than knowledge and experiences they are sharing the values that a person holds (2). As more people reciprocate and stronger emotional and cognitive ties are developed between participants the network begins to move towards conversations that are value-based, particularly in those parts of a networked community that are working as a collective (3).

As a consequence of the networked conversations dialogues, participants start to co-create new meanings and understandings of the dimensions of the ideas and problems they are discussing, They forge more links between and within the factors themselves, and thereby reconstruct their individual perspectives or understanding creating new meaning in the process.

Through this process they begin to align their own interpretations and understandings with those of other participants, creating a shared co-created perspective or understanding of the ideas and problems being discussed (Figure 2).

Cognitive change through networked conversations

A participant in the networked conversation is implicitly or explicitly influenced by factors that act as lenses or filters namely their goals, strategies, network (relationships), context, domain knowledge and interests. By engaging in conversations with other people in the networking space, and exposure to the exchanges between others within the networking space, the networker tries to make sense of the different ideas, problems and issues being discussed. Through this process, they align, interpret and alter the influences on their thinking according to their changing understanding. The participant might also share their own sensemaking through the network conversation. When the networker leaves the networking space, their goals, strategies, context, network, domain knowledge and interests have been modified as a result of the learning that has taken place, it is likely that their understandings are now more in tune or aligned with those of other participants. The networker has re-assessed and altered their interpretation of the ideas or problems being discussed and the factors or filters that influence their thinking.



Figure 2 Emerging relationships and interpretations

Networked conversations as sensemaking projects

One of the feelings you often get in a fast moving networked conversation is the feeling of being overwhelmed. There is so much information to take in and so many ideas and conversations to process and assimilate. Ultimately, we have to make sense of it all and so we use filters: filters that reflect our short and longer term goals, strategies, network (relationships), context, and domain knowledge and interests.

The experience of participating in networks show many similarities with Weick's descriptive perspective on sensemaking (4). Networkers are situated in a complex social environment interacting around a complex ideas and problems or a broad topic with many dimensions, on which they participate in many discursive activities - a chaos containing various diverse interpretations of the five factors (*sensemaking in flux*) emerges. They engage in noticing and naming (both individually and collaboratively) what they see and perceive during the networking event, by linking up (or aligning) several instances of the factors (*noticing and bracketing; labeling and categorizing*). Their perceptions are positioned against the backdrop of their own past activities, i.e. projects that they have done in the recent past or the teaching practice that they pursue (*presumption*). The networking event (#creativeHE) gives them the opportunity to re-evaluate their presumption and to amend it based on their new interactions (*retrospection*). These temporary understandings are iterative - with every new social interaction, the understanding can be changed to create a better fit (*social and systemic*). The networkers also engage in action, defining goals and strategies (*action*). Finally, the networkers ultimately value the conversations held at the conference, in their various formations (one-to-one, small group, ad-hoc discussions, one-to-many presentations). In these conversations, tacit knowledge is increasingly articulated (articulation in *communication*).

Networked conversations as relationship building projects

One of the things I have learnt from my experience of #creativeHE is that network conversations conducted in the spirit of openness, trust, respect and willingness to engage and share personal experiences as well as content, engage people in an emotional way. The process leads to relationships that might be categorised in terms of the strength of their ties into strong, weak and latent (Figure 2 above).

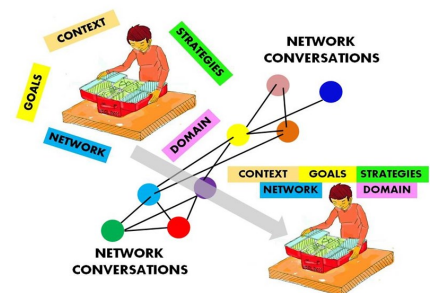
From my experience of the #creativeHE online course and particularly interactions with members of Group 1, I know that I developed about half a dozen new relationships at least three of whom I will try to maintain beyond the life of the #creativeHE conversation. I can also see how the development of new relationships holds greater potential for my learning and achievement in the future than the immediate learning that is gained from the network conversation.

Acknowledgement

Much of the content of this article has been adapted from Kamakshi's Lifewide Magazine article (1).

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A CURATORIAL PERSPECTIVE ON #creativeHE

Norman Jackson

Introduction

#creativeHE is an on-line course but it is also a set of platforms for the sharing of content some of which is curated but much of it, at best, is only partially curated. By that I mean the accumulated personal knowledge contained within the posts, links and images is available to the members of the community but it is not organised, categorised, tagged, synthesised or searchable. This article considers the #creativeHE knowledge development process from a curatorial perspective. In the absence of appropriate tools within Google+ to turn a loosely structured on-line conversation into a curated resource, the idea of a post-course on-line magazine (such as this issue of Creative Academic Magazine) is proposed as a way of curating and disseminating the knowledge assets and learning to a wider public.

Curation & creativeHE

Content curation is the active process of searching for, discovering, gathering, organising, presenting and preserving digital content that is relevant to specific subjects or themes - like 'creativity and learning'(1). In the Social Age, everyone who gets involved in the social web and starts building collections of music, videos or any other media, or who regularly shares their views and opinions via blogs or Facebook, and/or who distributes content and links via Twitter is participating in social curation.

The #creativeHE course is underpinned by a collection of organised knowledge resources in the form of texts, videos and images curated by the course organiser Chrissi Nerantzi and hosted on the P2PU platform. These assets are labelled and it is easy to find them. The Google+ community space also provides a platform for the storage of resources but more importantly it provides a space into which participants acting as social curators in their own right can populate the space with content. Furthermore they can connect this platform to their own platforms (portfolios and blogs) and other platforms (eg YouTube, TED... and many others) hosting content. Also the posts they make themselves are

personalised knowledge that contributes to a significant shared knowledge resource that if labelled/tagged can be searched for and retrieved again.

Participants in the #creativeHE course contributed directly to the curatorial process. They provided content relevant to emerging conversations acting as searchers, processors and filters to ensure the relevance and appropriateness of the material and adding value to it through their own comments that enable content to be contextualised in the conversation. The discerning identification and selection of relevant and useful knowledge and artefacts, together with commentary that helps other users appreciate meaning, is at the heart of the curatorial process. This is an implicit rather than an explicit and openly acknowledged process within the dynamics of the #creativeHE course.

The word curate derives from the Latin root Curare, or 'to cure.' To curate, historically, has meant to take charge of or organize, to pull together, sift through, select for presentation, to heal and to preserve. Traditionally reserved for those who worked with physical materials in museum or library settings, curation today has evolved to apply to what we are all doing online. The preservation and organization of content online is now largely the responsibility of the individual in highly personalized information spaces. This has created a need to understand how individuals choose to pull together, sift through, organize, and present information within these spaces (1)

Harold Jarche provides an elegant and simple tool (2) which describes the process underlying curation at both the level of the individual participant and the social level of the whole community.

Figure 1 The seek sense share model lies at the heart of the #creative social learning enterprise (2)



The conceptual tool, featured in the bottom left of Figure 1, comprises three components

Seeking is about finding information that is relevant to our conversation or inquiry. It involves using both our imagination and our analytical mind.

Sensing is how we make sense of the information we find or have already found and stored and how we give it new meaning for a particular context - such as a conversation. In this way we personalize the information as we reuse it.

Sharing includes exchanging ideas, information and experiences with our networks as well as collaborating with our colleagues. Sharing involves gifting our understandings or personal sense making to the world either by making it accessible in publications like magazines, books, papers, blogs, twitter posts and any other open access publication vehicles like #creativeHE

Every member of the #creativeHE community who actively participates by posting, or commenting on other posts, or sharing links and resources including their own portfolios is engaging in the seeking-sensing-sharing process that leads to the semi-structured curation of resources. Semi-structured because most of the posts can be clearly linked to a topic of discussion or course-related activity.

Visualising the #creativeHE social curation space

Ryan Tracey (3) proposed a framework for content curation which is shown in Figure 2 and described below. Although it was constructed with a business audience in mind, it has some merits when considering social learning spaces. The model seems to suggest a hierarchy but apart from the initial 'attraction' dimension of curation, all other dimensions are present throughout the process of generation and use in a social learning environment.

Figure 2 Ryan Tracey's framework for content curation



Attract me: To build a community you have to attract people so the first curatorial job is to attract people to the curation in the first place. In the case of #creativeHE notice of the learning event was broadcast through social media and in the first instance potential participants were attracted to the content curated by the organiser on the P2PU platform. The content has to explain clearly the purpose of the enterprise and what is involved in participating but also it has to interest them sufficiently and / or show them how it will fulfil a learning need for people to commit to the process.

Motivate me: Extrinsic motivators (such as compulsory assessment) do not exist in the #creativeHE social learning space, so curators (facilitators) need to encourage participants to engage through the intrinsic value of the resources they provide and the interactions that occur. Motivation is linked to the pedagogic project that underlies the learning experience and the desire to engage participants in ways that will ensure that they motivate each other with their posts and content. The need to motivate, engage and inspire runs throughout the whole process.

Tell me: Participants want to develop their knowledge about the domain they are engaging with. There has to be sufficient basic content to provide them with enough information to support their learning process remembering that education is not the provision of information; it is about individuals making sense of the information and assimilating within their cognitive structures and understandings. It's important for this content to actually teach something and #creativeHE encourages participants to use what they have learnt through structured activities.

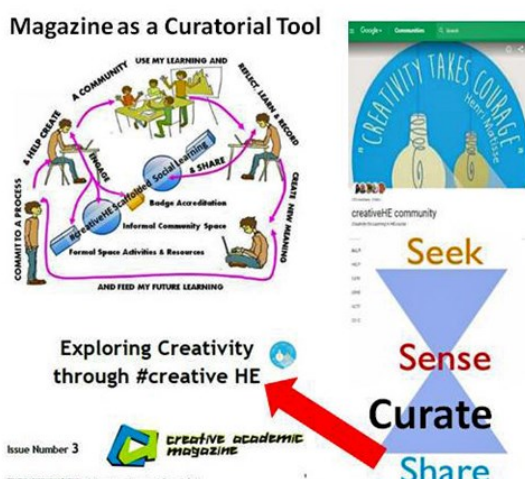
Show me: This content demonstrates the "Tell me" content in action. The whole point of social learning is to encourage participants to show each other what an idea or practice looks like from their own experiences. The recounting of personal experience through a story provides content with communicative power.

Let me: By creating new meaning from the content and putting what has been learnt into practice, the learner puts their understanding to the test. The activities designed into the #creativeHE learning process enabled participants to apply their learning, often in a playful way in a safe and supportive environment. By being encouraged to reflect on their experience and sharing what they had learnt more content with communicative power was generated.

Support me: This content comes from facilitators in the form of encouragement and feedback as people share their experiences and respond to questions raised by participants. It also comes from participants themselves as they interact with each other in a trusting, respectful and encouraging way.

Extend me: This content helps people see beyond what they can already see. It might be in the form of gentle persuasive challenge, in stories that provide alternative or additional perspectives and again it is offered by facilitators and other participants during the interactive process.

Value me: Underlying all the conversations and feedback in the learning space is the need to appreciate the contributions that participants make. This is about encouraging a culture of sharing and a culture that values what has been shared. Something that #creativeHE managed to achieve. This aspect of content curation extends into relationship building within a networked conversation that is described further elsewhere in this magazine (4,5,6). The sharing of value-based content leads to strong relational ties amongst participants which engender conversations (content) that have more potential for deeper learning and achievement. For example this magazine is an outcome of the development of relationships founded on the sharing of value-based content by four participants in #creativeHE.



The Curatorial Value of a Post Course Magazine

A lot of curatorial effort and skill is invested in developing the content of an open social learning online course like

#creativeHE, by the course organiser and everyone who actively participates in the course. Once the course has finished, although the site remains open to those who participated, they have no need or interest to engage with the content so the site lies dormant.

A social learning space without people is a dead space and if it is not accessible or searchable to the wider universe of learners via the internet it has little value as a resource. Perhaps, if the site was licensed through Creative Commons and the content was curated, the resources would be useful to people searching for this sort of content. The absence of curatorial tools, in Google+, makes it impossible to curate the content of #creativeHE. The approach we have adopted is to create a magazine that draws on the content and attempts to add value through analysis, synthesis, conceptualisation and other sense making processes. The magazine is published under a Creative Commons License so we are able to provide both the community, and the wider world, with both a flavour of the content and the way we have tried to make sense of the content and participants involvement.

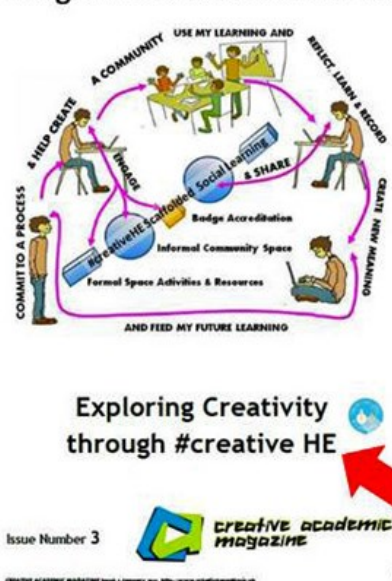
The problem with event-based social learning enterprises using the within Google+ platform

Perhaps we might extend the idea of a magazine based on the products of social learning as a curatorial tool, by suggesting that the production of an end of course magazine might be a useful activity embedded in the pedagogic strategy of any course of this type. The challenge for facilitators is then one of building a collective (6) with the enthusiasm and commitment to engage with this task.

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Magazine as a Curatorial Tool



USE OF WEBB TOOLS IN PROMOTING ENGAGEMENT IN THE #creativeHE COMMUNITY

Maria-Rafaela Tziouvara & Nikos Mouratoglou

Introduction

With the emergence of online courses, a variety of web tools have been developed to facilitate engagement in the online learning experience. Web tools are used in the educational process to enhance teaching and collaboration among teachers and students. Web 2.0. tools are amongst the most commonly used internet tools that allow users to interact and create content in collaboration with others.

Popular web tools which are used to facilitate online classes are Email, Avatars, Newsletters (1), Chat rooms or threaded discussions on discussion boards (2). Light and Polin (3) categorized web tools in four wider categories according to the goals of their use, namely:

1. Tools that create or support a virtual learning environment (Blackboard, Moodle, DropBox, Edmodo, MyUdutu, etc).

2. Tools that support communication and cultivate relationships (Blogs, Communicator, Jing, Twitter, *Individual blogs or journals, etc*).

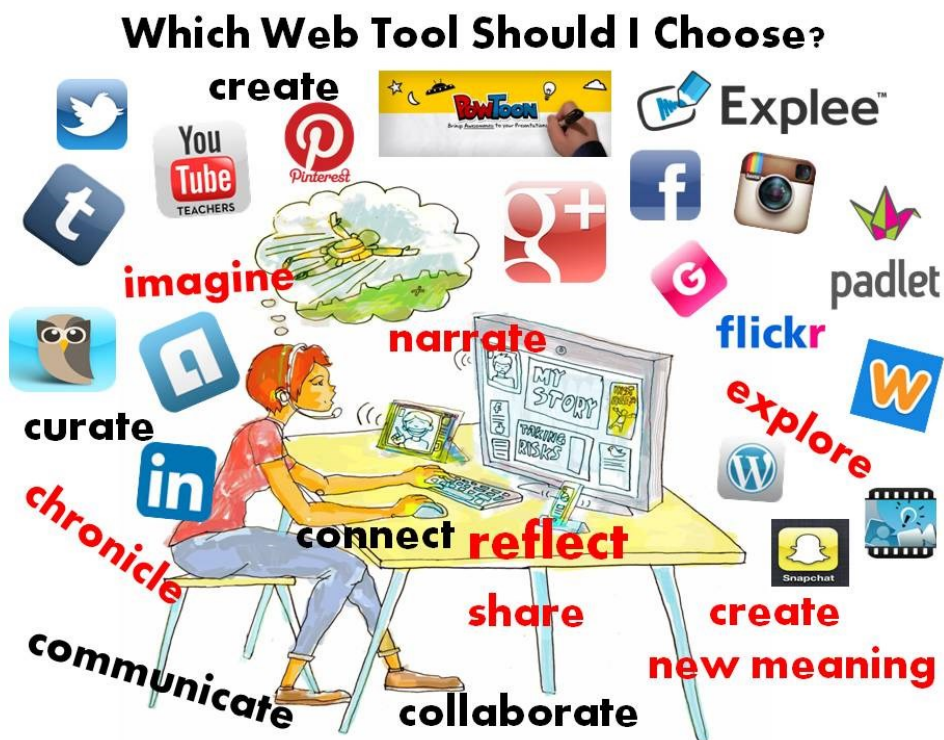
3. Resources to support teaching and learning (Brainpop, Study Mate, Thinkfinity, YouTube, Kto8.com, etc).

4. Tools enabling students to create artefacts to represent and communicate their learning (Audacity, Camtasia, Glogster, Prezi, Sketchy).

In the #CreativeHE online course, students were asked to participate in an online learning community, using web tools to complete the course's activities, collaborate and socialize with other participants and create a joint learning experiences. In this survey, we tried to identify the tools used in the #CreativeHE course and the particular reasons they were used for. We also tried to capture the dynamics of their use, detect challenges that occurred during their use and explore participants' attitudes regarding future use of these tools.

Online survey

Students' perspectives and experiences can provide an in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of web-based learning, in our case, regarding the use of web tools. In order to examine the use of web tools in the #CreativeHE community, an online questionnaire was designed using "Typeform" an online survey tool, to help students reflect on their experiences using web tools and get an insight of how or if their use facilitated the learning process. The questionnaire was available for sixteen days and was answered anonymously by twelve participants.



The questionnaire consisted of six questions, two multiple choice questions (Q1 and Q2) and four open-ended questions (Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6). In the first two multiple choice questions, we provided some choices of web tools and the choice “other” for participants to add tools that were not included on the list. Respondents could choose more than one option. Our list was not intended to be exhaustive, but it included most of the tools we encountered in our review of the #CreativeHE community posts. Questions 3, 4, 5 and 6 were open-ended questions for participants to fill in on their own. Statistics are provided only for the multiple choice questions, while for the open-ended questions we display a categorization of the answers.

Analysis of Results

Responses to the first question, “Which tools did you use during the #CreativeHE course”, (Figure 3) show that the majority of the participants (11), used the Google+ tool. This can be explained by the fact that Google+ was used as the main platform for the course and the #CreativeHE community, therefore its use was essential for participation in the course. Seven people (7) used Padlet and four (4) people used Wordpress, two e-portfolio tools, that facilitators suggested to the participants for reflection. Infogram was another tool used by four (4)

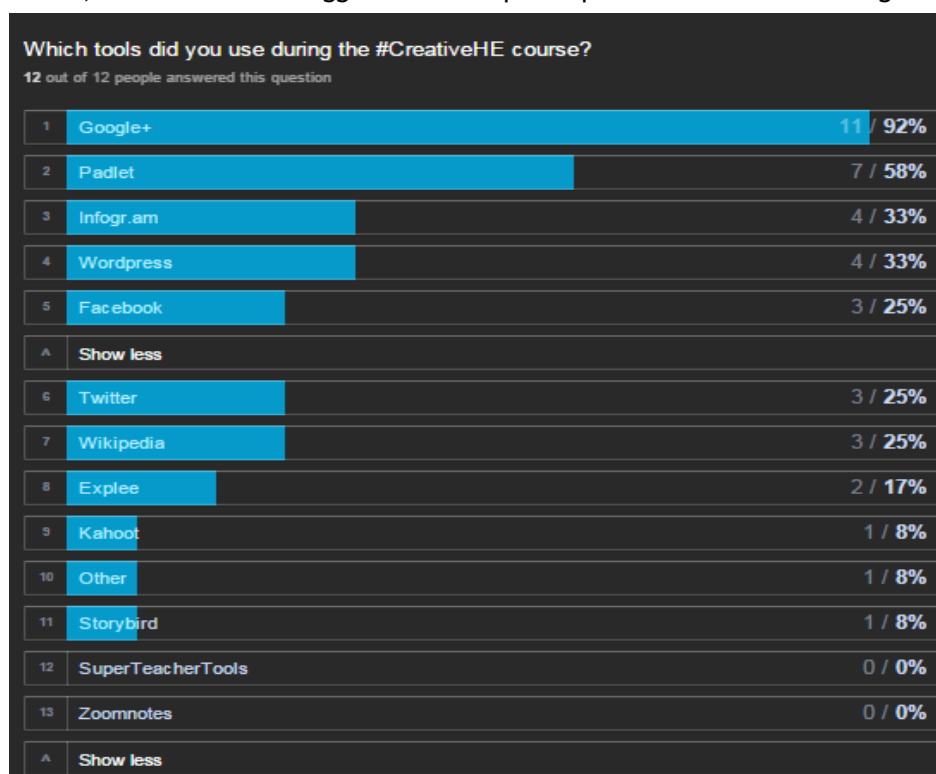


Figure 3: Responses to question 1

participants, to help them design personalized info graphics. Social media, such as Facebook and Twitter were used by fewer participants (3 and 3 respectively). An explanation probably was because the main part of the social interaction and collaboration was held in the Google+ community. Explee, a tool for creating personalized animated videos, discussed in the community, was used by two participants. Other tools, such as Kahoot a game-based learning platform and Storybird, an online tool for artful storytelling were used by only one participant. Finally, one of the respondents chose the “other” option, but did not specify which tool they used. Our analysis of the community posts also revealed that PowToon - an animation tool, was used by two participants.

In question 2 “What was the purpose of you using these tools”, we tried to identify why participants used these tools (Figure 4). Most of the participants stated that they used these tools for discussion, socialization and collaboration (11) and for digital expression of thoughts (11). This trend is not surprising, taking into consideration that the structure of the course was based on an online community and required some interaction between members. Moreover, most of the activities, amongst which the “to gain a badge” activity required evidence from an e-portfolio. Half of the respondents (6) used these tools to create digital artefacts required for the course’s activities, such as videos, graphics or posters.

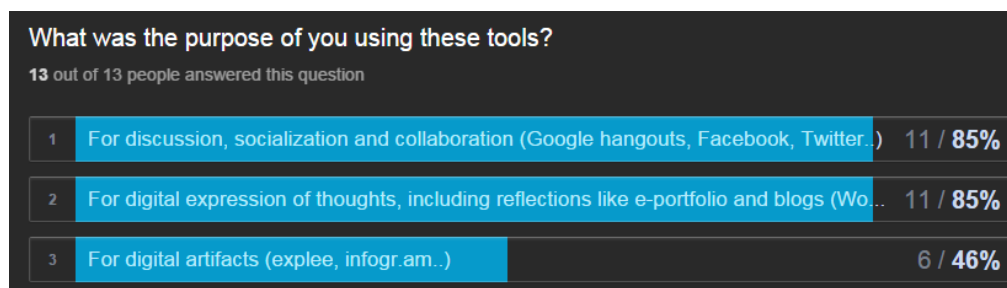


Figure 4 Responses to question 2

In question 3 we provided respondents with free option to fill in which of the tools they used for the first time in the #CreativeHE community (Table 1). We find in the first place Google+ (8), the main online platform used to access #CreativeHE community. E-portfolio tools, namely Padlet and Wordpress were also reported by respondents to be used for the first time (5 and 3 respectively). Google hangouts was also a tool mentioned by three participants to be used for the first time, mostly for Group Chats to discuss about ongoing projects during the course. A variety of tools, such as Explee, Powtoon, Kahoot, Storybird, Infogram, Text2mindmap and, Build-withchrome were also mentioned by one participant. Another respondent answered that all of the tools mentioned was used for the first time, while another one answered none of them. Finally, one participant did not respond in the question.

Table 1: Categorization of results from question 3

3. Which tools did you use for the first time in the #CreativeHE community?	
Number of answers	Tools
8	Google+
5	Padlet
3	Google hangouts
3	Wordpress
1	Explee, Powtoon, Kahoot, Storybird, Infogr, Text2mindmap,
1	All of them
1	None
1	No answers

In question 4, “What issues or challenges did you face in using these tools”, we tried to identify problems that participants faced using the tools that were mostly used during the course, in order to be aware of them and be more helping in future delivery of the course (Table 2). The main challenge mentioned by respondents (4) was the time they had to devote at the beginning to learn how to use the tools that were introduced “*I lost a lot of time because I did not know them*”, “*It took me a while to understand how they work*”. Three participants mentioned difficulties getting started with Google+, the main platform used for the community of the online course “*I needed to upgrade my profile before I could access it, though I had already registered with P2P*”. Technical issues at the start were reported by two participants, general difficulties and technical difficulties accessing the video conference about the webinars organized “*I had to reset all my audio and video settings (previously set for Skype)*”. Two respondents stated having faced challenges with the interfaces of some tools they had to use for the first time “*Annoyed with Google for changing the format - current version less friendly than version we started with*”. One respondent referred to the fact that (s)he had to duplicate posts/answers (s)he had written in the e-portfolio to the Google+ community and that was a source of frustration. One participant mentioned the tools (s)he had difficulties with, namely Google+ and Padlet, but did not mention what kind of challenges he faced using them. Two respondents answered that they did not face any challenges or issues using the web tools, while two participants expressed the value of Google+ and Hangouts

“Previously, I had avoided Google+ because it felt like just one more competing social networking tool. I'm now much more positive about its value. Similarly, I had avoided Google hangouts because I already had access to Skype4Business, Skype, WebEx, Blackboard Communicate, Vscene, and so on. I now prefer the simplicity and easy availability of Google Hangouts”, “Through the process came to see the value of Google+”.

Table 2: Categorization of results from question 4

4. What issues or challenges did you face in using these tools?	
Number of answers	Challenges
4	Time spent to learn how to use the tools
3	Difficulties getting started with Google+
2	Technical issues at the start.
2	Challenged by the interfaces of some tools
1	Having to duplicate messages from e-portfolio to Google+
1	Mentioned tools they had difficulties with (Google+, Padlet), not the problems they faced using them
2	No problems
2	Express value of Google+ and Hangouts

In question 5 we wanted to see if a positive attitude towards the tools used was likely to lead to the future use of the tools (Table 3). The majority of respondents (11) provided enthusiastic affirmative answers, such as *“Yes, I am now a firm convert to these”*, *“Yes, because I think they can be really useful and they are not as difficult to use as I thought”*, *“Definitely yes”*. One of the participants is already using it at his own context *“Yes I am already using Google+ to support my own commu-*

nity”. Finally, one respondent gave an affirmative answer, saying that he would be using the tools again, but not all of them.

The results from questions 4 and 5 lead us to conclude that despite the initial difficulties and challenges the participants faced using the tools, they formed a positive attitude towards them, resulting in them possibly using these tools again in the future.

Question 6 asked participants to suggest other tools

Table 3: Categorization of results from question 5

that could be used in a future course (Table 4). Three participants did not give a specific answer about tools. Other respondents made various suggestions, amongst which, use of social media like Facebook (1) or other communication tools/contact system, such as Skype, or other (2). Another respondent suggested

5. Are you likely to use again tools which you used for the first time in #CreativeHE?	
Number of answers	Answers
11	Yes
0	No
1	Not all of them

the use of tools for visual representation-animation, but not a specific tool and another suggested the use of Youtube for videos (1). One participant suggested the use of the online project management software “Smartsheet”. Another one suggested the use of the same tools that were already used during this course. Finally, one respondent did not suggest the use of other tools, while two others did not respond to the question.

Table 4: Categorization of results from question 6

6. Are there any other tools you think it would be useful to use if the course was run again?	
Number of answers	Answers
3	I don't know
1	Social Media (Facebook)
1	Tools for visual representation - animation
1	Skype, Youtube
1	The application “smartsheet”
1	All of them
1	Suggestion for different contact system
1	No
2	No answers

Discussion

Our findings about the extensive use of e-portfolio tools, such as Padlet, Wordpress and Weebly for reflection are consistent with the claim by Hernández-Ramos (4) that journals are a common requirement in many courses as a strategy to help students engage in metacognition or reflection (thinking about their own learning) with the expectation that the process will help them appreciate what they have learnt and learn better in the future.

Noting that the majority of participants used these web tools for collaboration, discussion and socialization, makes a valid point that social interaction among learners plays an important part in the learning process and can have a significant impact on individuals' own learning outcomes.



The use of Google+ community as an online discussion forum for collaboration and communication between members was recognized by all participants. Blogs and online discussion forums are two tools used to engage students in computer-supported communication that should, ideally, result in better learning (4).

Regarding the challenges participants faced, as stated by Mandernach (5), student engagement is a vital dimension in the success of online instruction. Students who demonstrate high levels of engagement will persist in learning through the online format despite technical difficulties. Even though participants faced a variety of challenges (Question 4), they managed to overcome these, continued with the course and stating enthusiastic to use them again "Yes, because I think they can be really useful and they are not as difficult to use as I thought", "Yes, I am now a firm convert to these", "Yes! I like Wordpress and may use it again", "I intend to continue using Google+". The finding that participants encountered problems with the technology and learnt to deal with them is consistent with the case study of Murphy & Cifuentes (6). We are accustomed to using technology that is effortless to use so become angry and frustrated when we cannot use the technology.

Conclusions



The article aimed to gain understanding of participants' perceptions on the use of web tools during the online course #CreativeHE. The findings of this survey can be useful in enabling future online courses to be more user-friendly and prevent some of the challenges or issues encountered during this course. A the majority of participants learned to use a variety of new tools during the course of #CreativeHE.

This is an important learning outcome from the course especially as many participants are enthusiastic about using these tools in the future.



As far as the postgraduate students of this course is concerned, we have to highlight the fact that this statement was also expressed during conversations at the University and it is discussed elsewhere in the magazine in the article titled "Participants Journeys". Briefly, the postgraduate-students claimed that one of the most interesting aspects of their learning experience was the fact that they were confronted with new technological tools, which they had to use in order to take part in the community, something which was really challenging for them. Some of them pointed out that they will continue to use these tools, not only in their private life, but also in their professional life, as the tools proved to be easy to use and effective both in collaborating with others and in task completion. This was really a positive outcome, as the knowledge gained through the #CreativeHE course will be of practical use to them in future as it will enhance their professional practice.

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Note: The questionnaire can be accessed at: <https://tziouvar.typeform.com/to/sujgNJ>



Editor's comment: I know from my own involvement in #creativeHE that participation involved many different emotions and the idea that our journey involved emotions as well as learning became a strong theme of the discussions in Group 1. So the moderators are indebted to Nikos and Maria for skillfully facilitating a post-course discussion with the postgraduate students to gain their feedback on their learning experience and how they felt during their experience. Their article reveals that journeys of learning are emotional as well as cognitive experiences and that the perceived cognitive benefits of an experience are closely linked to the way we feel about the experience. This relationship is often omitted in discussions about education.

Journeys are individual experiences and the technique used by Nikos and Rafaela allows us to appreciate what each student felt and experienced. Such knowledge is priceless for the designers and facilitators of on-line learning experiences and it helps us understand and appreciate the senses the students made of their journeys and the meanings they created from their experiences. This article provides a fitting conclusion to what has been a remarkable journey for everyone who was involved in #creativeHE.

THE JOURNEYS WE MADE THROUGH #creative HE

Nikos Mouratoglu & Maria Rafaela Tziouvara

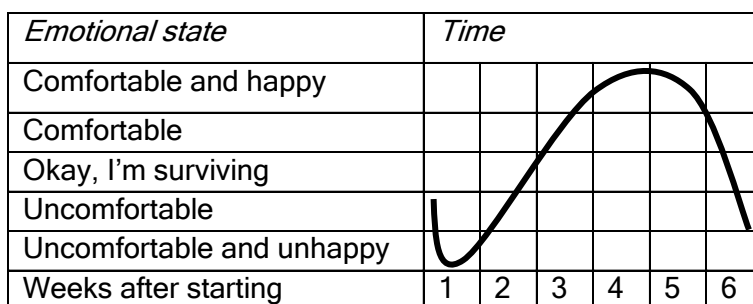
Helping postgraduate students make sense of their experience

After the completion of the #creativeHE course, the editorial team had the idea of trying to gain a deeper sense of the journey that the postgraduate students had undertaken. One month after the course had finished, and with the blessing of Professor Nikos Fachantidis, we convened and facilitated a meeting with the postgraduate students at the University of Macedonia, in order to reflect not only on the content of the course, but also on their whole learning experience which we encouraged students to imagine as a journey during which some interesting incidents occurred and various opinions and views were expressed.

In pairs, students were asked to discuss with another student their personal journey for five minutes and then draw a timeline representing the 6 weeks of the course and reflecting their positive (above the horizontal line) and negative (below the horizontal line) emotions during the course. Furthermore, they were asked to annotate their emotional timeline with memorable incidents and events such as activities, discussions, videos and reading posts, through which they gained valuable learning. Then, students were invited to compare their journeys with their partner's in order to finalise their timelines and finally discuss with the whole group for ten minutes their common, but at the same time personal, learning process. The aim of this last discussion was to track the commonalities between the ways in which students interpreted their learning journeys. The views of participants are summarised anonymously below - to ensure anonymity the gender of the student in each of the profiles does not necessarily correspond to their actual gender.

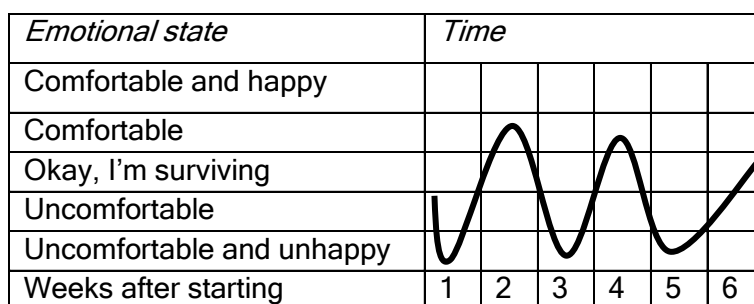
Students' Journeys of Learning & Emotion

Journey of Student #1



The first postgraduate student stated that in the beginning she had no idea how to navigate herself in the p2pu platform, as well as in the Google+ community. Due to the lack of information on the course and the fact that no prior knowledge on these technological tools existed, she faced difficulties in adjusting herself to the course during the first week. But encountering new ideas and engaging in activities provoked further thought and reflection; this situation formed a positive and safe environment, where good memories and emotions were observed. However, the negative emotions were also present, as a result of the lack of communication with other participants, the non-participation of many members of the community and the low participation of the members during the last two weeks. Furthermore, this student pointed out that there was a motivation for thinking and reflecting on her own experiences and knowledge, while at the same time she learned how to use new web tools such as Wordpress and Padlet, something that improved her self-confidence. Also, it was stated that this experience was something different from what she had experienced in her education to date because of the experience she would take part in another similar course in the future.

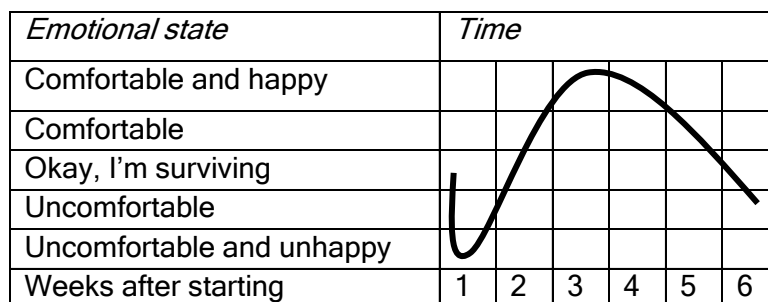
Journey of Student #2



The second student's experience was more like a roller coaster. At the start of the course he had difficulties with the linguistic demands as well as with the whole learning process, due to lack of general information about the community. By the second week he had started to feel more comfortable but the third week was a non-structured week, devoted to late comers so they could catch up with the rest of the participants, an incident that caused him to have negative emotions like boredom and lack of interest. He felt more positive in the fourth week, but the fifth week was built around a topic that this student didn't like and was not interesting for him. However, he stated that in general there were some interesting activities during the course, but he expected higher participation from the rest eighty (80) participants of the course. Due to this lack of participation, the course seemed like an obligation to him and not a learning experience, especially when feedback provided by the facilitators sometimes seemed poor and superficial. In addition, he suggested that a differentiated structure of the course would be better, as after the second and third week, he knew that he would see a video, read a PDF document and reflect on a question provided, which made the course predictable and less interesting.

For this student the interesting and personal changing perspectives related to the online and distance learning as he was a little bit suspicious at the beginning. However, through the #creativeHE course this participant stated that he has a better understanding of the possibilities that online learning provides. He also realised that creativity is a power for everyone, an element that strengthens someone's personality. Overall, the memories that this student has towards the whole learning process are generally pleasant, as there was the chance to reflect and think on his personal experiences. There was a variety of activities in the course and consequently he had to think different and alternative things. Last but not least, he appreciated the interesting and substantive discussions he had with some of the instructors, as well as the exchange of opinions and the creative activities that the participants shared during the course.

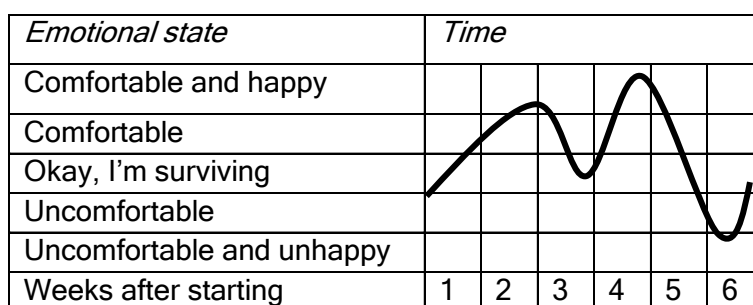
Journey of Student #3



At the beginning this student was anxious for the linguistic differences and had many questions on the process and the demands of this course. However, during the second week she started to understand the concept of the course and felt more comfortable. The best weeks for her were between the third and fifth weeks, as she experimented with the programs and tools suggested in the course activities (Wordpress, Padlet, Powtoon etc.). Moreover, she started interacting, discussing and exchanging ideas with the rest of the participants, something that she really enjoyed. However, during the last two weeks she was disappointed with the low participation of the members, as she perceived that the whole interaction felt like an obligation. A possible suggestion for the course from this participant includes more collaborative ways of engagement, such as Skype or more webinars.

The new perspectives that she gained, were that creativity doesn't involve only drawing, but also includes other techniques such as technology through the applications that she used during the course. Furthermore, the interaction with other participants from other countries, the rise of the creativity by seeing other people's creative ideas were also a motivation for her to interact, share and discuss. The general feeling of this course was positive, but there was a small anxiety for the linguistic demands placed on her.

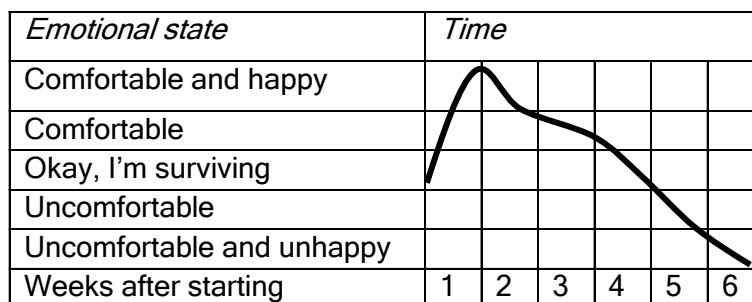
Journey of Student #4



This student felt comfortable, but also curious, in the beginning as she wanted to see what she can expect from this learning journey. She found the course really interesting the fact that there was a discussion and some engaging activities, but in the end she felt disappointed with the community, as she had more expectations of involvement by the rest of the participants. Regarding the journey of the course, she felt enthusiastic and excited about the new learning experience and really interested in the use of the new web tools. Furthermore, there was pressure and anxiety during this journey, as well as disappointment due to the lack of interaction with the rest of the participants. As a result, this participant felt that there were not enough to motivate her to complete the course.

The new perspectives that this student gained included the fact that she was able to think about things she would never think of, such as the activity with the three objects that someone would never use in her classroom, or the three objects which represent the past, the present and the future. Additionally, she also learned to function and navigate in an online community, while regarding the content of the course she stated that she did not learn anything new, or that a prior perspective on creativity had changed. About the feelings during this course, she stated that there was anxiety owing to the email she was receiving during the course, but now there is a sweet memory of the creativity, that remained at the end of the course, as she has missed talking about her creative moments. Finally, she appreciated the benefits of participating in this reflective conversation which took place after the completion of the course, as it was a chance to reflect on the overall experience and form conclusions which she had not thought of so far.

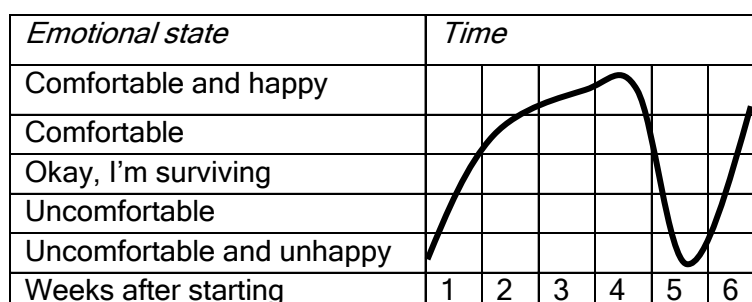
Journey of Student #5



The general feelings about this learning journey were very positive for this student, but he also experienced great variations in enthusiasm, from joy, anticipation and interest, to feelings of pressure and anxiety, disappointment regarding the level of interaction and consequent lack of motivation. Despite the fact that the topic of creativity was of great interest to him, he stated that he did not learn something new, but had the chance to adjust his knowledge to the new context. Specifically, he realised how many interesting, innovative and creative ideas can be connected with creativity, but also he pointed out the importance of the interaction among the participants. Finally, he learned to navigate himself in an online environment, while the most important learning for him is that he engaged in a context in which he was able to realise the value of distance learning.

The feelings regarding the community were mostly anxiety due to the very demanding program of the course and his parallel full everyday program. However, he misses the original joy and enthusiasm he had at the beginning of the process as well as the creativity that emerged while he was carrying out the activities. He also learned how to use some web tools which that he had not used before and he felt happy that he was able to share his experience with others.

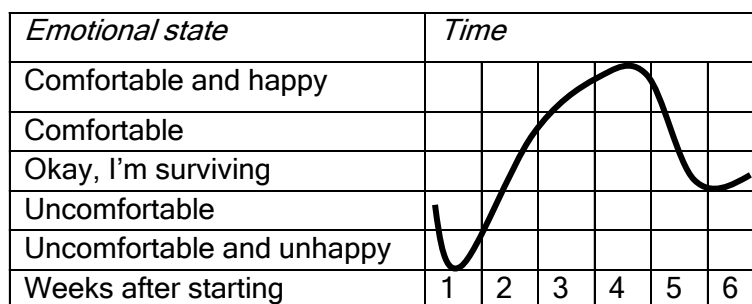
Journey of Student #6



This participant's interest grew through the course. At the beginning the feeling was negative, owing to the fact that she had to catch up with the rest of the participants that had already begun the course earlier. Amongst the positive elements of the course were the interactions and the activities which raised the interest during the course as well as the professor's opinions and the researcher's findings. Towards the end of the course interest declined because of the low level of participation and interaction was only between the Greek postgraduate students. However, the whole learning journey was considered to be nice and interesting and left behind some positive feelings.

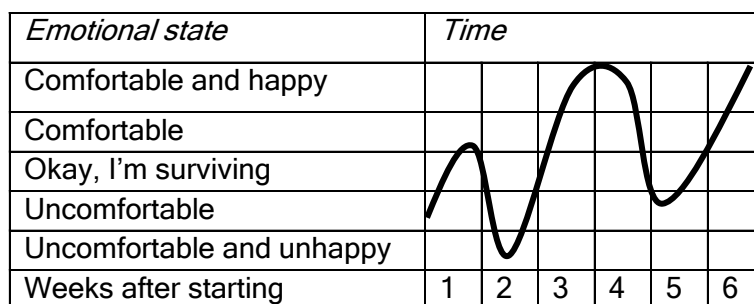
The overall feelings about the course were positive. New knowledge, interactions with other participants and organizers and the chance for self-reflection were some of the highlights of the course. Some of the negative aspects were the anxiety of catching up with the other participants and the lack of more enthusiastic participation and interaction during the last weeks of the course. Specifically, the student's perceptions on creativity did not really change, but as she pointed out she had definitely learned more things and details about this topic. The whole learning experience is connected with positive feelings as this student stated that she met new people who under other circumstances would have never met and exchanged views and opinions with acknowledged researchers. However, there was anxiety due to starting the course later than other participants and the "obligatory" aspect of the activities. According to this participant, there should be interaction with all the participants in order to utilise the dynamic of the discussions, while at the same time the web tools which were introduced during the course were a plus as she had the chance to exercise and experiment with new apps. Finally, the experience had encouraged her to participate in a similar course in future.

Journey of Student #7



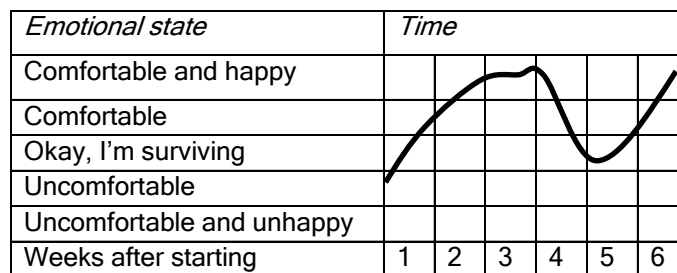
During the first week this postgraduate student was not sure if she would drop out of the course or not. There was an information load which was difficult to process and when combined with anxiety about the language this created feelings of uncertainty. However, she decided to devote more time and luckily there was also a change in her work schedule, allowing her to spend more time participating in the course and the Google+ community. As she familiarised herself with the community's environment she became more interested in the topic. Interactivity, use of new tools and some interesting activities contributed to a higher level of interest, but repetition of activity caused a feeling of dissatisfaction, although the feedback of the facilitators raised even more interest and as a result she was more active. A general observation that this student made was that there was no cognitive conflict as she knew that each person can be creative and express this creativity in different ways, a concept which was reinforced by the course. Moreover, she stated that it was a nice experience during which she learned new things and interacted with new people. She particularly remembers the videos and the different applications. The feelings that she noticed were anxiety for the language and curiosity and enthusiasm about the course.

Journey of Student #8



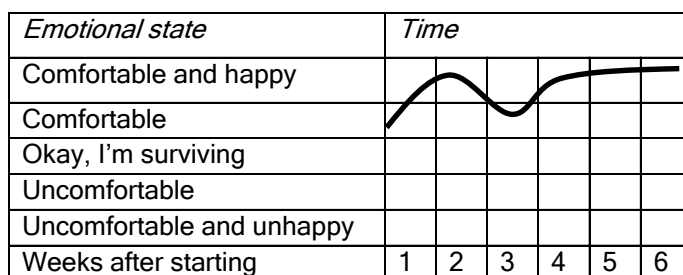
The positive things that this student described included the things and the activities that he used for the first time, such as the web tools and some interesting and alternative activities in which he took part. The negative elements for him were the amount of activities, the lack of theoretical analysis of some terms and the difficulty in understanding some of these terms. However, his overall feelings and memories were positive, even though at the beginning he was negative. As he stated, the whole learning process was valuable for him and therefore he would take part in a future course. Finally, his participation in such an online learning community was a big surprise, as he discovered a new way of teaching and educating. This last observation can be connected not only with the topic of creativity, but also with the transformation of the traditional paradigm in education, where multiple resources, various web tools and easy access to information can take place.

Journey of Student #9



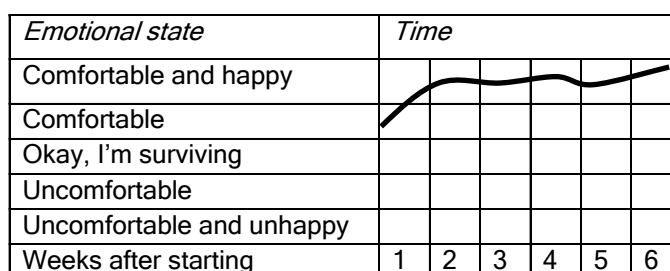
The positive elements of the course that this student recognised include the friendly and convenient environment, the discussions, the opportunity to exchange ideas and share experiences, the chance for familiarization with new web tools, the feedback provided by the instructors and the sharing of information and concerns on the topic. Further readings, searching for new knowledge and revision of some existing knowledge and concepts were also positive aspects of this course according to his point of view. For him the negative elements of the experience were the low participation from the rest of the students, some difficulties in the language and the difficulty of trying to catch up with the rest of the participants during the course. As a result there was not enough time to familiarise himself with the concept of the community, the demands of the course, the web tools and the activities, especially when the rest of the community was two weeks further on. He also stated that in the beginning he was anxious about the course, as he had no prior experience of this type of course. There were a lot of activities and anxiety for the language demands and he felt he lacked competency in using the tools used in the course. Nevertheless, eventually he said that he made it, and he would participate again in another learning community, as it was an interesting way to combine knowledge on web tools and a specific topic such as creativity. Finally, he claimed that his overall feelings were positive, while he did not perceive the badges as a motive for participation.

Journey of Student #10



This student stated that she was certain from the beginning that this journey would be a really interesting and inspiring experience in which she could reflect on some previous knowledge and thoughts she had. The activities and the environment in the #creativeHE community definitely formed this context in which the above mentioned practices took place: the event satisfied her initial expectations. The only thing that disappointed this student was the fact that there was not an active participation from all the members of the community, but after a period of time she came to terms with the situation and did not really let this influence her. The usage of some web tools she had not so far used was a benefit to her, as she had the opportunity to combine knowledge on a new context with knowledge on the usage of these tools. Finally, she found really interesting the fact that she was able to use her own experiences, express her point of view and eventually collaborate with other members with whom under other circumstances she would have never met.

Journey of Student #11



This student felt comfortable even from the beginning, as he had a previous experience with an online community. However, the content of the course as well as some web tools like Google+ and Google Hangouts were not familiar to him. At the start he had a small anxiety regarding the language and having to interact with professors from other universities, but he adjusted quickly to the context. Curiosity and interest were the dominant motivators throughout the process, even though sometimes he felt a little bit overloaded due to his heavy every-day work program. The activities seemed to him really interesting and alternative, but he wanted to take the opportunity to form more collaborative relationships, something that led him to join a group in the community. The live discussions in the groups google hangout, combined with some “projects” which they run in the group raised his interest, a situation that created positive emotions for the learning process and gave value to the learning he gained through this course.

The new perspectives that this student gained included the fact that he was able to reflect on thoughts, knowledge and experiences he had and think alternatively on these in order to extract a new meaning, in a new learning content. He also realised that creativity is a personal state which needs to be cultivated and expressed. However, this expression requires a safe, comfortable and friendly environment, which will inspire the individual to express his thoughts and ideas. He also realised that a qualitative positive emotional basis can form such a context in which people with different backgrounds and without even knowing each other, can function, collaborate and eventually co-create. However, this last situation still remains a mystery for him, as he was not able to understand exactly how this worked out well, but he is happy that this happened.

Appreciating the Patterns in Students' Learning Journeys

There were some commonalities in the way in which the postgraduate students perceived different aspects of their learning experience such as engagement, participation, interest, motivation, emotions, learning, interaction etc. The main points are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Synthesis of Postgraduate Student's views

1.	They were introduced to a new procedure for gaining knowledge.
2.	Some of the participants made an effort to implement educational innovation to their classes as a result of bringing creativity to the epicenter of their learning procedure.
3.	The overall assessment in terms of emotional engagement is positive.
4.	All participants expressed their enthusiasm because their involvement in the community gave them the opportunity to learn new web tools such as padlet, etc.
5.	All participants had high expectations due to participation of other academic professors from other countries (moderators).
6.	The majority of the participants expected more interaction among other members of the community apart from moderators. Motivation of many of the students tailed off towards the end of the course because of a lack of interaction.
7.	The fact that the “Badges” were linked with “LinkedIn” accounts was a strong motive. (For this, only oral approval was noticed).
8.	The overall evaluation is positive, most of the participants declared their willingness to take part in similar online courses in the future.
9.	The use of a foreign language was a challenge, even though in some cases there was the need for clarifications and particularization. However, it was an enhancer for participation and dialogue.
10.	The positive usage of I.C.T. in education was confirmed.
11.	Some of the participants were anxious, because of their schedule and other personal circumstances, followed the #CreativeHE with some delay.
12.	A strong motive for participation was the use of ICT rather than the content of the course.
13.	There were high expectations due to the high validity (professional and academic standing) of the moderators.
14.	Many of the participants appreciated the moderators' feedback with alternative ways such as a video after the conclusion of some sections.
15.	The links provided by the moderators weren't always accessible
16.	Some of the participants felt stressed because of the public character of the community HE/ expression of public speech (exposure). Some were concerned because they felt had to make statements using references to academic articles, books, etc.
17.	Lots of participants wanted and assumed that there would be more on-line lectures, not only the Webinars.
18.	Some participants felt anxious because they received e-mail notification every time something new was added in the community.
19.	Some participants felt that some activities were repetitive
20.	The feedback wasn't always sufficient, but it was direct.
21.	The program gave the opportunity to practice written English.
22.	It was welcomed that every project/discussion was in an asynchronous learning environment.
23.	The weekly timetable for completion of activities was challenging when other commitments were considered. A 10 day cycle for activities would provide more flexibility.

A metaphorical vehicle for the journey

In the spirit of the #creativeHE course, and to round off the meeting and provide a sense of closure on our collective experience, we decided to make an activity which could enrich students' perception of their learning journey. Of course, this activity was accompanied with a lot of joy, interest, dialogue and playful involvement.

Having described their journeys through the course, we invited students to choose a means of transport for their journey and everyone agreed that this should be the aeroplane. Students were invited to imagine various roles relating to aeroplanes and journeys involving flying and asked how the moderators and instructors might be related to these roles. They decided that Chrissi Nerantzi and Norman Jackson were the pilot and the co-pilot respectively, while some students also agreed that Norman could also be the owner of the airport. Sue Watling, Sandra Sinfield and Jennifer Willis were the Air-Stewardesses as their constant contributions, observations and suggestions helped the students to reinforce their learning. While Professor Nikos

Fachantidis was viewed as the air traffic control and the travel agent due to the opportunity that he provided to the students to embark on this journey. Scott Johnson and Roger Greenhalgh were perceived as the Ground Stewards who added value to the inflight conversations through their great comments in the G+ community.



<http://previews.123rf.com/images/notkoo2008/notkoo20081104/notkoo2008110400140/9337573-cartoon-flight-attendant-pilot-icon--Stock-Vector-airplane.jp>

Lessons we have learned

The term community is based on interaction among members/participants that co-exist in a specific context. Therefore it is essential that each member shall discuss, contribute, share and exchange views, opinions and ideas on the topic that is being addressed. Consequently, participation can be a determinant factor not only for the normal function of the community, but also for the rest of the participants due to the motivation and the expectations that they have by entering a community. Moreover, in order to foster the community's stability, more collaborative ways of engagement can be introduced, so that there can be a way for some individuals to cooperate with others in the framework of the working subject. Furthermore, a differentiated structure for each module could form interesting and unexpected conditions for the learners, something which could possibly raise the participation and maintain the interest of the participants. Additionally, there could be a preparation week, where the participants could familiarise themselves with the interface of the platforms and web tools that will be used during the course and as a result some technological constraints, which can lead to psychological instability such as insecurity, fear, shame etc., would be limited. This period of time could also be leveraged so that the participants can introduce themselves in the community, share some personal information, interests and generally develop some kind of relationships at least at an initial level. Consequently, the fear of being exposed would be lessened during the course and hopefully interesting, valuable and stable collaborations could be emerged. Finally, it must be noted that these points derive from the meeting that was completed at the University of Macedonia in Greece and constitute some thoughts and suggestions for the designing of future courses.

Acknowledgements

We are very grateful to all the students who participated in this reflective conversation. We appreciate very much the opportunity given to our postgraduate students by the collaboration between our teacher Professor Nikos Fachantidis and the course organiser Chrissi Nerantzi. It's a testament to your imagination and commitment, skill and enthusiasm that most of the students would voluntarily participate in a similar course in future. Last but not least, we would like to thank Professor Norman Jackson for the opportunity, the motivation and the encouragement that he provided us in order to synthesise the articles in the present magazine.

#creativeHE: A HUMANISED AND HUMANISING EXPERIENCE

Norman Jackson, Commissioning Editor

As we were finalising the magazine I came across #humanmooc (1) in my Twitter feed and followed the link to discover the Human MOOC.com website an instructor-led course that sets out to humanise on-line instruction. I was too late to join the course but felt that the idea of humanized instruction and community interaction in on-line environment established for the purpose of learning, resonated with my experience of #creativeHE. I loved the underlying wisdom in the principle of seeking to develop an environment within which our humanity can flourish. An environment in which people can trust each other and be sufficiently confident to share their personal experiences and reveal how they feel as well as what they know. My experience of #creativeHE was that it indeed felt like a very human experience replete with deep and meaningful conversations founded on shared experiences, caring, compassion, empathy, humour, insights and inspirations, creativity, commitment and new relationships and friendships. I hope that this magazine manages to communicate this, indeed I hope that this magazine is itself an extension of the humanised and humanising process that was #creativeHE.



norman jackson @mewider1 · 24h

love the idea of #humanmooc would like to appreciate your meanings please share #creativeHE



Aras BOZKURT @arasbozkurt

We are socially present on networks... Hello #HumanMOOC ers... :) A collective portrait of wanderers in our ecology

As I looked at the opening page of the #humanmooc I discovered that two visual metaphors were used to represent the sorts of experiences that participants might expect in the mooc.



The *Stream* is what you are probably most accustomed to in a standard educational setting. It is the typical instructor-led course, where you will be guided through a linear path of material, videos, and activities designed to give you a focused examination of the content from the expert's view. Interaction is a factor, but not the focus.

The *Garden* is the more free-form self-guided option. It is similar to workplace group work sessions where you will be given a problem to work on and solve in whatever method you agree upon as a group. This path is less linear with less instructor guidance and more reliance on connections with fellow learners.



Ideally a well designed online learning environment should provide opportunities for people to pursue either or both pathways - as the #humanmooc provides an exemplary model for such a design. It is then up to the learner to decide which path or which combination of paths they should take depending on their interests, needs and circumstances.

In our final editorial meeting, just before we published the magazine, I asked Nikos who was one of the post-graduate students on the course, which of these types of metaphors he felt was appropriate for #creativeHE. He replied that both were important to him. The main community space and course activities felt like a stream while the group space was more like a garden. I thought this was a nice way to round off our narrative of #creativeHE.

Source:

1) #humanmooc <http://humanmooc.com/>

Stream and garden metaphors and images: <http://humanmooc.com/syllabus/overview/>

CREATIVE ACADEMIC NEWS & FORTHCOMING EVENTS

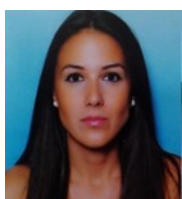


Well Done Chrissi

One of our Founders - Chrissi Nerantzi who is Principal Lecturer in the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching at Manchester Metropolitan University received the prestigious award of National Teaching Fellow in October 2015. Congratulations Chrissi and thanks for the difference you have made to higher education teaching and learning in the UK - the #creativeHE online course and BYOD4L twitter-based course being just two great examples that we have been involved in.

Welcome to new team members

As a voluntary organisation it's essential that we keep expanding our core team to help us progress our thinking, keep up to date with current institutional practices and developments, expand our ability to produce our publications and perform other activities. I am delighted to introduce five new members of our combined Creative Academic / Lifewide Education Team.



Maria-Rafaela Tziouvara is studying for a masters degree in the "Adult Education and Lifelong Learning" programme at the University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki, Greece, while at the same time working as a primary school teacher supporting students with special educational needs.

Nikos Mouratoglou is studying on the same masters programme but is also a Ph.D. candidate at Aristotle University.



Roger Greenhalgh works for Jisc and helps educational leaders make strategic use of ICT in the operations and development of their organisations. Roger was an entrepreneur in the '90s DotCom boom and subsequent Ed Tech enthusiast in universities and colleges, he mentors IT innovators. I'm sure you will be a great asset to our team.



Andrew Middleton is Head of Innovation & Professional Development at Sheffield Hallam University and leads the UK Media Enhanced Learning Special Interest Group (MELSIG), a pioneering group interested in enhancing and transforming learning with digital and social media. Andrew has edited books on media-enhanced learning, been a facilitator on the open learning event Bring Your Own Devices for Learning, and is Managing Editor the open Journal of the Media Enhanced Learning and the Student Engagement & Experience Journal. He is also an active member of the Lifewide Education Community.



Steve Outram was until recently a Senior Advisor with the Higher Education Academy. He is now working as independent consultant working closely with the Centre for Recording Achievement (CRA) which provide support for Personal Development Planning and e-Portfolios. Through Steve we hope to connect to the work of CRA.

If you would like to join the team of volunteers and you are willing to commit time to supporting our work please let us know.

Creativity conversation in Iran

The agreement between USA, UK, France Germany and Russia to lift the sanctions on Iran provided the context for a visit to Iran by Professor Norman Jackson. During his visit in late July it was clear from the media and conversations with people he met that there was a great sense of optimism and hope that the political movement towards normalising relationships will lead to stronger links and cooperative relationships with European countries.

Professor Jackson had been invited to discuss Creative Academic's work on encouraging and supporting creativity in higher education with Professor Farid Moore - a science professor at the University of Shiraz and Director of Fars Province Science Technology Innovation Park with view to establishing a collaborative link.



Professor Moore outlined his own philosophy on higher education arguing that the future lay in a more interdisciplinary, trans-disciplinary approach to science education. He recognised that the traditional subject-focused approach was now inadequate for preparing learners for a modern world and that more needed to be done to encourage learners to see and appreciate the interconnectivity of the sciences in tackling the complex problems facing Iran. He illustrated his argument using his own field of expertise, 'Medical Geology' which involves integrating science and practitioners from many disciplines (geology, chemistry, physics, medicine and epidemiology) to define and solve problems relating to the way certain diseases can be linked to the rocks, soils, water and air of a particular location. There were many examples of pockets of disease being linked to particular geological characteristics and conditions.

Because of his role as Director of the Fars Science Technology and Innovation Park he had now become very interested in the role of creativity in science education and research, recognising that while much good research was being done at the university, turning the results of such research into useful and commercially viable products and services was a significant challenge requiring creativity and enterprise skills and mind sets.

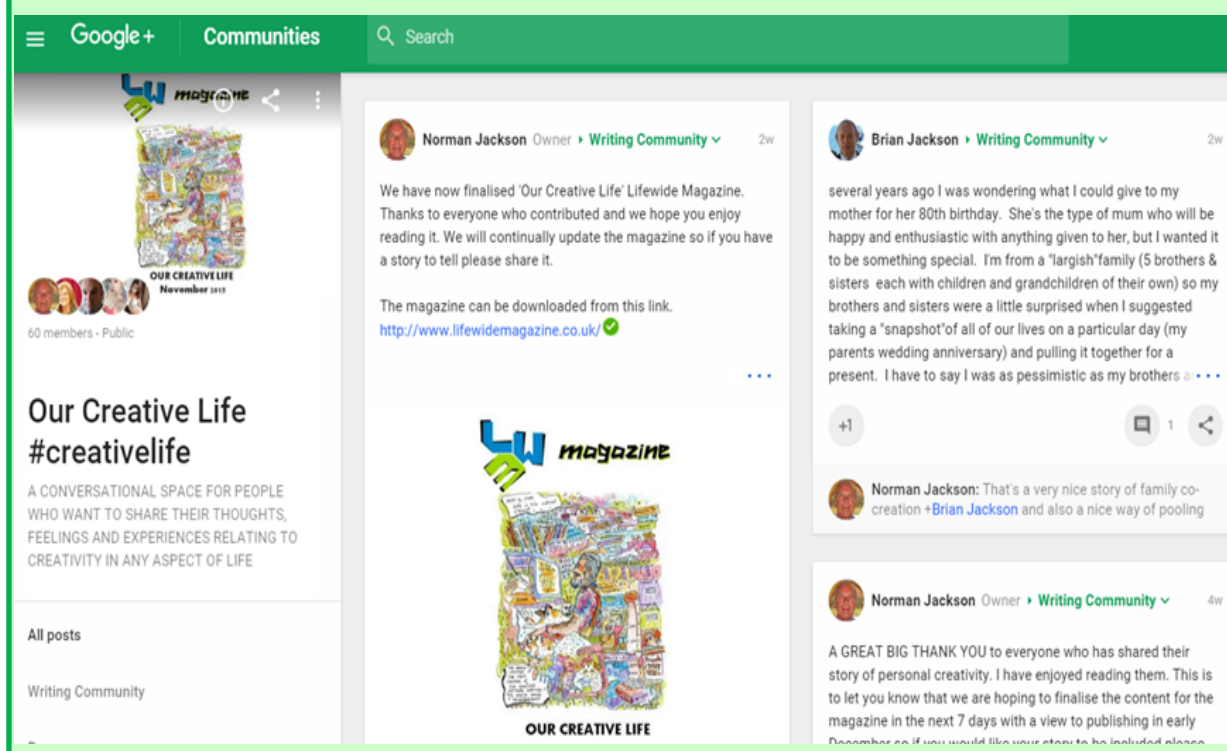
He saw that an important part of his role as Director of the Science Park was to encourage creativity to support innovation and enterprise and he recognised that this was a long term project beginning with undergraduate and continuing through post-graduate education and progressing into the people working in spin-off companies and projects. This interest had led him to the work of Creative Academic and an invitation was extended to Professor Norman Jackson to collaborate on developing a programme of workshops and Guides to begin this process with Faculty and postgraduate students.

'Our Creative Life' a New Conversational Space for the Creative Academic Community

Creative Academic and Lifewide Education have combined forces to support a new conversational space on the Google+ platform with the aim of encouraging conversation about everyday creativity or creativity in any aspect of life.

The project began when Lifewide Education decided to try and crowdsource the content of the December issue of its magazine by encouraging people to share their stories about their creativity in their own lives. About 60 people joined the community space over four weeks and perhaps 20 contributed stories which were then incorporated into the December issue of the magazine. As both Lifewide Education and Creative Academic are interested in promoting conversation around this topic it seemed natural to carry on maintaining and facilitating conversation in this space. We would like to invite all the members of our community to share your perspectives and stories of creativity in everyday life and periodically we will collate these and publish them in our magazines and continue to distil the wisdom and meanings they contain. To join the community simply click on the link

<https://plus.google.com/communities/106367720977059375674>



Looking Forward to 2016

Sharing our thoughts and feelings through the stories we tell in our own digital spaces and the forums we participate in provides an important outlet for our creativity.



@melsiguk
#MELSIG-NTU

Digital Narratives

(re)storying learning experiences for a digital age

A diverse one day programme
Sharing practice, developing skills and networking

Explore the role of digital narratives in learning, teaching and practice. For example,

- Digital Storytelling
- Storify
- Social media for learning
- Creating flexible and diverse learning experiences
- The digital-social learning space

Nottingham Trent University, 8th January 2016

Free event
Find out more and register here: http://melsig.shu.ac.uk/?page_id=981

MELSIG site

World Creativity and Innovation Week April 15-23 2016

<http://wciw.org/>

Founded in 2001, WCIW is a time to encourage people to use their creativity to make the world a better and more interesting place and to make their place in the world better and more interesting too.

WCIW is a time to inspire new action, create novel ideas, make new decisions.

WCIW is a time to educate, engage, celebrate and open doors that help people experience freedom from suffering and open up to new worlds of what's possible.

WCIW is a do-it-yourself event - it happens wherever you are and however you want it to happen.



Creative Academic will participate in this global event in 2016. Our contributions include:

1) Establish a new conversational space. From December 2015 we will encourage the sharing of stories about personal creativity and innovation in everyday life through a new Google+ Community 'Our Creative Life'. From time to time we will collate the stories and publish them in our magazine.

<https://plus.google.com/communities/106367720977059375674>

2) During April 2016 we will facilitate a Google+ community discussion on the theme of 'Creativity & Innovation in Higher Education'. As well as exploring the theme the forum will provide participants with a means of sharing their personal and institutional contributions to WCIW

3) In April 2016 we will publish Creative Academic Magazine #4 on 'Creativity in Development & Innovation'

4) We will also publish a 'Guide to Encouraging Creativity in Higher Education Teaching and Learning'

Norman, Jenny, Roger, Nikos, Rafaela and Chrissi will be leading our involvement in WCIW if you would like to get involved please contact one of us.

CAM4 April 2016

Exploring Creativity in Development and Innovation See introduction at:
<http://www.creativeacademic.uk/magazine.html>

Contributions: Contact Commissioning Editor, Norman Jackson, normanjjackson@btinternet.com