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published between
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Exploring Creative Pedagogies for Creative Learning Ecologies

 **creative academic magazine**

Issue Number 7D July-October 2017

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

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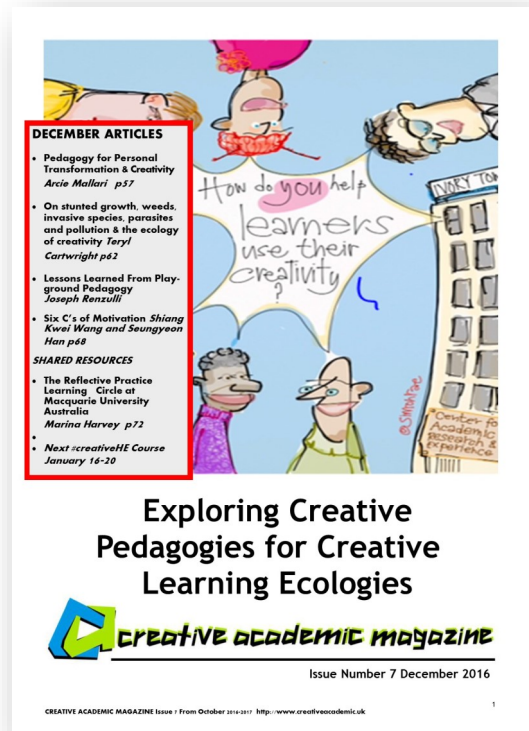
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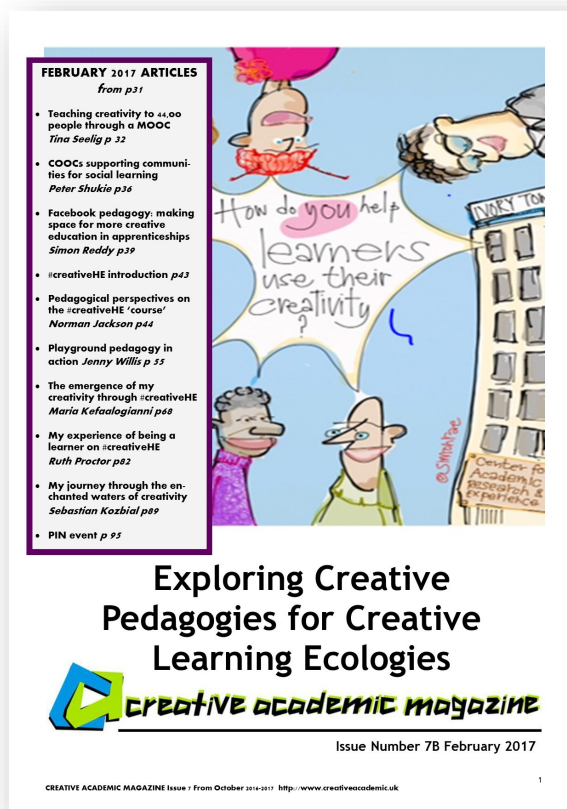
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Exploring Creative Pedagogies for Creative Learning Ecologies

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Exploring Creative Pedagogies for Creative Learning Ecologies



Issue Number 7D July-October 2017



Sketching at Surprise View, Derbyshire Peak District,
by Michael Gage @MichaelGageArt

CAM 7D

July 2017

Creative Pedagogies for Creative Learning Ecologies

Commissioning Editor's Introduction CAM7D

CAM7 is our first attempt to create an 'emergent magazine'. By this I mean we are not finding, editing and organising all the content before the magazine is published, rather we launched the magazine in October 2016 in the hope and belief that every month to September 2017 we will be able to update the magazine with one or more articles relevant to the topic we are addressing namely how higher education teachers develop ecologies for learning within which students' creativity can flourish. So far, in issues 7A, 7B & 7C we have published over 300 pages of content.

We believe that if you create the affordance for people who care about and are interested in something, stuff will happen - ideas will emerge as conversations take place and people share their understandings and practices. Through our *Creative Pedagogies for Creative Learning Ecologies project* we are trying to foster and facilitate new conversations about the importance of creativity in higher education teaching, learning and students' development and achievements. We are trying to bring together and connect educational practitioners and researchers, educational development teams, networks, communities, universities and colleges who share this interest and concern for students' and teachers' creative development, through a partly planned / partly emergent programme of activities. *And we are trying to connect the pedagogies of individual higher education teachers to the unique ecologies they create in which their students' creativity can flourish.*

We believe in collaboration and cooperation and we welcome the involvement of our readers in developing and creating this magazine. We believe in collegiality, openness and sharing and the knowledge we develop will be treated as open learning/ open educational resources. The ecology we are creating to explore these ideas is open to new ideas and to people and institutions who want to contribute. We are particularly keen to connect researchers to practitioners so that educational practice can be informed by evidence from research in this area. We are also keen to engage with the enormous range of learning contexts within higher education institutions in which students are encouraged to use their creativity. If you would like to share your own thinking and practices by writing an article for the magazine please do contact me.



Norman Jackson Commissioning Editor

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Creative Pedagogies & Learning Ecologies Project

<http://www.creativeacademic.uk/2016-17-programme.html>

July 2017

Live Projects-An inspirational model: The Student Perspective

Prue Chiles and Jeremy Till



Prue is Prof of Architectural Design Research at the University of Newcastle. Prior to this she was Head of the School of Architecture at the University of Sheffield. 'My work seeks to strengthen connections between people and design and on the reciprocal relationships between people, place, teaching, creativity and architectural design'.



Jeremy is an Architect, writer and educator and Head of Central Saint Martins and Pro Vice-Chancellor of University of the Arts London. Prior to this position he was Dean of Architecture and the Built Environment at the University of Westminster and Head of Architecture at the University of Sheffield.

This article was written while both authors were working in the School of Architecture at the University of Sheffield.

Introduction

The 'Live Projects' programme at Sheffield, is now an established and core part of the MArch (RIBA Part 2) course in the School of Architecture at the University of Sheffield. This case study is concerned with this experience and the comments and perceptions from the students participating. The live projects involve students working in groups with community, regional or national organisations. The projects have to be 'live' (i.e. a real client with a real problem) and are done in real time, with a defined end result - often a report or presentation to the client group. In many cases the results of the live project have been enacted or else led to further research or consultancy. Live projects reject the separation between real and theoretical, practice and education and allow the student to be creative within constraints. The case study is accompanied by annotated examples of live projects over the past six years.

"Through the live project architectural education is once again an inspirational model on which other forms of education may draw."
Rachel Sara

American Artist Kyong Park's Detroit House, which was rebuilt in Sheffield City Centre by nine students, to highlight the plight of post-industrial cities. The students negotiated with Sheffield City Council for all permissions and Health and Safety approval and re-constructed the house with no drawings or other construction professionals to help.



What is special about the live projects at Sheffield?

We have built up a reflective and research led critique of the live projects with various publications and a website [www.liveprojects.org]. Also, a PhD by Rachel Sara in 2004 entitled *Between studio and Street* examined the role of the live project in Architectural Education. Supervised by Jeremy Till, Rachel's PhD highlights the value in finding a place for learning that is both part of the academy and outside.

Live projects are happening in most schools now, but they vary enormously from place to place. Perhaps what is unique at Sheffield is the extent to which they are student managed and led. The client contact and the management of the project is almost all done by the group participating in the project. Also ground-breaking we believe, is the level of formal skills teaching and support that goes with the live project programme. Student comments support the approach we are taking. They are enthusiastic to learn the core professional skills of team management and communication and are increasingly Interested in participatory consultation techniques. Students feel this helps their confidence and ultimately their creativity. We have completed over 50 live projects to date, establishing an enormous archive of fresh ideas and useful work.

In 2002 we set up the Bureau of Design Research (BDR) - a project office and research consultancy, in the School of Architecture. This was primarily as a result of clients wishing to continue with live projects. The BDR now has a portfolio of over 30 completed projects prioritising community visioning and school design. The BDR also archives all the live projects and has a distant mentoring role, as well as participating in the live project programme. We are working on the possibilities for a closer supporting structure to enable live projects to continue throughout the year and to allow individual students to pursue live project interests in their own projects. We are also developing a resource and 'survival pack' for the successful live project.

The live project Website can be accessed at <http://www.liveprojects.org> where you can find out more about all the live projects.

Home.
About Live Projects.
Client guide.
Student guide.
Recognition.
Live Works.

Get involved.

Live Project Enquiries
School of Architecture
The University of Sheffield
Arts Tower
Western Bank
Sheffield S10 2TN

+44 (0)114 222 0399
liveprojects@sheffield.ac.uk

Browse projects.

Select Category

To search, type and hit enter



A bench and play area was created for Ballifield Primary School, to address playground problems, after a series of consultation events with pupils and staff.

Why the live projects are useful and relevant?

Students are very supportive of the live project programme and clearly find them useful and relevant. This year, when asked, the following key reasons were cited:

1. The timing is good, perfect for students just returning from a year or more in practice. There is an interesting balance between practice and education which encourages the student to position themselves politically. They have to re-assess the relationship between client, business and community in the context of the university rather than from an office perspective.
2. There are clear social benefits. They are ideal group projects that are contained time wise and need a group to succeed. They are particularly important for new students who can quickly get to know and work with established Sheffield students.
3. Perception of the projects. Students enjoy working collaboratively and not competitively for a change: this is backed up by research in Rachel's thesis.

4. Students are empowered by the positive feedback from the clients. Institutional and professional clients have commented that they had no idea how strategic students of Architecture can be and what a wide group of skills they have.
5. Students find, in job interviews after they have completed their diploma, that prospective employers are very impressed by the live projects and the output from these. They are also highly regarded by our external examiners.
6. Students enjoy developing their communication skills and see this as a very positive part of the process.
7. Fundamentally it makes the student's architectural education more relevant. The active hands on work is popular - not all like the actual building - as this is hard physical work but a core are really enthusiastic about this and find it enormously rewarding, putting in long hours and developing other carpentry and practical building skills.
8. Finally there are moral and ethical issues in the work, that cannot be ignored.

For the School of Architecture and the university generally live projects have enormous benefits. They tell the city and the community what students are up to and what the study of architecture involves; the general public are often completely mystified by what an architect does! They also give something back to the city and the community.



Students from Sheffield and Trondheim worked together in both Sheffield and South Norway to design and build new informal public spaces in two public parks

Teaching Approach/Methods

The live projects are logistically quite complex: in particular setting them up and briefing the clients. However, we have found that once they have started they generally generate a momentum, which gets over the short-term problems. It is also easy for the students to waste time at the beginning of the projects whilst meetings are being set up, so direction and support is needed here. Staff at the School of Architecture in Sheffield are now experienced in running these projects.

Tutoring is done in groups and is very much led by the students who use their tutors as consultants and mentors rather than as figures of authority. This is an important revision of normal power relations and leads to a much more committed student group. Tutors are put in a different and

sometimes difficult role of stand-in for the client rather than tutor. From a tutor's point of view the live projects offer many skills that can be gained elsewhere, but core skills of organisation, team working and working to a tight timescale are perhaps some of the key ones. These, we felt, have to be taught like everything else. So the live projects are supported by communication and brief building workshops, attached to the management module, as well as seminars on consultation and creative participatory techniques. Community consultation is a burgeoning profession in its own right; the line we take is firmly that of art and creative practices encouraging a visual, fun and experimental approach.

Students learn about the role of the client - and begin to understand the complexity of the multi-headed client - stakeholder mapping suddenly becomes relevant and is included in a workshop when the teams have all met their clients. Further group work in the workshops also brings out an understanding of what role each individual has in a team. An exercise which is always positively received is that of the Chinese whispers - illustrating how little we listen and how important positive listening skills are. Three years ago with university funding, we made a film with a professional team, interviewing clients and well-known architects on communicating with each other at various stages of a project. It is a revealing portrait of how architects need to learn to communicate better with non-architectural audiences and forms a back drop to the workshops.

Assessment

The live projects are assessed as group work according to a protocol that we have developed in the Faculty. We have suggested to students that they should, to a degree, be self-assessed, but they have been resistant to this idea because it might destroy the ethos of the projects in terms of collective work and identity. In addition, students reflect on their live projects in their written management studies. We established that the best tool to assess the projects is the presentation of the project at the end - this highlights how well the team have worked together, how successful the briefing process was and how the end result has been communicated back to the client. These are not critiques, but formal presentations run by the student body. Over the years there have been some fantastic presentations, well timed and professional. Again students are given pointers on good presentation techniques. However, all the pitfalls that architects fall into - being over complex with their visual imagery, talking to the screen etc. still occur!

We have variously tried to link the assessment of the live projects to a management module of the MArch course rather than the portfolio studio work, but have not found the perfect solution to date. We need to be able to provide formative assessment throughout the different stages of the project as well as at the final presentation stage - but then it is possible for tutors to fall back on the traditional, architectural assessment process.

Students perceive that there is a diminished focus on the critique, but sometimes tutors are seen to bring more traditional power relationships back in the review. This is seen as very negative and is really the only part of the whole live project process that has been criticised: so this is under review. We have had comments from students that occasionally tutors are trying to look clever and how irrelevant this is to the process here. We need to try and involve all participants in the evaluation process, giving value to the participants whilst reducing the power of the tutor over the student.

What specific lessons are learnt in the live project and how are these different from lessons learnt from other studio or management projects?

Many of the lessons are the same or related to those in other studio projects. However the following points summarise some observations.

1. Students fill a unique mediating role that a professional would struggle to do - clients, particularly community clients, are often wary of professionals, local authority operatives, housing groups etc. and will open up and discuss ideas freely with students in an unthreatening environment. Many extra-ordinary and creative comments come out of community consultation events. These are always a revelation to the students.
2. The tutor student relationship is definitely altered - the tutor becoming more of a consultant or client substitute. This has ramifications - it can become problematic when they become more like the client than the client themselves, although in some projects this has been a positive change of roles for the outcome of the project!
3. The whole design and building process is constrained due to the timescales of the project, the luxury of the long-term studio project development is often not an option, so prevarication is not possible. For a number of students this is their most productive project.
4. There is an emphasis on project management skills which is not really dealt with in other projects.
5. There is the potential for the 1:1 exploration - to actually build. This requires a whole new set of skills and has many benefits. Building requires a different kind of organisation and is often where their project and time management skills fall down.
6. Some different presentation skills are required, students struggle to provide these sometimes but in many cases some really imaginative work is produced. The skill of producing the creative feasibility study, necessary for all architects, is one very tangible outcome of many of the projects.
7. Some of the live projects are based abroad; this offers new challenges not found in many studio projects. Communication is even more of a challenge and there are different structures and processes to learn from - or a different emphasis created by the client from a different culture. Lessons are also learned in the universal power of design.

What are the limits of Live Projects?

One of the limiting factors is money. Often the client is at a pre-feasibility stage in their project with no money and only vague ideas about funding the project. They see using university students as a chance to gain from free work. We need to put some effort into persuading these clients to put some funding into the live projects to ease the process. Students sometimes end up spending a considerable amount of their own money on travel and disbursements. At the beginning of a project clients are often unaware of the value and quality of the work the students will produce and in some cases almost feel they are doing the university a favour with their time. It is afterwards they realise the power of the work they have, when it is too late. We need to brief clients better in this respect.

Live projects happen in other parts of the school - in particular first year where the experience is both parallel and different - but a lot shorter. In the diploma school, students spend the first six weeks of each year (i.e. approx one quarter of their course) working on live projects.

On a very practical logistical note, health and safety issues are becoming increasingly difficult to deal with. Allowing students to use power tools as part of their university course is a challenge and requires professional supervision.

Time constraints however are perhaps the biggest limiting factor to some projects, although others are almost too long. We have built up a portfolio of both challenging and ambitious live projects. All are different and all have enormous merits and some problems attached. Every year the limitation of the live projects lessen - and the possibilities grow. We are looking forward to the new projects this coming year.

Acknowledgement

We would like to thank Professor Chiles for giving permission to republish this article which was originally written for the Centre for Education in the Built Environment, Higher Education Academy.

Four Ways in which we Learn

Charles Jennings

Charles Jennings talks about the ways we learn:

- Learning Through Experience:**

we learn a huge amount through exposure to new and challenging experiences. 'Work that stretches' is often the best teacher any of us will ever have. Research tells us that immersive learning and learning in context provides the most memorable learning experiences. This is one reason for the increased interest and activity in experiential and social learning in the past few years. However, experiential learning is still often under-valued and under-exploited by learning professionals. As the late professor Allan Tough said 'most of the learning is under the waterline'.

- Learning Through Practice:**

we learn through creating opportunities to practise and improve. Without practice we can never hope to become high-performers. We can't for a minute imagine our great sportsmen and women rising to the top of their game without hours and hours of practice, even when they are world champions. What makes us think becoming high performers in our work is any different?

- Learning Through Conversation:**

we learn through our interactions and dialogue with others - through informal coaching and mentoring, and building social networks inside and outside work. Conversation is the 'lubrication' of learning and development. Jerome Bruner, the greatest educational psychologist of our era, once said 'our world is others'. We often forget this fundamental fact.

- Learning Through Reflection:**

Reflection is the 'glue' that we need to exploit the other forms of learning. Charles Handy, the management 'guru', writer and observer, points out that 'experience plus reflection is the learning that lasts'. We learn through taking the opportunity to reflect both in the workflow and away from our work. We can then plan further activities that will incorporate our learning and improve our performance further.



Tannmay Vora

Tannmay Vora turned this synthesis into the memorable infographic

The Power of Reflection in an Ever-Changing World <http://charles-jennings.blogspot.co.uk/2016/07/the-power-of-reflection-in-ever.html> Posted 28/07/16

Infographic <http://qaspire.com/2016/08/15/learning-experience-plus-reflection/>

Fifteen Principles for Facilitating Creativity

Michelle James



Michelle James has been pioneering Applied Creativity and Applied Improvisation in business in the Washington, DC area since 1994. She is CEO of The Center for Creative Emergence and founder of the Capitol Creativity Network - an Applied Creativity community hub since 2004 - and Quantum Leap Business Improv. Her mission is to integrate the worlds of creativity, service, meaning and commerce, and cultivate whole brain, whole-person engagement in the workplace.

For the past several years, I've offered an annual creative facilitation program based on universal principles of creativity, education, research and application of creative processes in the workplace. Most significantly, they are based on lessons learned and insights gleaned from the trial and error of facilitating creative process with hundreds of individuals and organizations (an ongoing exploration, with each iteration I refine the program). It requires a different focus, skill set, way of being and "container creation" than facilitating analytical processes. Below are a few of the many principles and practices I've learned or discovered.

1. Set intention and embody purpose.

Get clear on your intention - not only from a business perspective, (i.e., leave with a strategic plan), but also from the human element. Creative process in human beings is organic, and contains emotional energy. In fact, the more passion and inspiration, the deeper and more coherent the creativity that emerges. If you intend to support the growth, creativity and awareness of those you serve, you facilitate from a more meaningful place than if focused only on the business goal. If you take time, both in the program design and in the room when facilitating, to think about what is the service you are providing - the gift you are offering - it frees up your own creativity more to support that in your facilitation. Focusing solely on the task limits the creative potential. By genuinely focusing on what is yours to give, (not how you come across doing it), participants pick that up - either consciously or unconsciously - and are more receptive to trying new things with you. Creative facilitation adds some new "yes-and's" to what already works.

2. Focus on awareness in addition to what happens.

Focusing on the awareness aspect allows it to be transformative. In all facilitation, the debrief can be one of the most powerful parts. It integrates the learnings and serves as a bridge to what's next. In debriefing creative process, focus on what was going on inside of the participants as well as what actually was created outside in the room. This leads to self-awareness, which increases the chances of continued creativity and co-creativity after the workshop, program, or process is over. The more aware participants become of what emerges within themselves as they create - both what was most alive as well as what was most challenging - the easier it is to continue to navigate and cultivate their creativity beyond the workshop setting.

3. Understand the normal resistance that occurs with navigating the unfamiliar.

Resistance is a healthy, natural part of the creative process. It only becomes unhealthy when it is allowed to block the process (by overemphasizing it and spending too much time engaging it, or by not acknowledging it all and trying to barrel past it). Be prepared for resistance to show up. It's usually a result of fear of entering the new territory, and it can show up in a myriad of forms - deflection, sarcasm, distraction, disengagement or, most often and most subtly, talking about what is already known. It's not something to be pushed down or avoided, but rather something to be acknowledged and moved through if it shows up. Acknowledgment ahead of time gives it permission to follow its natural course when and if it emerges. It is the natural "contraction" to balance the creative expansion. You find this in all of nature's creativity. The flower feels the resistance of the bud most just before it blossoms.

4. "Fail" gracefully.

Be comfortable with messing up. This is a great lesson from improv theater. Improvisers do not see mistakes as static failures. Instead, we see them as dynamic invitations to learn in real time and an opportunity to create something new. To authentically learn how to deepen your experience in facilitating a transformational creative process requires you to be the explorer as well. Unlike facilitation that relies on what is known, creativity depends on elements of the unknown. You can better facilitate that which you're willing to experience for yourself. Applied creativity has vulnerability attached to it as being experimental means being vulnerable. And, that means something you try may not work, or may work differently than you had anticipated. Go with it. Use that information as feedback to either refine for the future, or, in that moment, to take the group to another place. The facilitator's discomfort with the challenges of creativity can inhibit the group's creative process. (If you can take an improv class, do it! It's the quickest way I know to free yourself of the "the fear of failure" and develop a comfort with thinking on your feet.)

5. Adapt in real time.

There's always a dynamic balance between creating enough structure and releasing. If you as a facilitator need to control the process, do whatever you can on your free time to get comfortable with letting go, shifting gears, and modifying the agenda in real time. Use the real-time feedback loop: engage, get feedback, modify; engage, get feedback, modify, etc. It's an ongoing process, and like with all things, takes practice to embody. Do this enough and it becomes comfortable and easy...and alive! In fact, you will get to a point where it takes more energy to try to stick to the exact plans than to follow the creative aliveness of what is trying to emerge in the room. Be ready to adjust your "agenda" at any time for what is really going on in the room. Otherwise, you can get engagement, and even expanded perspectives, but generally no real novelty. Novelty contains an unpredictability within it, and to facilitate creative process means adapting to that unpredictability in real time. May as well have fun with it!

6. Work from your own creative edges, not your comfort zone.

This creates a palpable dynamic aliveness in the room. You are all in it together. This may seem antithetical to our "expertise" culture. The paradox is that you must still deeply know and understand what you are doing before you enter the room, but then once in the room, hold it loosely and respond in real time. Be in your own unknown - a co-discoverer instead of the expert on their creativity. Allow yourself to be surprised. Don't limit them, or yourself, by your creativity experience or pre-existing assumptions. While you are the one creating the container and holding the space, this role is balanced with your own openness to what emerges. Creative facilitation is an open system.

7. Respect creative style diversity.

To further expound on #6, one size, approach, method, technique, or even paradigm does not fit all. One creativity model definitely does not fit all. Understand that each person in that room is at a different comfort level, and will have a unique relationship with the creative process. Each carries unique and different stories of creativity in his or her consciousness. You give them tools and techniques as entry points, but be ready to let their creativity show you ways of creating that you can't imagine. This expands your own Creative Practices repertoire.



8. Understand patterns found in the creative process.

This allows you to facilitate during times of resistance. Another paradox: while each person has different creating styles and approaches that work for them, there are also re-occurring universal patterns that tend to emerge in a creative process. The deepest understanding comes from your own experimentation and learning, and will most likely be refined over time. Start with what you know, and open up to being "yes-anded" all the time. Look for patterns, not just techniques. Techniques only get you so far...patterns and principles allow you to create new techniques on an ongoing basis. Start where you are, be gentle with yourself as you learn, and learn from direct experience. Insights that emerge from experience and observation give you a real-time agility that book learning alone cannot offer.

9. Embrace dynamic balance.

Divergence and convergence. Left and right brain. Structure and flow. Reflection and action. That is one of the re-occurring themes in this post because it permeates all of creative process...and the complexity of being human. Creativity is filled with paradox. Setting up conditions for creativity is as well. Like with all natural systems, every situation, project, and group has a dynamic balance that will allow the most amount of creativity to emerge in that situation. Too rigid keeps the creativity bound; too loose, it gets unfocused. There is a balance between structure and flow. This is why whole brain practices are needed - the right brain to access new levels of ideas and information, and the left to discern and organize it.

10. Allow for self-organization when facilitating a group project.

Inherent in the creative process is a self-organization found in all of nature. You see this all the time in improvised jazz or improv theater...something larger than the sum of the parts emerges and it is a coherent whole and unexpected. It is similar to the experience you have in those moments when everything just seems to effortlessly come together in a brilliant, yet totally unexpected, way. This possibility always exists in any group. One key is to not over-control the experience and allow enough space for the next level of creativity to emerge in the room. This takes some trust in the creative process itself...and practices recognizing, like in an improv performance, when you need to step up and lead, or step back and follow. Without question, groups have the capacity to self-organize around a creative task - a collective creative intelligence can take over that is larger than any one person's idea. You have nature on your side. We are natural meaning-makers, and creativity is naturally self-organizing. By balancing both directing and following in real time, you can more naturally move to higher levels of coherence, meaning, and sense. (All "a-ha's" are deeply grounded in common sense at their new level). We have simply been socialized, educated, and trained to over-plan. Instead, we can learn how to work with the natural creative process.

11. Seek to make it safe, not comfortable.

Safety will allow people to open up and move into unknown territory without the fear of criticism, failure. Too much stability, and nothing new emerges. Asking people to share what they already know is different than guiding them into their unknown. On the other side, without doing the “container creating” to make it safe, taking people in too deep too soon can throw them into chaos and they will shut down - and they lose trust in you. In either case, nothing new emerges. Find the balance of the Creative Zone - the place of creative potential between stability and chaos. Create a safe space and guide your participants into new territory, which can be uncomfortable. Discomfort is a normal part of the creative process. In fact, if everyone in the room is entirely comfortable the whole time, chances are you did more of an information gathering process than a creative one.

12. Fun is functional.

There is more research emerging all the time that shows how fun, play, and “lightening up” have a serious role to play in increasing creative thinking and establishing creative work culture - not just as an outlet to do on your free time, but as a driver to navigating change and working on serious challenges in work and life. It frees the brain to think more creatively, and frees the energy in the room for more effective and safe collaboration. In fact, I have not come across any research anywhere that points to not having fun and not being playful as a more effective way of living and creating. To facilitate creativity requires accessing and being comfortable with having fun yourself. And, knowing how to bring it in purposefully, and in a way it can be accepted (and not shut people down). It's different for every group and every culture. Once you access your own “deep fun” self, you have more choice on what methods to use and how. As with all facilitation, know your audience.

13. Your inner stories directly impact the container you create for others.

Check out all the stories you carry around creativity, fun and play. Do you hold them as separate from a business bottom line? Most of us grew up with the programming that creativity is something you do on your free time after the “real work” is done. Facilitating applied creativity carries a new story - that it is an essential part of the real work. It is more than something fun to open up a group, but actually something to help transform individuals, groups, teams and organizations; create a thriving work culture, and feed the bottom line. Do you carry a story that creativity is for the domain of the arts...or do you know it to be present, in infinite abundance, for every person, group and system? What stories do you carry about yourself as a creator? In knowing yourself as a creator, and knowing that you are walking into a room filled with other creators (whether they are aware of it or not) allows you to help facilitate a new story for those in the room.

14. Diverge...and converge with discernment.

Facilitating transformational creativity requires your presence, adaptability, agile thinking...and discernment. Discernment keeps whatever emerges in the room focused on the objectives, relevant, and purposeful...not just random creative expression (unless that is your goal). This means having processes for convergence as well as divergence. Divergence explores, discovers, yes-and, and accepts to expand the playing field - the increase the field of potential from which to draw. Convergence discerns, focuses, fleshes out, uses what is relevant and leaves the rest. For a visual with more on Divergence and Convergence click [here](#). As with each of these points, the dynamic balance is the key: expand, contract; explore, refine; value logic and intuition; planning and spontaneity. Most people naturally gravitate to more comfort with diverging or converging...find out which is your preference and practice giving more time and attention to the other.

15. Prepare yourself with pre-workshop creativity rituals.

Creativity, by its nature, contains a lot of energy and newness. Facilitating novelty is not “business as usual.” It's about leading a group into the non-habitual. It requires being resilient, agile, compassionate and an “expedition guide.” Taking some time to do whatever you need to enter your own non-habitual state first can make a significant difference. One of the best ways to do that is by taking some alone time before the facilitation, to do pattern-breaking exercises to increase your own energy and become present, alert, and responsive. The more of the whole-brain - and whole-body! - you bring in, the better. Like an athlete who warms up by stretching muscles, you're a creativity facilitator who warms up by stretching beyond your familiar patterns. Try different things, like moving in non-habitual ways around your living room before you leave your house. You'll be alone, so the more “out there” you can be in the privacy of your own space, the better. Surprise yourself at how “out there” you can get! It will also help you be more comfortable when something “out there” emerges from a participant. Do it until you transform any negative self-judgment or evaluation you have into the joy of exploration. It will increase your energy and aliveness, and help you be more attentive and at ease with what shows up in the room. Creativity is messy. Non-judgment of self and others during the process is essential!

I have covered some of the basics here. They are meant to be a loose guide for your own exploration and refinement. My hope is that something in here gives you food for thought, inspiration or validation. Take what resonates and leave the rest.

Acknowledgement

The article was originally posted at: <http://www.innovationmanagement.se/imtool-articles/15-foundations-for-facilitating-creativity-in-the-workplace/>

Image credits

<http://www.filositerracina.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/prog2.jpg>
<http://blogs.ibo.org/sharingpyp/files/2015/12/creativity-quote2.jpg>

**“creativity is
intelligence
having FUN”**

- ALBERT EINSTEIN

creative academic ANNUAL REPORT AUGUST 2017

'Creative Academic' was founded in January 2015 by two members of **Lifewide Education** - a not for profit, voluntary and community-based, social-educational enterprise. Our purpose is to champion creativity in all its manifestations in higher education in the UK and the wider world. Our ambition is to create and support a strong network and vibrant community of people who are interested in their own creativity and committed to enabling students' creative development.

Our goal is to become a global HUB for the production and curation of resources that are of value and relevance to educational practitioners and institutions. Our focus is primarily higher education but we are interested in connecting to and learning from all phases of education. Our aim is to influence thinking and practice and encourage educational professionals to share their practices that facilitate students' creative development in all disciplines and pedagogic contexts, and to connect researchers and their research to practitioners and their practice.

We value 'openness' and believe in open learning, open education and open resources and practices. Most of our resources are published under a creative commons licence. Membership is free and open to anyone who shares these interests and values.

Our activities involve exploration and research for better understandings and for improved educational practices, in particular we explore:

- 1) Creativity as a concept and perceptions and narratives of our own creativity in different contexts
- 2) The creativity of teachers and other professionals who support students' development
- 3) The creativity of students and how their creative development is encouraged and facilitated by teachers and other professionals who contribute to their learning and development
- 4) The creativity of universities - the ways in which institutions encourage, support and recognise the creativity and creative development of students and staff.

We undertake research, scholarship, publication and dissemination of information relating to creativity and creativity in learning & education

We support the development of higher education professionals by:

- contributing to CPD programmes of education professionals
- leading and facilitating on-line conversations via the #creativeHE Google+ community forum
- preparing and publishing magazines that encourage the sharing of educational practices encouraging academics to publish articles on their teaching
- organising and contributing to our events

Our Team

Our team of ten volunteers act as champions, brokers and facilitators to engage and work with the global community. During 2016-17 our team expanded to ten with new members Simon Rae who helps with illustrations, Lisa Clughen, who guest edited CAM8, Maria Kefalogianni, Teryl Cartwright and Rebecca Jackson who are regular contributors to the magazines and #creativeHE conversations, and Gillian Judson who Co-Directs the Imaginative Education Research Group at Simon Fraser University in Canada.



Prof Norman Jackson
Founder & Co-Leader
Commissioning Editor



Chrissi Nerantzi
Co-Founder & Co-Leader
Academic Developer



Prof Paul Kefalogianni
Designer



Dr Jenny Willis,
Magazine Executive
Editor & Researcher



Lisa Clughen
HE teacher &
researcher



Maria Kefalogianni
HE teacher, researcher
& prof. therapist



Simon Rae
Magazine illustrator



Dr Gillian Judson
Director Imaginative
Education & HE teacher
researcher



Teryl Cartwright
Freelance writer,
online course
developer & facilitator



Rebecca Jackson
HE researcher &
teacher

Review of Activities August 2016 - 17

The main activities undertaken during this period were:

1 **Ongoing support (see below) for our community of interest.** There are 550 subscribers an increase of nearly 200 in the last 12 months. We use Mail Chimp to manage our mail list and communicate with our subscribers. People can join and leave the mail list at any time. Our aim is to be an international HUB for creative thinking, research and resources. The majority of subscribers are from the UK but our membership includes representatives from: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Canada, China, Colombia, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, Ireland, Korea, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Netherlands, Peru, South Africa, Sudan, Switzerland, Taiwan, Tanzania, and the USA.



2. **Maintaining the website and blog** <http://www.creativeacademic.uk/> The website has been regularly updated.

3 **Maintaining a presence on the twitter @academiccreator** twitter platform. We currently have 559 followers. Twitter has proved useful in finding people to contribute to our magazine and also in the promotion of activities relating to our magazine, blogs and surveys. During the year we facilitated one #LTHEchat.

4 **Support for three Google+ community forums.**

#creativeHE (see below) <https://plus.google.com/communities/110898703741307769041> 589 members

Our Creative Life <https://plus.google.com/communities/106367720977059375674> 86 members

Creative Academic <https://plus.google.com/communities/113507315355647483022> 56 members

5 **Creative Academic Magazine.**

CAM6 'Exploring Creative Ecologies' August 2016

CAM7 'Creative Pedagogies for Creative Learning Ecologies' - 10 monthly issues

CAM8 Role of the Body in Creative Processes & Practices

The magazine page on our website has received **7000 page loads** for the 8 issues of the magazine we have produced which shows that there is interest in the contributions we are making. We are averaging about 2000 page loads a year. We also share our magazines via academia.edu

6 **We have a successful partnership with Chrissi Nerantzi owner of the #creativeHE open learning and education platform** .The site currently has 588 members (240 more than last year). During the year we hosted and facilitated two courses (led by CN) and three discursive events (led by NJ and LC)

Table 1 #creative courses and conversations

30th October - 4th November 2016	#creativeHE conversation <u>Exploring creative pedagogies and learning ecologies</u>	Assets curated Creative Academic Magazine CAM7A November 2016
16th - 20th Jan 2017	#creativeHE open course linked to MMU module	Complete #creativeHE course, curated in Creative Academic Magazine CAM6
27th -31st March 2017	#creativeHE open conversation 'Exploring Personal Pedagogies' our contribution to Open Education Week between April 15-21 2017	Assets significantly curated in Creative Academic Magazine CAM7C March 2017
15th -21st April 2017	#creativeHE open conversation 'Exploring the Role of the Body in the Process of Creation' our contribution to World Creativity and Innovation Week between	Assets partly curated in Creative Academic Magazine CAM8 June 2017
May 22-26 2017	#creativeHE Creativity in HE open learning course	

7 Contributions to World Creativity & Innovation Week April 15-21 2017 <http://wciw.org/>

WCIW encourages people to use their creativity to make the world a better and more interesting place and to make their own place in the world better and more interesting. Creative Academic participated in this global event in 2017 by hosting an open conversation 'Exploring the Role of the Body in the Process of Creation', publishing a magazine on the same theme and publishing via Twitter our 101 ideas - a project led by CN and EH. We were considered the top engaged partner by Marcia Segal (founder of WCIW) for many weeks in the run up to WCIW.

8 101 creative ideas campaign

<https://101creativeideas.wordpress.com/>

During the year Ellie Hannan and Chrissi Nerantzi led and facilitated a successful #101creativeideasOpen Education Resource project to gather and share novel ideas around learning and teaching that foster and nurture imagination, curiosity and



creativity in higher education. Nearly 50 ideas have been gathered to date from practitioners. All creative ideas are being made available under a specific [Creative Commons license](#) so that others can easily use and develop them in their own practice with staff and/or students. #101creativeideas collection 2017 will consist of the 101 most novel creative ideas selected by a panel of educators and students. In the countdown to WCIW an idea was posted every day on twitter.

9 Creative Pedagogies for Creative Learning Ecologies Project

- Creation of a network of interest (89 people)
- Exploration of ideas and sharing through Creative Academic Magazine (CAM7 - over 300 pages of content between Oct16 and July17)
- Facilitation of 3 #creativeHE conversations
- Contribution to online TLC seminar and facilitation of #LTHEchat
- Contributions to professional development events in five HE institutions
- Production of 9 monthly newsletters to disseminate activities
- Development of the concept of personal pedagogy

We undertook a survey of HE practitioners currently 110 respondents on the factors that influence the pedagogical thinking and practices of HE teachers. The survey is still open and an interim report of the results was produced by Dr Jenny Willis and published in CAM7. About 20% of the respondents indicated that they would like to contribute further to the project and these people will be invited to participate in phase two of the project in the coming year.

Goals for 2017/18

- **Sustain and build on our achievements** including:
- Continue to serve and grow our community
- Publish at least 2 issues of Creative Academic Magazine each exploring a new theme
- Encourage/facilitate discussion and enquiry through surveys using our Survey Monkey website
- Maintain and develop our presence through social media (Google+, Facebook, Linked in, Academic.edu, Twitter, other)
- Contribute to the CPD activities of teachers in universities in UK & overseas
- Provide opportunities for members of our community in at least one face to face event
- Research & development priorities - Continue exploration of important themes relating to creativity in higher education - eg disciplinary perspectives on creativity, teaching practices that encourage students to use their creativity and learning ecologies that enable creativity to flourish, personal pedagogies and the use of imagination in higher education.
- Publish a book based on the research we have undertaken.
- Contribute to World Creativity and Innovation Week April 2018
- Develop a meaningful and productive relationship with the 'Imaginative Education Research Group'

AND adapt to changing circumstances and make the most of new opportunities as they emerge

Rough Plan October 2017 – 2018 (supersedes the plan published in July 2017)

We value open learning & educational practices, we work for our community, we adapt to changing circumstances and we are open to new ideas and possibilities

		<i>Creative Academic Magazine</i>	<i>#creativeHE informal monthly institutional meetups *</i>
October 2017	Review Creative Pedagogies for Creative Learning Ecologies Project	Publish final monthly issue CAM7	University of Salford
November	Initiate new project 'Creativity in Practice' aimed at developing fresh perspectives on creativity in disciplines		University of Manchester
December			?
January 2018	#creative Creativity Course 22-26th January Lead facilitator Chrissi Nerantzi Visit Swaraj University India	First issue of CAM9 'Creativity in Practice'	?
February March	Preparation of CAM10 'The role of imagination in education' Guest edited by Gillian Judson		?
April <i>World Creativity & Innovation Wk April 15-21</i>	#LTHEchat Twitter conversation 'Using Imagination in Education' & '#creative Creativity Course Lead facilitator Dr Gillian Judson	Second issue CAM9 'Creativity in Practice'	
May	Complete CAM 10	Publication CAM10 'The Role of Imagination in Higher Education Meanings, Ideas & Practices' Guest Editor Dr Gillian Judson	
June			
July		Third issue CAM9 'Creativity in Practice'	
August			
September			
October		Review of Creativity in Practice project and Final issue CAM9	

*** #creativeHE institutional meetups—see announcement on page 76**



'Blending' Kerry Bertram (see Kerry's article 'Blending Past, Creating New'
Lifewide Magazine #19 @ [http://www.lifewideeducation.uk/
magazine.html](http://www.lifewideeducation.uk/magazine.html)

CAM 7D

August 2017

Imagine a University with No Classrooms, No Teachers, No Degrees, Curriculum or Exams, Founded on Principles of Self-Designed and Self-Determined Learning

Rahul Hasija



Rahul is a writer and storyteller and works as a lead facilitator at Swaraj University. Part of his work is to design and implement the programme, develop facilitation tools, create safe spaces for the learners to share, hold the space, host sessions on team-building, cooperative games, circular dances, reconnecting with the ancestral roots, rethinking development and connecting with nature. Community building, gardening, bird watching, making herbal products, gift culture, theatre and nature connect are his key areas of interest and engagement. This article is adapted from a previous article he wrote ¹
E-mail id: rahul_hasija89@yahoo.co.in | Blog: <http://thefreedomwalker.wordpress.com>

What if you walk into a university to find out that there are no classrooms, no teachers, degrees, curriculum, and exams? Above all, you see people learning joyfully in their own ways, involving their head, heart and hands, doing what interests them and making a difference to what they care about most in their lives. This is our vision and our practical educational goal for Swaraj University.

A university (Latin: *universitas*, "a whole") has come to mean an institution of higher education and research which awards academic degrees in various academic disciplines. But the word "university" is derived from the Latin *universitas magistrorum et scholarium*, which roughly means "community of teachers and scholars."³

Our concept of university is a place where learners and teachers come together to learn, research and experiment. We use the word 'University' to challenge the notion of what a university has come to mean. Swaraj University does not offer any degrees, diploma or certificate, nor does it have or require accreditation from anyone. Rather than certificates Swaraj helps learners (learners at Swaraj are known as *khojis* i.e. seekers) build their learning portfolios, which comprise their experiences and achievements, actual work models and recommendation letters from mentors, peers, and feedback council.

Swaraj University is located at Tapovan Ashram 15kms from



Udaipur city in the Rajasthan province of NW India. The University was founded in 2010 when it launched a 2-year programme that is partially structured and partially co-created with *khojis* to enable them to become designers of their own learning and whole, happy and healthy beings.

The concept of *swaraj*, or self-rule, was developed during the Indian freedom struggle. ... As Gandhi states, "It is *swaraj* when we learn to rule ourselves." The real goal of the freedom struggle was not only to secure political *azadi* (independence) from Britain, but rather to gain true *swaraj* (self-rule where 'self' implies an interconnection of many selves, local governance and localized and self-reliant model of living). Swaraj University uses this concept as a foundation principle

Imagine if the youth of today...

- Were equipped with the skills to deal creatively with complexity, uncertainty, collapse and change in the world?
- Had a personal vision of and commitment to building healthy and resilient communities and lifestyles?
- Were able to put their ideas and dreams for social change into real action?

Swaraj University was founded in 2010 as a two year learning programme for youth. The focus of the programme is on self-designed learning; deepening understanding and practice of perspectives like ecological sustainability, social justice, healthy living; and finding / designing and starting 'right livelihood' + leadership (livelihood which integrates my dreams / heart's calling, gifts, beliefs & values in a way that is in sync with nature.

This self-directed learning process invites learners to identify their hearts' visions and engages them in developing the skills, relationships and practices they need to manifest those visions.

The programme is as much about developing the capacities and confidence we need to create and pursue our unique learning paths as it is about strengthening the leadership capacity and right livelihood opportunities in communities.²

educational and pedagogical cultures and practices to support and enable self-directed and self-managed learning.⁵

Educational mission

Since its inception in 2010 Swaraj University has provided a platform for young people to identify their hearts' vision and engage them in developing the skills and practices they need to turn their vision into reality. In this way Swaraj University nurtures the creativity of its learners and empowers them to bring their ideas into existence so they can make a positive contribution to the world.

Our khojis come from all over the country. They are also from varied socio-economic backgrounds and hail from metropolitan cities, semi-urban as well as rural areas. The first cohort of khojis joined Swaraj in 2010 and in the last 7 years, over 120 khojis, more than 250 mentors, and countless other supporters from all over the world have been part of the programme while the idea has reached many more in some way or the other.

The question might arise as to why we need a programme for self-designed learners. All of us have experienced self-designed learning and we might be ready to walk our own unique paths, but several factors stop us: fear and doubt, lack of mentorship or guidance, finding supportive co-travelers, socio-economic responsibilities or simply not knowing how to start.



At Swaraj University, we support and enable khojis to start, create and reclaim self-designed learning processes and projects and provide a safe space for learners to walk their own path with other co-travelers. We engage them with many un-learning challenges to help them out of their comfort zones and build deeper perspectives for regenerating self, soil and society.

We also connect khojis to a wide network of individuals and organizations that provide internships, mentoring and work opportunities, support them to discover

Origins

Swaraj University was founded by four visionaries - Reva Dandage, Manish Jain, Nitin Paranjape and Deborah Frieze - who imagined a democratic open learning space for youth to engage in. The seeds for this venture were sown years before. One of the co-founders, Reva Dandage (right), in spite of being an above-average student in school failed in all subjects of class 12th exam. During the same time, two of her friends committed suicide due to failure in exams. This made her question the parameters of grading and measurement and pushed her to find the dreadful impacts it was causing to a learner. She felt these parameters were not leaving learners with satisfaction and happiness; rather they created new social hierarchies like rank, grades, pass or fail. Then on, she has been passionately involved with democratic education. Her interest in understanding the pedagogy of self-directed learning made her leave a well-established design business and took her to several alternative and free schools around the world.



Manish Jain, on the other hand worked with UNSECO, where he realized that there were existing traditional learning systems in African and Asian nations to which the mainstream education not just neglected, but destroyed. He saw a big picture of how the whole education system is destroying local cultures, traditions, occupations and is creating more insecurity and fear, and is getting people ready only for corporate slavery. This made him quit his job and he came back to India, and along with his wife and sister, initiated a learning movement called Shikshantar in Udaipur. For last 20 years, Shikshantar has worked tirelessly creating alternatives and challenging mainstream education system. It has also worked for creating Udaipur as learning city. Over the years, several hundred people have visited Shikshantar and have gotten inspired and taken home a seed for change in their lives. Manish along with his wife have unschooled their daughter Kanku and has motivated many families to do the same.



Nitin Paranjape has been actively involved in activism through Abhivyakti Media for Development, an organization he and his wife started 25 year back in Nasik and has actively worked with land rights movement including Narmada Bachao Andolan. Nitin, in his life, has experimented a lot on learning and unlearning. He also supported her daughter to unschool. He opens up space for talking which a youth does not find anywhere in society. Nitin and Manish ran a fellowship program called Berkana fellows for self-driven adults striving for a different lifestyle and occupation just before the launch of Swaraj.

Deborah, another co-founder, lives in USA and was long associated with Berkana institute. This US-based nonprofit promotes “leadership development” projects based on community conversations on issues of interest. She has also co-authored a book with Meg Wheatley called Walk Out Walk On: A Learning Journey into Communities Daring to Live the Future Now. She also runs an urban learning center where neighbors gather to rediscover how to create healthy communities.



Concept of fee at Swaraj University

What are the expected expenses for a learner at Swaraj University?

Today we see commodification of everything around us, including education. This is wiping out ideas and practices of deep learning, self-organizing learning communities and vibrant learning ecosystems. Hence, at Swaraj University we believe that learning should be free. This will not only help revive other practices of learning but will also give us the opportunity to re-examine our relationship with money. Through this we can explore money in a newer and holistic manner and experiment with the spirit of gifting, sharing, trust and abundance.

However, to run this program we will incur expenses for lodging, boarding and travelling for each learner. For those whom it is possible we ask a contribution against the above mentioned expenses. And if you can, your additional contributions will help to support other peoples' participation. This year for the batch starting in 2017, the expected contribution to meet the cost is Rs. 1,30,000/ year/ person (equivalent to £1534). **However, if you cannot afford this for any reason, then please let us know and we will arrange for a scholarship for you**

Unique ‘institution’

One frequent compliment we have received from khojis is that this place offers them acceptance that they struggle to get elsewhere, and that is one of the biggest reason young people are attracted to Swaraj. Unfortunately, due to pressures of society, family, media, and education system, youth today are devoid of acceptance at every level. In the tender age of 15-27, a lot changes in the life of a youth which they need to cater to - there are struggles with parents on career & livelihood; that is when they begin tryst with relationships and love; there are a lot of bodily changes, one also begins to question their role in the society, or find purpose of life, or try to understand one's own sexuality. Unfortunately, our education system and none of the universities focus on all these aspects of life. The only focus is on career and livelihood while a lot of youth today struggle with low self-esteem, and if unnoticed and uncared for, they carry the unnecessary emotional baggage with them.

At Swaraj, apart from understanding one's interests and developing and practicing life skills, a lot of the focus is on holistic learning; which means it is inclusive of understanding self, working with others including the local community, harmonizing relationships at home and society, and understanding body and emotions, and much more. Workshops on Non-Violent Communication (NVC), Understanding, Gender and Sexuality, Dance Movement Therapy, Jeevan Vidya, and living together in a community at Swaraj have helped khojis find balance in their lives. To cite an example, two of our khojis at separate points in time had to leave the programme to spend time with their ailing fathers. Any other place of study or work would have not counted or valued this experience, but here, as a community, we did it and rather encouraged them to hold that period of time as a learning time. One of them even used NVC to bridge many gaps to heal his strained relationship with his father.



Life at Swaraj University teaches young people to be an active citizen in a democratic community. Right from deciding a day's schedule to deciding what kind of food experiments the community want to try, from resolving a conflict to sometimes sitting 8 hours at stretch in a community meeting struggling to come to a decision - all of it has help khojis build muscle to live in any kind of group - be it in a family or workspace. Democratic education has helped khojis be more tolerant, patient and learn to look at other's point of view- which is very essential in

today's living. The best part for khojis as well as the facilitation team has been the continuous evolution of the programme. It has never been the same for any khoji cohort, and nor it has been for the facilitating team. Every khoji cohort bring their own flavors, ideas and needs, thus helping the program to not be stagnant but evolve keeping everyone on toes, ready to learn new things, challenging & pushing everyone out of their comfort zones.

Table 1 Important differences between Swaraj University and a traditional university⁵

<i>Swaraj University</i>	<i>Formal university</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self-directed learning where individual interests and styles are the foundation of the programme 2. Learner decides the amount of time he/she requires to go into the depth of the subject 3. Learners carry out self and peer evaluation as well as develop their own learning portfolios 4. Grooming of learners so that they question the current state of society and develop the commitment and practice of sustainable action 5. All the learning opportunities are real and are based on understanding of local issues and their global context 6. Geared towards starting one's own enterprise 7. Co-learners coming from a wide variety of backgrounds and ages that can help in bringing different flavours and learning resources to the process 8. A sense of community and democratic co-learning environment 9. Each learner will have a mentor in their area of interest and a mitra to provide guidance in the learning process 10. Hindi and local languages are used in the learning process to bring out feelings and nuances, and to keep ourselves in contact with our cultures 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compulsory learning- individual interests and learning styles are not taken into account 2. Limited time and opportunity to understand the subject in-depth 3. Evaluation based on testing which creates fears, inferiority complexes and a sense of competition with others 4. Grooming of learners so that they become spectators, producers and consumers for the state and corporations 5. Teaching matter and the process is disconnected from their immediate world 6. Geared towards finding a job in the government or a corporation 7. Students separated by age groups. Students from similar age group are put together in the classrooms. 8. Hierarchical and authoritarian learning environment 9. Larger class size, so lack of individual attention 10. Teaching done majorly in English, which disconnects the student from local culture

Pedagogical principles & practices

An educational concept of 'swaraj' (learners as self-determined, self-directed, self-managed and self-regulating) underpins the pedagogical practices that are used to develop learners so that they can become proactive beings. There are also strong elements of ecological thinking embedded in the relationships that are cultivated between the learners and their mentors and facilitators and the natural and social environment in which they are learning. For example, Khojis are also empowered to build their own support structure involving parents, peers, friends, mentors, and other people who can motivate, inspire, instigate, critique and help them through their journey.

Each person's learning programme is individualized according to his/her specific interests, talents, questions and dreams. There is ample scope for learners to develop a multidisciplinary curriculum. There is a strong focus on apprenticeship learning, leadership development and community living. In the area of community living, learners explore healthy and sustainable personal lifestyle choices, gift culture, co-creation and democratic decision-making. Decisions regarding day-to-day functioning is done through the form of consensus, with a space for each person in the Swaraj community, be that learner or facilitator, to express his/her voice.

The world is our classroom! Swaraj University challenges and helps learners to 'self-design' their learning processes. Rather than being dependant on external sources and frameworks for one's education, we believe in enabling the learners to take responsibility for their own education and hence design their own learning path. A learner at Swaraj is hence called '*khoji*' or 'one who seeks'.



In a self-design learning approach, each khoji is encouraged to...

- Explore their learning styles, questions and passions without the institutional constraints that smother interest and joy, and breed mediocrity
- Engage consciously with unlearning, *jugaad* (playful improvisation), deep dialogue and gift culture
- Design individualised learning webs that are based on authentic real world trans-disciplinary projects and inter-generational relationships
- Build feedback frameworks and mechanisms to reflect on their learning

Use the close, supportive learner community as a base from which to engage with local, regional and global communities

With this as a basis, the *khojis* design their own learning plan. Their learning plans revolve around one core feature of this programme - *intimate mentorships*. Swaraj University aims to revive the traditional approach to education in India, through a *guru-shishya parampara*. That is, learners being placed one-on-one with mentors (also called *ustads*) who share both a range of practical skills as well as personal philosophies/wisdom. These mentors have been carefully selected to ensure that, in addition to being cutting edge leaders in their respective fields, they are able to engage with youth in a true spirit of co-learning and friendship.



This is complemented by...

- **Khoji meets:** The *khojis* converge every few months to cross-fertilise their learning and build perspectives on the core principles of Swaraj at our campus 30 kilometres away from Udaipur city. (To know more see Campus)
- **Individualised self-study program:** After getting initial exposure to several practice areas, *khojis* chart and pursue their own path of study based on their interests. They are guided in developing their self-study programme using various books, websites, films, etc. Significant attention is given to processes of self-awareness, self-understanding, and examining their life choices.
- **Skill workshops:** *Khojis* have the choice to participate in workshops featuring basic entrepreneurial skills as well as other skills such as: communication, facilitation and group dialogue, computers, financing, marketing, cooking, sewing, farming, yoga, film-making, web design and blogging, desktop publishing, writing of proposals and business plans, documentation, working English, etc.
- **Service projects:** *Khojis* design individual and group projects in collaboration with local communities and social movements.
- **Organisational internships:** *Khojis* can do internships with leading social organisations and social movements spread all over India. This experience gives them the opportunity to know the expectations of the real work-world.
- **International dialogues:** They interact with and spend time with visiting students from other countries. In addition, they are able to engage in virtual interactions with partner programs from around the world.

Learning journeys: *Khoji* cohorts travel together to engage with the cultural diversity of India and visit inspiring people and places such as Auroville, Ladakh, and POSCO *andolan*.

Each *khoji* builds their own portfolio over the course of 2 years, comprised of recommendations, self-reflections, published work, photographs of events and achievements.

Programme structure

The structure of the programme (see below) reveals that there is an emphasis on learning, developing and applying knowledge and skills in the real world in a range of contexts linked to the idea of learning journeys in which social learning is important. There is plenty of opportunity for project-based learning, and self-directed learning is underpinned by mentors who encourage reflection on learning experiences and the results of actions. A summary of differences between a traditional university and Swaraj University is shown in Table 1.

Year 1

The aim of the first year is to encourage khojis to unlearn their dependence on external sources of knowledge and to engage in co-creating their self-directed learning path. Khojis also learn basic jugaad (playful improvisation), planning, facilitation, media and communication skills, as well as identify a practice area to pursue in more depth. It is also the time to go deeper into their own stories, histories and understand one's own self - beliefs, values, patterns, fears and emotions, and not just one's own self, but also understanding these stories of the whole group that empowers them to support their peers much strongly. There are various explorations and experiments to understand the meaning of Swaraj, and the core principles related to it, which are sustainability, social justice and holistic living. Khojis are exposed to different kinds of community contexts - rural villages, social movements, entrepreneurs and non-profit organisations.



Here is a typical time-table for the year 1 programme:

Khoji Meet 1: Exploration of self, our own stories, community building, etc. Includes the initiation ceremony of khojis who have completed 2 years' process (5-8 weeks)

Learning Journey 1: Whole group goes to one city or area to meet various inspiring activists, artists, social entrepreneurs, and change agents (2 weeks)

Self-Designed Learning Time 1: Individually or in pairs (1.5 - 3 months) Khojis design if they want to do mentorships, travel, go home or a combination

Khoji Meet 2: Re-thinking development, co-learning and community living with peers and through workshops at Udaipur (8 weeks)

Learning Journey 2: Cycle Yatra to villages (10 days)

Self-Designed Learning Time 2: Individually or in pairs (1.5 - 3 months) Khojis design if they want to do mentorships, travel, go home or a combination

Khoji Meet 3: Co-learning and community living with peers and through workshops at Udaipur (6 weeks)

Learning Journey 3: Whole group goes to join any live people's social movement of resistance and stay with the resilient communities.

Mentorship 3: Individually (2.5 months)

Right—making music from waste



Year 2

The focus of the second year is on *Deep Diving*. The aim is to facilitate deeper learning around each khoji's emerging vision. It is in a way consolidation of first year's exploration into a live project they take up.

Central piece of year 2 - *identifying one's heart's calling & following it*. This is done through Project Based Learning (PBL) which is a form of self designed learning (SDL).

The Project is to give your heart's calling some concrete shape in the real world. It involves:

- Pedagogy of mistakes / failure: risk taking, learning by doing, celebrating mistakes as paths of learning.
- Feedback & iterations: unlearning the student teacher relationship of writing an exam and getting marks which declare whether you know something or not and that's the end of it. Here, learn to take, seek and value feedback, create dialogues to figure out what can be better / different in your own work instead of thinking I need to give the 'right' answer. Based on this iterate for constant improvisation. Khojis sometimes find it hard to take feedback / dialogue about their work / iterate as they are still stuck in the cycle of 'but I gave the right answer' / seeing facilitators as authority.
- Identifying and leveraging your learning style
- Self awareness
- Self evaluation

Khojis are encouraged to take risks, to try new things out and not to be afraid of making mistakes. These projects can be anything - right from their dream ideas to ideas they want to experiment with in their communities, from a foundation of an enterprise to ideas implementation in existing organizations. We call it Alivelhoods. Usually the focus of existing universities is just to have learners reach livelihoods. Our focus is to increase the spectrum and include questions, ideas and deeper calling from the world that makes the khojis alive or the communities they intend to work with, Alive. Khojis also begin to develop understanding and practice in leadership, management, resource mobilization, marketing and networking skills to engage others to support their vision. They also learn about the basics of social entrepreneurship, starting a green business or a social initiative, fund-raising, basic accounting and budgeting, creating business plans and project management.

Here is a typical time-table for the year 2 programme (Hindi meanings- sangh = union or association, milan = coming together or unification and aagaz means new beginning and it is the initiation ceremony)

What	Details	Days
Meet 1	Common meet	7-10
	Livelihood module	4-5
	Learning Journey	10
	Milan	8-10
Meet 2	Common meet	7-10
	Livelihood module	4-5
Sangh meet up 1	Khoji organized	4-8
Meet 3	Common meet	7-10
	Livelihood module	4-5
	Learning Journey	10
Sangh meet up 2	Khoji organized	4-8
Meet 4	Common meet	7-10
	Livelihood module	4-5
Pre Milan prep		4-5
Milan and Aagaaz		6-8

Encouraging & facilitating creativity

The whole pedagogical approach to encouraging khojis to determine and design their own learning pathways taps into the deep interests and ambitions that drive intrinsic motivations within which creativity can thrive. Indeed one of the core purposes of the Swaraj approach is to develop people so that they are able to create their own learning projects and bring new enterprises into existence. Here are just two examples of strategies we employ to encourage khoji's to use their creativity.

One of the interesting experiments we do with the khojis in the first year of the programme is called Eklavya Ghumantu. Ghumantu means a nomad. And Eklavya is a mythological character who learnt archery by constructing a sculpture of his Guru as his teacher. He represents a true self-designed learner. Eklavya Ghumantu is an exploration of finding learning opportunities on the run. In India, learners are made to believe that learning could only be possible if there's an expert to teach you. So, the whole power of learning is shifted to that expert. Eklavya Ghumantu is a process where khojis are encouraged to go on the streets to search for and find their own Gurus. There is treasure of learning everywhere and potential teachers are everywhere. Artisans, cobblers, barbers, mechanics, and repair artists - the streets are full of people whom we can learn from. The khojis have to find these teachers and learn from them. It challenges their notion of learning and whom to learn from, encourages them to use their creativity to find and engage their own teachers and introduces them to many everyday contexts in which people use their creativity.



One red paperclip is a website created by Canadian blogger Kyle MacDonald, who bartered his way from a single red paperclip to a house in a series of fourteen online trades over the course of a year https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One_red_paperclip.
graduation, the khojis do it all and they are encouraged and forced to use their creativity.

Inspired by 'red-clip' challenge, in the second year of the programme khojis are given an object of some value and asked to exchange it as many times possible to acquire new objects and other resources of higher value. Learners are forced to use their negotiating and resourcefulness skill in order to complete the

A lot of processes at Swaraj University are indeed designed by khojis themselves. From the 1st meet of year 1, they get into designing the khoji meets and many aspects of the meet. Right from designing the conflict resolution mechanism to designing the way responsibilities will be help and executed, from designing and hosting events, to setting their own criteria for

Experiments like cycle yatra, Eklavya Ghumantu, where they are not allowed to carry money or food, push them to think more creatively, and they have to use their imaginations and be resourceful.

Many a time khojis struggle to take initiatives because they get into the head-space too often and think on it so much that action seems to be a faraway thought. We encourage them to act, to try things out to make quick prototypes to shift into action and experiment without thinking too much. If they are taking up a big project, we ask them to make a quick prototype that breaks their fear and gets them involved in action so that they can learn from doing something that contributes to what they want to achieve.

In the year 2, they are also encouraged to undertake a research, collate all the necessary inputs and experiences and design a Course Hamara (*Hamara*, in Hindi means Ours). Taking their cue from the online learning platform like Coursera, Course Hamara encourages khojis to put together their learning into a form that can leverage the project they are already doing and we believe that one of the best ways to learn is also to share/teach it to others. A few examples of Course Hamara taken up by this year's khojis are - Human trafficking, Life in Ladakh, Pornography, Disappearance of Vultures, Menstruation. Researching, designing and presenting a course on a subject that interests them deeply is another important we encourage khoji's to use their creativity in the service of others.

Khoji Explorations in various fields!

Media

Community Radio
Journalism: alternative
magazines & publications
Poetry
Film: editing, direction
Translation & Transcription
Documentation: film, articles,
blogs, events, formal writing
Story writing
TV Programming : script,
coordination
Social media management

Entrepreneurship

Marketing & Production:
bags, jewelry, handloom
cloth & products

Social Justice

Gender & Sexuality
Anti-Corruption
RTI activism and training
Politics: campaign
management, grassroots
Localization :
strengthening communities
through cafes, city walks,
cycle tours
Working with under-
privileged communities :
Teen girls, Rag pickers

Science

Weather Science
Astronomy
Understanding
plants

Healing and Self care

Various healing techniques: Pranik,
Reiki, Past life regression
Ayurveda
Massage therapy
Non-Violent Communication
Dance therapy
Urine Therapy
Animal based therapy
Systemic constellation
Drum circles

Alternative education

Renewable energy

Solar energy: home and
commercial
Human powered water
pump



What are our khojis up to?

Khojis have explored more than 75 different fields, such as sustainable living practices, eco-architecture, farming, theatre, design, healing (psychology, pranic healing, naturopathy, etc.) technology, facilitation/teaching, writing, film making, storytelling, alternative education, kabaad se jugaad, event-management, and much more. More than 60 khojis have now completed their two-year programme at Swaraj University.

Here are a few examples of the ways our graduates are using their creativity and talents.

Ritesh is currently running a collaborative enterprise called Eco-Hut, which is a store in Udaipur that sells hand-made herbal products, products out of waste, books, and hand-made jewelry. She makes jewelry out of seeds. <https://www.facebook.com/ECO-HUT-451732841625718/>

Gyan is a documentary filmmaker. He has worked with Ekta Parishad, a pan-India organization working on land rights movement, covering 18000kms of Jan Samvaad Yatra. He has also worked with other activist organizations and has made more than 50 films.

Kamalbiri has started her own enterprise 'Saadgi' where she with the help of women-folk of a village in Udaipur, makes utility bags out of fabric waste and then markets it at various handicrafts store and exhibitions. <https://www.facebook.com/saadgicreations/>

Arjun has been working extensively with SkillTrain in developing video content, marketing and the website administration part of it. SkillTrain is a technology-enabled blended vocational training company that offers online and mobile-based training programs to cater to prospective vocational skill learners anywhere in India, for free.

Karen left her job of 5 years in IT & Advertising sector and gave herself space to explore her association with theatre. She has begun directing theatre shows in Bangalore and has started her Theatre company.

Vikas is currently practicing Pranik healing on gift culture basis in Anand, Gujarat and carries out small experiments in farming with his wife. During the course of Swaraj process, Vikas worked at Vinobha ashram (Naturopathy centre) for 1 year and experimented that year living without money and later also practiced consultancy for 6 months at a friend's clinic in alternative therapy.

Rahul Karanpuriya initiated his traveling and learning process called 52 parindey, in the process of which, he travelled to 52 differently located people who have self-designed learners in their life and are experimenting with their life and lifestyles. The intention is to make short films and inspire others to take a leap and walk on their own path. Right now, he is visiting and documenting 12 weaver communities for next 12 months.

Neema worked as teacher with a Government school for 10 years and then joined Swaraj. Her pursuit has been to bring reform and liveliness to the educational system as a whole, specially in the State of Gujarat, where she belongs to. She is currently the principal and brought Theatre and democratic styles of learning into her school. She has also been part of the Frisbee team of her state.

For more stories of what khojis are up to, check: <http://www.swarajuniversity.org/khoji-stories.html>

Many other khojis are trying out different things, experimenting different ways of lifestyle and livelihoods, some figuring out what kind of life they want to live, some confused, some trying to understand the impact they want to create in society, but all are connected to each other, sometimes working at individual levels, yet kind of supported by a community.



Ideas, experiments and way forward:

Many people, of all ages, show interest in being part of Swaraj University but due to family and financial responsibility and unavailability of time, they are not able to join. For people who cannot afford to give 2 years into it, we have short period workshops, which are open for khojis as well as outsiders, which also helps people interact with the khojis and get the feel of the programme and space.

At Swaraj we also are constantly striving (failing, falling, getting up, trying again) to imagine and create a space for being the gift - which means slowly cultivating inside us and around us a wholesome state of giving and receiving. As a part of this, we are experimenting with gift culture practices in our relationships with khojis, mentors, resource persons and team-members like moving from transaction to trust, contracting to connecting, scarcity to abundance, private ownership to commons, extracting from relationships to nourishing each other. These are big words and yet they hold meaning for us in small acts.

We believe spaces like Swaraj University can sprout up anywhere and everywhere. The idea for us is not to scale up and expand to various cities, but support individuals, groups and communities to begin one in their own locality, with their own philosophies, design and ideas. That is how learning can evolve and be diverse; otherwise, expansion with the same idea will homogenize the learning and will turn it destructive similar to mainstream education.

For the readers of Creative Academic who are open to new ways of thinking, have dreams of building healthy and resilient communities and who want to keep learning alive, we urge you to experiment. Begin with your own lives, start with your own learning spaces and contexts, challenge continuously what you have been taught all the while. Make your own learning live.

You are welcome to visit Swaraj University to experience the joy and aliveness of our way of learning.

We welcome contributions of all kinds!

Swaraj University is a small but potentially powerful step in the direction of 'Swaraj' the way Gandhi imagined it. Our aim is to restore the responsibility of education to the learner and the community and revive local cultures, local economies and local ecologies.

We invite you to join us on our journey. Swaraj University is not accepting any grants from big donor agencies. We operate on the idea of Gift Culture, accepting gifts of various kinds from friends, supporters and well-wishers. You can also contribute in our journey by gifting books or films for the library, or old laptops for the media resource centre, games and sport activities for the khojis, or gift us your time and share your skills and/or wisdom. Financial contributions to support scholarships for khojis are also welcome.

Sources

1 A version of this article was originally published in "The Common Indian"

<http://thecommonindian.in/2015/11/learning-what-you-feel-like-to-learn-welcome-to-swaraj-university/>

2 Swaraj University <http://www.swarajuniversity.org/>

3 the meaning of university <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University>

4 the meaning of swaraj www.swaraj.org/whatisswaraj.htm

5 <http://www.swarajuniversity.org/comparison.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2gesJTwkga0&t=216s>



This TEDx talk by Reva Dandage, co-founder and director of Swaraj University, explains how she came to hold her beliefs that led her to establish an alternative university with a focus on self-design learning, including exploration of basic entrepreneurial skills within the context of environmental sustainability and social responsibility. It is India's first university dedicated to strengthening local economies, local cultures and the rich diversity of local traditions. Its two-year program is rooted in the age-old 'guru-shishya parampara' or learning through practical experience with mentors or gurus. Reva's passion is to create and host alternative spaces for learning, and through Swaraj University, she facilitates young people in co-creating their learning programs towards their passions and dreams. She is also dedicated to living sustainably and engaging youth in dialogues to challenge their ideas

of success and inspire a spirit of compassion and social responsibility in them.

Her talk is about the journey of her new initiative: Swaraj University. Faltu is a movie, which is a Hindi remake of the movie "Accepted". Swaraj is a kind of University where students make their own curriculum and decide their own path. The talk focuses on some of the problems with current education system.

Studio for All - perspectives on the pedagogy and ecology of studio-based learning

Andrew Middleton



Andrew is Head of Academic Practice & Learning Innovation at Sheffield Hallam University. He is a National Teaching Fellow with 22 years of experience in higher educational development and curriculum innovation. His background is in fine art and music, and these continue to shape his thinking about life and learning. A studio philosophy has informed his work on the development of future learning spaces, active learning and the student experience in recent years with peer co-operation in a learner-generated context being a recurrent theme. Andrew is a member of the Creative Academic Team and he blogs at: tactilelearning.wordpress.com

"There is knowledge, or better yet knowing, in practice. People have in their doing a tacit kind of knowing. They know more than they can say, and in zones of uniqueness, uncertainty, and conflict they are sometimes able to reflect on what they know"^{1:3}

Introduction

Several contributions to the Creative Academic inquiry into creative pedagogies for creative learning ecologies have drawn attention to the importance of certain sorts of spaces in encouraging learners to use their creativity^{2,3}. In this article, I build upon Donald Schön's observation above of the studio as a place of tacit learning and his assertion that the studio is an ideal space for developing conceptual knowledge¹. I set out to discover what we mean when we talk about the studio as learning space and a place of practice. To do this, I have consulted with people who have taught and learnt in studios and asked them "What does studio mean to you?" and used their testimony alongside the literature on studio learning to discover whether there is something we can call the essential studio. A number of these testimonies can be found on the #creativeHe Google + forum for conversations about creativity in education⁴. A goal of my study has been to explore the degree of commonality about the studio within those disciplines, to distil its essence, and to ask if this can be shared more widely for the benefit of all.

The general educational value of the idea of studio is illustrated in a comment by Fred Garnett, an advisor for InQbate, the Creativity CETL at Sussex University. "After a long consultation and design process they built an interactive classroom that was based on the Art School learning model." InQbate concluded that the studio environment offered the most flexible and supportive learning environment within which creativity could flourish regardless of the discipline.

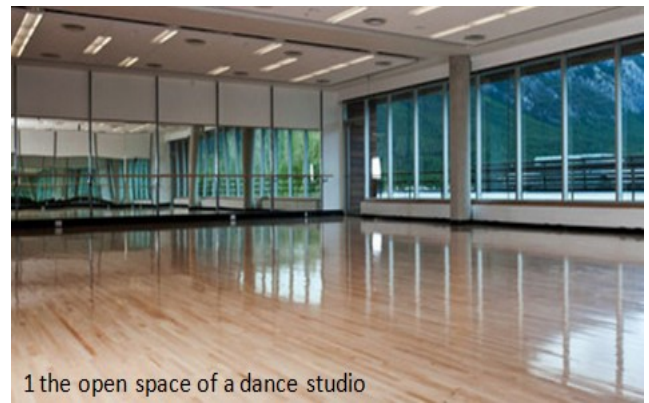
In formal educational environments the studio is perceived differently to other types of learning space like the lecture theatre or the classroom. Creatives from many disciplines say that their studio space operates on many levels, serving as a private, social and professional space for their work and study. They are clear that the studio is imbued with meaning, being understood variously as a material space, a place of teaching and learning, a way of thinking and being, and a place of work⁵. For some, their very identity is bound to the idea of the studio. Here, I will make connections between conceptions of studio and the way it is lived as a networked and ecological environment, and how this reflects an emerging idea of digital hybrid learning studio.

Studio learning space

Etymologically, studio is derived from the Latin *studere* to study and historically its identity is as a place of learning and apprenticeship. However, its trajectory as a learning space is distinct from that of the dominant, pedagogic and cultural trajectory of the didactic⁶. Pedagogically, the studio is a space for practice founded on exploration, interpretation, uncertainty, serendipity, experience and, importantly to Schön, reflection-in-action⁷. Shreeve and Batchelor⁷ say that for tutors the studio "is not didactic, but open-ended, individually focused and about realising the potential of each student". Not all studio disciplines agree with this Fine Art view of developing individuality however. In Design or Performance, for example, the studio is as often about being group-centred. In all cases, studio philosophy tends to be about exploration and experimentation where ideas, topics or themes are explored. In the drama studio Paul Kleiman explains the studio creates a space for exploring themes through experimentation with a 'Let's try' attitude.

There is also consensus that the studio, whatever it is, contrasts with the didactic philosophy of the lecture room in which the single authoritative voice of the teacher is used to systematically deliver highly structured knowledge. Paul Kleiman, who has experience of both art and theatre studios, reflects on how the studio is essentially “a democratic, shared space, in complete contrast to the somewhat ‘authoritarian’ space of the lecture theatre and the standard classroom.” Perhaps there is a contrast being closing down or managing knowledge and the studio philosophy of resisting the resolution of knowledge; keeping possibilities open for as long as possible.

The traditions of the ateliers, conservatoires, schools of architecture, and the performing arts have had and maintain distinct identities. In the UK, colleges of the arts, technology and education were largely subsumed by degree-awarding universities, being integrated as departments through changes following the Robbins Report⁸ in 1963. This shift addressed the need for higher education to have a better approach to financial management, recognise the advanced levels of educational quality in colleges, remain competitive on a global stage, and meet a demand for growth. Despite this organisational convergence, institutional provision has remained mixed in the plastic and performing arts while cultural identities have been keenly protected. This determined independence may explain why the essential studio is not well-understood beyond its disciplines.



1 the open space of a dance studio

Studio as an engaged learning experience

While acknowledging a diversity of practices across the studio disciplines, artists and performers tend to be independently minded and, without contradiction, critically co-operative. In educational development, where my own interest is located, a desire to move academic practice from a teacher-centred paradigm towards student-centred active learning has been ongoing since John Dewey first promoted ideas about experiential learning¹⁰, and latterly through a more widespread appreciation of student-centred active pedagogies and the conception of the learning paradigm¹¹. This view seeks to create an environment in which deep level learning happens, where learners attempt to connect ideas as they understand underpinning theory and concepts, and make meaning from material under consideration.¹²

Plastic Arts (spatial arts) a concept uniting forms of art that exist in space, do not change and develop over time and are perceived visually eg painting, sculpture, graphics, photography, architecture and artistic

The massification of higher education and the emergence of digital technologies since the 1990s have affected the learning environment for all disciplines, inherently challenging the teacher to consider their students differently. A marked growth in student numbers, and greater diversity, mean that the teacher must think about learner engagement as a prerequisite to student learning; it is not enough to assume that students are intrinsically motivated and academically capable. Equally, it is not enough to understand learner engagement as meaning keeping students ‘enjoyably busy’¹³. Teachers in all disciplines need to be artful about how they inspire purposeful activity, not least because in the UK they cannot hide from the National Student Survey or the Teaching Excellence Framework. Consequently, classroom design and practice is turning to ideas that resemble some of the characteristics of studio-based learning.

“The spaces that are most effective for active and collaborative learning are those that create a flexible and fluid environment. A studio model, which resembles an open work-space for architects or artists... This enables more interaction than the typical classroom and supports student engagement and movement.”¹⁴

The second factor, the advent of digital technology, largely remains full of potential as a learning space. Institutionally provided and personal technologies are ubiquitous in universities and have changed how we operate but, arguably, decades of investment have been misguided by the idea that learning is about the systematic and expedient delivery of knowledge. Consequently, there has been little real progress when it comes to the digital affecting the nature of learning. Learning today looks very much like learning yesterday.

Recently, however, the use of social media has shown us how co-operative networks can foster natural patterns of productive communal engagement alongside self-moderated experiences that really matter to learners. Today it is the *users* of the digital spaces and social media who show us how adept we are, as human beings, in using space and technology co-operatively when we feel a sense of purpose and ownership over our experience. The *providers* of institutional technologies have, for too long, tended to get bogged down in servicing knowledge delivery rather accommodating rich, blended learning experiences. In the studio, we learn early on that the technical space is only one context for our becoming and that relationships we form around us are critical to our learning behaviours and identities. This is something that others seem slow to understand.

This demonstration of collective imagination over social space reveals that we do make space work for us when we are given the chance. Space is not agnostic. It matters to us, liberating us or tying us up. In education, this is referred to as built pedagogy¹⁵.

The studio affords the opportunity to create a balanced ecosystem that epitomises engagement through the authentic learning paradigm of ‘legitimate peripheral participation’¹⁶: the inherent flexibility of the studio is not that bits and pieces can be moved around, but that we move around within the space to incorporate, with guidance, activities of practice as we learn at the edges of our community of practice. The studio is a shell in which students become practitioners by exploring common interests and purposes in ways that are meaningful personally alongside peers and mentors.

Learning networks and ecologies

The essential idea of a studio learning philosophy, whatever the discipline, begins by creating a dynamic situation of which each student is part. Studio, then, is the sum of the physical or digital space, its people and their individual and collective ambition, and the problems and opportunities they find. Together, these factors are volatile, generating interactivity, change and growth. The responses and relationships of the people in this equation particularly create a sense of fluid dynamism. In this context, each learner has agency and finds meaning.

The studio ethos exemplifies situated and experiential learning therefore. It is an ecological space being open to possibilities, shunning the binary conventions of formal and informal learning, and exemplifying networked behaviours. With reference to social media, boyd^{17:1} describes an understated interdependence of networked publics as 'the imagined collective that emerges as a result of the intersection of people, technology, and practice... they allow people to gather for social, cultural, and civic purposes'. Understanding the studio as a networked space, more than one of introspective communities, clarifies how the individual in the studio brings value as an autonomous co-operator. Each arrives into a dynamic learning space with their knowledge, experience, skills, dispositions and self-determined drive ready to work for the mutual benefit of their peer co-operators. Their histories are as diverse as their aspirations, but for a while studio learners act as networked co-operators enjoying each other's wisdom and energies for mutual benefit.



More than communities, which are usually well-delineated and often inwardly orientated, networks are inherently nodal, co-operative, unbounded and fluid, being knitted together through loose ties. Because of social media, there is a new intensified personalisation and concurrent interdependency amongst young people in their use of digital space¹⁸. This is a state that will be familiar to many studio practitioners where the tension between the self and the social group is experienced as a false dichotomy. Even when we compare the Art studio to the Design studio where we have noted a difference of emphasis between the individual and the group, the studio is first and foremost an open plan fluid idea. The classroom and the lecture theatre are enclosures that exemplify hierarchical structures and are designed around teacher dependency, where the teacher is the leader and arbiter of knowledge. In contrast, the openness of the studio means it is essentially a networked construct situated around problems and opportunities that require the practitioner to work co-operatively in a socially-enmeshed space. Even the artist at their easel stands in the open being part of a supportive collective. The studio-based learner possesses, or develops, a different outlook and expectation of themselves and others as practitioners; an outlook embodied in the arrangement of the physical space, its histories, technologies and conventions.

The life class is perhaps an archetypal space for the art student. It works as a space for the individual in the context of the collective. A rather cosy space, warm enough to ensure the life model does not catch cold, Paul Kleiman describes how students "sit in virtual silence, working individually, concentrating on looking closely and making marks on paper, with only the occasional quiet words of advice from the tutor to an individual student." The student is alone in their focus, with each one staking out their easel space to gain their angle on the model positioned in the centre of the studio as if in a forest clearing. He describes the fluctuations in the drama studio where performers work "sometimes noisily, sometimes quietly", but immersed nevertheless. In both cases it reflects what happens in a networked space where there is a balanced awareness and frisson of engagement between the mass players.

For a dancer like Roisin Cahalan, the studio has equal potency, evoking for her memories of "sprung varnished floors covered in non-slip Marley. Mirrors on one wall, bars along the others. Music system in the corner and lots of hot, sweaty dancers." For Roisin, the studio is a space of action and freedom. But the artist's, dramatist's and dancer's studios share this strong sense of being, of intense commitment, of being surrounded by a few defining tools and sometimes a degree of clutter, but always a sense of pending achievement. Roisin says of the dance studio, "It is a space for a community of like-minded people when nothing other than the dance is relevant or important;" a sentiment recognisable by any studio user. This is what Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi¹⁹ calls 'flow', which is characterised by activities that are intrinsically rewarding, involving complete concentration on task, a transformation of time, and a blurring of actions and awareness.

Brown^{20:18-19} says that students in studios "learn from the struggles, the missteps, and the successes of their peers." The studio is about an enculturation into a practice.

Respondents have observed how studio-based learners learn iteratively, prepared to accept and respond to failure readily. It builds both tenacity and reflexive adaptability. They are driven by a desire for imagined perfection even though this desire is probably unrealisable given that success is ultimately determined by an unknowable audience. Studio learning, in this way, is partially shaped by a deep and authentic self-assessment that contrasts with superficial extrinsic drivers often used in other disciplines. The experience and struggle encountered through each piece of work or performance is absorbed and used to shape the learner's self-efficacy, as well as building their knowledge. It is this self-exploration through a multitude of personal experiments that develops the learning habit of the studio-based practitioner. The learner-practitioner adopts the ways, knowledge, motivations and sensibilities of their practice through productive enquiry in a social setting.

Spaces of difference

Ellen Sims is clear that the studio has many meanings to those who use them. She has written about the studio being a signature pedagogy of art and design²¹. For her the studio provides a work space, office, library, a making space, an exhibition space, store, and archive.

These qualities are evident in Cork Lined Studios (<http://www.corklinedrooms.com>). Artist, Sharon Kivland shared a link to this project to which she has contributed. Initiated by Karen David, it presents the studios of over 50 contemporary artists through collections of annotated photographs. The practising artist's studio is revealed to be idiosyncratic and mostly a space of inspirational clutter made up of found and made objects.

For some, the studio is positioned as having a distinct purpose that scaffolds artist discipline and distinct ways of thinking and being. Penny, who responded to my survey, said that her studio environment needs to be different from the other environments she uses each day so she can consciously move from her "more bureaucratic tasks as an educator to a more productive and experimental set of actions."

Many of the respondents to my survey said that the artist's studio is frequently characterised by its clutter, whereas the design studio is characterised by its organisation, and the performance studio by its openness and lack of clutter. Others said you can think of the space itself as a technology that functions to accommodate the different ways it is used by the individual and its communities.



The designer's studio is a space of professional practice and Claire Lockwood, Head of Art & Design at Sheffield Hallam University, describes the learning space for her Design students as a space that steadily enculturates and supports them to *become* the designer they aspire to be. The renovated studio space at Hallam has been designed to replicate industry physically but also in the ways that students work with others. In the new development one of the greatest successes has been the proximity of academics to the students. She says, "Social spaces including shared kitchens have been designed into every floor. Food brings everyone together. It's where people talk." It seems that before it is anything else, the studio is a way of being. Claire says, "A studio-based experience is different to other disciplines because it creates a safe environment for taking risks. Students feel like they can be creative. They can put things on the wall and they know this practise is valued. It gives them a sense of belonging and home."

The studio bubble

Ellen Sims describes her experience of studio as a Fine Art student in a police state. She conveys a picture of the studio as a sanctuary and as a place of immense trust between the students and lecturing staff. Students would study in more formal and confrontational spaces and return to this studio sanctuary for long episodes of creative immersion. "This fluid coming and going ... [established]... a more social learning experience, as did spending all day every day with scant breaks for lunch or coffee. Relationships with lecturing staff were also different - much less hierarchical, more informed by being wowed at the work they were producing alongside us in the same studio space." She describes a reassuring conspiratorial culture supported by her lecturers who cut keys for the students so they had the freedom to come and go whenever they needed to. "Soon everyone was spending evenings and weekends in the studio. It was closer than a marriage, more intense than therapy - but probably played that role, too... We talked, talked, all the time." Ellen remembers venturing forth from the studio, crossing the boundary into the dangerous hinterlands surrounding the studio to gather photographs and inspiration. The nascent artist identities of the students took shape in this safe and stimulating haven. "Tacit, implicit forms of learning were far more important than explicit forms. We all had a sense of being both teacher and learner, assessor and assessed, involved in a shared venture." Although Ellen's studio was situated amidst testing social conditions, other artists

and musicians talk about the special bonding they feel in which communication seems to happen at an instinctive hyper-level. My own experience as a printmaker shares this idea of a privileged space, being set apart from the norm with special access to facilities and different kinds of trustful relationship. It also resonates with my experience of being in bands- a sense of tenacity, deprivation and “us against the world” in the cause of creativity.

Even in adversity Ellen says, “Nothing approximates the luxury afforded by the studio.”

Autonomy and freedoms to choose

Many contributors told me that the studio is about high degrees of autonomy and freedom to pursue ideas, sometimes without clear purpose and structure. However, accounts describe a shift in the learning studio across educational levels that markedly affect the culture as students get more experienced and confident with the space. Simon Rae recalls how eventually “students were left alone to get on with whatever they wanted to do using whatever medium they chose... talk with whoever, and use whatever.” Giving students freedom is challenging and Simon says that, “unfortunately many students dropped out and left. Being a Fine Artist is a tough business.”

Stimulating the inner world

Kerry Bertram, a fine artist, responded to my question in her blog post²² titled ‘Inner studio’. She says that all she needs is an inspiring space, where space is as much head space as physical. It should be “full of light, pattern, colour and things that spark ideas.” She can imagine this, and that should be enough for her, although she also acknowledges the importance of the studio as a space to make the imagination concrete through visualisation or journaling: in effect, the process of challenging the imagination to make ideas real. Making real requires materials, tools, and surfaces to work on, but these do not need to inhibit creativity for her, often being to hand or freely available in the world. A studio in Kerry’s mind is the combination of inspiration, resources and a space that may only need to be temporal or psychological. The physical world is subservient to these.

A place of skills for the making of cultural artefacts

The studio can also be a functional space: A place for making. Norman Jackson, reflecting on making music and producing animations, highlighted the significance of technologies. The technical environment challenges the artist or performer to respond. He says, “In ecological terms, the space encourages and facilitates the sorts of relationships and interactions necessary for the making of such artefacts.” Julius Dobos, a Distinguished Professor of Digital Audio Technology, focuses on the studio as, “a place where hands-on creative work happens, which typically involves two or more individuals. To me studio refers to a place where creativity is at work, manifesting (a) creator(s) ideas that will ultimately spread outside of the physical boundaries of the studio.” I do not think that a ‘studio’ has to involve any sort of technology.”

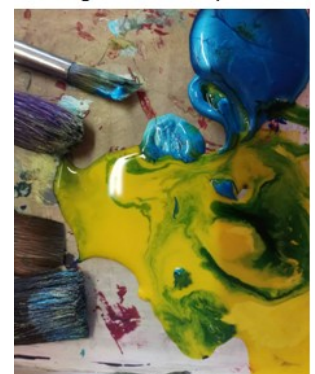
A place of becoming and placemaking

The studio is an ontological space. A place that is made through learner agency. John Cowan proposes the studio is “A place, empty when first occupied, where you can work creatively, shaped according to the kind of activity that will happen within it.” This shares Kerry Bertram’s view of the studio as a space relatively devoid of meaning until imagination and action affect it. The studio is a space that tempts the artist or performer to give it meaning. As such, the studio is a locus of placemaking and the creative act itself gains value only when it engages others.

Properties of the studio learning space

The essential philosophy and practice of the studio continues to reflect longstanding practices and cultures in disciplinary areas such as art, design, architecture, media, drama, dance and music. A studio, whatever the discipline, is a material space that supports a studio-based learning philosophy that resembles and scaffolds professional practices. In this space students accept challenges which they explore through research and experimentation by focusing on designing, producing and then presenting their responses. These can be individual or collective works and performances and, as such, they require the review and feedback of tutors, peers and publics.

4 mixing colours Kerry Bertram



Educationally, the studio continues to mean:

- a space in which individual craft, knowledge and dispositions are valued;
- a space designed to promote creative thinking and originality;
- an immersive networked place of individual effort and collective agency;
- a place of co-operation and co-production;
- a cauldron of ideas, technologies and people

Above all, a studio affords, for people who know how to use it, the space in which they can create their own ecologies for learning, exploring, developing, creating/co-creating, making, performing and achieving²³

Studios for all' enhancing opportunities for active and engaged learning

As we reshape higher education for an unknown future institutions of higher education are paying much more attention to the types of spaces that promote active engaged learning. The steady development of higher education as a discipline in its own right and the attention given to developing graduate attributes through the curriculum²⁴ have demanded a wider appreciation of the ontological learning space. These changes in the way we are thinking about learning in higher education open up new possibility space for the expansion of studio-based learning.

At the same time, the supremacy of epistemological knowledge has been usurped by the accessibility of the internet; knowledge grows and is promulgated exponentially, challenging the paradigm of knowledge retention²⁵. Further, the unreliability and disputability of factual knowledge and what we accept as credible, seems set to define our times as an age of uncertainty with the political denial of research evidence. All this means that the university teacher must be increasingly concerned with developing critical thinking amongst their students. This demands the use of strategies in which the learner is actively engaged in iteratively scrutinising knowledge by tackling problems creatively, and developing their own knowledge in the process, and then reflecting on the validity of knowledge developed through their activity.



So far, I have tried to establish the studio as a learning space with a different pedagogical tradition to other more didactic pedagogies of disciplines that do not use studio spaces in their teaching and learning practices. I have described these respective pedagogic traditions as running in parallel. However, there are signs in some universities as they rethink their learning spaces, and we shift from a teaching paradigm to a learning paradigm that studio type learning environments are becoming more widely available. I do not suggest the studio is an ideal learning space, having pedagogic challenges to do with managing informality and 'hidden rules of engagement'²⁶ however, a growing interest in active learning classrooms¹⁴ suggests a studio-type philosophy is becoming more attractive to teachers in disciplines that have traditionally not utilised studio spaces or pedagogies.

Adopting a *Studio for All* philosophy for developing higher education learning spaces resonates with the ambitions and aspirations of our students to lead creative, rich, rewarding and fulfilling lives. Smith Taylor²⁷ has observed how exposure to a studio space "can launch teachers into active learning pedagogy and can increase the positive effects of that pedagogy on learning." The challenge facing higher education in delivering a *Studio for All* philosophy, however, is a lack of experience and understanding of active, student-centred teaching, yet its execution needs the conviction to ensure that large numbers of students grasp the opportunity. However vibrant the active studio is, we have seen how the studio is a challenging space; one not immediately suited to all students.

6 my attempt to create a studio space & pedagogy for learning



Nevertheless, the studio speaks of situated knowledge and a graduate fluency that Schön¹ calls 'a tacit kind of knowing'. These suggest the time is right to explore how the studio learning space might be used to good effect across disciplinary curriculum experiences.

But perhaps another question might be, where do learners in disciplines that do not use studio spaces, gain the sorts of experiences for authentic exploration, learning and creativity afforded by the studio environment?

Acknowledgements & credits

I am grateful to all the people who contributed to my survey and shared their views on *what studio means* in the #creativeHE Google+ Forum⁴. Paul Kleiman, John Cowan, Simon Rae, Julius Dobos, Declan Phillips, Kerry Bertram, Roisin Cahalan, Ellen Simms and Fred Garnett

Image credits

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- 2 Peeking into the artists studio by Dina | Jun 2, 2013 | [Creative inspiration, My blogrol](http://www.thatchreativefeeling.com/peeking-into-the-artists-studio/)
<http://www.thatchreativefeeling.com/peeking-into-the-artists-studio/>
- 3 Students learning to make clay animals in a studio social setting <http://www.phoenixstudio.co.uk/courses/clay-animals-with-james-ort-27th-28th-february/>
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- 6 Original photo by Andrew Middleton

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You can share your views on what your studio spaces mean to you on the #creativeHE Google+ Forum for people who are interested in creativity and students' creative development
<https://plus.google.com/communities/110898703741307769041>

EXPLORING STUDIOS FOR ALL

Andrew will be exploring the idea of Studio for All in a year-long project this academic year. He is keen to hear from anyone with experience of learning in studio environments and from people interested in connecting thinking in this area. Contact Andrew at: a.j.middleton@shu.ac.uk

Example of a studio based approach to collaborative learning

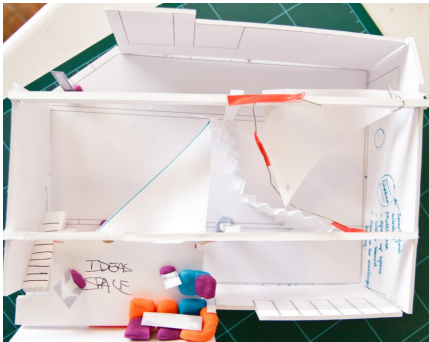
ImaginationLancaster is an open and exploratory research lab at the University of Lancaster that investigates emerging issues, technologies and practices to advance knowledge and develop solutions that contribute to the common good. The team of people working in the centre conduct applied and theoretical research into products, places and systems - using innovative strategies including disruptive design techniques that combine traditional and social science methods with practice-based methods arising from the arts. Approaches emphasise productive collaborations to create desirable and sustainable design interventions that break the cycle of well-formed opinions, strategies, mind-sets, and ways-of-doing, that tend to remain unchallenged. Areas of research span education, health and social care, well-being, culture, the leisure sector, media, transport, manufacturing and the environment.

Designing Spaces for Creative Collaboration and Co-Design

The Designing Spaces for Creative Collaboration and Co-design workshop organised and facilitated brought together a multidisciplinary group of designers, designer makers and craftspeople to spend a half day within the shell of the 3rd floor 'art school' space in the Storey Creative Industries Centre, generating design proposals for refurbishment of the space.



The workshop took the form of an exploration, creative reflection and discussion of potential design elements which would allow the area



function as space for creative

community collaboration. The idea is that people from local communities, creative industry professionals, academics, public services and third sector employees can work together in this space to identify the specific challenges facing the communities, and collaborate to propose design solutions.

An interesting illustrated account of the process, pedagogy and outcomes can be found in the Workshop Report¹.

¹ Workshop Report 'Designing Spaces for Creative Collaboration and Co-Design'. ImaginationLancaster available at: [http://](http://imagination.lancaster.ac.uk/sites/default/files/news_downloads/04042011_creative_collaboration_report.pdf)

imagination.lancaster.ac.uk/sites/default/files/news_downloads/04042011_creative_collaboration_report.pdf

Find out more at: <http://imagination.lancs.ac.uk/>



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Studio spaces & pedagogy at The Claremont College's Hive Centre

Creative Academic is always on the look-out for the imaginative ways that universities create spaces that encourage students and teachers to use their creativity. One such space, which takes its inspiration from studio spaces, is the Hive Centre created by The Claremont Colleges: a consortium of five undergraduate liberal arts and two graduate institutions in California. The Hive Centre was featured in the May issue of CAM7C¹



Spaces & Resources

The Hive is rich in resources that students can use in their creativity projects and different spaces contain different sorts of resources. The Centre's spaces and resources encourage a 'maker' mentality and a way of being that involves working with tools and materials.

To find out more about the Hive Centre visit

<http://creativity.claremont.edu/>

and take a look at the video clip on the home page.

CORE PRINCIPLES

Show everyone how they can fit in

Develop ways to engage a wide variety of potential participants. This initiative will not be for everyone, but anyone who wants to participate should be able to find a way to easily plug in - the history major should feel as much a part of this as the engineer, the artist, the entrepreneur, and the activist.

Create permission to experiment and play

Support the expression of new and different ways of thinking, even those that don't have a clear path to success. Develop structures to protect unusual ideas and mindsets. Create ways to compost a large volume of failed experiments.

Nurture connections

Bring people, ideas, and disciplines together. Support those collaborations. Creativity is strongest when unusual pairings come together.

Present ambitious challenges

Push participants to go beyond conventional boundaries - whether personal, disciplinary, institutional, or community. Tackle the seemingly unsolvable challenges, and get participants to try things that can't seem to be done.

Cultivate generative mindsets

Foster an optimistic mindset. Use research and critical thinking skills to find & define the most pressing challenges and a maker's mindset to address them. This is a place for thinking and doing.

*At the Hive, we provide a space where students can experiment and play. Up until this point in their studies, students have usually learned to play it safe and get to the right answer, and so we seek to put them into modes where, as is the case in more problems than not, there's not a right answer. There are many possible answers. For example, one of the exercises we do sometimes is set students up to have them working in groups on jigsaw puzzles. That's a complicated problem but there's a right answer. Everybody knows what it is, and everybody's really comfortable. They divide up, and somebody wins. But then we take them into another room where there are scraps of fabric laid out all over the floor and say, "Okay, now make a quilt." So what's the difference between the jigsaw puzzle with the right answer, and the quilt with infinite answers and no right answer? How do you form as a creative team and what do you observe about your behaviors in both of those situations? Our argument is there are more quilts in the world than there are jigsaw puzzles, and so we want to teach people to put things together in ways that haven't been done before. Frederick Leichter**

Source

¹ THE HIVE CENTRE for students' creativity. Creative Academic Magazine CAM7C May 2017 available at: <http://www.creativeacademic.uk/magazine.html>

* Frederick Leichter, is a design innovator and the founding director of The Claremont Colleges' Rick and Susan Sontag Centre for Collaborative Creativity known as "the Hive."

Example of a studio maker space and thinking in scientific disciplines

The *Parallel Practices* experiment at Kings College, London University was described by Kate Dunton in the November issue of CAM7A¹. It involved two resident craft-makers specialists in metalwork and automata and in glass, who set up residence in a maker space in a scientific laboratory that was equipped with various tools including a 3D printer and a sewing machine. The idea was to create a vibrant, student-owned [studio maker] space outside the formal curriculum where students from the Faculty of Natural and Mathematical Sciences could experiment and play alongside peers in different departments and at different levels of study. By embedding artistic makers with skills in traditional crafts, and scientists in the same space it was hoped that students would develop the confidence to experiment and learn by making, as well as the opportunity to learn new skills that would otherwise be inaccessible to them in the formal teaching of traditional science and engineering disciplines.

The craft makers used two pedagogical approaches: a workshop approach, where the makers would directly engage students in structured activities that might broadly support their subject-based learning, with a more



traditional residency where the makers pursued their own work in the space thus allowing for more informal open-ended, curiosity-driven conversations, through which new ideas and activities could emerge. It was the reciprocal need for both the students and the craft makers to take something from the encounter, and the process of making and experimenting that lay at the heart of their shared inquiries, that provided the impetus for creativity and learning on both sides.

The space itself was crucial and was specifically designed to encourage students to express their creativity¹. It embodied the ethos of the maker studio space; that is, a space to imagine, take risks, play, tinker, experiment, collaborate and develop ideas that have personal meaning to the individual, making use of the abundant resources and without fear of failure. This space, and the resources within it, provided the 'affordances' for personal creativity but crucially participants had to recognize these affordances and be willing to act on them. But the space needed to be *animated* by human communication and interaction, and that's where the craft makers and their academic partners were key.

Erica McWilliam's idea of teachers as meddlers-in-the-middle² helping, enabling and challenging learners and themselves to create in ways that have personal meaning reflects the way the craft makers modelled their own creative processes and behaviours, constructively disrupting the students usual expectations and approaches, offering a glimpse another world, was an important element in fostering this collaborative ecology for learning and creative achievement. The way that the space brought together and connected students across departments and at different levels of study, removing some of the usual hierarchies, encouraged the sharing of resources, including participants prior ideas and knowledge as well as those which were developed collaboratively through making and practical experimentation. The undeniable truth - *that our most creative ideas and achievements cannot be predetermined as a set of learning outcomes so typical of the way we manage learning in higher education*, contains the fundamental wisdom in this experiment.



Source:

1 Dunton C (2016) Collaborative Learning Ecologies: A novel pedagogy for fostering creativity across disciplines Creative Academic Magazine November 2016 p21

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An ecological perspective on studio spaces

Norman Jackson



Norman is Co-Founder of Creative Academic and leads the pedagogies for creative learning ecologies project

In his article, 'Studio for All'¹, Andrew Middleton highlighted the importance of studio spaces in enabling people, who know how to use such spaces, to create their own ecologies for learning, exploring, developing, creating/co-creating, making, performing and achieving. Higher education has an important role to play in providing such spaces and developing learners thinking and practical capabilities to make productive and creative use of the spaces and the resources they contain. In this short article I want to explore how studio spaces and the pedagogies that are used in such spaces encourage learners to create their own ecologies for learning in which they are able to use their creativity.

The affordance of a studio

An empty studio is just an enclosed space (usually a room) and it is only given meaning by the people who use it. Studios come in all shapes and sizes (see below). They are often given a name to reflect their purpose and the types of activity that is undertaken in the space, for example dance studio, design studio, recording studio, painting studio, photographic studio, animation studio, TV or film studio.

A [studio is a] place, empty when first occupied, where you can work creatively, shaped according to the kind of activity that will happen within it.
Professor John Cowan²

A studio's dedication to a purpose implies that it has particular qualities and characteristics that support and enable these purposes to be achieved. The affordance in such spaces is a matter of how individuals perceive the space and the resources it contains. Understanding how a studio space might be used and developing the capabilities to use it in some form of cultural practice eg photographing, dancing, designing, painting, making, playing and recording music etc., is developed over significant periods of time through the purposeful inhabitation of the space usually with other users.

Learning to inhabit such specialised studio spaces to create or reproduce cultural artefacts and performances requires apprenticeship: enculturation and instruction in ways of thinking, knowing, being, acting and performing in a social context involving other practitioners both novice and experienced. Such apprenticeships are accomplished through formal education and professional training and lots of informal self-determined experiences. The pedagogies (how a person enables another to learn) of apprenticeship in these disciplinary domains are necessarily *signature pedagogies*. "the types of teaching that organize the fundamental ways in which future practitioners are educated for their new professions"^{3:52}. For example the signature pedagogies of designers working is the design studio involves experimentation, collaboration, the practicing of skills, a focus on artefacts, and dialogue/critique⁴, while 'conversation, criticism, evaluation and the generation of ideas' are key activities in the signature pedagogies used in art and design studios⁵. 'the studio in [art and



design] education mirrors the practice of the profession and helps to create the habits of mind associated with the profession.⁵

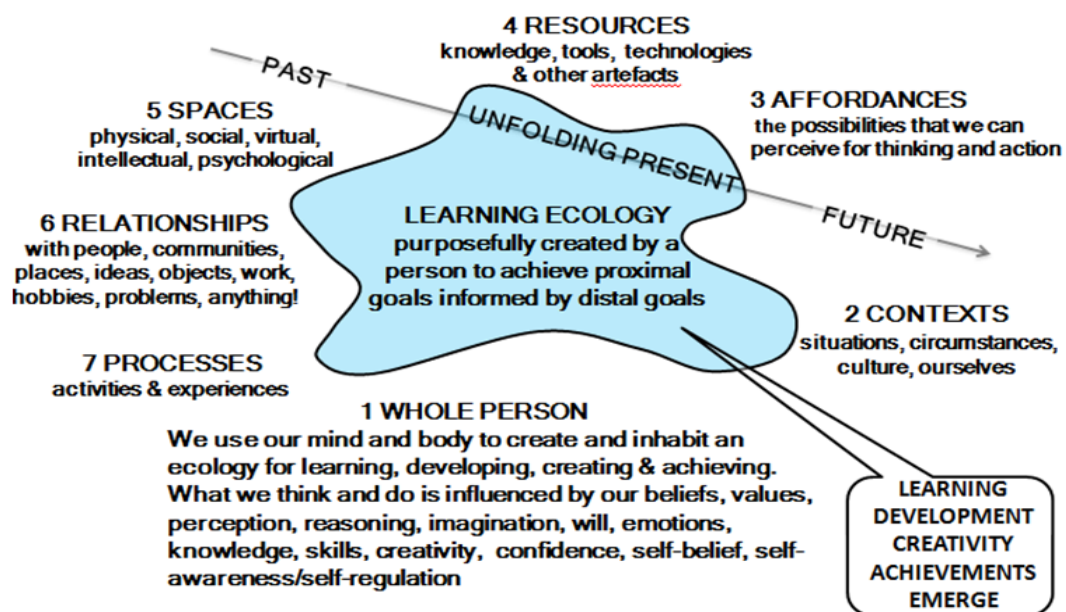
The role of spaces in a person's ecologies for learning and creating

In a recent article⁶ I tried to show how field geologists, use the landscape and the rocks contained within it [ie natural space], to create an ecology in order to produce a geological artefact - a geological map. The authentic creative products of the geologist's physical, intellectual and emotional endeavours (his own learning and his geological maps and reports) grow out of his purposeful, reasoned and intuitive interactions with the landscape and the rocks within it. A view of how creativity emerges through our interactions with the world that is consistent with Carl Rogers concept of personal creativity *'the emergence in action of a novel relational product growing out of the uniqueness of the individual on the one hand, and the materials, events, people, or circumstances of his life'*^{6:350}.

We might apply similar reasoning to disciplinary specialists who use studio spaces in order to be their authentic, productive, creative selves and posit that these spaces constitute an essential component of their ecologies for learning, developing, collaborating, creating and co-creating, making and performing.

A person's ecology for learning, creating and achieving is simply the set of interactive relationship between themselves and the things in a particular physical and mental space, that exists or is created by the person in order to learn, develop and achieve something⁷. Applying the idea of ecology to learning, personal development and achievement is an attempt to view a person, their purposes, ambitions, goals, interests, needs and circumstances, and their physical, cognitive and emotional relationships with the worlds they inhabit, as inseparable and interdependent⁸. Figure 1 shows the important components of a learning ecology⁷.

Figure 1 Important components of an ecology for learning, creating and achieving⁷



Studio spaces are 'man-made' spaces—they often have characteristics that uplift and inspire. Traditionally, they are the spaces in which people like designers, artists, artisans, dancers, actors, musicians, photographers and animators - work, practice, explore, experiment, collaborate, rehearse and perform. In such contexts they are used by a person for a particular purpose like 'I'm training to become a dancer' or 'I am preparing and rehearsing for a performance' or 'I am executing a design brief', or 'playing and recording a song', or 'painting a picture' or 'making something'. The studio space provides a physical environment containing the resources, tools, technologies and other artefacts, and if appropriate, other people, that support and enable the person to achieve their purposes. Because users of the space have had many past experiences of studio spaces they readily perceive the affordances in the space and the resources it contains and use the whole of themselves to act on these by creating processes, activities and practices through which ideas are generated, problems are imagined, tackled and solved, and new cultural artefacts are developed and created in the unfolding present. Conceptually, a studio space is no different to any other space in which people, with specialised ways of knowing and doing, embody their creativity in authentic practices as they pursue their goals, utilising the affordances and resources that are available in their environment. But to the creative practitioner who inhabits the studio, it is the space in which they can be the person they want to be: a state of being that was captured well by a former professional dancer, *'when nothing other than the dance is relevant or important'* (Roisin Cahalan).

It is clear from the stories that shared by the people who use such spaces² that they form a deep, enduring, relationships with the studio spaces in which they work, create and perform. In ecological terms the studio space encourages and facilitates the sorts of relationships and interactions - physical, social, intellectual and emotional, necessary for the making of such artefacts and performances. Creators derive inspiration from their surroundings and they are able to embody who they are by drawing on their deep intrinsic motivations, harnessing their imaginations, intellect and emotions, immersing themselves in their creative work to tackling and solve the problems and challenges they set themselves and create the artefacts and performances they are seeking.

To me studio evokes sprung varnished floors covered in non-slip marley. Mirrors on one wall, bars along the others. Music system in the corner and lots of hot, sweaty dancers. It evokes space and freedom to move, the potential for creativity and pushing your body to the limits. It means exhaustion, aching sore legs - but the good type of pain that builds your body. Water bottles, layers of discarded clothes, sitting or lying on the floor to try and cool down. It is a space for a community of like-minded people when nothing other than the dance is relevant or important. Roisin Cahalan (retired professional dancer)²

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The September update has a distinctly Australian feel as our main feature is written by four Australians and the Commissioning Editor is visiting his mum in Australia

**sunrise over Narrawallee Beach
photo taken by the Commissioning Editor**

CAM 7D

September 2017

But what are the creative disciplines? What makes a curriculum creative? What are the pedagogical practices in creative disciplines and how do these relate to spaces for learning. These topics are addressed in our literature review.

What are the creative disciplines?

Between the claims that our education systems are eliminating creativity from the experience of learning (Robinson, 2006) and those of that advocate creativity as an essential component of not only learning but of teaching (Sweet, Carpenter, Blythe and Apostel, 2013) it is apparent that most educators believe that all disciplines have a creative dimension and creativity is a core capability of any graduate in any discipline.

A number of disciplines are readily recognised as having an explicit creative purpose. Those recognised in the review are shown in Table 1 but the categories and divisions within this table are neither definitive nor exhaustive; they are intended to provide some indication of the scope of the creative disciplines as addressed in this paper. It is quite conceivable that disciplinary skill may well be included in several of the categories and that many of the practices integrate skills from across all disciplines.

Table 1: Creative disciplines identified in the literature review

Visual Arts	Performing Arts	Design Arts
painting sculpture drawing printmaking photography ceramics pottery	dance drama music live arts theatre theatre production choreography circus arts puppetry	fashion architecture digital design jewelry furniture 3D product design set/scenery design lighting design interior architecture urban design user interface design experience design interaction design industrial design
Media Arts	Literary Arts	Hybrid Arts
film television multimedia video computer games audio radio visualisation	creative writing poetry songwriting script writing	computational forms conceptual art intelligent textiles smart fashion wearable technologies biological arts transformative arts experimental arts

One area that seems to link these distinct, yet related, disciplines is that the teaching and learning processes require the activation and refinement of individuals' *creativity*. Bode (1996) emphasised the psychological theories of creativity and discusses it in terms of "the mapping, exploration and transformation of structured conceptual spaces" (Bode, 1996 p. 6) while others discuss it in terms of a teachable skill (Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, 2015) requiring general and disciplinary knowledge and drawing upon "cognitive and non-cognitive skills, curiosity, intuition and doggedness".

What are creative curricula?

Each of the creative disciplines has its own unique discourse and an accompanying disciplinary knowledge base. In broad terms these might be categorized into a number of domains shown in the adjacent box.

Just as the categorization of the disciplines themselves present challenges because of overlap, incompleteness and some subjective decisions, the curriculum that applies to each is similarly complicated. The risks in trying to reduce the curriculum of the disciplines into such a generalised list are that the sometimes subtle, but defining differences between the disciplines can be lost in the process.

Discourses & knowledge bases in the Creative Arts

Theoretical frameworks
 Cultural History and Theory
 Studio and creative practice
 Innovation
 Technical Skills
 Technical knowledge
 Professional knowledge
 Professional practice
 Industry expectations/practice
 Business/Arts management
 Fine arts and applied arts distinctions

The expectation for engagement with practice-based learning seems to underpin many of the creative disciplines (Soot & Viskus, 2013, p296).

Experiential and practice-based learning is common-place teaching practice in creative, performing, design and media arts. Student newsrooms, theatre and music productions, or graphic design projects provide students with ‘real world’ experience - or, at least, experience that is closely aligned or reflective of industry practice (Latukeyu et al., 2013, p.66).

The disciplinary expectations or signature pedagogies (Shulman, 2005) must necessarily define the specifics of practice and authenticity within a program of teaching and learning. Herrington (2004) suggests the features of authentic learning activity should be:

- Ill-defined
- Provide the opportunity for students to examine the task from different perspectives
- Provide the opportunity to collaborate;
- Create polished products valuable in their own right
- Allow for competing solutions and diversity of outcome

But not all works are material works - the visual and performing arts can create works that are intangible, ephemeral, and performative. Dance, drama and music can be works in their own right or features of other forms of creative practice - live art for example. Sound and light can be the predominant features of a work. Creative works can be functional, they can be tangible and intangible, they can be experiential or unfathomable. In some practices the absence of materiality and form can be the work. Creative work can also employ digital and media elements that might position a work as film, or game, or digital multimedia.

The theoretical frameworks that apply to each of the disciplines can be drawn from across the full scope of human knowing. These frameworks are defined in many ways, they can be obvious and transparent, drawn from legislated requirements that affect building, construction and manufacturing industries, or they may be more political and philosophical in nature driven more by the orientation and interest of teachers and students. The culture of a discipline and the cultures that inform a discipline have a great bearing on how the discipline is understood.

Moran (2009) discusses the challenges of creating art school environments as finding ways to institute “*flexibly configured structures - or platforms - in which creative production will take place*” (p.35) thereby highlighting the need to understand what activities are undertaken within and across the various creative disciplines and the nature of shifting practices that are driven by cultural, sociological, political, economic and technological change.

The curricula of the creative disciplines, and the signature pedagogical practices that animate curriculum, are constructed from an understanding, expectation or projection of what practitioners will do in their working life (see for example the list compiled by South 2015).

WHAT ARTISTS DO (South 2015)

Artists Make Art
Artists Think About the World
Artists Read, Watch and Listen
Artists Share Their Art
Artists Are Part of the Community
Artists Do Administration



And like any list it remains partial, it doesn't reflect that artists may have to negotiate with manufacturers to physically produce a work they have conceived; they may have to collaborate with other professionals, trades and artisans to materialise their art work. Designers similarly must include client liaison; architects need familiarity with legislative systems, building codes, etc; musicians, actors and dancers have rehearsal processes.

Design for art curriculum should consider these principles (Gude, 2013, pp. 40- 41)

Playing
Forming self
Investigating community themes
Encountering others
Attentive living
Empowered experiencing and empowered making
Deconstructing culture
Reconstructing social spaces
Not knowing

Teaching disciplinary knowledge is thus seen, not as an end in itself, but as the transmission of the tools needed for conducting creative investigations into important themes in the lives of students and their communities. (Gude, 2013, p39)

Interdisciplinary engagement and learning across disciplines

It is hard to imagine a very insular and bounded creative practice occurring in a void detached from culture, politics, technology, economics and science:

Art students need access to training in other disciplines, combining what we may identify as the very best of historical and contemporary drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, and installation art with conversation, ecological, and environmental efforts; ethics, cultural anthropology; urban sociology; behavioural psychology; global political science and economics; robotics; and media theory among other fields. (Pujol, 2013 p.5)

This may seem a very simple consideration in terms of the business of Art and Design; practitioners need to be able to function in commercial settings and have functional knowledge of business systems, organisational management, etc.

The growing interest in hybrid, experimental, transformative and biological practices in Art and Design mean that undergraduate practitioners may also require formal learning in the physical and biological sciences, law, and ethics.

The affective domain

One of the factors considered essential in many curricula is that of student drive or motivation (Lyon 2012; Tovey 2015; Barker and Hall, 2010) as a key requirement of fostering a new professional creative practitioner.

Discussion of motivation is similarly accompanied by an assumption that resilience and “grit” are also essential qualities of a graduate from the creative disciplines. As such the need to provide learning opportunities that challenge not only the knowledge and skills of a discipline but according to the literature, also the core personal orientation of the learner are included in pedagogical models, for example:

The developments which these interactions and negotiated meanings comprise cannot take place in an emotional vacuum” (Dafiotos, 2013, p. 154)

...the ethical and political potential of affect activates a productive and creative sense of living that engages with the world through affective interventions... (Zembylas, 2006)

Curiosity, risk, ambiguity, failure, uncertainty, enthusiasm are all terms that are seen as essential in providing meaningful teaching and learning in the creative arts. The affective domain is explicitly addressed. This in turn suggests the need for safety and security within such programs. When a learner’s emotional mettle is deliberately brought into the learning design there would seem to be a responsibility on educators and educational institutions to be mindful of duty of care; as in processual drama pedagogy which explicitly acknowledges the conventions of “role distance” and “role protection” (Carroll and Cameron, 2005) as features of learning design.

Shulman (2005, p.57) suggests that these “*pedagogies command student vigilance, which in turn causes learners to feel highly visible in the classroom, even vulnerable*”. If the “neophyte” is considered to be acting within a “situated role” then there also need to be buffering mechanisms that support, guide and protect the learner whilst they are navigating their own growth and development. Motivation is also critical to the process:

Motivation is not a vague, passive force; it can be understood, shaped and developed. In fact, designing demands a constant refreshing and renewal of motivation, and this has implications for design curricula and the sort of blended learning experiences that are created for students. (Tovey, 2015, p 8)

The affective dimensions of curriculum are not simply those of engaging the learner but of having the learner shape their own attitudes and orientations, and the development of a certain professional resilience that derives from the public nature of assessment and appraisal.

Pedagogy in the creative disciplines?

Learning by doing, or *experiential learning*, is emphasized in different ways across the literature but it is one area where there seems to be consensus about how learning is engaged within the creative disciplines: *the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience* (Kolb, 1984, p. 41)

Shulman (2005) discusses the integrated nature of subject and pedagogy as a feature in itself in his discussion of *signature pedagogies*; the pedagogical practices associated with professional practices that serve to induct new practitioners into the disciplinary mindset through knowledge, skill and professional orientation

“Practice-based design teaching” (Tovey, 2015 p.3) is somewhat aligned to a model predicated on “authentic learning” (Herrington, 2004) where students are positioned as “neophyte designers” expected to develop into “independent, self- analytical, critical thinkers”.

This seems to invoke the idea of “*situated learning*” (Lave and Wenger, 1991) where the learner is embedded within a culture of practice and develops expertise through a process of “*legitimate peripheral participation*”.

What are Signature Pedagogies?

- “Types of teaching that organize the fundamental ways in which future practitioners are educated for their new professions” —Shulman (2005)
- “Ways of being taught that require [students] to do, think, and value what practitioners in the field are doing, thinking, and valuing” —Calder (2006)
- “Introducing students to the culture of thinking in a specific discipline ... level[s] the playing field for those students who don’t come to college ‘preeducated’” —Middendorf and Pace (2004)

The use of modular approaches to studio (Shankwiler and Schaar, 2008) and the challenges of catering for large cohorts are described below:

“Art and design education has broadly settled on two categories of pedagogical frameworks, both evolutions from historical precedents. The first of these categories is driven by the spirit of the ‘design collective’, and comprises the art school studio or atelier model...

The second category derives from the teaching of industrial arts and is typically driven by the far greater student volume processing needs of the institution. This category comprises the ‘hot desking’ or increasingly the ‘no-desking’ model, with large taught classes in lecture format, and occasional group tutorials. Such a model is often the norm for universities’ academic courses.” (Barker and Hall, 2010)

Learning in these contexts involves more than just doing, and in essence students “bridge theory and practice” (Shulman, 2005, p. 56) by involving themselves in complex and performative integrations of understanding, analysis, application and reinvention.

The communication process is non-linear; as such, the spaces in which these practices are developed and refined should inform non-linear student engagement with space (Carpenter et al., 2013, p323).

Pedagogical practices in creative disciplines

Teaching and learning in the creative disciplines is a multi-modal and multi-disciplinary undertaking. A number of projects illustrate the complexities of teaching and learning in the creative disciplines. For example, the [Studio Teaching Project \(2015\)](#) conducted circa 2007-2009 sought to define the Studio in disciplines of Art, Architecture and Design as well as identifying and describing the teaching practices that were current and emerging. The project identified these key findings about teaching and learning in a studio context that confirm contemporary studio approaches introduce many options and opportunities demanding flexibility and adaptability for spaces, learning activities and assessments.

Spaces for learning

The spaces used for learning in highly creative contexts can differ from the traditional classroom model and may include:

- Studio
- Workshop
- Location/site based
- Gallery/exhibition
- Performance/presentation
- Rehearsal spaces
- Production spaces
- Manufacturing spaces
- Seminar/meeting spaces
- Personal/private spaces
- Laboratory spaces
- Common/shared space
- Informal learning
- Facilities for accessing virtual spaces
- Storage - materials, works, tools
- Change rooms, lockers and related facilities



The variety of spaces and purposes also impacts upon the teaching and learning strategies that are employed. King et al. (2015) consider the effects upon pedagogy when experimental uses of space and technology are employed. Learners in creative disciplines are often cast into the role of explorers to test and experiment with practice understand and extend the limits of their disciplines.

The broad range of philosophical perspectives that introduce politics, aesthetics, and epistemology into learning also have an impact upon the pedagogical choices:

Philosophies such as dialogical education, social reconstructionist education, critical pedagogy, feminist pedagogy, and resistance theory education over the past one hundred years articulated many methodologies for re-imagining restrictive educational practices (Gude 2013 p. 39).

Teaching and learning within the creative disciplines have much in common with “maker” culture - the engagement with makerspace and *Fablab* (Fab Foundation, 2015) style communities are already influencing the ways in which learning engagement occurs in many creative disciplines.

The Waag Society (Institute for Art, Science and Technology) <http://waag.org/en/labs/academy> has created a series of academies (Biohack, Fab, Fabschool, Waag) that address learning across all sectors and levels from primary to adult education focusing on learning in and around innovation and creativity.

There is also the inclusion of remote/distant/online models and there are new and established online providers offering learning opportunities in formal and informal participation - MOOCs, communities of practice, commercial providers, etc

Variability of the physical scale of creative works also introduces issues surrounding working spaces, access to tools and equipment, occupational health and safety considerations, etc. In many ways, because of the close integration of working and learning, teaching spaces within contemporary art and design schools are required to be multipurpose, encompassing the features of a manufacturing workshops, formal meeting rooms, gallery and exhibition spaces, warehouse and archival stores, co-working spaces, board rooms, private refuges, public thoroughfares, classrooms, informal meeting spaces, coffee shop, consulting rooms, playground and more.

Teachers ideally need to shift between the traditional roles of *Sage on the Stage*, *Guide on the Side* and *Meddler in the Middle* (McWilliam, Sweet, Blythe 2013 p.6) in as much as they are purveyors of professional culture, mentors and future collaborators and peers within a practice-led context of the learning designs.

Emerging pedagogical shifts

The adoption of enhanced narratives, business simulations and co- working collectives are generating learning contexts that have significant effects on the ways learners are positioned within the process. For example: *TmSE (Transmedia Storytelling Edutainment)* (Kalogeros, 2014, p. 16) - a critical-creative pedagogical framework (Kalogeros, 2014, p. 211) that acknowledges the new modes of engagement and convergence in Media education, and how this impacts on the use of media for learning and as a product of learning.

Keeping pace with changing practice

Barker and Hall (2010) suggest that professional practice is likely to advance far more quickly than teaching practice. They highlight the needs of design graduates who must “cope with increasingly sophisticated and dynamic working practices”. The examples they provide demonstrate the straddling of analogue and digital methods, local and global scales, and the translocation of design teams supported by communications and collaboration technologies. The relevance of curriculum and pedagogy must be evident to both students and industry, maintaining currency with industry standards and expectations can also place rapidly changing demands on teaching spaces.

Evolved models may be beneficial, which support the formative development of the individual designer via an atelier-based environment, yet which in later phases develops the nomadic skills and internal mental maps necessary for remote collaborative, co- design and crowd-sourced working. Such models require development through educational institutions in partnership with practitioners and are likely to rely extensively on networked digital tools (Barker and Hall, 2010).



Conclusions & recommendations

The literature review has endeavoured to engage with a diverse range of scholarly works that present pedagogical approaches to a wide range of creative disciplines. The case studies presented draw upon actual and visionary cases of interdisciplinary teaching and learning that might be considered in the development of a new building to support creative disciplines. While these pedagogies and cases presented are largely diverse, they are not exhaustive of the entirety of pedagogies that occur in a wide range of disciplines.

The increasing global and cross-disciplinary emphasis on fostering creativity in learners and higher education outcomes. A number of pedagogical models can be applied to creative disciplines with a growing emphasis on authentic learning and cross disciplinary application of knowledge.

The spaces required for learning in highly creative contexts can differ from a traditional university classroom model and include a range of formal, informal and virtual learning spaces. Designing for cross-disciplinary engagement there will be a design requirement for ‘flow’ between areas that are informal shared spaces and the formal or specialised zones. The starting point for consideration providing adaptable areas including the following:

- Studio and acoustic studio spaces
- Workshop
- Location/site based
- Gallery/exhibition
- Performance/presentation
- Rehearsal spaces
- Production spaces
- Manufacturing spaces
- Seminar/meeting spaces
- Personal/private reflective spaces - importance of safety to explore and discover
- Laboratory spaces
- Common/shared space
- Informal learning
- Facilities for accessing virtual spaces
- Storage - materials, props, works, tools, biological materials and technical equipment
- Change rooms, lockers and related facilities
- Networking, power supplies, adaptable lighting and flexible multipurpose furniture and fittings
- Safe access and security
- Design considerations should focus beyond contemporary needs and allow for future expansion or rearrangement depending on needs and areas of development.

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CAM 7D

October 2017

Image credit: 'Growing Beauty in Colors' watercolor abstract art on paper by Dutch painter artist Fons Heijnsbroek, 2008 - abstract expressionism; public domain, free print download
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/abstract-art-fons/16823131849>

This seems to capture the way beauty in understanding (new meaning)
is created through the exploration of ideas.

Developing students' political agency by enabling and empowering them to engage local communities

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Introduction

This article came about because I was involved in facilitating a session in the University of Limerick's Graduate Diploma course on the 'Youth Engage Project' which we created using the UL Practicum curriculum design tool and the commissioning editor, who was also involved in the course, invited me to write about it as part of Creative Academic's exploration of creative learning ecologies.

Institutional context

[UL Engage](#) was established in September 2015, in accordance with the University of Limerick's Strategic Plan. The aim of UL Engage is to integrate civic engagement into the University's core missions in research, teaching and internationalization. UL Engage supports university/community collaborations in all shapes and sizes through a variety of new and existing UL programmes and projects. It serves as the hub for civic engagement activities across campus and works with staff in all faculties to amplify, incubate and co-ordinate the various ways that students, faculty and staff can work to make a difference. The success of this strategy can be seen through the scale of activity over the last two years

<http://www.ul.ie/engage/projects-by-category/24>



So how does the university encourage and facilitate the growth of civic engagement projects?

The UL Practicum

One of the issues in universities is that they lack the curriculum design tools that empower and enable academic teachers to design experiences that enable learners to practice what they have learnt in real world problem solving situations. The University of Limerick has overcome this issue by creating the *UL Practicum - a credit-bearing module framework* (appendix 1) that enables academic staff to deliver their curriculum in collaboration with community partners working on projects that are of relevance to the community and enabling students to achieve the learning outcomes through practical and applied experiential learning.

For communities, UL Practicum projects respond to identified community needs, designed and implemented by teams comprising UL staff, Community Partners and Students. **For students**, the UL Practicum provides curriculum based accredited learning in community projects, combining applied academic work with the development of *transversal soft skills*. In the University of Limerick, these soft skills, like team-work, creativity and responsibility, are referred to as Graduate Attributes that we hope to encourage amongst all our students. **For academics**, the UL Practicum is essentially a project shell. It provides a pre-approved module code that enables students to work on collaborative community projects as part of their credited academic curriculum. **For the university**, the UL Practicum raises the profile of staff / student engagement with communities outside the institution and applies consistent criteria for best practice community engagement.

Transversal knowledge, skills and competences are relevant to a broad range of occupations and economic sectors. They are often referred to as core skills, basic skills or soft skills, the cornerstone for the personal development of a person.

like the ability to work in a team, leadership, creativity, self-motivation, the ability to make decisions, time management and problem-solving.²

Practicum principles

Aside from relevant academic curriculum, all Practicum projects evince three key criteria

- They are based on a *partnership arrangement* that is respectful, reciprocal and inclusive, with clear terms of reference, roles and responsibilities for everyone involved.
- Attention is given to *graduate attributes* acquisition - a means to genuinely develop those 'generic and transversal skills' in appropriately related disciplinary and academic knowledge
- Their impact is *evaluated*- we are agnostic about how evaluation takes place, but we cannot claim that our project is an effective partnership, or that graduate attributes have been attained, or that we have made any impact at all, without some form of project evaluation.

Scale of involvement

In the academic year 2016/17, 108 students successfully undertook a UL Practicum as part of their undergraduate or postgraduate programme. Amongst these, 43 students from the School of Law worked on three community projects, providing clear and accessible legal guides and support to community partners in Milford Hospice, the National Infertility Support and Information Group and Community Law and Mediation. 12 postgraduate students in the School of Languages and Communication delivered three separate English language courses to Limerick refugees and asylum seekers. And 18 students of politics collaborated with local youth services and community groups to provide informative 'flash-debates' and workshops to local schools and organizations, designed to increase political participation and civic engagement. This article is the story of their Practicum project: 'Limerick Be Heard'.

Historical perspective

Practices have a history: a history that is closely linked to context. As teachers we often draw inspiration for new educational practices from the world outside our institutions and the recent history of Irish politics provided plenty of inspiration for a teacher interested in political agency and action.

In 2015 Yes Equality Campaign energized Irish voters and presented a new model for political campaigning and active citizenship in Ireland. The tone of the campaign was deliberately open and conversational, summed up by the campaign message: "I'm voting yes. Ask me why?"



The result was a refreshingly different political campaign which, instead of the usual podium politics and political posturing, was intensely local and personal, staffed by 100s of gay and lesbian canvassers, supported by friends and families and floods of volunteers. Perhaps because the campaign was not run by professional politicians or political parties, it had a very different modus operandi in terms of the areas canvassed and the people who canvassed, and in terms of the mode of canvassing and organizing principles: the campaign was discursive, inclusive, non-combative and non-judgemental. For many voters, the campaign provided a space to talk about ideas they were unsure about, and connected with voters in ways that the traditional parties had all but forgotten about. It was respectful, inclusive and engaging.

Together at the celebrations of the count in Dublin Castle, from left to right: Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams, Panti Bliss (providing Ireland's alternative to the Queen's speech in Christmas 2015), Fine Gael Minister for Justice, Frances Fitzgerald and RTE broadcaster and presenter, Miriam O'Callaghan.



UL Graduate Attributes



Irish General Election - new opportunities for community engagement

Less than 12 months after the Yes Equality campaign, the Irish General election presented an opportunity to see how this positive political approach might work in the broader political context of a general election. The 'Limerick Be Heard' project was an attempt to 'do politics differently' in a way that was inclusive, creative, subversive, diverse, respectful and even fun!



The UL Practicum project, **Limerick Be Heard #Youth Engage** capitalised on this opportunity. It was designed to capture the creativity and dynamism of Limerick's young people as a strategic resource for the promotion of human rights and political engagement, challenging the prevailing political orthodoxy that *young people* are not interested in politics. The central ambition of the project was to make political engagement more inclusive and representative of the often marginalized voice of young people, combatting stereotypical attitudes towards Young People about their capacity and commitment to be involved in positive political change. In doing so, the project sought to create forums for political engagement where young people could feel confident and comfortable to have their say about what matters to them, supported by co-created educational resources and activities.

Through creative Youth Work facilitation methods, the project attempted to connect Young People across Limerick City and County to build a collective and authentic voice for change. The result was the creation of the Limerick Be Heard #Youth Ambassadors for Democracy programme.

Limerick Be Heard #Youth Ambassadors for Democracy

The design process for this programme was youth-centred, exploratory and inductive - designed by young people for young people - to promote political participation and political agency for justice and inclusion.

Youth led Design - postponing decisions about learning outcomes!

We began with a group of youth volunteers who were keen to work together to 'make a difference'. Working as a team we met fortnightly and used youthwork facilitation methods to illicit the opinions and ideas of young people about the challenges and opportunities for young people interested in becoming more politically engaged. The topics that we addressed and the project tasks that these raised were identified by the young people participating. For me, this was an inversion of my usual approach to teaching. Instead of designing a "learning outcome" and then looking for ways to achieve it, in this process, the young people identified their challenge and then worked towards its resolution. It was only after they had resolved the challenge, and after I had reflected on what we did and what we learned, that I was able to retroactively discern the "learning outcome" that our activity had addressed.

Exploratory

To give an example, in order to explore 'how to make a difference' we decided to invite some politically engaged people to talk to the group about their activism. We encouraged the speakers to explain as much as they could about why they were active as they did about their activities. After their presentations, the speakers joined in our youth group work to explore the questions: What matters to me? What can I do? In the discussions between activists and young people, a primary and recurring theme was how to make a connection between a larger political concern and a smaller local action that people can connect to it.

Inductive

We learned from this session that our activists were motivated by a variety of feelings. For one speaker, activism was a way to prevent frustration, to re-direct feelings of anger and to use this energy positively. For another it was a way to meet people and socialise, to have fun whilst doing something worthwhile. Another speaker revealed that although he had originally thought that he did his work for other people, he had come to realise that he did it for himself: it made him sleep better and feel better about himself as a person. We also learned that quite often large scale political concerns, that might seem overwhelming and impossible to address, may have local dimensions where smaller scale concrete action can be taken. Concern about Europe's refugee crisis, for example, can be addressed by working with local refugees.



Personal reflection

My involvement in this project had a significant impact on my own thinking. Although originally I might have thought the learning associated with this was, 'how do I get involved', reflection illustrated that the more fundamental question we had answered was 'why should I get involved'. This brought political engagement to a personal level which to more tangible teenage concerns like having fun, finding a voice and maintaining good mental health.

Before this experience I might have understood the learning topics to be: 'what is political activism?' and 'why does it matter?' - relating the answer to higher level and more abstract political issues. After this experience, I understood the learning topic to be 'why should I engage politically?' and 'how can I incorporate this into my current way of life?'.

Together with the UL Practicum students on this project, we participated in all of the workshops, transcribed the meetings, and reflected individually, then together on what we had learned. The result was a 6 week programme, combining all of the best parts of our learning, to develop a community / university co-created and co-designed youth programme designed to develop civic engagement and political understanding for the promotion of human rights and democracy.

In an evaluation of the project³ the responses of Young People to a series of #GE16Flashdebates and workshops were particularly notable: the undergraduate students who had helped facilitate the debates and workshops gave enthusiastic endorsements to this alternative and applied way of learning about politics; and the Young People who participated in the workshops found them interesting and informative as well as interactive and engaging. Both sets of Young People were keen to do more, leaving only one question: why wait for another election?

Sustaining community collaboration through a new credit-bearing module

Following UL Practicum students' successful and enthusiastic participation in the Youth Engage project activities, helping to facilitate and record workshop discussions and developing workshop resources, it was decided to create an undergraduate politics module that would run in parallel to the Limerick Be Heard programme.

The new module in Political Agency enables students of politics to develop their understanding of political agency - both in the theoretical frameworks used to explain political behaviour and in practical application through their support for, and engagement with, the Limerick Be Heard programme. These two programmes together are mutually supportive, making the collaboration between the University and Limerick Youth Services more sustainable in the longer term, and providing more support for the development of political understanding and civic engagement between a wide range of young people from different backgrounds. Collaboration between an academic institution and pro-active Youth and Community Services facilitates evidenced and evaluated peer to peer learning and enables the creation of practical resources by Young People for Young People. In addition, working outside my own realm of expertise, with youth workers and young people who are experienced in approaching their inquiries quite differently to the way that I have been trained, has opened my eyes to new ways of delivering and co-creating content for my other politics course

Understanding Political Agency

The UL Practicum module, mixed classroom based theoretical insights into the motivations that underpin political action, with practical exercises and workshops in support of the #Youth Ambassadors for Democracy programme. For each week of the six week Ambassador programme, our students must help devise content, facilitate sessions and reflect on what they have learned.

Rationale

Teaching politics to students in a way that is engaging, interesting, informative, and capable of building a range of competencies among students presents an on-going challenge⁴. To achieve a higher level of student competency as 'critical political thinkers', Gorham^{5:346} suggests that political thinking is most likely to occur 'where the classroom experience itself is integrated into service-learning as a public space'. This approach to teaching politics reflects Stoker's⁶ exhortation that we should stop talking about politics and instead create more opportunities to practice it. That is the rationale underpinning the UL Practicum elective module 'Understanding Political Agency'.

Moving the classroom out into the Community

The learning environment for this module is provided by combining the more familiar university classroom setting with an off campus learning platform, made possible by our involvement in the #Youth Ambassadors for Democracy programme.

Lecture content is designed to provide theoretical explanations for political action, including insights from New Social Movements theory and Rational Choice approaches to understanding political behaviour. A great deal of the course content revolves around practical examples and case studies of alternative forms of political action. In contrast to more traditional teaching, however, most of this 'evidential content' is delivered in the applied and 'out of classroom' context provided by the #Youth Ambassadors for Democracy programme. Students on this module facilitate the Ambassador programme workshops and help to co-create workshop resources, artefacts and background materials. For example, the lecture topic concerned with 'Defining political action' is accompanied by practical work for the Ambassador programme concerned with preparation for a workshop activity. In this instance, the Ambassador programme includes a quiz - 'making the connections' - where political artefacts (a

button badge, a petition, a poster, a song, a ribbon, film clips, photos etc) must be matched with the political issue to which they are connected. Our students work to create the artefacts - and the answers - by preparing short briefings on each issue. They work to develop the content and format of the quiz so that it is engaging and fun.

Assessment

There are two points of assessment to this module, each worth 50%. The first comprises the creation of a reflective portfolio to review the Ambassador programme and their own participation in it. The second assessment is an essay. Guidelines concerning the creation of portfolios, and final essay topics are all presented with the course outline.

A full report of the content for both programmes can be found in the project report⁷. There is also a podcast at



Creativity in Communities

Community interactions can be fun and engaging, but sometimes leave open concerns about the extent to which they address the concerns of academic curriculum. Students need the space to explore their ideas, but there needs to be a means to link these explorations to the curriculum content so that they can begin to see the connections between theory and practice and have a more informed knowledge about 'how the world works'. For me, Creativity is about making the connections between the everyday and the curriculum and creating the conditions for autonomous learning - giving a supportive framework, within which students have plenty of room to figure things out for themselves.



The Limerick Be Heard group with their partners Capetown Be Heard October 2017



'Be Heard' goes global

In 2017, with funding from the Irish Research Council, Limerick Be Heard joined together a group of like-minded partners to run 'mirror groups' based on the Limerick Be Heard initiative. Capetown Be Heard was established and we look forward to 'Boston Be Heard' in 2018. Seven Swedish groups are interested in joining. The creation of mirror groups by international project partners enables the programme to transcend the local and develop an international consciousness regarding human rights, global citizenship and the importance of Youth Voice

as a vehicle for change

In Spring 2018, we will begin the third 'Limerick Be Heard' Practicum project with a new global focus enabled by our international network. The #Youth Engage project enabled us to develop synergies and share resources with our international mirror groups, and to plan for a more formal inclusion of the international dimension into our project with shared resources and virtual spaces. The international dimension has enabled us to create a variety of ways for young people taking Limerick Be Heard programmes and modules to connect with each other in order to transcend the local and develop an ethic of global citizenship. Exchange artefacts include postcards, youth exchange briefings, as well as podcasts and videos made by our students and participants. Combining university students with a mix of young people not in education or training gives the programme added educational value, providing peer modelled pathways for third level education to young people and giving a real life exposition of many topics covered in the politics classroom that gain a new relevance when illustrated by lived experience.

Sources

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- 2 <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/content/how-boost-soft-skills-recognition>
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APPENDIX 1



PRACTICUM MODULE OUTLINE

ECTS Weighting:	
Practicum Partners:	
Academic Contact:	
Practicum Student Placements on this project	
Course Code:	
Module Title:	
PROJECT TITLE	

INTRODUCTION

The UL Practicum seeks mutual benefit between the University of Limerick and the communities it works with. It provides curriculum based accredited learning that is supported by university teaching staff in response to identified community needs, in the context of applied community projects. All students undertaking a Practicum module will have an academic supervisor and community based Practicum Coordinator.

The UL Practicum is not like regular modules. In contrast to an introductory or survey course, the UL Practicum typically takes a single topic and offers a 'deep learning' experience, using out of the classroom problem-based and experiential learning to add new insights to established academic arguments and issues. Much of this learning is self-directed, under the supervision of your academic project leader, but enabling you to control the direction of your academic studies in consultation with UL staff. The module will require attendance at some combination of lectures, tutorials, workshops and community meetings. Some of these will be taken jointly with community partners and may occur outside normal student academic scheduled hours. The contact hours for a UL Practicum are comparable to those of a regular academic module with the same ECTS credit weighting. However, the organisation of these hours may vary throughout the module, in accordance with the needs of the project. You may also be required to attend some scheduled lectures as required by your academic module leader.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This module will provide students with practical experience, generic skills development (such as applied research work, team work, problem-solving and project work) as well as the experience of being part of a multi- or inter- disciplinary team. It will enable them to apply the disciplinary knowledge that they have learnt to multi-faceted real-world problems. Students will: take part in problem identification and ideation; develop a deeper understanding of academic issues areas and problems in consultation with external stakeholders; work towards solutions in collaboration; implement identified changes and evaluate outcomes. A reflective practice will underpin the student experience throughout.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Develop the capacity to apply curriculum-based knowledge in a real-world setting.
- Develop competence to work effectively as a member of a multi-disciplinary team in collaboration with external community stake-holders
- Develop project work and problem solving skills
- Develop competence in conveying ideas clearly and effectively to a range of different stake-holders in different organizational and/or community or cultural settings contexts.
- Explore issues of social responsibility, ethical practice and in sustainable community contexts.
- Develop the capacity to see new opportunities to address commonly identified issues/ problems within the community
- Recognize the capacity of those outside their own area of expertise to deliver their own professional and/or experiential expertise into collaborative project work.

COURSE STRUCTURE

UL Practicum workshops

All UL Practicum students must participate in the UL Practicum workshops. Workshops will address topics such as roles and responsibilities, UL graduate attributes, reflection, learning in community engaged placements, partnership principles, agreements and ethical considerations, engaged research methods, measuring impact and outcomes.

Community focused activities

Academic supervision of the project work is carried out by the responsible academic for your project. The involvement of your Practicum Partners is contingent on the parameters of each individual Practicum Project and negotiated during the first part of the programme in the general project set up. You may be required to sign a community learning partnership agreement, detailing the responsibilities of the academic department, of the community hosts, and agreed guidelines for your participation in the programme. In addition to the academic content of your programme, the UL Practicum offers an opportunity for students to learn a variety of important transferable skills in a supported environment. You will be supported to develop graduate attributes (*knowledgeable, proactive, creative, responsible, collaborative, articulate*) to work effectively as a member of a multi-disciplinary team in collaboration with external community stake-holders.

ASSESSMENT

A range of formative and summative assessment methods will be used. Assessments will be designed to compliment the interactive teaching and learning approaches. In particular, methods conducive to workplace assessment will be employed (McDowell, 2002). Examples of these may include all or some of the following: project presentations, reflective assignments, real time problem-solving tasks, portfolios and profiles, negotiated assignments and learning contracts, group assignments, self, peer and co-assessment.

What have we learned from our exploration of creative pedagogies for creative learning ecologies?

Norman Jackson



Norman is Co-Founder of Creative Academic and leader of the creative pedagogies for creative learning ecologies project and commissioning editor of Creative Academic Magazine. His main research interest is focused on developing and applying the idea of learning ecologies to educational and other life contexts.

Introduction

In this article I will try to synthesise the most important things we have learnt from our exploration of *creative pedagogies for creative learning ecologies* which began in October 2016¹. When we started this open learning project we did not know where it would take us but we were willing to have a go. The words of one of our contributors Rahul Hasija capture this spirit of adventure very well. *Unknown is the path, unknown is the destination, unknown is the journey; known is my willingness to walk*². While our journey was unknown we knew that we wanted to continue to develop our understandings of the idea of learning ecologies, and more specifically, learning ecologies in the context of teaching and learning practices. We chose to focus our attentions on the idea of **pedagogy** and on the pedagogies that lead to ecologies within which learners are encouraged and enabled to use their creativity.



But being willing to walk a particular path also requires *hope* based on belief that the walk will be worthwhile and that if we create the right conditions - other people will join us, which fortunately they did! We did not set out to be rigorous or systematic in engaging with the topic, rather as we walked we meandered and explored whatever looked interesting. Our exploration was therefore emergent, partly planned and deliberate (this would be worth looking at), partly ad hoc, as contributors approached us with their ideas and practices, and partly opportunistic as we discovered interesting places and practices by accident. And as we walk we can't help but be changed by our relationships and interactions so that progressively our initial ideas are refined, abandoned or morph into entirely new thoughts.

At the start of the project we extended an open invitation and over 80 people registered their interest. We provided a monthly newsletter to keep all who expressed an interest informed. We employed three strategies to develop new perspectives. Firstly, we invited people through both open and targeted invitations, to share their perspectives and practices through our emergent CAM7 magazine, contributions included : 1) descriptions and evaluations of educational practices 2) syntheses of discussions or surveys 3) interviews with higher education teachers and 4) sense making conceptual pieces. Secondly, we used social media - we conducted two open discussions on the #creativeHE Google+ Forum and a #LTHechat on twitter the results of which we reported in CAM7. Thirdly, we conducted an on-line survey to explore the idea of personal pedagogies. We also contributed to a #TLC on-line seminar and to several institution based events.

Gregory Bateman, one of the pioneers of ecological thinking, once said, 'an explorer can never know what he is exploring until it has been explored'³. This article was created to take stock of what has been explored and what we have learnt along the way.

We will never know how many people our project has touched. We do not judge success by the number of contributors, rather we judge success on the value to others of what we have done and what we have produced, and that is something we will never know. And perhaps the most significant outcome is the new relationships we have developed which will continue beyond the conclusion of this project.

As I was completing this synthesis I came across Gillian Judson's contribution the recent TEDx WestVancouver event in which she talked about the importance of story in learning and I think this is what we have been doing - we have been trying to find the ecological story in the contributions that have been made. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=loIZyzPVqrU>

Making pedagogy personal

One of the insights we gained from the contributions to CAM7 is just how personal pedagogy is. We tend to think of pedagogy in the abstract when we talk about particular approaches to teaching and learning. But those approaches are customized by the teacher for particular educational contexts and particular groups of learners, and connect to their own interests, capabilities and qualities as a teacher.

In choosing to adopt a pedagogical focus we had to explore the meanings of pedagogy. It is a contested term and it is generally not used amongst faculty/academics in their everyday conversations about teaching and learning in higher education. But it is a powerful concept that embraces much more than teaching. Adopting the basic premise that [pedagogy is 'the conscious activity by one person designed to enhance learning in another'](#)^{4,3}, it's fundamentally an ecological idea in the sense that it is all about people in a relationship, interacting with each other and their environment.

The particular concern of our project was with pedagogical thinking and related practices that lead to ecologies within which teachers help learners use their creativity in the process of learning: a pedagogy for creativity is 'the conscious activity by one person designed to enhance learning and *creativity* in another'.

We are particularly interested in pedagogical practices that enable learners to create their own ecologies for learning and creativity. This is more in keeping with Barnett and Hallam's 'pedagogy for supercomplexity', '*based on a view of learning construed as, at least in part, the acquisition of those human capabilities appropriate for adaptation to conditions of radical and enduring uncertainty, unpredictability, challengeability, and contestability*'^{5,142}. Through this project we are exploring the proposition that a human capability necessary for learning in these conditions of circumstantial and contextual complexity and perplexity is the ability to create an ecology in order to learn, achieve and create.

By focusing on a teacher's pedagogical practice for the subject of this inquiry (rather than teaching) we are highlighting the ecological affordance contained in the idea. In this way we might reveal the value and significance in the idea. The proposition we are adopting is that a teacher's pedagogy is fundamentally about relationships - with their beliefs, values, knowledge and experience, with the learners they are accompanying and caring for, with their subject which they often care passionately about, with the resources they prepare to help students learn, with the activities for learning they design and animate through their teaching, with the assessment tools they create, with the technology they use and with the spaces they create and their students inhabit within their institutional ecosystem.

This broad ecological view of pedagogy, is similar to that adopted by Thomson et al^{6,10} in their investigation into the signature pedagogies of artists and other creative practitioners.

*Pedagogy is more than teaching method, more than curriculum, more than assessment practice*⁷. It is all these things, but it is also how they are made into patterns of actions, activities and interactions⁸ by a particular teacher, with a particular group of students [in a particular context]. The concept of pedagogy encompasses relationships, conversations, learning environments, rules, norms and culture within the wider social context^{9,10}, and may extend beyond school to community and public settings^{11,12}. It takes in the ways in which what teachers and students do is framed and delimited within a specific site, a policy regime and the historical context¹³..



A teacher's personal pedagogy is not fixed. Rather we should think of it as a dynamic expression of their knowledge, skill and judgement and sensing of what is needed because they are deeply in tune with the learners' interests and needs, and the contexts, circumstances and situations in which they practice. A teacher's pedagogical thinking and practices are not fixed because they are influenced by the everyday professional, institutional, social and technological world they inhabit. In fact, the influences on pedagogical thinking are much wider and deeper than a teacher's professional career: they emanate through a lifetime of engaging with learning in family, education, work and other social settings^{14,15}. While higher education teachers may not use the word pedagogy to describe this complex and dynamic set of relationships and interactions this is the reality of a pedagogy that is personal and lived day to day.

One of the interesting ideas to emerge through our exploration is the ways in which teachers develop their beliefs about learning and how to facilitate learning in others, over a lifetime of experiences. High impact experiences, like good and bad experiences in school, or experiences of professional practice in the commercial world, influence their pedagogical thinking. We might speculate that the pattern of beliefs and values that higher education teachers hold ultimately determine the ecologies they are willing to create in order for learners to experience learning in the world in the ways that they believe are necessary to develop the capabilities and attitudes necessary for the modern world. We began to explore this idea through interviews with some of the contributors to the magazine.

This claim is based on interviews reported in CAM 7C How does MediaWorks work? Interviews with Tony Dias and Julius Dobos p. 53' and 'Meet the Teacher – Declan Phillips p.94', unpublished conversations with HE teachers and my own experience of life.

The idea of personal pedagogies was explored in the March issue of CAM7C, in an on-line #LTHEchat and #creativeHE conversation, and through an online questionnaire¹⁴. A number of academics shared their own influences and these were published in the March issue of CAM7C (right). When a teacher maps their pedagogical journey, it makes explicit where and how particular beliefs and values emerged in their life and how these impact on their current thinking.

CAM7C March 2017

Exploring Personal Pedagogies Norman Jackson p.7
Who has Influenced my Pedagogical Thinking? John Cowan p.13
Using Metaphor to Make Sense of my Personal Pedagogy Rebecca Jackson p.14
My Personal Pedagogy: A Constructivist Perspective p.17
Will Haywood
I am my Pedagogy Maria Kefalogianni p.20

Figure 2 provides a conceptual framework for viewing important influences on individual's pedagogical practices¹⁵. Potential influences include the contexts of their discipline, the educational needs of the programme and the learners on the programme, the strategic priorities of the institution, including the provision it makes for the development of higher education teachers, and some of the influences that are external to the institution. This conceptual aid tries to convey that there are many possible influences - past, present and future that are likely to impact on a teacher's pedagogical thinking and practice - it emphasises that a personal pedagogy is an ecological phenomenon evolving in a relation between the person their life, past and current experiences.

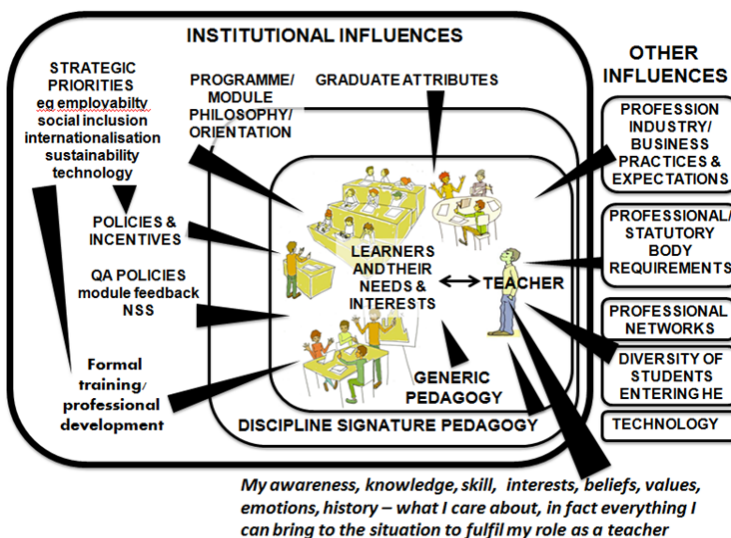


Figure 2 Representation of the influences on a teacher's pedagogical thinking and practices in a university ecosystem the manifestation of which I am calling a personal pedagogy¹⁵

At the centre of this concept map are the learners who are participating in a particular module in a particular programme, it is their needs and interests in this educational context that provide the most important context for the teacher's personalised pedagogical thinking and practice. A module or programme might have a particular content, theoretical or practical orientation that shapes a teacher's approach. Their pedagogical knowledge is formed and influenced from many different sources, here are just a few of them.

- The teaching practices the individual has encountered as a learner in their disciplinary field and the *signature pedagogies*^{14,15,16} of their discipline which are core to the ways in which disciplinary practitioners think, solve problems, and develop and use knowledge.
- The generic pedagogical practices learnt from peers within or outside the institution or from professional development activities within their work environment - they include such practices as a traditional lecture or seminar and the use of criteria to assess students' work
- A teacher's research interests, knowledge, practices and related resources and networks which can be drawn upon
- Institutional strategic policies that impact on teaching and learning - for example an institution might have a policy that encourages all graduates to possess certain qualities and attributes that might impact on pedagogical practices. Institutional quality assurance procedures may also require certain forms of practice such as curriculum designs that are based on learning outcomes.
- Issues the institution is engaging with. For example, an institution might be committed to social inclusion and widening participation, or to internationalisation or sustainability all of which can affect the pedagogical approaches used by teachers.

A pedagogy that sets out to enable learners to use their creativity is a personal and situated phenomenon not an abstract idea. It's the particular 'patterns of actions, activities and interactions by a particular teacher, with a particular group of students' in a particular set of institutional, curricular and relational contexts and circumstances. Further explorations of the idea of personal pedagogical journeys are warranted.

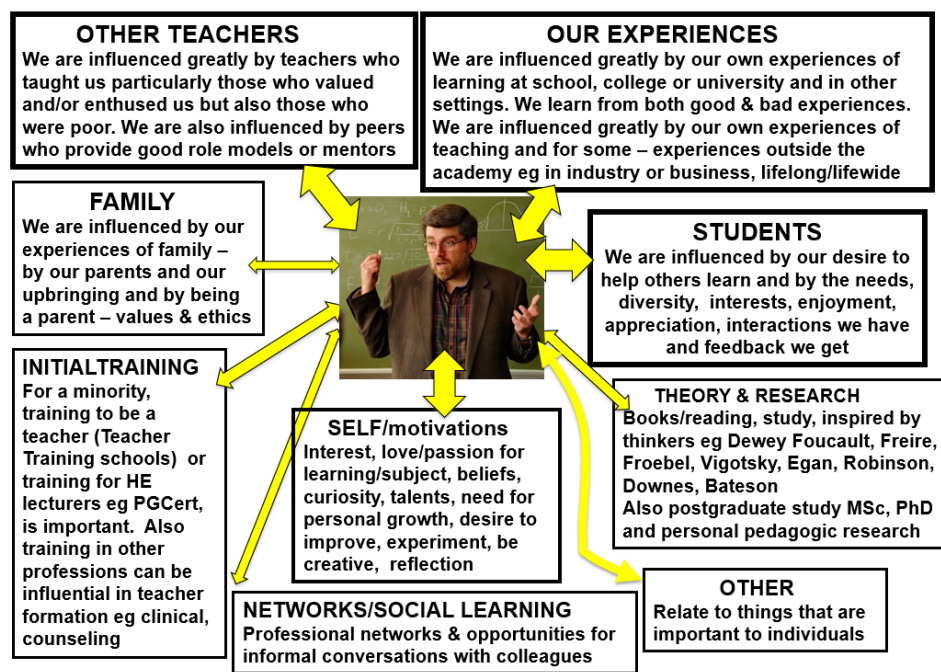
Survey of personal pedagogical influences

To evaluate these ideas we conducted a survey the results of which were reported in the April issue CAM7C¹⁴. There were 60 respondents at that time. Figure 3 provides a synthesis of key influences.

Figure 3 Synthesis of key influences on a teachers formation.

The survey concluded that:

- role models are very important sources of professional development. This may be colleagues or others observed teaching ie experiences of being taught, or they may be renowned educationalists or theorists who open new ways of thinking about learning and teaching.
- personal and lifewide experiences are recognised as helping professional development.
- closely related to this is personal disposition, including the motivation to enquire, experiment and persevere even when experiments do not work out as they had hoped.
- respondents demonstrate that, with experience and training, they are responsive to their learners and rely greatly on the feedback received, whether informal or formal.



Personal experiences of teaching and designing courses and the willingness to experiment are perhaps the major influences on the continuing development of pedagogical thinking and practice. The survey remains open <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/personalpedagogy> and to date there are 85 responses. The accumulated results can be viewed at <https://www.surveymonkey.net/results/SM-Q6R29H3G/>

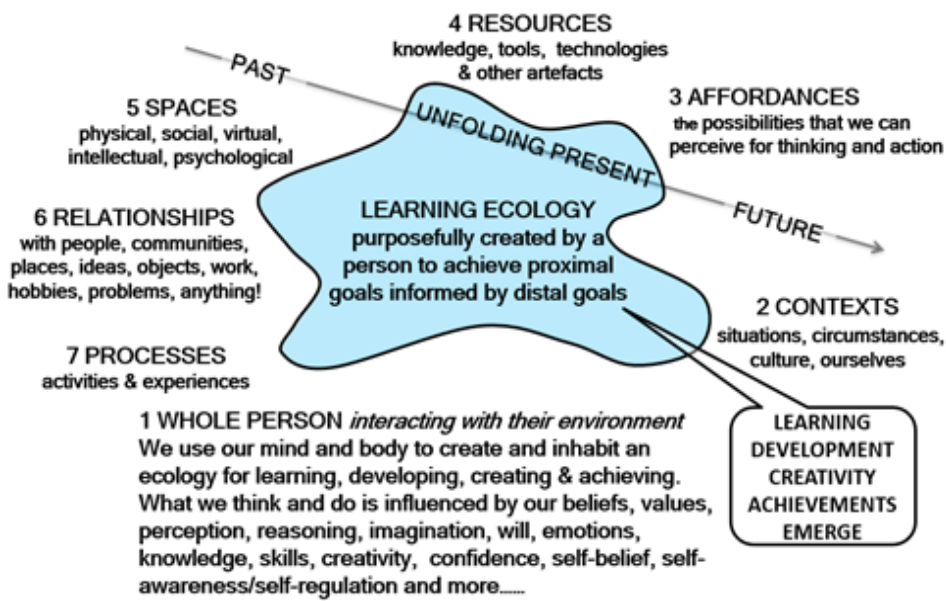
Seeing and thinking ecologically

From the start of this project we treated the subjects of our inquiry ie teachers' personal pedagogies and the ways and means they encouraged and facilitated learning and the creativity of learners, as an ecological phenomenon rooted in educational contexts and environments. 'Every organism has an environment: the organism shapes its environment and the environment shapes the organism. So it helps to think of an indivisible totality of 'organism plus environment' - best seen as an ongoing process of growth and development'¹⁶. From an educational environmental perspective it does not make sense to talk about the environment in which we are learning without reference to ourselves as the organism that is perceiving and interacting with the environment we inhabit in order to learn.¹⁶

Applying the idea of ecology to learning, personal development and achievement, including creative achievements, is an attempt to view a person their purposes, ambitions, goals, interests, needs, creativity and circumstances, their perceptions of the world and their social and physical relationships and interactions with the world they inhabit, as inseparable and interdependent. The idea of ecology encourages us to think more holistically and more dynamically about the way we inhabit and relate to the world. It encourages us to think in a more holistic way about our life: how we connect up the moments in our lives to form experiences and achievements that mean something to us¹⁷.

The ecological framework we are developing and testing through this project is shown in figure 4.

Figure 4 Model of an ecology for learning within which our personal creativity emerges. Based on the framework proposed by Jackson¹⁷



Our ecologies for learning embrace all the physical and virtual places and spaces we inhabit in our everyday lives and the learning and the meaning we gain from the contexts and situations that constitute our lives. They are the product of both imagination and reason and they are enacted using all our capability and ingenuity. They are therefore one of our most important sites for our creativity and they enable us to develop ourselves personally and professionally in all aspects of our lives. If this belief is well founded then surely, our ability to create our own ecologies for learning and development must be one of the most important

capabilities we need for sustaining ourselves, achieving our purposes and maintaining our sense of wellbeing in a complex, ever changing and often challenging and disruptive world.¹⁷

Reiterating what was said earlier, the ability and willingness to create our own ecologies for learning, developing, creating and achieving aligns to Barnett and Hallam's 'pedagogy for supercomplexity', *'based on a view of learning construed as, at least in part, the acquisition of those human capabilities [and dispositions] appropriate for adaptation to conditions of radical and enduring uncertainty, unpredictability, challengeability, and contestability'*^{5:142}

Ecology of personal creativity

There are many definitions of creativity and most seem to have the ideas of bringing something new and original into existence as their core conception without providing any sort of context. It's as if creativity and invention happen in isolation from the world of their creator. Because of this I have come increasingly to appreciate the significance in the way Carl Rogers framed the idea of personal creativity as, *'the emergence in action of a novel relational product growing out of the uniqueness of the individual on the one hand, and the materials, events, people, or circumstances of his life'*^{18:350}

The bottom line is that creativity is an ecological phenomenon. It's about human beings having thoughts that are stimulated by their relationship and interactions with the world, both inner and outer, they inhabit. A creative thought is the result of a person interacting cognitively, physically, emotionally, virtually with something in their world ideas, people, things, problems, situations and experiences, and a multitude of other things and this interaction triggering a novel thought. These thoughts are often the result of connecting/combining two or more things to create something that is different to the things that were connected. Erica McWilliam¹⁹ catches this beautifully in their idea that creativity is often the result of *making a third 'thing' from two existing things or ideas*, rather than making something from nothing. In a complex creation, like the Media Works example, many ideas will be brought together, by teams of people and merged to form the new artefact. In this example we see how individual's creativity is harnessed within a project and focused on a shared purpose and goal. The selection of ideas to be combined becomes important and the idea of relevance becomes a guiding principle.

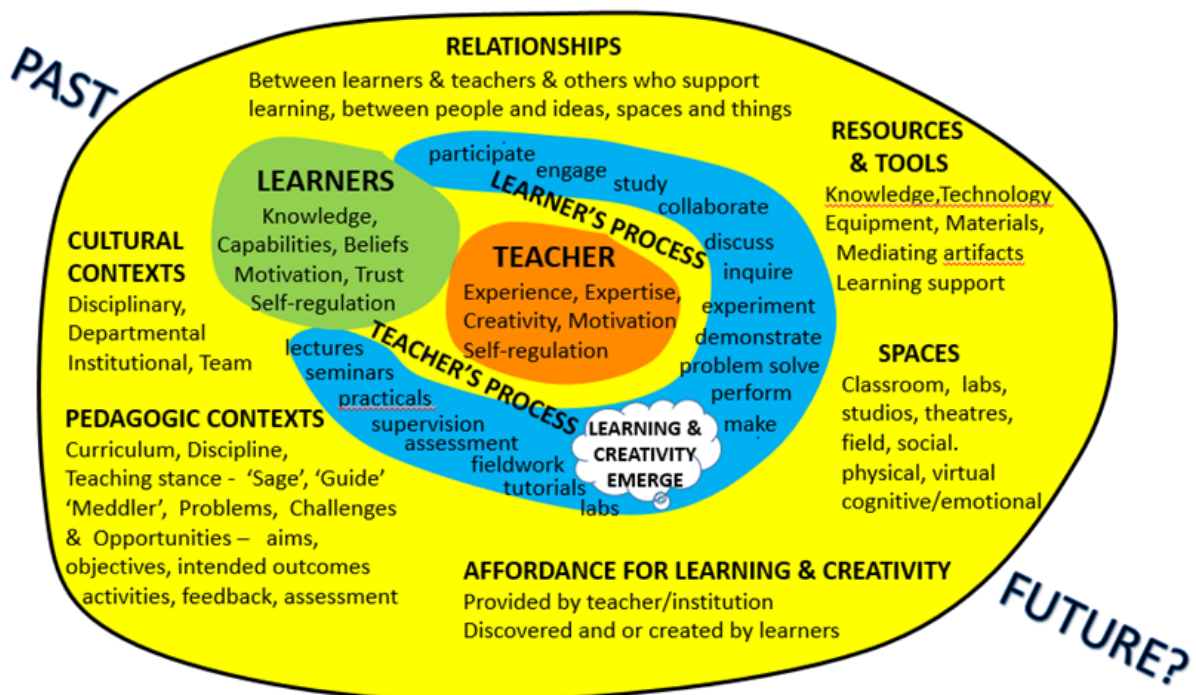
A learning ecology contains not only the physical, virtual and social spaces, materials, resources, relationships and activities that help to form the circumstances of our lives, but also the mental / psychological spaces that enable us to think about ideas and situations in a variety of ways and bring ideas together in a particular context to generate new ideas (to us) and also perhaps novel ideas to others. Furthermore, the intrinsic motivations and beliefs that derive from these processes encourage us to develop our ecology so that we can create, achieve and learn how to do these things in the contexts and situations of our lives.

If we translate this way of thinking to the formal teaching and learning environment then the most important things a teacher does through their pedagogical thinking and related practices, is to create affordance for learners to create their own ecologies for learning, creating and achieving. Ultimately, this is the capability and related beliefs and dispositions that will sustain learners throughout their learning lives.

Ecologies for learning created by teachers

Higher education teaching is a complex matter requiring deliberation, decisions, planning, design and implementation, the consideration and connection of many variables and the improvisation and adaptation as the teaching and learning process unfolds. Figure 5 reveals some of this complexity by identifying the main components of a typical course-based ecology for learning that is designed and taught by a teacher and are hosted in an institutional ecosystem which provides the physical, cultural and virtual environment.

Figure 5 Typical ecology for learning developed through a teacher's pedagogic practice associated with a taught course within an institutional ecosystem (refined from Jackson^{17:244}). Jackson's model of a learning ecology (Figure 3) provides the underlying conceptual rationale for this pedagogically constructed ecology for learning which links the past experiences and learning of the teacher and students, to an unfolding present in which thinking, action and interaction develops over time. What results will be reflected upon and what is learnt will inform future pedagogic adventures. In this ecological model of pedagogy everything has a relationship and the potential to interact.



Learning ecology conceptual spaces

There are two different ecological contexts in which students' creativity can be facilitated perhaps best represented as two ends of a continuum. At one end of the continuum the teacher controls all or most of the aspects of the ecology for learning but within this context there might be scope for learners to use their creativity - for example the teacher might control the aims, outcomes, content, contexts and spaces for learning but provide a challenge within which students have the encouragement and freedom to engage their creativities to achieve an outcome that is not controlled by the teacher. At the other end of the continuum the teacher relinquishes control over such matters as the outcomes, content, contexts and spaces for learning and encourages and enables learners to shape or even create their own ecologies for learning within which their creativity can flourish.

Figure 6 developed by the author¹⁷ provides a framework to explain the conceptual spaces within which learners either, 1) participate in ecologies created by teachers, 2) participate in ecologies that they create for themselves or 3) participate in hybrid ecologies that are co-created by learners and teachers and/or others. The 2x2 matrix is defined by: 1) *contexts for learning* i.e. whether the contexts are formally constituted and structured within an academic programme or whether they are informal and unstructured opportunities for learning and development, and 2) whether the *institution or the learner* determines the what and why, the how, where and the when of learning, and ultimately determines what counts as learning. The key question is who determines the goals and purposes, knowledge and skill content, processes, resources, tools and technologies outcomes and achievements. Four different scenarios are imagined to represent the different conceptual spaces in Figure 6 are summarized in Table 1.

Figure 6 Conceptual tool developed by the author for¹⁷ evaluating the affordances for learning available to students while they are studying at university. Affordance for learning, developing, creating and achieving occurs in the institutional ecosystem and in the ecosystems beyond the university.

The different spaces have different levels of affordance for students to determine and create their own ecologies for learning and achieving (D>B/C>A). The Goals++++ axis contains the dimensions of goals and purposes, intended learning, knowledge and skill content, process, resources including tools and technologies, relationships and recognition of achievement.

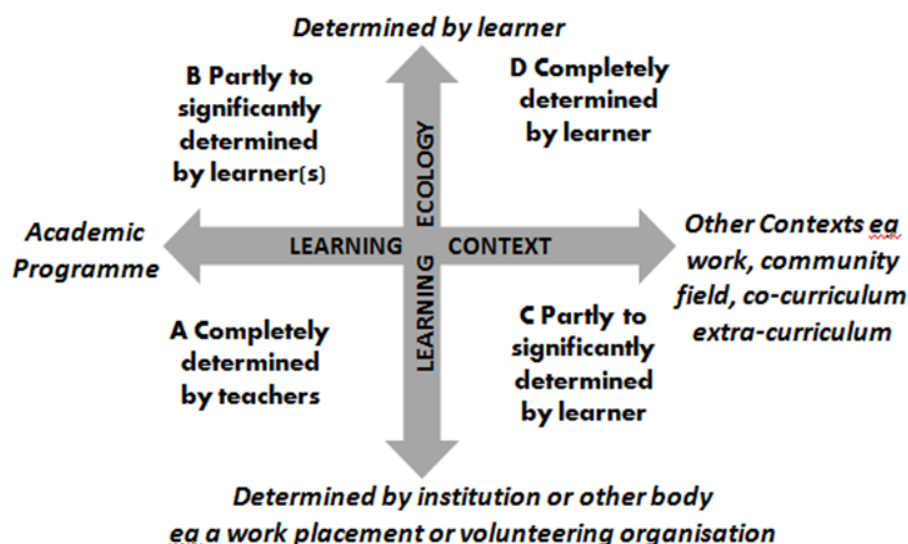


Table 1 Elaboration of conceptual spaces shown in Figure 6 offering different levels of affordance for learners to create their own ecologies for learning

A) Traditional lecture-based ecology for learning

Teachers working with a pre-determined curriculum or syllabus containing specific knowledge and opportunities for skill development and supported by an appropriate set of resources, engage their students in a process for learning. The main activities undertaken by learners are attendance at lectures, perhaps supplemented by seminars, essay-based coursework assignments, and revision for examinations. Learning and achievement reflect mastering the content of the course, determined through teacher assessment. In this type of learning ecology the learner has little or no involvement in the design of the ecology they merely participate in one that has been designed for them. They have little or no control over the goals, tasks, content, process, resources and what counts as learning and achievement. Their learning is likely to be geared to gaining the best grades in their coursework and examinations.

B) Teacher designed & facilitated active ecology for learning

Pedagogies that lead to extended processes for learning and contexts within which particular forms of learning are situated will engage learners in very different forms of participatory activity. Problem-, project-, inquiry-, event-, design and make, and field-based learning all actively encourage learners to define and explore their own problems, build and utilise relationships for learning, be resourceful and discover for themselves the knowledge they need to produce possible solutions, sometimes in contexts that are unfamiliar. In these types of learning contexts teachers operate as facilitators, guides, supervisors and coaches rather than didactic transmitters. Such pedagogies and practices help learners develop the will, capability and confidence to create their own learning ecologies for learning and achieving. Students will still want to gain good grades in their coursework and examinations, but in engaging in these sorts of processes they are gaining much more. They are learning through an experience that learning involves a process that has to be created. That involves assessing a situation, defining problems and seeing opportunities, setting goals, planning and executing tasks, discovering and applying relevant knowledge and other resources and forming new relationships. Although ultimately the teacher will determine what counts as learning and achievement and they may give little or no recognition for learners' processes of learning, learners will still have learned these things. Learning that is important to the creation a learning ecology.

C) Institutionally supported self-directed ecology for learning

There are some contexts in unstructured learning environments like for example work, volunteering in the community, independent fieldwork, co-curricular enterprise and event organising, which involve learners in activity in which they determine for themselves goals, tasks, content, process and resources. Such environments are beyond the control of the teacher and institution but they may be influenced and supervised by other people like employers, supervisors, entrepreneurs, who may influence goals, tasks, content, process, relationships and resources, and ultimately the recognition of what counts as learning, performance and achievement. Universities can capitalise on these contexts for students' development through frameworks and processes that enable learners to visualise, plan, record/evidence, reflect on, make claims and gain recognition for their own learning and development. These forms of support and recognition vary in the extent to which they focus learners' attention on specific goals and outcomes or they encourage learners to define their own goals and achievements. Support may also be given to encourage and facilitate interaction between learners engaged in a similar process for example in providing a forum for students to exchange information and discuss situations.

D) Independent self-directed ecology for learning

This conceptual space is where people create their own learning ecologies for their own purposes typically for their own learning projects often associated with interests like sport, hobbies, travel, working in the community or for a charity, enterprise like setting up a business or organising an event, raising a child and countless more contexts. Involvement and learning are not driven by the need or desire for formal recognition but by the intrinsic desire to improve self, and the sense of doing something worthwhile to contribute and make a positive difference. In such self-motivated circumstances the learner determines for themselves and or with co-participants goals, tasks, content, process, resources and relationships and achievements. Although, learners do not seek recognition for learning and personal development gained through such experiences a university could provide the tools and mechanisms that enable learners to plan, record/evidence, reflect on, make claims and gain recognition for their own learning and development. From an educational perspective these contexts are particularly favourable for learners developing their own ecologies for learning and achievement in a way that a formally structured and controlled educational environment cannot.

Physical spaces

Physical spaces are an important and obvious element of a person's environment. The spaces in which teachers and learners perform creatively are quite varied. People can be creative in almost any space but some spaces are perceived to be restrictive (eg a lecture theatre) while others are perceived to be facilitative (eg more open spaces which can be used flexibly). Some spaces are deliberately constructed to create spaces in which particular types of creative work can take place. For example, in the August issue of CAM7D Andrew Middleton explored studio spaces²⁰ and concluded that educationally, the studio continues to mean:

- a space in which individual craft, knowledge and dispositions are valued;
- a space designed to promote creative thinking and originality;
- an immersive networked place of individual effort and collective agency;
- a place of co-operation and co-production;
- a cauldron of ideas, technologies and people.

Students working in a studio space



Quite simply a studio space has more potential for interaction if the teachers and learners using the space choose to exploit the potential.

*"The spaces that are most effective for active and collaborative learning are those that create a flexible and fluid environment. A studio model, which resembles an open workspace for architects or artists... This enables more interaction than the typical classroom and supports student engagement and movement."*²¹

A studio affords, for people who know how to use it, a physical environment in which they can create their own ecologies for learning, exploring, developing, creating/co-creating, making, performing and achieving²².

While studio spaces are often connected to artistic disciplinary practices involving performance, in science laboratories are the dedicated spaces in which people practice, perform, experiment and create. Spaces have to be fit for purpose and this often involves including within them the tools and other resources necessary for the work undertaken within them. Kate Dunton provided an excellent illustration of the way a science laboratory had been transformed into a 'maker space' in which scientists and artistic crafts people could collaborate in creative ways.²³

It is clear from the stories that are shared by the people who use such spaces that they form a deep relationship with the spaces in which they practice and perform. In ecological terms the studio space encourages and facilitates the sorts of relationships and interactions - physical, social, intellectual and emotional, necessary for the making of such artefacts and performances. In such spaces creators are able to embody who they are by drawing on their deep intrinsic motivations, harnessing their imaginations, intellect and emotions, immersing themselves in their creative work to tackling and solve the problems and challenges they set themselves and create the artefacts and performances they are seeking.

Learning to inhabit such specialised spaces to create or reproduce cultural artefacts and performances requires apprenticeship : enculturation and instruction in ways of thinking and knowing, acting and performing in a social context involving other practitioners both novice and experienced. Such apprenticeships are accomplished through formal education and professional training and lots of informal self-determined experiences. The pedagogies (how a person enables another to learn) of apprenticeship in these disciplinary domains are necessarily *signature pedagogies*. "the types of teaching that organize the fundamental ways in which future practitioners are educated for their new professions"^{24:52}.

Pedagogical illustrations

The purpose of the Creative Academic project (documented in CAM7), was to identify examples of pedagogical practices where learners could create to, a significant extent, their own ecologies for learning: ecologies within which they could use their creativity in order to achieve something that was relevant and of value. Here are five examples of pedagogical practices used in higher education that try to apply these ecological ways of viewing learning and achievement.

#1 Parallel Practices, Kings College, London University

The Parallel Practices intervention described by Kate Dunton²³ in the October 2016 issue of CAM7, involved a Lecturer in Informatics and a Lecturer in Physics and two resident craft-makers - specialists in metalwork and automata (John Grayson), and in glass (Shelley James) who set up residence in a maker space in a scientific laboratory equipped with various tools to facilitate making, including a 3D printer and a sewing machine. The idea was to create a vibrant, student-owned *space* outside the formal curriculum where students from the Faculty of Natural and Mathematical Sciences could experiment and play alongside peers in different departments and at different levels of study. By embedding artistic makers with skills in traditional crafts, and scientists in the same space it was hoped that students would develop the confidence to experiment and learn by making, as well as the opportunity to learn new skills that would otherwise be inaccessible to them in the formal teaching of traditional science and engineering disciplines. The makers used two pedagogical approaches: a workshop approach, where the makers would directly engage students in structured activities that might broadly support their subject-based learning, with a more traditional residency where the makers pursued their own work in the space thus allowing for more open-ended and curiosity-driven conversations, interactions and activities could emerge. It was this reciprocal need for both the students and the craft makers to take something from the encounter, and the process of making and experimentation that lay at the heart of their shared inquiries, that provided the impetus for creativity and learning on both sides.²⁰

Students at work in the maker space by John Grayson



Science students created their own ecologies to make their own artefacts within the frameworks provided by workshops and informal interactions and conversations, utilising the expertise of the makers to develop the skills to work with the tools and materials that were available in the maker space. It was clear that the affordance in this environment inspired both makers and students and the culture that was created encouraged experimentation without the fear of not succeeding.

It's opened up so many opportunities for all involved. Some of the students started to really immerse themselves. I think it gave them a good opportunity to see how they could apply their skills in a slightly wider context, and in a risk-free way. Because it's not tied to a module they're not petrified about failing. It was a supporting environment. They knew that we were there to ensure that what they were making didn't end up being tat. At the same time, it allowed them to challenge themselves a bit. (John Grayson)

The environment was rich in resources and tools that enabled participants to create novel artefacts that held both scientific and aesthetic meaning and value.

I noticed that the bottles that they keep their amazing nanoparticle samples in are really ugly, so I showed them how to heat up and blow standard glass pipettes to make little vials. We put some of their nanoparticles in and then one of the research students said, "Why don't you make it longer, like fishing floats, and we'll put them in water..." And we all zoomed down to their labs in the basement where there

were all sorts of big glass cylinders. I had no idea that space even existed. One of them ran off to get blue light torches and they were all so excited by the way the colour looked different when looking from underneath through the water, or from the top. As the 'tails' full of liquid crossed in front of each other, we could see new colour combinations. If I'd suggested it, it wouldn't have had the same spontaneity. One of the students then wondered what would happen if we looked at the colour through thicker pieces of glass. We mixed their dyes and nano-particles with a special glue and used that to assemble pieces of glass. Again, the colour looked different depending on the angle of view and we've started to build some more complicated models together using these effects. So it was important to leave space for the students to bring their own ideas. I suppose I incubated a situation that was still open. (Shelley James).

This account provides good examples of creativity in action ie taking an idea, combining it with another to create something new and playing with the media to see what would happen and discovering new phenomenon in the process.



Ecology for learning and creating

In terms of the ecological conceptual spaces framework shown in Figure 7 this type of environment equates with zone C - a co-curricular space containing some structured activity for the development of skills and awareness, and unstructured space for self-determined and self-directed activity, in which learners could imagine, experiment and make their own artefacts.

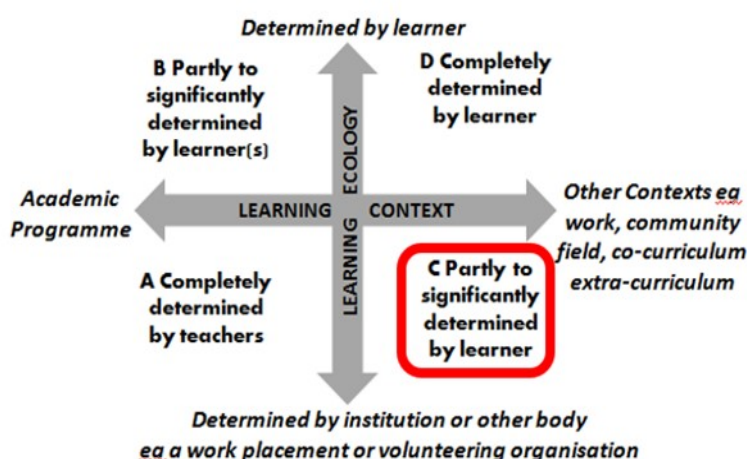


Figure 7 Location of this pedagogical intervention in the typology of learning ecologies framework

An important reason for why learners' creativity flourished in this setting was that the ecology encouraged them to take risks, moving well beyond their previous experiences, and experiment without the fear of being penalised for not being successful because of the absence of a) intended outcomes proscribing results and b) grading for the products of their work. John Grayson, one of the craft makers, put his finger on why the culture of the environment promoted such behaviour.

The nice thing with this project is that it's not part of assessed learning against a module descriptor with a predetermined set of learning outcomes. And of course, that introduces an element of risk because it could turn out to be completely rubbish. You could argue that not identifying outcomes at the beginning is a problem because you can't measure if you've met them. But equally, risk generates innovation. There will always be 'known unknowns', that is to say, the things that we know are going to happen because that's the nature of the project, but we don't know what they are exactly and we let them unfold. We can do that because it's not tied into a set of learning outcomes. We can extend those vials into long pipettes and chuck them in a bucket of water just to see what happens. In a formal module, where that might not serve the learning outcomes, those moments of spontaneity would be lost. I suppose what I'm saying is that the outcomes are much more fluid. For example, if you started with an outcome that was about developing new technology - lasers, for example - and then through the act of play it starts going in a different direction, somewhere amazing, you might feel you have to reign it in. That to me seems to defeat the whole point of doing something experimental (John Grayson).

When invited to identify an alternative kind of learning that is not outcomes-based both the craft-makers highlighted the way this form of engagement changed participants in ways that were not easy to measure: more to do with a sense of their own existence and place in the world, their relationships with the things in their learning ecology and the journey that they are undertaking.

You might need to call it a 'development'. People are changed in some way. It's something to do with the way they understand their own fields, their sense of their own potential, of themselves as human beings, of learning how to interpret the behaviour of the material they work with. It's about recognising that it's a journey, it's a process, rather than an outcome. (Shelley James)

Kate Dunton²³ draws out the ecological significance of the Parallel Practices experiment. The space itself was crucial and was specifically designed to be somewhere that students might express their creativity. It embodied the ethos of the maker space; that is, a space to imagine, take risks, play, tinker, experiment and develop ideas that have personal meaning to the individual, making use of the abundant resources available and without fear of failure. This space, and the resources within it, provided the ‘affordances’ for personal creativity but crucially participants had to recognize these affordances and be willing to act on them. Equally, the space needed to be *animated* by human communication and interaction, and that’s where our makers and their academic partners were key. In the interview, Shelley talks of an ‘incubated collaboration’. I think that chimes very much with the learning ecology idea, but importantly a learning ecology that is both created for students and within which the students are active in shaping and activating that ecology continually as key components of its survival. Erica McWilliam’s idea of teachers as meddlers-in-the-middle⁶ helping, enabling and challenging learners and themselves to create in ways that have personal meaning reflects the way the craft makers modelled their own creative processes and behaviours, constructively disrupting students’ usual expectations and approaches, offering a glimpse, as John pointed out, into a parallel world, was an important element in fostering this collaborative ecology for learning and creative achievement.

I think it would be really interesting if there was a module in every year that had nothing in it; no content, no learning outcomes, just a slot of time, a space, and some money for the staff to do something truly ground breaking. And if it all goes pear-shaped, no-one is going to get canned. (John Grayson)

The way the space brought together and connected students across departments and at different levels of study, removing some of the usual hierarchies, is also interesting from an ‘ecological’ perspective. It allowed and demanded the sharing of resources, including participants prior ideas and knowledge as well as those which were developed collaboratively through making and practical experimentation. Creativity was driven by the need for everyone to give something and to get something from their engagement with the milieu. This came out very strongly in Shelley and John’s wonderful reflections - ‘it was the drive to find a shared ground and reciprocal benefit that drove the creative encounter’. The idea of emergence was very strong in both narratives and the undeniable truth that our most creative ideas and achievements cannot be predetermined as a set of learning outcomes contains the fundamental wisdom of this story.

People who are driven to be creative seek and find favourable environments to be creative in. They also modify existing environments in ways that enable them to realise their creativity and they also create entirely new environments (eg an ecology for learning) in which they and others can be creative. They are able to see the affordance in an environment they inhabit and use it to realise their creative potential.”^{4:5}

Hybrid pedagogy

In their study of creative practitioners in schools, Thomson and Hall²⁶ draw attention to the emergence of hybrid pedagogies when artists bring their practices into formal educational environments in order to facilitate the creativity of others.

Creative practice was characterised by its hybridity. Artists generally did not do in schools what they did in their own creative practice. They all ‘taught’- that is they had thought about and developed, through experience and in dialogues with teachers, ways to make important aspects of their creative practice pedagogical. These practices were not the same as those which occurred routinely in classrooms. Some artists of course were more teacher-like, just as some teachers were more like artists in their pedagogical repertoires. Nevertheless, what we observed is that in the space/time of creative pedagogies something happened that was different from what happened in either an arts or conventional classroom space/time. A variety of blends and mixes occurred....

This tendency to hybridity seems to have been an important feature of the pedagogical environment described above. It connects to Tim Ingold’s insight that the environment shapes our actions and we shape the environment.

#2 Design Studio: University of Limerick

In the June issue of CAM7D Michael Quilligan, Declan Phillips and Tom Cosgrove shared their approach to encouraging students to use their creativity in the Civil Engineering curriculum at the University of Limerick²⁷. The year 2 “Design Studio” module aims cultivate *listening skills* so the young engineer is better equipped to respond to a client’s brief in a creative and innovative way. The module sits within a programme that adopts a Problem Based Learning (PBL) pedagogy in which the problem solving ‘process’ has parity of esteem with the required ‘technical’ content. The educational value system that underpins the approach is *learning that is active, collaborative, creative and reflective*.

The catalyst for creativity is a challenge that students define and own “What we are trying to do in the Design Studio has almost nothing to do with content. It has to do with thinking and creating the environment in which students can think for themselves. In a typical module, we tell the students what we want them to do. We have very specific technical outcomes, and rightly so, that students have to reach to become competent as engineers. But in the Design Studio space we say, “We would like you to work on a topic that you are passionate about.” We want them to create a challenge that they find personally meaningful - which, by the way does not need to be about engineering!” There are however two caveats. The first, based on our experience in the industry, and reflecting on the deficits in our own education, was that you have to look at a problem from multiple perspectives. The second, is that in working with the problem you have set yourself you have interact with an end user. If you pick a device, or a service, or whatever it may be, you must engage with someone that is using that service, or is using that device, so that you can take on board the views of the end users, and incorporate those into making a better design. That’s the module in a nutshell. We have a number of ice breaker activities, which, I think, are necessary in order to get the students to realize that they truly have the freedom to think for themselves, and that there is no hidden agenda.”²⁸

The key features of the module are shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8 Key features of Design Studio

Table 2 shows how the module is highly structured. It flows along two parallel tracks, one focussed on the creative challenge, the other a triplet of reflective pauses moving through anticipation and planning, awareness and consideration of current experience and action and retrospective self-assessment of achievement and future needs.



Table 2 Design Studio Module/Process Map

		Creative Challenge	Reflective Pauses
Phase I	Develop a Proposal (on campus) Weeks 2-5	Students choose 2 topics (artefact, <u>process</u> or situation) of personal interest, not necessarily linked to engineering. Research those topics and consider potential improvements. Tutors give guidance to the class, as well as meeting individually with each student on 2 or 3 occasions. Students develop two proposals before choosing one for further development	
Phase II	Off Campus Retreat Week 6	Module activity moves to a city centre venue. A research phase is followed by an interim presentation on Wednesday with peer and tutor feedback on process and content. Final presentations take place on Friday. Invited speakers <u>address</u> the students on 3 mornings.	Workshop 1 & Reflective Task 1 “Based on your experience in the module to date, identify the skills/abilities or dispositions/ traits that you expect will be called for from you during the semester”
Phase II	Portfolio & Final Reflection (on campus) Weeks 7-11	Students create an e-portfolio detailing their problem, their enquiry and creative response.	Workshop 2 & Reflective Task 2 “Complete your interim reflective self-assessment & seek peer feedback” Workshop 3 & Reflective Task 3 “Update and submit your final Self-Assessment with future actions for improved effectiveness”

In Design Studio the teachers create an ecology which is rich in resources and stimuli that they believe encourage students to think differently and creatively, and to think about the meaning of creativity. Some of these stimuli take the form of interventions for example.

"I picked some videos that I felt might provoke students to think about creativity. John Cleese, the star of Fawlty Towers and Monty Python, has in a number of internet videos reflecting on the conditions that facilitate creativity.....The Design Studio students watched and discussed these videos in the first week of the module and were then asked to critically reflect on their own daily routines, habits and educational arrangements and to consider how these may be influencing their creative abilities."

Students were inducted into the idea that they had to engage creatively with a challenge but the results were disappointing.

"I introduced a short 2 week project. The students were asked to design a short course that would both inspire and help them become better engineers. The purpose of this exercise was not so much about the students' products; rather, it was about bringing them to consider critically aspects of taken-for-granted familiar educational experiences. Every student offered a module traditionally structured as lectures, labs and tutorials. There was very little evidence of creativity or innovation in their thinking."

A third intervention involved a series of talks by inspiring speakers, who had in their own way made a creative contribution.

The most significant and costly intervention involved an off-campus retreat to put learners into a different sort of environment to what they were accustomed to.

"I think a campus symbolises tradition, structure and familiarity. We wanted to break from this so in 2015 we secured a 'bohemian' loft space off campus in which the students would be comfortable, have a place to sit with plenty of wall space to display their work"

"[a] space and time for the students to explore something of personal interest to them. It is somehow amusing to consider that in so many documents we expect students to innovate when they are put through a system that does nothing to foster free exploration and choice. Secondly space and time outside the University environment."

"We [were] keen to secure large chunks of un-interrupted time so students could explore and speculate on the myriad of ideas they generate on their project. We believe the 'lecture-tutorial-lab' framework, inhibits the freedom we were hoping to provide. Even if we had a full-dedicated week on campus, we believe it would not be congenial to the freedom of thought and imagination that we aspire to facilitate. Being off campus as a collective and with a collective goal is one of major successes of this module. The rough and ready open space in the centre of the bustling city was the perfect venue for developing and honing new ideas, a space that students could make their own."

Off-campus space - unimpeded time for thinking, action and interaction



This physical, social and intellectual space seems to have been very important for some students

"I would attribute the reason for coming up [with] and solving the problem is the change in the place of work/ studying which has had significant boost to my creativity." Anon student

"We also needed a big enough space so people get away from one another and sit in a corner to think." Anon student

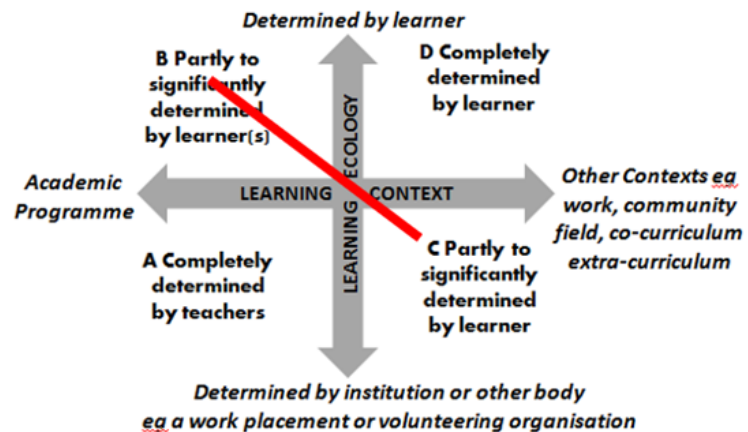
Ecology for learning and creating

In terms of the ecological conceptual spaces framework shown in Figure 9 Design Studio is located in the academic programme in domain B but some of the learning experiences occur off campus in domain C. The ecology for learning is structured and facilitated by teachers who are encouraging learners to use their creativity. A key feature of the ecology is the challenge and its openness to interpretation and customization by individuals.

Figure 9 Location of Design Studio in the typology of learning ecologies framework.

A key feature of the ecology for learning is the ‘challenge’ and its openness to interpretation, customization and ownership by individuals.

“We would like you to work on a topic that you are passionate about.” We want them to create a challenge that they find personally meaningful.. There are however two caveats.... you have to look at a problem from multiple perspectives [and] in working with the problem you have set yourself you have interact with an end user.



The way this challenge is framed is interesting in that it relates closely to the way creativity is understood in terms of ‘the relevance of a possible solution to an external client’, which is described in the next example.

“At the start I had two ideas to choose from, my other was an adjustable arm support for welding. I decided to do some research into which would be more useful. I approached a friend who is a second year apprentice welder and a friend of my dad who is a professional welder, both said my idea had merit. I spoke to my dad and neighbours about the bale handler and they said it also was a good idea. I chose the bale handler as I had experience with it myself and more knowledge.I researched to see if my idea had already been thought of and I approached end users for their opinions. I visited Rossmore engineering, who specialise in bale handlers, where I got constructive advice which I used to change my design. This module showed the importance of research in any project you undertake.” Anon student.

A distinctive feature of the pedagogy and individuals’ learning ecologies is the emphasis on reflection. The reflective writings of students ‘tell the inner story of experience, struggle, frustration, and excitement. The development of reflective writing skills is something that was designed into the learning ecology.

#3 Media Works - Cogswell College

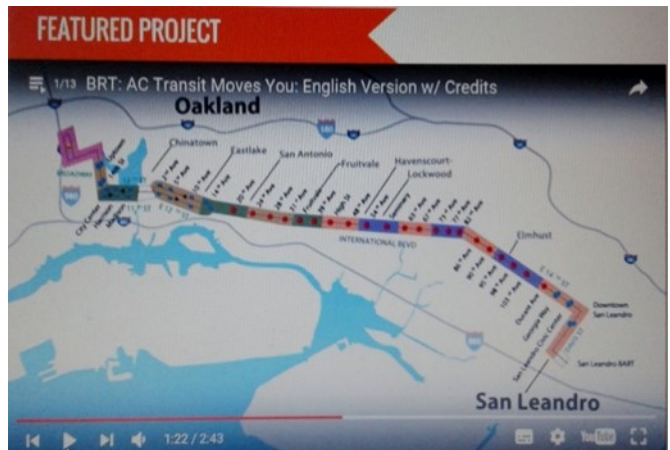
Cogswell College, located in Silicon Valley in San Jose, California, provides practical education in the combined disciplines of technology and entrepreneurship with an emphasis on leadership, and a strong focus on new technologies and business models to prepare graduates for careers in the global economy. The April issue of CAM7 featured one of their curriculum innovations called Media Works²⁹ together with an interview with Tony Dias and Julius Dobos³⁰, the two teachers responsible for designing and facilitating the process.

The team-oriented, project-based and collaborative environment of MediaWorks offers its students a production experience that mirrors actual industry pipelines, decisions, challenges and problem solving scenarios. Teams consist of 4-8 digital audio technology students and 4-8 digital art and animation students with a goal of completing one full production, from concept to delivery, in a deadline-driven 8-week period. The finished films and animations run anywhere from 10 seconds to 1 minute in duration. The class exposes students to the full production cycle, the chance to directly work with industry professionals, an actual client, build client relationship management and communication skills and develop very strong pieces for immediate use in students’ portfolios - which gives our students an enormous advantage on their employment interviews. <http://cogswell.edu/student-projects/mediaworks/>

The ways in which students experience project-working and learning with a commercial organisation are captured in a presentation available on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=860LqtKnBx4>. In June 2016, AC Transit, California’s third largest bus company announced that it planned to construct an \$80 million Bus Rapid Transit system (BRT) in East Bay, California. The company researched potential organisations who could work with them on this important project and gave ‘overwhelming approval’ to Cogswell College’s Media Works programme. A team of 25 students worked closely with AC Transit staff, under the guidance of two

tutors, one in the digital art and animation department, the other in the audio department, to produce an educational and promotional video designed to enable ACT to explain their new transportation system concept to the public.

The students' presentation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=860LqtknBx4> describes in detail how they had only two months from start to finish to produce the video. They explain how they met with the client in order to fully understand their brief, then divided into sub-groups to identify key elements for potential inclusion in their product. They repeatedly interacted with the client, asking questions, sharing and pitching ideas until they were both clear what was required.



Next, they devised a story board, into which they built the specific scenes, sounds etc that would need to be researched and created. Producing these was not always straightforward, and they quickly found that what might have appeared the perfect element fell way short of the standards anticipated. One of the composers,

The audio and video sub-teams each had their own tasks to complete, and two project managers were responsible for keeping everyone on schedule and informed each other's progress. The planning was meticulous; each member of a team knew precisely what was expected of them and when they had to deliver. Sometimes they had to apply their creativity to problem solving, as happened when they realised that they could not achieve the technical requirements in the time allocated without subdividing their work further as illustrated in the adjoining slide. One person explains how he went into a meeting as a sound manager, but had to learn on the spot how to be a tactful script adviser as he led the writer of the voice-over script through a process of condensing his text to meet the time limit.

By the end of 2 months intensive work, the students had produced a 3-4 minute video, with bespoke music and sounds to accompany bespoke animations. Through their interactions with the client they learnt many things that would have been difficult or impossible to learn in a classroom and they gained valuable insights into production standards and processes of working required in the commercial world. Perhaps most important of all is the way students gain experience of working with and adapting to the sort of challenges they will meet when they leave college and enter the commercial world. In the words of one the teachers.

Julius: we're not trying to grow software users or specialists. The most important skill and the most valuable skill, that students get from Media Works is... the ability to adapt. So if they're given different expectations, not something that they know how to do, something they're not used to doing or for that matter have ever done before, they can figure out a way through the process of figuring out how to do it. That's what they learn through Media Works and they are going to be able to apply that figuring out process to any situation in future.

Pedagogy

The two teachers who are responsible for Media Works have practical experiences of the commercial world as well as being experienced teachers. This means that pedagogically they can blend their knowledge of commercial practice with the educational requirements of their programme. They act as Visual and Audio Director's - forming a bridge between client and students and a bridge between the two student groups involved in the audio and visual elements of production. Their perceptions of their role might be summarized in these statements..

Tony: Partly I see myself as a facilitator..... I try to make things easier for my students, but I don't necessarily give them the answers..... we have to guide the students to stick to getting the stuff done for the project at hand. How do we teach them to stay focused? I guess we don't really tell them how, we just give them the expectation. This is what you need to do, this is how it's going to be in the real world. So I think another one of my roles as a teacher is being a coach and a broker.

Julius: I think facilitator is a good word, but the way I like to see myself is more of a 'challenger' or a 'disrupter' I try to push students outside their comfort zones. Try to make them do things that they're worried to do or they will never think about doing, or they don't know if it's possible. I like to do things that are very unexpected and see what happens. Like put students in a situation when they have to come up with a solution on their own, where it's not a technical question that's searchable on Google. Not how it has been done before? kind of question, but put them in a situation that I have never encountered in 20 years of doing this. And see what happens, see what they do with that situation, see how they cope with it and come out of it on a good side. So as a teacher I have tried to push them.

The other role I have as a teacher in Media Works is to keep things relevant..... I think relevance is most important for students. Everything that they do has to be done towards the completion of the project goal: the requirements of the client. It has to express what the client wants not what they feel like doing. When the students are immersed in these really hard to solve or manage situations, it's not enough that they come up with a solution that gets them out of a situation or solve the problem. The solution has to work for the project, for the client.

Creativity

Ultimately the students' project was to work cooperatively to produce, make or create a short video film that was relevant and meaningful to the client. They were using their knowledge and technical skills and creativity to produce something that did not exist before which fulfilled a particular purpose defined by the client. The teachers explained their understandings of creativity in this pedagogical context in these terms.

Tony: it's not so much that we're trying to get the students to be creative, it's more about trying to get them to use their creativity in a way that is useful. One of the first things we really try to get across to our student is what we call the REE method.

Julius: when there's a client, if there's a task at hand to accomplish that requires creativity in order to achieve the goal then you have to follow these three things, the relevance, the efficiency and the effectiveness.

Tony: As facilitators our role is to challenge the students to keep thinking and keep refining everything they're doing. But a large part of what we do ends up just becoming training students to work. Because once you have the concept and once you have the storyboards approved, then everything is based on those storyboards. I don't think it's so much creativity anymore. At that point, it's execution. We have accomplished the 5% creative inspiration and the other 95% is the perspiration or something like that.

Julius: The way I look at creativity in the context of Media Works is not the same as the way artists think of creativity, which is they use their imagination to just think outside the box, try something that no one has tried before, and as a teacher coming up with exercises and assignments for students to do that.

For the kind of work we do in Media Works this approach doesn't work. I like to think of the problem as if there are two boxes, one box within the other box. The small box, the inside box is what you have to think outside of. But the large box around it is what we would like to stay inside of. That's basically what the client defines, and is the message for the piece.

Students have the advantage that they do not take the same approach as an experienced professional worker they do not use the cookie cutter solutions that everybody in the industry sooner or later defaults to because they don't have that past experience. It's actually pretty easy to work with creativity in a way as these students are naturally creative. What I found was hard, at least on the audio and music side of MediaWorks is to stay inside of the big box which is where the REE criteria are very helpful.

I would say this is at the heart of the MediaWorks philosophy on creativity and it is different from your typical arts school that just do whatever they want to do or a technical school where they learn to apply the technology but they are told what to do and they are basically using software to get from point A to point B, both points given to them.

In this description of creativity in the students' working and learning process it seems that they are creating meaning for themselves but meaning that is also relevant to the client.

Julius: Absolutely. It's very true that the students are creating meaning and sometimes even our clients are finding additional layers to the meaning of their own business which is pretty astonishing. The other part of this process of finding and creating new meaning is that students have to also understand the meaning behind a business or a brand, what that really stands for. Sometimes it's not easy for them to gain this understanding about a field they know nothing about. The students have to learn to ask the right questions so it's really important that they have to do the research to find the right questions to ask....they need to ask questions to discover what they need to know to apply to the project to find possible good answers. I think the process is a really good brain exercise for them, as a matter of fact for us, for Tony and myself as well.

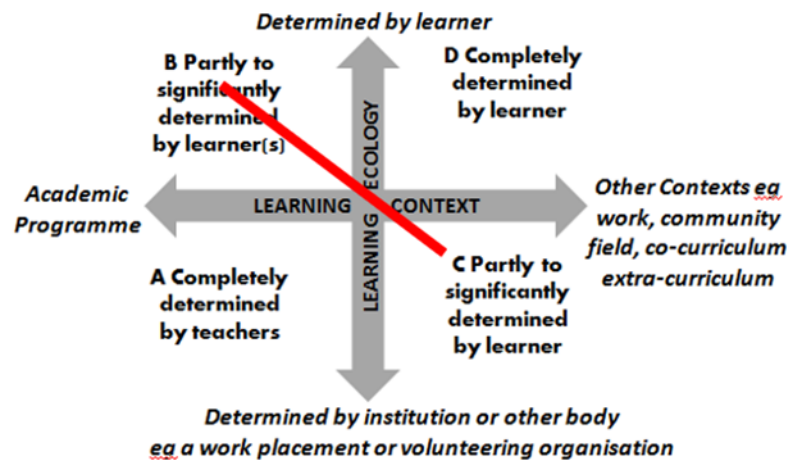
Collaborative ecology for learning and creating

Media works is an interesting example of a pedagogical approach that seeks to facilitate the development of an ecology for collaborative learning and achieving in which a number of participants pool their knowledge, skill, creativity and all the other things they bring to the project. The ecology is clearly developed in the context of an academic programme but a crucial dimension of the context is the relationship and interaction with a client with particular interests and needs that relate to a business. The affordance for learning and creativity is in the clients brief and the multiple perceptions and perspectives brought to bear on the brief but it is only through

the relationships and interactions with the client that the meanings in the brief and the business can be fully understood and then achieved. The collaboration followed a structured process similar to that which would be used in a commercial environment facilitated by teachers with commercial experience. Their role was not only to guide but to challenge and ensure coordination across the work groups. Work was undertaken in specialized spaces with specialized technological tools including software.

Figure 10 Location of Media Works in the framework for learning ecologies

In terms of the ecological conceptual spaces framework shown in Figure 10 Media Works is located in the academic programme in domain B but some of the learning experiences occur off campus in domain C and involve interacting with a commercial client. The distinctive feature of the ecology is that learners' creativity is used to meet the needs and interests of the client, as it would be in any commercial undertaking. They are effectively learning to create and work in an ecology similar to what they will experience when they leave university and start working in the media industry.



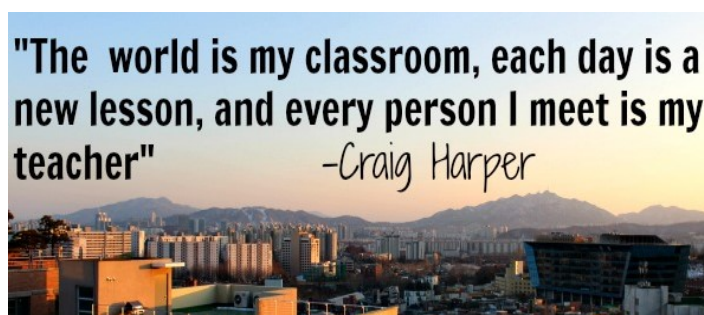
#4 Swaraj University

Our exploration led to the discovery of an institution that sets out to encourage and help learners to create their own ecologies for learning and personal creativity and empower them to bring their ideas into existence so they can make a positive contribution to the world in the form of new [green] social enterprises that meet the needs of their communities. Since its inception in 2010, Swaraj University near Udaipur city in the Rajasthan province of NW India, has provided a platform for young people to identify their vision and engage them in developing the skills and practices they need to turn their vision into reality. In this way Swaraj University.

The concept of swaraj, or self-rule, was developed during the Indian freedom struggle. The University uses this concept as a foundation principle for educational and pedagogical cultures and practices to support and enable self-directed and self-managed learning.²⁵ In his article, Rahul Hasijah, described several pedagogical strategies used in the two year programme aimed at developing social entrepreneurs.

A distinctive part of the educational experience at Swaraj is the focus on holistic learning; which means it is inclusive of understanding self, working with others including the local community, harmonizing relationships at home and society, and understanding body and emotions, and much more. Life at Swaraj University teaches young people to be an active citizen in a democratic community. Right from deciding a day's schedule to deciding what kind of food experiments the community want to try, from resolving a conflict to sometimes sitting 8 hours at stretch in a community meeting struggling to come to a decision - all of it has help khojis (the name given to learners) build muscle to live in any kind of group - be it in a family or workspace.

An educational concept of 'swaraj' (learners as self-determined, self-directed, self-managed and self-regulating) underpins the pedagogical practices that are used to develop learners so that they can become proactive beings. There are also strong elements of ecological thinking embedded in the relationships that are cultivated between the learners and their mentors and facilitators and the natural and social environment in which they are learning. For example, Khojis are also empowered to build their own support structure involving parents, peers, friends, mentors, and other people who can motivate, inspire, instigate, critique and help them through their journey.



Each person's learning programme is individualized according to his/her specific interests, talents, questions and dreams. There is ample scope for learners to develop a multidisciplinary curriculum. There is a strong focus on apprenticeship learning, leadership development and community living. In the area of community living, learners explore healthy and sustainable personal lifestyle choices, gift culture, co-creation and democratic decision-making. Decisions regarding day-to-day functioning.

is done through the form of consensus, with a space for each person in the Swaraj community, be that learner or facilitator, to express his/her voice.

The world is our classroom! Swaraj University challenges and helps learners to 'self-design' their learning processes. Rather than being dependant on external sources and frameworks for one's education, we believe in enabling the learners to take responsibility for their own education and hence design their own learning path. A learner at Swaraj is hence called '*khoji*' or 'one who seeks'.



In a self-design learning approach, each khoji is encouraged to...

- Explore their learning styles, questions and passions without the institutional constraints that smother interest and joy, and breed mediocrity.
- Engage consciously with unlearning, *jugaad* (playful improvisation), deep dialogue and gift culture.
- Design individualised learning webs that are based on authentic real world trans-disciplinary projects and inter-generational relationships.
- Build feedback frameworks and mechanisms to reflect on their learning. Learners get the opportunity to build a personal *feedback council* and have supportive peer cohorts who are available to help them reflect on and improve their work.
- Use the close, supportive learner community as a base from which to engage with local, regional and global communities.



With this as a basis, the *khojis* design their own learning plan. Their learning plans revolve around one core feature of this programme - intimate mentorships. Swaraj University aims to revive the traditional approach to education in India, through a *guru-shishya parampara*. That is, learners being placed one-on-one with mentors (also called *ustaaads*) who share both a range of practical skills as well as personal philosophies/wisdom. These mentors have been carefully selected to ensure that, in addition to being cutting edge leaders in their respective fields, they are able to engage with youth in a true spirit of co-learning and friendship.

This is complemented by...

Khoji meets: The *khojis* converge every few months to cross-fertilise their learning and build perspectives on the core principles of Swaraj at our campus 30 kilometres away from Udaipur city. (To know more see Campus)

Individualised self-study program: After getting initial exposure to several practice areas, *khojis* chart and pursue their own path of study based on their interests. They are guided in developing their self-study program using various books, websites, films, etc. Significant attention is given to processes of self-awareness, self-understanding, and examining their life choices.

Skill workshops: *Khojis* have the choice to participate in workshops featuring basic entrepreneurial skills as well as other skills such as: communication, facilitation and group dialogue, computers, financing, marketing, cooking, sewing, farming, yoga, film-making, web design and blogging, desktop publishing, writing of proposals and business plans, documentation, working English, etc.

Service projects: *Khojis* design individual and group projects in collaboration with local communities and social movements.

Organisational internships: *Khojis* can do internships with leading social organisations and social movements spread all over India. This experience gives them the opportunity to know the expectations of the real work-world.

International dialogues: *Khojis* interact with and spend time with visiting students from other countries. In addition, they are able to engage in virtual interactions with partner programs from around the world.

Encouraging & facilitating creativity

The whole pedagogical approach to encouraging khojis to determine and design their own learning pathways taps into the deep interests and intrinsic motivations in which creativity can thrive. Indeed, one of the core purposes of the Swaraj approach is to develop people so that they are able to create their own learning projects and bring new enterprises into existence. Here are just two examples of strategies we employ to encourage khoji's to use their creativity.

One of the interesting experiments we do with the khojis in the first year of the programme is called Eklavya Ghumantu. Ghumantu means a nomad. And Eklavya is a mythological character who learnt archery by constructing a sculpture of his Guru as his teacher. He represents a true self-designed learner. Eklavya Ghumantu is an exploration of finding learning opportunities on the run. In India, learners are made to believe that learning could only be possible if there's an expert to teach you. So, the whole power of learning is shifted to that expert. Eklavya Ghumantu is a process where khojis are encouraged to go on the streets to search for and find their own Gurus. There is treasure of learning everywhere and potential teachers are everywhere. Artisans, cobblers, barbers, mechanics, and repair artists - the streets are full of people whom we can learn from. The khojis have to find these teachers and learn from them. It challenges their notion of learning and whom to learn from, encourages them to use their creativity to find and engage their own teachers and introduces them to many everyday contexts in which people use their creativity.



One red paperclip is a website created by Canadian blogger Kyle MacDonald, who bartered his way from a single red paperclip to a house in a series of fourteen online trades over the course of a year https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One_red_paperclip

Inspired by Red-clip challenge, in the second year of the programme we challenge them. They are given an object of some value and asked to exchange it as many times possible in lieu of new objects / resources of higher value. The learners then have to use their negotiating and resourcefulness skill to exchange.

A lot of processes at Swaraj University are indeed designed by khojis themselves. From the 1st meet of year 1, they get into designing the khoji meets and many aspects of the meet. Right from designing the conflict resolution mechanism to designing the way responsibilities will

be help and executed, from designing and hosting events, to setting their own criteria for graduation, the khojis do it all and they are encouraged and forced to use their creativity.

Experiments like cycle yatra, Eklavya Ghumantu, where they are not allowed to carry money or food, push them to think more creatively, and they have to use their imaginations and be resourceful.

Many a time khojis struggle to take initiatives because they get into the head-space too often and think on it so much that action seems to be a faraway thought. We encourage them to act, to try things out to make quick prototypes to shift into action and experiment without thinking too much. If they are taking up a big project, we ask them to make a quick prototype that breaks their fear and gets them involved in action so that they can learn from doing something that contributes to what they want to achieve.

In the year 2, khojis are encouraged to undertake a research, collate all the necessary inputs and experiences and design a Course Hamara (*Hamara*, in Hindi means Ours). Taking their cue from the online learning platform like Coursera, Course Hamara encourages khojis to put together their learning into a form that can leverage the project they are already doing and we believe that one of the best ways to learn is also to share/teach it to others. A few examples of Course Hamara taken up by this year's khojis are - human trafficking, life in Ladakh, pornography, disappearance of vultures, menstruation. Researching, designing and presenting a course on a subject that interests them deeply is another important way we encourage khoji's to use their creativity in the service of others.

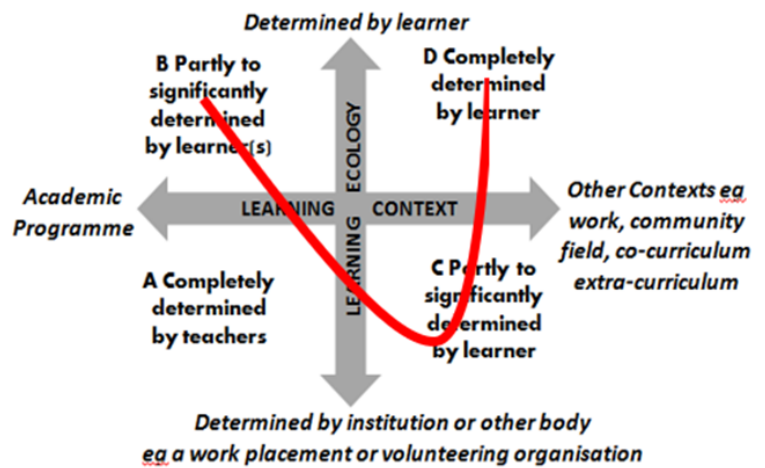
Ecologies for learning and creating

The approaches used by Swaraj University shows how, admittedly on a small scale, an institution could frame its educational mission using ecological principles in which the learner is viewed and appreciated as a whole person interacting with their environment and everything in it. The ethos of encouraging and enabling learners to design and manage their own programmes empowers them to create their own ecologies for learning: ecologies that connect them in a fundamental way to their visions, challenges and the environment in which these are being engaged.

The social entrepreneur apprenticeship for thinking, acting, doing, being and becoming involves learners participating directly in the world to make things happen. Learning is action oriented and geared to the learners' own purposes. It involves them in viewing themselves and their environment as one. They learn how to perceive and make use of the abundant resources in their environment and how to enrich their environment in ways that enable them to achieve their goals.

In terms of the ecological conceptual spaces framework shown in Figure 11 the approach used at Swaraj University includes the B, C and D domains. It is dominated by the C and D domains with the goal of developing learners who can operate independently in the D domain.

Figure 11 Location of the Swaraj learning experience in the typology of learning ecologies framework



#5 Developing political agency through community engagement: University of Limerick

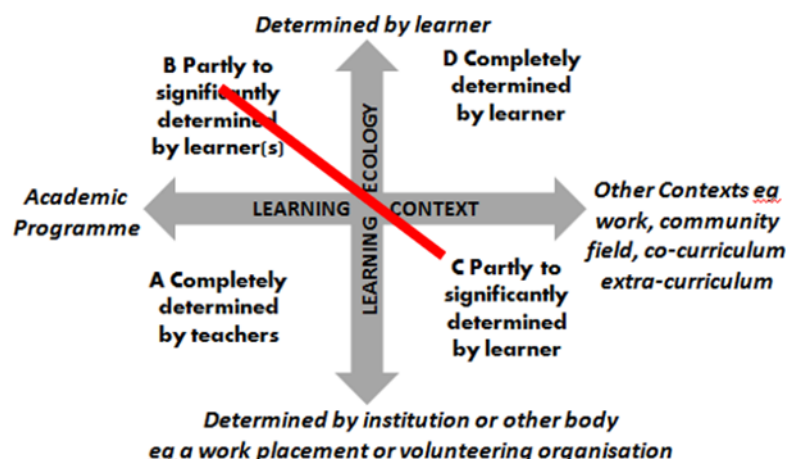
One of the issues in universities is that they lack the curriculum design tools that empower and enable academic teachers to design experiences that engage with the sorts of ecological learning experiences that Swaraj University promotes. The University of Limerick has overcome this issue by creating the *UL Practicum* which enables academic staff to deliver their curriculum differently - in collaboration with community partners working on real-life projects and enabling their students to achieve the learning outcomes via practical and applied experiential learning.

An example of how the design tool has been used in the Understanding Political Agency module of the politics programme was provided by Maura Adshead who described the **Limerick Be Heard #Youth Ambassadors for Democracy** 6 week programme for Young People to develop civic engagement and political understanding for the promotion of human rights and democracy. The programme was created, designed and facilitated through a partnership involving the university students and staff and the city's youth services **Understanding Political Agency** - is a UL Practicum module mixing classroom based theoretical insights into the motivations that underpin political action, with practical exercises and workshops in support of the Youth Ambassadors for Democracy programme which enables learners to activate their learning through interactions with the local communities within which the university is embedded.

From the perspective of enabling learners to use their creativity the strategy enables the learning goals of an academic curriculum to be linked to learning experiences gained in the social and political world outside the formal educational environment. It's a way of addressing academic concerns for theory with real world opportunities for relating theory to practice.

*Students need the space to explore their ideas, but there needs to be a means to link these explorations to the curriculum content so that they can begin to see the connections between theory and practice and have a more informed knowledge about 'how the world works'. For me, Creativity is about making the connections between the everyday and the curriculum and creating the conditions for autonomous learning - giving a supportive framework, within which students have plenty of room to figure things out for themselves.*³³

Figure 12 Location of the Understanding Political Agency module (domain B) and the off campus Limerick Be Heard #Youth Ambassadors for Democracy programme (domain C)



Provisional conclusions

Conclusions drawn from open-ended explorations can only ever be provisional. Exploration of the relationship between pedagogy, learning ecologies and creativity in higher education was driven by the belief that the world of learning outside higher education is not structured. In fact, its messy, confused, ambiguous, full of social pitfalls and conflicts, and any manner of things that will block or disrupt learning in the quest to achieve something of value. The words of Maryellen Weimer³⁴ (Figure 12) very helpful in explaining why we are trying to explore this territory.

Figure 12 A justification for why it is important to understand the idea and practice of learning ecologies and their link to creating and achieving.

Whether we're trying to prevent disruptive behavior, motivate preparation, inculcate integrity *[or encourage creativity]*, exerting more control is not the answer. It locks teachers and students into a viscous circle. The more structured we make the environment the more they need. The more decisions we make, the less they are able to make decisions. The more extrinsic their motivation, the less intrinsic their commitment to learning *[and to using their creativity]*. The more often we do learning tasks for them, the less likely they are to assume responsibility for *[designing their own tasks for learning]*. The more control we exert, the more controlled they become. We end up with students who have little commitment to learning and who cannot function in less than a totally structured learning environment.

Weimer, M. (2002). Learner-centered teaching: Five key changes to practice. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

My modifications in italics

We can indeed see through the four case studies provided how teachers are encouraging learners by empowering them to structure their own environment for learning, discover what motivates them, make their own decisions, and create their own tasks for learning in order to harness their own creativity.

Our exploration has reinforced beliefs that the ecological metaphor affords us the most freedom and flexibility to explore and appreciate the ways in which we and our purposes are connected to our experiences and the physical, social and psychological world we inhabit. Through our perceptions of this world gained through all our sensory means we decide to act in ways that we feel are creative, but our perceptions of creativity only have meaning to us in our particular circumstances, although others might also perceive our actions and the results of our actions as being creative.

Applying the ecological framework to each of the case studies we can see that the B, C and D domains all provide affordance for learners to create or co-create their own ecologies for learning with the ultimate aim of enabling learners to create their own learning ecologies in domain D.

Our exploration has strengthened our conviction that a teacher's pedagogical thinking, applied to particular educational contexts, leads them to create an ecology within which learners are able to learn and in the case examples provided, use their creativity. The exploration has revealed the importance of teachers' personal histories in shaping their thinking, beliefs and values so that the ecologies they create for their learners are unique to them and their circumstances.

We can see from the case studies that teachers play a key role in facilitating the process of enabling learners to work in unstructured learning environments or to structure the environment for themselves in ways that enable them to discover what motivates them, make their own decisions, and create their own tasks for learning in order to harness their own creativity to learn and achieve. The case studies reveal something of the pedagogies that are used to prepare, engage and facilitate learners in ways that encourage them to use their creativity. Teachers adopt multiple roles in the ecologies they describe. They facilitate in many different ways eg. by showing and demonstrating, by leading, by encouraging questioning and challenging assumptions, by provoking, by meddling and brokering, by encouraging reflection to learn from experience and through mentoring relationships and conversations. In an ecological sense they help learners to perceive the

environment in ways that they, as a more experienced user and constructor of the environment, can appreciate the affordances in it. This perhaps might be framed as an ecological apprenticeship that is relevant to a particular field of activity, learning and achievement.

The case examples all involve *partnerships* for example academic teachers and artistic crafts people, teams of teachers with different practice-based backgrounds, experiences and interests, collaborations between universities and other organisations. In these circumstances *hybrid pedagogies* emerge²⁶: pedagogies that are drawn from the academic and practice environments and blended for the particular context. This introduces novelty to the learning process.

The illustrations show how *challenges* and *unfamiliar situations and contexts* are important catalysts for engaging with problems in creative ways. They show how the creativity that emerges from learners' engagement with a challenge is focused and *relevant* or *fit for purpose* for the particular contexts and circumstances. They also show how important the relationship is between teacher and learners and the particular roles that teachers play in these pedagogical environments that seek to stimulate and provoke creativity that is relevant. They also reveal that teachers often have complex pedagogical histories involving learning, working and creating in both practice and educational contexts such that the pedagogies that emerge are 'hybrid'. This tendency to hybridity seems to be an important feature of the pedagogical environments described in these cases 'environment shapes our actions and we shape the environment'¹⁶, to which we might add the idea that past environments we have experienced (like working in a commercial environment) may shape how we structure our present (educational) environments

The case examples illustrate that creativity is often the result of connecting/combining ideas to make something different¹⁹. In complex problem solving enterprises this happens over and over again. For example the complex creation produced through Media Works^{29,30} involved many ideas being brought together, by teams of people and merged to form the new artefact. In this example we can appreciate how individual's creativity is harnessed within a project and focused on a shared purpose and goal. The question of which ideas should be combined becomes important and the idea of relevance (to the client and brief) becomes an essential guiding principle.

Our project has only taken the first step to explore these ideas and we will continue adding to the examples. **If you have an example of practice you would like to share through our magazine, please contact me. We will continue to add further examples to our CAM7 thematic over the next year and I will update this synthesis in the light of further contributions.**

Next steps

All too often in education we talk about creativity in a way that is not contextualized. But for creativity to have value beyond an individual it must be relevant to a particular context or purpose. In the next stage of Creative Academic's exploration of creativity in higher education we will focus on the work environment and examine the ecologies people create to achieve in environments that are not structured specifically for learning, but which demand learning in order to achieve and create something of value. In this way we can perhaps begin to connect backwards to signature pedagogies and signature experiences employed in higher education to prepare learners for the *white water world*³⁴ of work they will come to inhabit.

CREATIVITY IN PRACTICE

In an attempt to gain fresh insights into the meanings of creativity in different disciplinary or other practice settings we are looking for people who would like to collaborate by sharing a narrative of the way practitioners tackle a typical problem or challenge in their field using the learning ecology framework we are developing and then identify the meanings of creativity in this practice context.

An illustrative narrative can be found on the Creative Academic website <http://www.creativeacademic.uk/creativity-in-practice.html>

Alternatively, if you are willing to create an oral narrative we can produce a transcript of the conversation.

If you are interested in collaborating please contact the project leader Professor Norman Jackson normanjjackson@btinternet.com @lifewider1

Contributions will be published in Creative Academic Magazine and the project will run between November 2017- November 2018 |

Our appreciation of the people who have contributed to our inquiry

On behalf of Creative Academic I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who has contributed to our informal exploration over the past 12 months (see contents at front of this issue). In particular, I would like to thank the authors of the case studies featured in this synthesis—Kate Dunton, Michael Quilligan, Declan Phillips, Tom Cosgrove, Tony Dias Julius Dobos, Rahul Hasijah and Maura Adshead. It takes real effort and commitment to share practice in sufficient detail that others can find their own meaning in it and for that we are very grateful. I hope that readers will see the value in what we are trying to do and be inspired to share their own experiences, practices and thinking through future issues of our magazine.

Norman Jackson

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**#creativeHE combines offline & online
conversations and activities**
Chrissi Nerantzi

[#creativeHE](#) is an open collaborative community for creative and innovative practitioners growing out of the Greenhouse initiative that operated from 2014-2016 at Manchester Metropolitan University (Nerantzi, 2016) and the online [#creativeHE](#) community at <https://plus.google.com/communities/110898703741307769041> through which a series of online events and courses have been offered by the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching at Manchester Metropolitan University <http://www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/> in partnership with Creative Academic <http://www.creativeacademic.uk/> and facilitators from a range of institutions nationally and internationally. In the coming year we will continue connecting, collaborating, experimenting and learning together online, what is new, is the addition of gatherings locally, initially in the NW of England but ultimately anywhere there is an interest and we are welcome.

This initiative aims to support pedagogical rebels and free-thinking innovators in experimenting with, developing, sharing and getting support for novel learning and teaching ideas as well as initiate and disseminate research activity around these that have the power to transform the student and staff experience within and beyond institutional boundaries.

This community is open to anyone who would like to join, academic staff, students and the wider public. All who have an interest in creative and innovative approaches to teaching and helping others learn.

We plan to meet physically on a monthly basis, each time at a different institution. During our gatherings, we will have the opportunity to get to know each other, share and grow new ideas, take risks and support each other in our creative adventures, experiment and play, as well as test and develop pedagogical ideas and identify ways to take them forward.

We will continue using the [#creativeHE](#) online community space which now supports and connects a global community of over 600 people. Furthermore, this space will offer additional opportunities for professional development through online discussions, events and courses that are organised through [#creativeHE](#), the Creative Academic and the wider academic community. The openly licensed [#101creativeideas](#) project will help us collect and share our ideas and the pedagogic innovators project (#pin) to engage in related research activities.

Our monthly local gatherings will be half days. We welcome institutions who would like to participate in [#creativeHE](#) events by organising a local gathering. All we need is a flexible space for up to 30 individuals.

We suggest that each gathering features time for socialising. As the gatherings will all be free and open, we encourage each participant to bring a gift of food and/or non-alcoholic drinks to share with other participants. Homemade and more healthy contributions are very welcome as are foods from different cultures. In this simple way we aim to encourage sharing of the many cultures that make up our society.

The institutional contact will coordinate the monthly gathering and a booking system will be in place through CELT at Manchester Metropolitan University.

Our first local gathering will be in October at the University of Salford. More details regarding this will follow.

If you would like to become a creative champion in your institution, please get in touch with us.

We are really looking forward to seeing you again online and locally,

Chrissi and Norman on behalf of the [#creativeHE](#) team

GREAT THINGS HAPPEN WHEN PEOPLE COLLABORATE TO LEARN TOGETHER


Visit <https://plus.google.com/communities/110898703741307769041> for details of forthcoming events

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**creative academic**

Creative Academic champions creativity in all its manifestations in higher education in the UK and the wider world. Our goal is to support a global network of people interested in creativity in higher education and committed to enabling students' creative development. Our aim is to encourage educational professionals to share practices that facilitate students' creative development in all disciplines and pedagogic contexts, and to connect researchers and their research to practitioners and their practice. Our ambition is to become a global HUB for the

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**creativeHE community**
Creativity for Learning in HE course & community
MODERATE


What do you want to share?

Ellie Hannan • General stuff, announcements ▾ 5d

Hello everyone! For those of you with an interest in digital learning and teaching, myself and +Chrissi Nerantzi are hosting a Wildcard event this afternoon (1:30-3PM UK time) called the #101creativeideas challenge.

It is part of the ALT Winter Conference and the idea is to create and share ideas for creative digital practice in learning and teaching!

You don't need to register, just go to <https://alt.ac.uk/online2016/sessions/101creativeideas-challenge-71> . . .



+1 1

Chrissi Nerantzi: Thank you Ellie. Join us if you are around. Thank you for all your wonderfully creative ideas so far.

Chrissi Nerantzi Owner • General stuff, announcements ▾

Hello everybody,

Nassi (15) has created an advent calendar for some daily inspiration. Please access <http://www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/advent/index.html> to unlock your daily star.

Feel free to share with others. Thank you.

Chrissi from the #greenhouse

AC16
celt.mmu.ac.uk


+1 5

francisco j. santos: Nice and inspiring. Thank you Chrissi.

Sandra Sinfield Moderator • General stuff, announcements ▾ 2w

#lovelid - loving this invitation! Thanks #cdmoot

Originally shared by Kevin Hodgson

**Creative Academic**
A space for people working or studying in higher education to share their thoughts and practices about creativity in higher education


What do you want to share?

Norman Jackson Owner • General Information ▾ 9w

CREATIVE PEDAGOGIES OPEN COLLABORATION

We have just published our first newsletter .. why not join us in our quest for new understandings for improving our educational practices <http://www.creativeacademic.uk/2016-17-programme.html>

The next #creativeHE conversation October 30- November 4 will explore the idea of creative pedagogies and learning ecologies. <https://plus.google.com/communities/110898703741307769041> . . .



Norman Jackson Owner • General Information ▾ 3w

NOVEMBER ISSUE OF CREATIVE ACADEMIC MAGAZINE #7 HAS BEEN PUBLISHED

It contains a number of articles drawn from the recent #creativeHE conversation including a synthesis of the Little Boy Story.

We are intending to publish several more articles in the December update and welcome further contributions on the theme of Creative Pedagogies for Creative Learning Ecologies. Special thanks to contributors +Jennifer Willis +Simor . . .

