Exploring Play in Higher Education

Issue Number **2A**
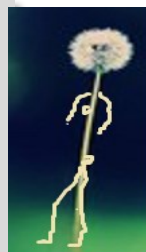
creative academic
magazine

CONTENTS CAM2A

Guest Editors: Chrissi Nerantzi & Alison James

C Nerantzi

Jenny Willis
Executive Editor

'What's that?' you may ask as you see this childish sketch. Well, our Guest Editors' first playful gesture was to instruct contributors to produce their own doodle to accompany their piece. Already, we knew that we were in for some fun!

In fact, Chrissi and Alison were so engaging that they found contributors to the theme of play in HE from around the globe. As articles came in, it was clear that there is a wealth of joyous, imaginative practice, too much for us to do justice to it in one magazine. Hence the next decision: CAM2 would have to stretch to two complementary parts, 2α and 2β.

Each part is topped and tailed by the editors, but between their pieces, articles appear in a totally random order. We hope that this will encourage you to dip into every page of this bumper issue. You never know what the next page may hold! We range from discipline to discipline, student to teacher experience. Articles echo the qualities and techniques which allow them to enhance their students' learning.

As always, some profound thanks are called for. Firstly to Alison and Chrissi for their vision and enthusiasm. It has been no easy task, co-ordinating so many contributions and an editorial team of four: for his patience and support, I am indebted to Norman Jackson.

The magazine has been illustrated not only with the doodles of each writer, but also by two talented professionals: James Condon and Elli Chorta, whose work features in both parts of this issue. A special thank you to James for his wonderful cover design.

And, of course, a sincere thank you to everyone who has contributed to this important issue of CAM. We have truly fulfilled our aim of being curators and pedagogical leaders. I am sure you will find much to amuse you, make you reflect and maybe even risk incorporating in your own professional practice.

We welcome hearing your views—do get in touch!

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Dear Readers,

A warm welcome to this issue of the Creative Academic Magazine!

The place for play in HE seems to have really struck a chord!

When we first came up with the idea of dedicating an issue of the Creative Academic Magazine to play in Higher Education we had no idea that it would attract so much interest - play is often seen as too edgy or novel and definitely not mainstream practice. However the contributions show that practitioners are exploring, experimenting with and implementing more playful approaches. Is the learning and teaching landscape in HE actually changing?

As Jenny explained, because we have had so many responses to our open invitation (over 30 contributions) we have divided this issue of the magazine into two parts - alpha and beta. We are grateful to everyone who has submitted an article to this issue, whether they are colleagues disseminating their work in this area for the first time or more experienced academic writers. We have really enjoyed working with all our contributors over the past weeks and would like to thank them for making the time to share their work with us and the wider community. Our warm thanks go to our colleagues and partners-in-CAM Norman Jackson and Jenny Willis for their help in bringing all the different elements nicely and neatly together. A special thank you goes to James Condon, our illustrator, for creating the cover based on doodles created by all contributors. Finally, for us too it has been the first time we have worked together as co-editors and it has been eye-opening and thought-provoking.

This is just the beginning. An exciting beginning into the world of play and the possibilities it opens for creating stimulating learning situations and experiences for learners and educators.

We are now handing this issue over to you. The very fact that you have started to read this suggests you have a fresh and open mind - but if you are approaching this issue with one that is closed or prejudiced against play in HE, please suspend your disbelief until you have read every word. And then reassess. Do any of the contributions present opportunities for you and your practice? Will you give playful learning a go? And if you need help to get started, reach out to our community.

We very much hope that you will be encouraged and inspired to try out and develop new approaches to play and we will be happy to include reflections on your own experiments in future issues of the magazine.

Happy reading!

Chrissi Nerantzi @chrissinerantzi

Alison James @alisonjames

A WATERFALL OF QUESTIONS
Or can we afford not to play in HE?

Chrissi Nerantzi and Alison James

Chrissi Nerantzi is a Principal Lecturer in Academic CPD in the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching at Manchester Metropolitan University. She is well known for her approach to professional learning and development which is playful and experimental and she specialises in creative learning & teaching. Chrissi developed the__FLEX initiative__ and leads the development of the Good Practice Exchange at MMU. She also teaches on the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP) and the MA in Academic Practice, is an internal accreditor for the MMU PSF and supports individuals and teams across the university to develop their teaching further. Chrissi is a PhD student in open educational practice at the Edinburgh Napier University and an active member of the __Media-Enhanced Special Interest Group__(MEL SIG), co-conveyor of the __Creativity in Development__ project led by Prof. Norman Jackson, and co-founder of Creative Academic. To find out more about Chrissi, please visit her __LinkedIn__ page or visit her personal __blog__. You can also connect with her via __twitter__ @chrissinerantzi

Dr Alison James is Associate Dean, Learning and Teaching, at the London College of Fashion. She is also a National Teaching Fellow (2014) and Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. Her pedagogic research interests encompass creative and multisensory approaches to learning, personal and professional development (PPD) and alternatives to writing which embody critical reflection. She is co-author, with Professor Stephen Brookfield, of Engaging Imagination: helping students become creative and reflective thinkers (Jossey-Bass, April 2014). She is an accredited Lego Serious Play (LSP) facilitator, working in Europe as well as the UK. She works extensively with Lego, including in her internal network Legolab and in external collaborations. She has won a UAL Excellent Teaching Award for using LSP to enhance student learning and staff and educational development. She is one of three co-founders of Creative Academic.

In this issue we explore the idea, concept, practices and applications of play in a variety of higher education settings through the voices, stories and artwork of practitioners and students. As we have sifted through contributions and mulled over our own experiences of play a waterfall of questions has poured over and through us some of which our contributors address, some of which remain unanswered, and more still which have yet to be asked.

When we first started playing to learn ourselves we realised how ambivalent or polarised responses can be when playful methods are mooted for teaching and research. Some people embrace them wholeheartedly, while others, often in high level roles, or who feel they have a certain kind of accountability, are nervous about the implications and resistant to participating. It is clear from the sheer weight of ideas contained here that many colleagues fall into the first group: however for those outside this 'magic circle of play', (as one of our writers describes it) we need to ask the question "Can we afford not to play?"
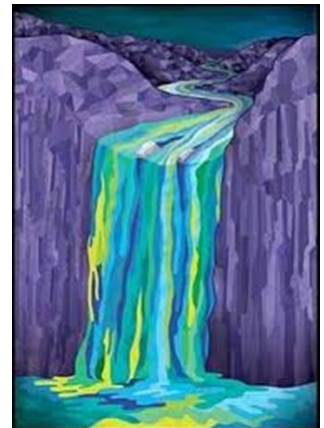
Einstein said that "play is the highest form of research"[1] and Brown[2] considered that "play is the fertiliser of the brain"; Plato – much cited - argued that you can learn more in an hour of play with someone than in a year of conversation; the political philosopher and professor of law Martha Nussbaum, in setting out her 10 central human capabilities included at no.9

> *"Play*. Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities."[3,4]

So why then do some of our colleagues feel uncomfortable about play in higher education? Why do they roll their eyes, find numerous excuses not to play dressed up in serious reason and beat a firm and speedy retreat? What are they retreating from? What causes their discomfort? Is part of it about loss of control, or feeling coerced into engagement and out of the tired-sounding-but-true comfort zone? How much of this is within them (and us?) or caused by conventions, traditions, expectations of appropriacy, value, level, context and so on ad infinitum? What is it about our professional roles that constrains us against playing? What is the impact of the clash in beliefs and behaviours between those who are pro-play and those who are against on our learning cultures and environments?

Is part of the problem that we deem play to be trivial or childish? Is it? And if this is the case, why do we think that way? Is play always childish for children? And what does childish actually mean, beyond the dictionary definition? If play is central to our development as human beings why do we draw a line after a certain age? Who dictates when we should cease to play? - and most importantly why? We like the word "childlike", as denoting the openness to discovery and absence of prejudice and preconceptions: also it has an innocence that the unfortunate conjunction of 'adult' and 'play' has completely lost.

And what about higher education? Does it exclusively prepare graduates for the world of work? Or does it, and should it do much more than that, as Barnett[5] explores in *Imagining the University*? We think higher education provides an open and dynamic greenhouse for ideas to grow, develop and evolve for the public good. For us play is a very sophisticated way humans of all ages learn, develop and grow using appropriate play. Why should play suddenly stop when we enter adulthood? Do we stop riding a bike? Do we stop playing goofball? Do we stop dancing?

With Stephen Brookfield, Alison has written about the importance of play for learning and creativity[6]. How can we nurture the new, the novel, the weird and find exciting ways to combine the uncombinable? The examples we have brought together here show that this is happening already – and outside the pages of CAM too – only think of the work by Sara Ramshaw and Paul Stapleton combining musical improvisation and the study of law. Isn't this what universities should be all about? Isn't this what research is? What else is happening in the labs that we don't know about?

And what are the consequences of not playing in any form whatsoever? Colourless, tasteless, emotionless learning? Flat learning, serious learning in every sense of both those adjectives? Not talking, not moving, not feeling? Are we creating silent or silenced sheep in our educators and our learners if we try to constrain play? Silence, of course, has its place – and yet play can be silent and solitary too. However, if we really want autonomous creative and critical thinkers and doers, is silence enough? What else should happen in higher education? Is there a need for more madness, messiness and playfulness – at least among those who thrive on it? How can we challenge misconceptions about play? We think the answer lies in the ideas presented here. We also suggest some of our own ideas in the Reservoir of Possibilities (see Cam2 Part B) which accompanies the readings, viewing and visuals you will find here.

Explore, enjoy and ride into the waterfall.

References & Notes

1 Einstein play quote. In 1962 the journal "Childhood Education" published an article titled "Play is Education" by N. V. Scarfe that contained the following passage: [2] *All play is associated with intense thought activity and rapid intellectual growth.* **The highest form of research is essentially play.** *Einstein is quoted as saying, "The desire to arrive finally at logically connected concepts is the emotional basis of a vague play with basic ideas. This combinatory or associative play seems to be the essential feature in productive thought"* quoteinvestigator.com/2014/08/21/play-research/

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4 Kleist, Chad (online) Global ethics: Capabilities Approach, available at http://www.iep.utm.edu/ge-capab/#H3 [accessed 18 April 2015]

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waterfall https://www.pinterest.com/thethreebrowns/school/

ROOM FOR IMAGINING—THE PLAYFUL MIND
Andrew Middleton

Andrew is Head of Innovation & Professional Development at Sheffield Hallam University and best known for his work developing audio feedback and other digital voice pedagogies. He leads the UK Media-Enhanced Learning Special Interest Group (MELSIG), a pioneering group interested in enhancing and transforming learning with digital and social media. Andrew has edited books on media-enhanced learning, been a facilitator on the open learning event Bring Your Own Devices for Learning, and is Managing Editor of the open journal the Student Engagement & Experience Journal.

Imagining is an under-used idea in higher education and I would like to consider its importance by comparing it to other widely accepted learning concepts such as reflecting and thinking critically. Note the active voice here: this interest is primarily about the learner's enactment of learning. My thinking here is informed by many years of commitment to academic innovation - something that demands the freedom to consider challenges and opportunities imaginatively.

I think imagining means being able to suspend reality and being able to thereby construct alternative realities or possibilities. It is a playful activity - meaning it is not critical in the sense that 'unsuccessful' imagining will not cause any lasting damage. Another more positive way of expressing this is to think of imagining as an act of freedom or of actively opening ideas; that is, more than simply being open to ideas. Imagining is a creative

> imagining is playing with ideas

act but one, in the context of learning in HE, which is based on having purpose: imagining is a dimension of learning necessary to construct, consider and critique meaning.

Imagining was described as "possibility thinking" by Bernard et al[1] in studies they conducted into the way young children learn. Craft describes it as the conjoining of problem finding and problem solving and is exemplified by the asking of "What if..?" questions[2] while these studies have been conducted in the context of school-level education, Sir Ken Robinson[3] has pointed out, being creative is not a childish attribute, only one that humans lose through unimaginative schooling. I think there is more to imagining than finding and resolving problems, especially in higher education: in the act of applying and synthesising knowledge (thoughts, ideas, feelings, etc.) we play with ideas (to be honest, just as I am doing now!).

Learning is a continual process of setting up hypotheses and attempting to knock them down - just like throwing stones at bottles on a wall. It's quite good fun, albeit an intellectual activity. We do it when we write or in other situations in which we analyse and explain ideas or share our understanding, and we see it in models of
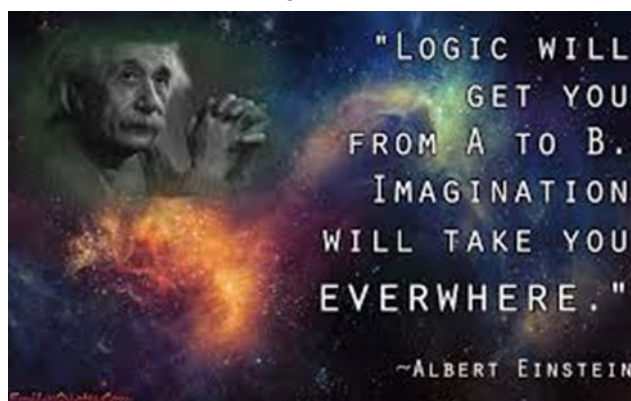
experiential learning and notions of experimentation and exploration. This is a much more *active* view of learning than a simple view of "being reflective" I would suggest, although it is important to note the extensive literature on reflective and experiential learning which embodies active engagement. It is different to critical thinking which, in my mind, is a necessary analytical process that is usually evident in good academic thinking and something that often sets graduates apart from others but comes later in the thinking process of learning.

I want to connect this thinking about imagining to ideas that were recently highlighted in a webinar by David Smith[4] and to ideas about Lego Serious Play, [5, 6] both talk about the use of objects and what objects can mean in promoting learning as multi-sensory "thinking tools". It occurs to me that objects as artefacts in the learning environment can be used in many different ways and that, in all cases, the tactile nature of the object and the associations people may have with an object become important in making learning real. They help to scaffold the learner's imagination and facilitate

transfer from abstract conceptualisation to application and then to generalising learning to be applied to other contexts and problems (creative synthesis).

I propose that objects in the 'classroom' sit on a reality continuum: actual/ simulated/ representational/ metaphorical/ abstract. In each case the purpose of the object is to enable learning through imagining: that is establishing and critically reviewing meanings as a personal interaction whilst in a socially mediated context.

- Actualisation - the object brings the real world into the hands of the learner. Thinking is usefully constrained and is focused on the problem of using the object or considering its use by others;
- Simulation - the object safely replaces real world objects enabling the learner to 'play hard', risk free but within the parameters of real world situations;
- Representation - the object is a good enough 'stand in' or it can be a symbolic marker. The learner understands it enough to make reference to it, e.g. in problem finding and problem solving. Thinking is directed to a situation but free to establish other associations;
- Metaphorical - used metaphorically the object allows the learner to improvise and 'skit' on a theme by generating alternative responses. The use of metaphor signals that playful responses are appropriate and likely to be useful. Thinking is unconstrained, but metaphorical thinking ultimately retains a connection to real world application;
- Abstract - the object lacks connection to real world application but becomes a focus for more affective or aesthetic engagement in learning, especially in a social setting.

In each case, objects can engender active imagining by individuals and groups. Imagining or possibility thinking is a precursor to proposing hypotheses, experiments and acute critical thinking. We see imagining *within* definitions of reflective thinking and experiential learning, for example Moon [7] but it is necessary for us to extract the idea of imagining (purposeful unstructured mental processing) and consider it in its own right. Moon defines reflection:

> *Reflection is a form of mental processing – like a form of thinking – that we use to fulfil a purpose or to achieve some anticipated outcome. It is applied to relatively complicated or unstructured ideas for which there is not an obvious solution and is largely based on the further processing of knowledge and understanding and possibly emotions that we already possess*

However, when expressed as a part of reflective thinking the potency of imagining is subsumed and the importance of the formative act of imagining is diminished or even lost. We need to appreciate imagining as an act of learning in its own right and the value of this is exemplified above in looking at how imagining with objects opens up learning. I argue that imagining is a hugely important and creative dimension of learning that clarifies why the playful mind is something that must be fostered through formal teaching and not left to the playground beyond university.

I began by relating my interest in imagining to my role as an educational developer with responsibility for promoting academic innovation. Imagining effects my work in two ways. I take some time to play with possibilities, verbalising some of these when others choose to be more reserved. I like to challenge thinking and seriously discuss 'possibilities', even in situations where other people expect to be engaged in a more serious way. Professionally this is quite risky, but it 'is me' and it is *important* to me to - innovation does not easily come from stasis.

Secondly, and more importantly, there is what imagining means to student learning. In my role I have a lot of influence over the ways curricula are designed and approved, yet I don't hear people talking about imagining. However, too often I do hear people talking about reflection and critical thinking without fully appreciating the need to create 'imagining activities' - space for possibility thinking, knowing that to be reflective there must be experience, and to be critical there have to be alternatives in mind.

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Image credits

1 Einstein quotation http://emilysquotes.com/logic-will-get-you-from-a-to-b-imagination-will-take-you-everywhere/

2 Objects - http://creativehistory.co.uk/training-days/using-objects-artefacts-develop-historical-understanding-reasoning/

ON BEING FERAL

Dereck Harris & Michael Spencer

Dereck Harris, Course Leader of Pathway Leader BA Fine Art: Painting at Wimbledon College of Art and Michael Spencer, Course Leader of MA Performance Design & Practice at Central Saint Martins, discuss a recent event within a project called Feral Space, which questions current models of assessment and the relationship between learning and assessment. Feral Space re-situates the idea of creative play at the centre of the learning experience.

On the 18th and 19th April 2015 we held our first *Feral Space* residency, to test out some different teaching and assessment ideas on some unsuspecting students. The *Feral Weekender*, as we called it, took place at the Kingsley Hall, Bow, in East London. Our intention was to present an alternative learning environment and apply a completely different assessment model (with no prior learning outcomes or assessment criteria). We felt that setting the *Weekender* out side the environs of the education institution was essential, as the context of the learning environment can be a powerful factor in the influence it exerts on creative behaviour. In this case we found a particularly appropriate venue, Kingsley Hall having a long impressive history of resistance and experimentation: Ghandi having stayed there in 1931 on his UK visit to protest about English rule in India, and providing the venue for a R.D. Laing's ground breaking 5 year residency for in the late 1960s, proposing a radical approach to dealing with psychologically disturbed patients. Twenty students participated over two long days (10am – 11pm each day) from seven different HEIs including some down from Leeds College of Art. The students were from various creative disciplines (Theatre Design, Fine Art, Spatial Design, Performance Art etc.) and at various levels: Foundation and at different stages of undergraduate courses. This was intentional. *Feral Space* is not about specific disciplines or levels.

Having gathered the students, we began the experiment. *Feral Space* provided: an 'external' location which offered a variety of rooms in which to work, equipment and materials with which to make the work (projectors, light and sound systems, paper, tape, card, paint, string etc.), plus food, drink and ourselves, for the entire week-end. For that the students were asked to contribute their presence throughout the residency, make some work to show at a prescribed time, and attend all the group meals. No pre-prescribed agenda was suggested for the work and if in doubt students were encouraged to play with the materials and equipment as a catalyst. A schedule indicating timeslots for working and eating was distributed at a short briefing where the students were told about the aims of *Feral Space* and of the week end. And that was it.

The students needed little further explanation or prompting from then on - clearly the idea made sense to them and they immediately began working. For us the time flew by. We were involved in cooking and preparing meals, as well as supporting students *technically* (we cannot remember ever being asked if the intended work was 'good') and, crucially, making a piece of work each ourselves, which was indicative of our claim that the experience be non-hierarchical. The simple idea of the shared, group meals, almost immediately succeeded in quickly breaking down barriers and putting students at ease with themselves, us and the context in which they found themselves. Some of the best and most interesting conversations happened around the dining table.

It may be useful to pause at this point, and offer a little bit more information about the back-story of *Feral Space*, which is one of the various Communities of Practice (COP) supported across UAL. At the (now traditional) end-of-year Academic Leader Forum (or Internal UAL Conference) some five years ago Michael stood up and gave a short provocation entitled, '*an art school in a university: a contradiction in terms?*' Dereck led one of the break-out groups connected with this provocation, and it seemed that a chord had been struck as colleagues expressed passionate views about the creative inhibitions they experienced in their professional roles. The ensuing discussion identified the shift in approach over the past decades with regard to evaluating creative practice. The learning outcomes (and / or assessment criteria) model has become ubiquitous across all subject areas in a university sector

increasingly preoccupied with transparency and accountability to its (now high) fee paying students. This in contrast to an art school philosophy which, as the imposition of the Coldstream Report in 1960 demonstrated, has traditionally been against equating creative practices with certificated awards, which by necessity seek to define and measure such creativity. The debate seemed to highlight a shared frustration with what we perceived as a limitation of the learning outcomes model, and with the apparent acceptance within the senior management culture across the University sector (and at UAL) that there was no administrative need for an alternative. We both longed for a space in the curriculum where students could value creative risk-taking for it's own sake, where students could make work outside of a prescribed framework, which at worst became a series of hoops through which they were obliged to jump. In such a space, students would be released to learn through play - they would experience a more open (inter-disciplinary) process of (autonomous or collaborative) decision-making and perhaps even feel the exhilaration of a (relatively) unbounded learning environment. This became *Feral Space*.

Five years later, encouraged by seed funding from various university learning and teaching initiatives, we have held several *Feral* seminars/presentations in order to create a network of like-minded academics in different HEIs across the UK. Our aim is not to *replace* the learning outcomes model, which is clearly logical and provides many students with the feedback they need in order to develop, but rather to encourage our institutions to consider the inclusion of an alternative model as part of each students learning experience, at some point. As much as anything, this is to give students a perspective on the learning outcomes approach to assessment, as most will have experienced nothing else since primary school, and in some cases even earlier. In contrast to the regulated space within our HEIs, we want students, at least once, to have an opportunity to experience *Feral Space*.

At the *Feral Weekender* briefing we told students that, as with any experiment, it might end up proving that our theory was wrong, however in retrospect we can see a fairly conclusive affirmation of the *Feral Space* approach. We filmed much of the week-end and will attempt to construct a short documentary, one idea being to interview some of the students a couple of months after the residency, to give them the opportunity to reflect on the intensive weekend after re-entering the regulated assessment space of their institution. Will these interviews will be similarly conclu-

sive? We have noted some of feelings and responses articulated by students that we felt were a direct consequence of our approach. Four such examples are described below, recorded from the comments given at the showing of the work on Sunday evening, where we tried to interrogate what had been learnt by each student.

One student sat in the garden and drew most of the week-end - a series of very complex blown up images of tiny natural forms observed. When talking about what she had done she explained that it was very different from her systematic and research-lead approach to work at College (interestingly, a UAL Foundation Course). She also said that the work had given her 'pleasure', which was not normally the case.
A rhetorical question was prompted: to what extent is the sense of play, enjoyment and personal motivation important in Art & Design education?

A second student created an installation involving construction skills with wood, card, screws and tape. We had observed her during the process and she was clearly not used to using tools such as saws and drills, which she later admitted. Her lack of skills in this regard made the process laborious and frustrating, but she kept at it. We did not intervene to suggest more appropriate techniques. In the end, what she was most proud of was the fact that she had not given up, but had constructed the large sculptural object herself, which though not to the finish she would have liked, was all her own endeavour. I was reminded of one of Ron Barnett's 'dispositions' to foster within students (*The Will To Learn*, 2007): 'a determination to keep going'.
A rhetorical question was prompted: if a student perseveres with, and overcomes a problem for a graded reward, does this represent the same achievement as when they do this for their own reasons (their own motivation)?

A third student made an artwork on a stairwell and in the discussion she confidently stated that the work wasn't very good, or even important. What *had* been very important to her was the collaborative experience, and the contribution of others who had suggested ideas as they passed through the staircase throughout the weekend. Some stopped by and as casual-collaborators contributed as much to the ideas and construction as she did. For this student, the realisation that collaboration in itself could be so satisfying and important to the work was a revelation, as she clearly had not experienced this before.
Would a formal curricular requirement to collaborate with peers have yielded the same playful result?

WORKING LIKE A DOG

Anna Petts

Anna heads up the organisational development and learning team at University of the Arts London (UAL). She is responsible for staff engagement projects, leadership and management and supports a range of initiatives with the objective of making UAL an even better place to work.

Working for a Business School I was charged with putting together and identifying a senior leadership development programme within the HE sector - and in an attempt to do something different, (always a challenge), I stumbled upon a unique solution – sheepdog handling.

The senior leadership team were feeling somewhat 'bruised'. The staff survey had reported that staff perceptions in relation to senior leaders was less positive, in particular: senior leaders lacked presence – were unapproachable; poor and inconsistent communication and lack of consistent leadership, particularly around the role-modeling values and behaviours. So the team were looking for a programme that would enable senior leaders to better connect with staff and help bring the School's values to life which included, respect, courageous, ambitious and engaged.

I was somewhat nervous recommending this solution; as an internal provider of staff development there is always the risk of damaging one's own credibility and reputation if it's considered a poor fit.

Although I anticipated a sceptical response - the programme was an 'outdoor' experience – which was bound to get moans and groans, the leadership team felt it would address the issues they faced.

The programme promoted the opportunity to explore leadership styles and communication, encouraging delegates to give feedback to each other on their leadership style. As there was already high trust between individuals within the senior leadership group, it was felt that this would further enhance peer working and collaboration.

The event, which lasted a day, entailed assigning delegates with their own sheepdog, with the objective of providing an experiential and empowering experience and draw upon their leadership skills by having to 'navigate' their sheepdog around an open and unfamiliar course, involving sheep (lots), gates and wide open fields.

Delegates were encouraged to consider their emotions and reactions; how well they gained the trust of their sheepdog, (each sheepdog having their own personality and temperament), their communication, particularly body language, as well as what strategies they adopted and how these may have been influenced by any pre-conceived judgements or beliefs that may have guided or even hindered their approach to working in tandem with their sheepdog

Although it may have felt like the proverbial 'herding of cats (let along dogs)', the experience offered delegates the opportunity to reflect on how well they personally navigate the complexities of the workplace in particular, how they lead and motivate others and their ability to connect emotionally with others by using non-verbal communication and stay connected in challenging situations.

After an exhausting yet rewarding day, delegates left with new insights and understanding, recognising it's not power or hierarchy that makes a good leader but trust, respect and authenticity.

It also afforded the opportunity for delegates to learn outside of the classroom, in a non-didactic way which chimed with the learning styles of the group, particularly for the academic leaders in the group, who appreciated the how the experience provided the sensory inputs to produce self-learning and reflection.

Why Work With Sheep Dogs?

The benefits of working with dogs and sheep are many:

• They are non-judgemental (they do not condescend or criticise) – everyone can learn constructively from mistakes and successes

• They give an immediate response (they don't discriminate no matter your position at work, and won't move if they don't want to) you get instant, honest safe feedback, a perfect mirror to learn from.

•They respond to non-verbal communication – meaning you learn how to make your message clear through your movements, posture, body language, and tone of voice (you already do this at work and at home, understanding your impact at this level is very empowering)

•They reward your efforts once you have earned your authority and their respect – encouraging and developing leadership through rapport, respect and trust, not power and authority. It is truly remarkable.

THIRTY SECOND THEATRE: AND <u>YOUR</u> TEACHING
Alan Jenkins

Now retired, Alan started off in school teaching and then moved into higher education. After an initial shock at the dominant lecture based higher education pedagogy he and his geography colleagues at Oxford Polytechnic created a student active curriculum through and persuaded the institution to have a week where no one was to lecture but to use methods that required student involvement. He then moved into educational development and focussed on supporting curricula featuring undergraduate research and inquiry. http://alanjenkins.info/

As a geography teacher I long used various plays and simulations particularly in the context of staff led field courses which generally involved students over 3-7 days working in ways that were 'semi structured' and generally included much group work . In the introductory session I often used games/simulations such as Star Power and Bafa Bafa that opened up for structured discussion issues of effective group work and *learning* in more open 'creative' but also uncertain structures . Such activities were often 'playful' in the sense of generating much laughter and requiring students –and staff – to create and react to learning activities that involved them in improvising and learning from acting out roles that were sometimes 'foreign' to them .

When I moved into educational development I sought to open up the complexities of *teaching* in such semi structured environments for discussion. One activity I devised for a group of 40 geography, geology and environmental science staff was called Thirty Second Theatre (Gibbs 1988). As you read the instructions I gave to participants, you might imagine how you could adapt Thirty Second Theatre to your own teaching .

My instructions to participants

"Get into groups of 5-7. Get away from other groups, try to look excited and expectant ….and take a stiff drink….(this was an evening session!). In fifteen minutes each group will put on a short - '30 second or so' -play about an issue /problem relating to fieldwork. In an envelope is your scenario. Keep it private from other groups. Construct a play that clearly conveys the issue/problem but stops just as you are starting to try

to resolve it. This is a modern play. You do *not* tell the audience what it's about. They have to work that out, and after the play ends suggest possible solutions."

The Scenarios

The scenarios were things that had happened to myself or colleagues- or could have done . For example:

"It is week 7 of a final year course on Environmental Ethics. In a week's time the students go into the field. Students were divided into project groups in week 2 and had to devise a research project to be done in the

week long field course The play opens with a student group doing a final classroom presentation on their project. As they talk the module leader realises that what they plan to do is seriously unethical. By the way, this is a compulsory module which students have to pass for graduation. The play takes us into the beginning of staff led discussion that follows the presentation." …

After each play was performed I led a short discussion along these lines: "What issue /problem is the play revealing? Is it one that resonates with you? How might it be resolved /dealt with? What should staff do next?"

When introducing thirty second theatre, as with simulations such as Bafa Bafa, it is important to move people quickly into the scenario. Do look out for the occasional student /member of staff who seems 'reluctant' to be involved. Encourage them to get into the 'event' but also give them space to stay on the fringes. My experience is that most participate fully and enter into the fun and learning that these structures reveal. What is so important is at some point to stop the play. Don't led it drag on. And then the most important part of the event is to ensure that there follows teacher led structured discussion of the events /issues that the play reveals. That might include enabling those who wonder why you are using such activities in 'higher education'. From being on the side-lines of the play they can then move centre stage and their perspectives can help open up key issues. In effect the play provides as a stimulus for learning and debate. The whole class becomes a 'Greek Chorus' moving the discussions to a higher level of reflection and understanding.

So how might you adapt Thirty Second Theatre to your teaching? Clearly the account above is shaped by the particular disciplinary contexts of my teaching geography and then HE pedagogy. But the strength of this approach is that it's immensely flexible, and it can be great fun for all. It opens up for public structured discussion those messy issues that are at the centre of all disciplines. That's for you to decide and act upon! Now write your play outline!

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Elli Chortara

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PLAY: THE PATH TO DISCOVERY
Or my Friday afternoon experiment

David Smith

David is a senior lecturer of Biochemistry at Sheffield Hallam University. He teaches across all levels and his students have recognised his teaching style through a Vice Chancellor's award for inspirational teaching. He is an active researcher and regularly publishes in the field of structural biology applied to the understanding of Parkinson's disease.

Lambs gamble as a way of learning to avoid predators. Kittens chase flies to practise hunting. Science undergraduates and postgraduates perform practicals and assessments that mirror what they will do after employment. Each has an element of play as preparation. Equally some of my best work and almost certainly my highest impact work has come from play or more specifically, what I call my Friday afternoon experiment. To elaborate, on a Friday as a researcher I often find that the main body of work has been achieved but there are a few hours to kill before the weekend starts. So with a curious mind what do you do? You play.

As a university researcher I have access to the materials, I have the machines, I have the time and critically the freedom to explore. I wonder "What would happen if I did *this*?" Nine times out of ten nothing interesting happened, but I do now know that Tunits tea cakes when dipped in liquid nitrogen will shatter only the chocolate but not the marshmallow when hit with a mallet.

Once in a while however you observe something odd and say, "*Oh that's interesting*" and a new line of thought and discovery opens up in front of you. In 2007 one of my journal articles received an award for best research paper and that research came purely from a visit to the manufacturer's factory to trial a machine using samples I grabbed on the way out of the lab. The aim that day was not to do a planned piece of work - the aim was to "play" with the instrument. At the end of that day my past learning and experience had made me ready to recognise that something interesting and new had just happened and play was the route to finding it.

The Friday afternoon experiment is true of my teaching practice too: I have access to all the tools, I have a room full of keen minds, and I wonder what would happen if I tried "this." Sometimes it will work well and a new approach to a session can be generated, sometimes it will crash and burn and should never be repeated. Play a little "what's the worst that can happen?". There is an element of risk in this approach, you are trying something new and it might not work. However it is a risk worth taking as the consequence of failure is often minimal save a red face. This topic was recently discussed in the weekly #LTHEchat. (https://storify.com/LTHEchat/lthechat-11-learning-and-teaching-in-higher-ed-ch)

These examples are practice based and come from the point at which I had completed my degree, done my postgraduate study, donned the floppy hat and flown round the world just to learn from a different group of people who in effect embraced life long learning.

It is possible incorporate play in undergraduate study to foster creativity

([TED talk on play by Tim Brown: Tales of creativity and play](#)). Through play I want my students to develop skills in creating their understanding through practical experience. I want them to be able to think deeply about a situation and to marvel at the world. By following a set protocols the answers will often already be known and although this approach allows the student to experience what should happen and see the practical application of their knowledge, it lacks higher level thinking.
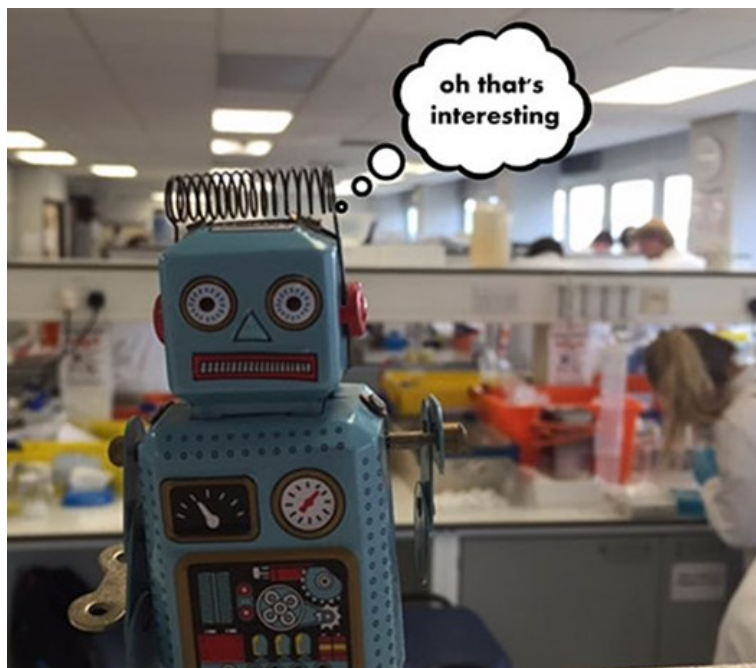
important not the outcome. Assessment is then of the process by documenting the play and reflecting on and rationally thinking about the outcomes. It is much less about generating hard data. Ownership and control of the experience is then passed to the student and lets them take the project in their own direction. This gives students permission, allows play to happen and for the student to have the "Oh that's interesting" moment. Through play in this way the student is acting in an authentic manner experiencing what it is like to become a researcher and generate new ideas for themselves.

* The definition of play can be thought of as *"Engaging in activity for enjoyment and recreation rather than a serious or practical purpose"*. However through play useful outcomes can occur such as novel observation, evaluation of results and creative thought as well as enjoyment and fun!

The most obvious place for a STEM student where play can be encouraged is during the final year research projects and dissertations. At Sheffield Hallam we have introduced self directed mini projects from the first year as a way of developing these higher level skills. At the point of the final year project the students have had a range of prior learning through the taught material, they know what should happen. Although the focus here is final year the ideas are applicable at all levels. If we have done our job well the students will have been exposed to different outcomes and ways of looking at a problems. Play in this setting then involves trying out new experiences and ideas in a "safe" way. So good project design will have an element of "safeness": this is going to work, you will have something to write about, a framework in which to work with defined objectives. A playful project will further this and have an element of risk*: this has not been done before. I have an idea how this is might turn out, but I have never done the experiment. To get this to work the tutor turns from the supervisor to play mate: "Give it a go and see what happens". Permission is given to play and it is the act of playing that is
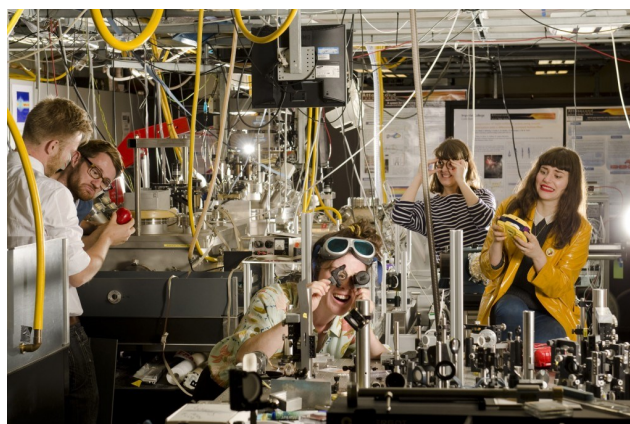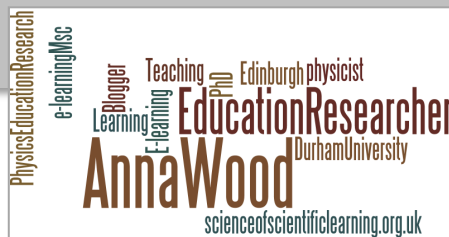

Image Credit: Jiggling Atoms - Playing with physics http://jigglingatoms.org/tag/blackett-laboratory/

THE SCIENCE LEARNING PERSPECTIVE ON PLAY

Anna Wood

However, as I wrote in a blog post about creativity in science

Children, Piaget said, have an innate curiosity, and are therefore natural scientists. I think that perhaps the reverse is also often true: scientists are natural children, or at least child-like in their playful approach to the world. Yet this view of science is not one that students will often experience from studying it. As _Stuart Firestein_ writes in his blog 'nautilus' 'science appears as a scary, insurmountable mountain of facts, rather than the playground of inquiry it actually is'.

In my experience play is a central part of being an academic scientist. A new piece of equipment (perhaps a new laser, or a spectrometer) will invariably be referred to as a 'new toy', to be 'played' with. There may be some playfulness in the use of language, here – after all, they are doing serious science, but I think that it also hints at the role that a playful and exploratory approach has in doing good science.

How then, can we help students to view science as a playground of inquiry? Certainly directing students to be more playful, more creative is unlikely to work: a playful attitude is not something that can be imposed on students, nor demanded of them. Playfulness is something that comes from within – it is a state of mind, a way of interacting with the world. It is something that emerges only when a culture of playfulness exits, when opportunities for playfulness are created and when playful approaches are rewarded.

Yet the experience of a student studying science at higher education often seems to be devoid of many of the attributes of playfulness: indeed in many cases playful approaches are actively suppressed. This is a particular problem in science where, at least at undergraduate level there is little room for opinion or interpretations - there is after all, usually only one correct answer to a problem. Assessments designed to give marks for the correct answer but not for the thinking behind the solution, serve only to exacerbate this problem. But it is in laboratory classes where the issue is most pronounced. Science practicals should be an ideal opportunity for students to explore, to be creative, to be inspired by scientific phenomena, and to develop an understanding of how science happens.

'In my experience labs were stressful, there seemed to be too much pressure to get the 'right' result. Often there was a huge booklet of instructions to follow in a short space of time ... there was ... no time for thinking, playing, exploring or being creative.'

How then can we encourage playfulness in science education? One key element of playfulness is that it is the _process_ rather than the outcome which takes centre stage. And one way to achieve this is through assessments that reward the approach to problem solving, rather than privileging the final answer. Eric Mazur (of Peer Instruction fame) demonstrates this through setting students open ended questions which are graded on effort rather than correctness. In science there is very rarely only one method of solving a problem (think about calculating 8x6 - you may solve this by taking 6 and doubling three times. Or you may calculate 10x6 and take away 8 twice). Grading effort rather than correctness encourages students to explore different approaches. Open ended problems encourage students to think about how science interacts with the real-world. They need to be creative about the assumptions that they make (the infamous spherical cow for example) and how these assumptions are justified.

Laboratory sessions can also be designed to create opportunities for playfulness. Problem based labs, or inquiry based learning are longer, more open ended projects than the traditional single session 'recipes' written by teaching staff. With appropriate scaffolding, these give students more freedom over the topic, the chance to design the experiments themselves, and to have control over the way the project develops. The longer time frame reduces the pressure to achieve a result at all costs, which changes the focus from the perceived 'correctness' of the outcome to the quality of the scientific thinking that has guided the methodology of the project. In short, it offers space for playfulness.

Both open-ended homework problems and problem based labs give students opportunities to be creative and playful, and I think it is no coincidence that they also both give students a more accurate sense of what it is really like to actually be a scientist.

THE JOY OF LEARNING: PLAY AS A RECIPE FOR INNOVATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION PEDAGOGY

Whitney Kilgore

Whitney lives in N Texas and works for 'Academic Partnerships' as VP of Academic Services. She has extensive experience. She has spent the last 10 years in higher education, specifically in distance education and technology enhanced learning .

"Almost all creativity involves purposeful play" – Abraham Mazlow

I recently led a twitter chat (#profchat) where higher education professors come together to discuss topics related to teaching and learning. We discussed the topic of play and learning. Our conversation pointed to the importance of play as a means of engaging learners in the process of exploration, discovery, failing and learning which ultimately sets the stage for creativity and innovation. Play engages the cognitive, physical, and emotional aspects of learning. These same professors, when asked what fond memories they recall from their own learning experiences, were quick to mention times when they were engaged in problem solving, exploration, and discovery.
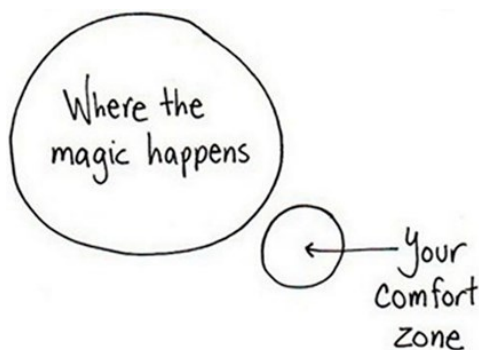
In contrast, when asked about faculty embracing play in their teaching, roughly half of the participants shared that they felt this was not an easy concept to embrace at times in higher education. They stated that this was particularly the case for new faculty members seeking tenure. Some said that it is important to be perceived as expert and professional in their field. However, faculty who have embraced a willingness to utilize exploration, discovery, and play shared how this has changed their courses. One professor, Paul Wilson, said, "utilizing play unlocks possibilities, alternatives. Creative synthesis replaces the parrot litany." In addition, Kris Giere stated "Play is imaginative; it harnesses ideals, not just ideas, & helps give them form, making something meaningful in the process." To access the professional conversation #profchat on Twitter click here

So if play is good for higher education, but hard to implement based upon perceptions of needed formality, how can we encourage its use? Here are three simple ways that you can add some informal interactions to your teaching that embrace the notion of play:

Q1: Why is play important to the learning process? #profchat

Why is play important to the learning process?

1. Start off your class with an icebreaker. There are many ways t o do icebreakers that get the learners thinking creatively. One simple idea is to include an activity that calls upon students to introduce themselves using two truths and a lie, allowing the other students to determine which one is the falsehood. Be prepared for a little laughter.

2. Role-play: Are there opportunities to expand on an idea presented in the curriculum by allowing students to play a part in the conversation? Debates, case studies, and current events lend themselves well to allowing students to play a role in the issues, which translate well into deeper learning and a higher level of cognitive presence.

3. Scavenger hunt: A scavenger hunt for information related to particular topics can add a level of fun and engagement to your course.

Keep in mind that play must be purposeful, and that we may need to push outside our comfort zone. If we encourage and allow students to be creative, we may just become more innovative as a result.
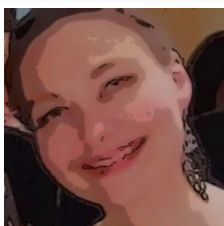
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BEAM ME UP FOR BUSINESS: PORVOO CAMPUS PLAYGROUND
Pia Kiviaho-Kallio

Pia Kiviaho-Kallio is Senior Lecturer at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. Currently she teaches English and performance skills, using dance and movement as pedagogical resource in preparing students for a career in business. Her research interests include integration of the arts into business education.

Why move like Prometheus chained to his rock or Petrouchka confined to his cell when the space around us begs to be taken over and conquered? Move spaciously through space. Manipulate it, cut through it, sweep across it, gather it in all embracing arms, cut patterns through it with scissor sharp legs and melting arms, be master of the air[1]

Upon entering the lobby of Finnish Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, Porvoo Campus, the visitor might be welcomed by a surprising sight: a group of students crossing the floor in straight patterns to music by Philip Glass, just like in the opening scene of Jerome Robbin's urban ballet Glass Pieces, first choreographed for New York City Ballet in 1983. What is this all about? The answer might be surprising, yet thought-evoking: it is first-semester tourism students taking part during their induction week in a dance and movement improvisation workshop with the aim of enhancing team and risk-taking skills.

Dance and movement as a pedagogical resource has for several years been implemented in the Tourism programmes at Haaga-Helia UAS Porvoo Unit. This approach started in 2010 as an EFL teaching experiment within the European Commission-funded Creanova project[2] with the purpose of exploring innovative methods. I was in charge of developing tools for combining contemporary dance pedagogy with foreign language learning. Subsequently, the method was expanded to teaching core business competences such as team skills and responsible self-management. These kinaesthetic learning experiments were supported by the relocation to the purpose-built Porvoo Campus in spring 2011. The transparent contemporary school architecture with its interesting learning spaces invited students to explore the university building in an unorthodox manner: instead of staying immobile and confined inside a classroom, students were given the opportunity to embody the space in a playful and three-dimensional manner. Thus we saw Porvoo Campus turning into choreographer and dance master as well as playground.

There has been little discussion on the positioning of dance and movement in a tertiary level business education context. Naturally, there seems to be a purely utilitarian value in dance as a means of skills transfer: dancing together enhances the feeling of togetherness in a team and makes team members trust each other, as expressed by an international tourism student after an induction workshop, Music Moves, in September 2013:

> *"This workshop was important because it teaches us to interact with each other in a creative open-minded way."*

Another student summarised the experience as follows:

> *"Happiness, friendship, laughter are something that every team needs to achieve success."*

Apparently, a well-functioning team is essential in a curriculum built on project-based learning, as is the case on Porvoo Campus. Thus dance activities can be seen as beneficial for preparing the students for their

studies involving industry commissions. However, on a more profound level dance can also be regarded as valuable in itself due to the joy and empowerment experienced when practising art for art's sake. In this article I will present an induction week workshop which combines both aspects, the immediate benefit of team building as well as the positive long-term effect of embodying kinaesthetic memories.

The title of this article refers to an introductory movement workshop exercise I have named "Beam me up" where, just like in Star Trek, molecules are made to "dissolve" upon breathing out and then replaced to the very last molecule, so that the blurred edges of the body become clear and sharp. How does it feel to "dissolve and then beam up"? Naturally, the immediate and visible result in students is a heightened level of focus and presence that should be maintained for instance in a business presentation. When the workshop proceeds, students are taken out of the classroom to explore the bigger public spaces by doing various group and pair exercises. Thus the entire Campus turns into a playground of multiple possibilities to discover. If looking for a rational argument for these kinds of activities, naturally such exercises invite students to come out of their comfort zone and into taking bodily risks. Accordingly, crossing an empty space with long and affirmative steps make students feel risk-taking in a very tangible manner. A student in the Music and Words workshop stated the following at the end of the session: *"All these practices gave feeling that at least I know the building better, also got a more homey feeling here."* To sum up, after two hours of dancing and playing together, the majority of students express how they feel safer and more comfortable within the group and the workshop is often described as a true ice-breaker at the beginning of the studies.

Finally, it should be stated that the implementation of arts and play in a business curriculum is not something that happens overnight. The practitioner needs to have patience and to be prepared to proceed through trial and error. Repeatedly, colleagues and management alike will request arguments and justifications for the use of creative methods and one has to be prepared for both acceptance and rejection. In an educational climate that demands efficiency, it can often be challenging to argue for additional resources for small-group artistic activities. On the other hand, in an era that hails creativity and innovation, arts and play hold an important position in preparing students for an uncertain and unpredictable future where creative thinking will be of paramount importance. As viewed by Juri Lotman, founder of the Tartu-Moscow Semiotic

School, play is a mechanism for initiating a creative conscience, since play does not passively follow a predetermined programme. Instead, it creates a multi-faceted world of possibilities as opposed to one-dimensional adult seriousness.[3p126-27] In terms of dance and movement activities on Porvoo Campus, I believe that we have only seen the beginnings; there seem to be multiple possibilities to develop the use of arts as creative learning resource in cooperation with the core subjects. Currently, a new Campus Curriculum is being written and there is an interest to include dance and movement activities as a method for enhancing presence, embodiment and presentation skills. For the first time, this novel method would gain official status at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, paving the way for more systematic inclusion of the arts into the curriculum. Maybe one day "Beam me up" and "Business Ballet" will become as self-evident as CRM or Accounting in a business school context.

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Films from workshops:

Glass Pieces improvisation on Porvoo Campus (30.09.2014) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndjo-hmSe74

Music Moves: Dance and Movement Improvisation workshop on Porvoo Campus (24.09. 2013) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cgr8W3U-81Y

DISRUPTING STATUS QUO: ANALYSIS AND PLAY IN SONGWRITING

Glen Fosbraey

Glen is Programme Leader BA Creative Writing / Creative & Professional Writing at the University of Winchester

Composing Song Lyrics – 2nd year module - BA Creative Writing, University of Winchester
Assignment 1: A 1500 word essay analysing the lyrics of one album.
Assignment 2: A collection of between 6 and 10 original song lyrics.
Seminar structure: mixture of creative and analytical discussion, exercises, workshopping, and peer/tutor feedback.

One of the hardest things about being a Creative Writing lecturer is walking the line between passion and dogmatism, and never has this been more of an issue than on this module. What I *liked* had nothing to do with its construct; all the songs we listened to and analysed in class were selected based upon what I thought would open the students' eyes to different styles, writing techniques, and background information. Students on this module were encouraged to push themselves creatively by playing with the songwriting form; even if they were writing conceptual EPs, where the subject matter remained constant, variety could come from different rhyme schemes, points of view, tenses, and manipulation of audience. Through a 100 word 'justificatory' introduction, students were able to specify what they were attempting with each song, so, pushing boundaries and 'playing' with the conventions of popular music lyrics was at the forefront of the module's aims, and not merely a gamble to be taken at the risk of losing marks.

The discussions that emerged

Playing by the rules: Ways of writing
Whether songs seem to have, as Neil Young suggests, appeared 'like rabbits: (coming) out of their holes when you're not looking', or, in Sting's case 'taken him months – even years – to write', they are products of us having been exposed to music almost literally from birth, and we are therefore drawing upon everything we have heard since. It's important, therefore, to note that the aim of discussing songwriting techniques was not to suggest any one particular method, but to demonstrate different ways of writing. Proficiency on a musical instrument wasn't a pre-requisite for students taking this module, and, as such, they were given a number of options when it came to writing and submitting their lyrics:

- Perform and write both lyrics and music
- Write both lyrics and music and get someone else to perform it
- Compose lyrics and vocal melody (performed by yourself or someone else) over an existing *backing* track
- Re-write the lyrics to an existing track (keeping the same vocal melody)

Each of these options carried the same weight when it came to grading, with the Learning Outcomes stating that it was the *relationship* between lyrics and melody that was being scrutinised, not whether the melody was original or not. It is also important to note that the first 3 options are commonplace in popular music composition, so the techniques being used, however different they were, reflected the industry. Morrissey's famed lack of proficiency on any instrument means that he writes songs in the manner of option 3: a co-writer brings him a recorded demo, minus any vocal, and Morrissey composes lyrics and melody line around this. To illustrate this technique, I played the students the song 'Not bitter, but bored' by the band Johnny Panic, written by long-term Morrissey collaborator Alain Whyte, followed by 'Irish Blood, English Heart' by Morrissey himself, which used exactly the same chord sequence and near-identical instrumentation and production, but with completely different vocal melody and lyrics. The two examples above, when played consecutively display how vital

melody and lyrics are to the meaning and feel of a song, as well as evidencing that the ability to play an instrument isn't necessary for composing lyrics (or vocal melodies).

In play: biography and deception

'It's important to be honest and reflect how you feel but it's also important to try and include the people that listen to your record…otherwise you're just writing for yourself. – Paul Weller

Do we need to have an understanding of the artist/ songwriter in order to fully appreciate their work? And how much is biography distorted by the media or the artist's own personal interventions? To explore this, we analysed the work (and biographies) of Kurt Cobain and Mark Everett (aka 'E'). E's lyrics almost demand an understanding of his personal history for the lyrics to have any real emotional impact. The song 'Things The

Grandchildren should know' is emotional to a listener almost *solely* because of prior knowledge of E's life, and would mean little to a listener who hadn't followed his career and heard the heart-wrenching 'Dead of Winter' ('the saddest song I ever wrote'), 'Elizabeth on the Bathroom Floor', or 'Going to Your Funeral Part 2' (or indeed read his autobiography). For those that *are* aware of E's biography, however, the final verse within the song 'Things the Grandchildren should know' shows a positivity a loyal listener always hoped he would achieve:

'So in the end I'd like to say that I'm a very thankful man… I had some regrets, but if I had to do it all again, well, it's something I'd like to do.'
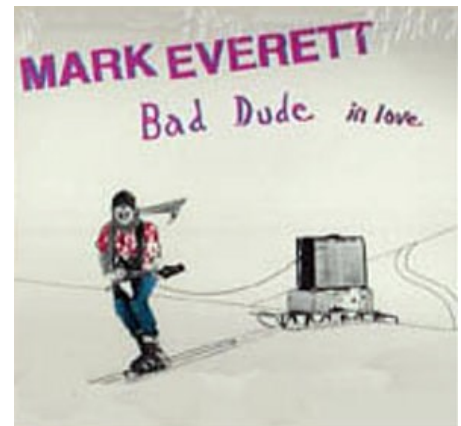
Coming from a man that began his autobiography listing the different methods he had considered for committing suicide, this kind of development is similar to a character arc one might see in a novel or feature film. In this instance, the author's life becomes a part of the music's narrative and may well be necessary in order to experience its full impact.

In contrast, Cobain, a man that stated in his journal that he used 'bits and pieces of others' [sic] personalities to form (his) own' deliberately distorted his biography to prevent the listener from getting the 'real' self. This is most evident in the song 'Something in the Way', which has largely been attached to Cobain's biography due to a story he used to tell about living under a bridge, which has later been documented as a fallacy.

The use of one's own experiences as subject matter in songwriting has possibly been the most prevalent form of expression over the years, but some artists, although recognising its importance, also see it as a way to ignore the wider world, especially among modern artists. In a recent interview, Damon Albarn observed that 'young artists generally just talk about themselves; they don't talk about what's happening out there. It is the selfie generation in every sense of the word'. As students of song lyrics, though, whether we agree with this statement or not, the sense of self in song, or lack of, is vital to consider.

Playing me false: meaning and ambiguity

'Don't you tell me,' says Noel Gallagher… 'that song doesn't mean anything.' He's annoyed at comments made by one 'expert' critic who voiced his opinion that the song's lyrics are meaningless. With cool clarity and insight, the songwriter simply points back to those who were pointing at him, the 120,000 fans who bellowed out the song: 'Looks like it means something to them!'"

So, lyrics don't necessarily have to have *meaning* for them to be successful, but it was important to discuss the concept of song meanings, and, indeed, if such a thing can ever be objectively defined and agreed upon. Students were played 2 versions of the song 'Yesterday', firstly one that used alternative lyrics based around

Paul McCartney's working title of 'Scrambled Eggs', and second, the Beatles' version. We discussed how, although the alternative lyrics were amusing, they lacked the emotional depth of the real version's, even if the latter's were ambiguous. We sought to minimise this ambiguity by exploring some readings of the song, particularly regarding the lines 'Why she had to go, I don't know, she wouldn't say/ I said something wrong, now I long for Yesterday' where 'it has been suggested that they are about the loss of Paul's mother'. As a class, we then discussed whether having a meaning adds anything to the song, and if it's more important to know the writer's intent, or for the listener to attach their own meaning to it. Fellow Beatle John Lennon stated that he'd have 'a separate songwriting John Lennon who wrote songs for the sort of meat market, and… didn't consider them – the lyrics or anything –to have any depth at all. They were just a joke.' And yet, just as the Oasis fans found meaning in so-called meaningless lyrics, so did millions of Beatles fans across the world. The desire to seek meaning in lyrics has always been at the heart of most review and discussion of popular music, and this has led to certain writers playing with critics/ listeners, possibly most famously with the Beatles' 'I Am The Walrus'. When John Lennon discovered that the lyrics to Sgt. Pepper were being analysed by academics, he was prompted to write the famously ambiguous track, with the invitation to 'let the f…s work that one out'.

Playing the devil
Perhaps the artist most famous for playing with his listener's reactions is Eminem.

Eminem is always acutely aware that he is writing and rapping 'for' an audience, and plays to this, manipulating his lyrics to demonstrate such awareness, understanding that his lyrics will be taken as serious insights into his thoughts, rather than a performer speaking tongue-in-cheek lyrics in character (whether Eminem, Slim Shady, or perhaps, for all we know, even Marshall Mathers). Eminem offers direct (if overblown and humorous) musings on how his music's subject matter will be perceived;
his songs almost daring the listener and critic to draw conclusions, and he toys with them accordingly by:

- guessing what they think of him:
'Now you probably get this picture from my public persona/That I'm a pistol-packing drug-addict who bags on his momma'

- directly questioning the power an artist is perceived to have over a listener:
'They say music can alter moods and talk to you/ Well can it load a gun up for you, and cock it too?'

- inviting criticism by flouting his position as a 'role model' and *telling* the listener to act in a certain, irresponsible way:
'Follow me and do exactly what the song says: smoke weed, take pills, drop outta school, kill people and drink/ And jump behind the wheel like it was still legal'

- blurring the lines between artist and character:
 'A lot of people think that what I say on records or what I talk about on a record, that I actually do in real life, or that I believe in it… Well, sh… if you believe that then I'll kill you. You know why? Cause I'm a CRIMINAL'

This last point brought us on to talking about:

Role-play
In literature, when an author of fiction writes in the first person, association is suspended, and it is simply accepted that they are writing from a character's perspective. In music, however, the 'I' is immediately associated with the songwriter (and singer), and it is extremely hard to accept that the voice may be that of a character. One only has to look at the controversy surrounding the song 'Blurred Lines', in particular the line 'I know you want it' to see that the 'I' is not presumed to be the voice of the character, but of the artist. Why,

does this kind of thing not happen to actors? Do we really believe, for example, that Larry David is truly playing himself in Curb Your Enthusiasm, rather than a grossly exaggerated version created for comedic purposes? Or that Sacha Baron Cohen is speaking his own beliefs when posing as Borat, Ali G, Bruno, or Admiral General Aladeen? One of my favourite exercises is to ask my students to write, as first person lyrics set to a backing track, the most revolting character they could think of, carrying out the most revolting deed, then read/ sing them aloud to classmates. Given that these are 2nd year students used to the intense work-shopping ethos we have on the programme, and are comfortable reading out prose with controversial first person content, it was excruciatingly difficult for them to carry out this activity, even though they were all aware they had been *asked* to do this, and therefore any link between the lyrics and them was minimised. How difficult, then, for a singer-songwriter to write in character, when they know the words will be linked back to them? It begs the question: is it worth writing lyrics that deliberately draw attention to offensive issues, even though we are exposed to this kind of thing in the media, and in fiction every day?

A play on words: to rhyme or not to rhyme?
Like them or loathe them, rhymes and music are largely inseparable, to the extent where if an artist decides to reject using them, it is the *lack* of rhyme that is the most distinctive thing. But different rhyme schemes and rhyme types will have different impacts on a song, so it's important to at least consider them. Examples of Identical, Perfect, Additive, Subtractive, Family, Assonance, Consonance and Internal rhymes were given, and we talked about 'forced' rhymes, and how searching for a rhyme (in particular 'Perfect' rhymes) can end up distorting the meaning of a song.

We also looked at creating lyrical rhythm through rhyme scheme, and how different types can affect a song. Songs analysed were Simon and Garfunkel's 'America' (no rhyme scheme); The Beautiful South's 'Table' (ABCB); The Undertones' 'Teenage Kicks' (AABB); Bob Dylan's 'Oxford Town' (AAAA), and Joni Mitchell's 'A Case of You' (A,B,C,DD,B). Jarvis Cocker has highlighted the importance of considering lyrical rhythm, and how one should think about the relationship between this and melody: 'That's often where I think songwriters can fall down, is when they mess around with syntax and syllables in order to make it fit with the melody that they've come up with. I think you've got to keep the rhythm of the words as near as possible to how they would be if you spoke them, so it fits. (Re Gary Barlow) Melodically some of his songs are OK, but the way he brutally shoe-horns the words on top is a bit much'. (Jarvis Cocker)

The exercises:
Considering the statement that a song includes 'a range of extraverbal elements – such as voice, appearance, persona, and the music', write a brief report on an artist of your choice, detailing the impact these factors may have on how their music is perceived.

- Write a song using only perfect rhymes to explore the process of 'forcing' rhymes and how this impacts upon the song.

- Construct a response to a song that 'changed your life', in the style of Nick Hornby's personal essays in 31 songs. As part of this process, students were asked to look at Reception Theory and Reader Response criticism.

- Listen to The Streets' 'Geezers need excitement', then detail a night out of your own in a narrative-driven spoken word format over a selected backing track.

- (Following the class session on song structure) select songs that utilise introduction, verse, pre-chorus, bridge, hook, and consider how these different components affect the listener.

- Find two songs with the same chord sequence, and discuss how they are made to sound different by their respective artists.

- Compose a song around the '4 chord' structure to explore the melodic variety available within the most used sequence in popular music.

- Identify the rhyme scheme types used in a selected song, then mirror this technique within your own lyrical responses.

- Writing lyrics to an existing backing track with a lead melody line (Cecilia Ann by The Pixies).

*These last two exercises were designed to both analyse the musical and lyrical construct of songs and to identify whether or not the students felt restricted or inspired writing in such a prescriptive manner.

- Select an existing track whose lyrics are written in the first person, re-write in the 2nd and 3rd person, then discuss with a fellow student if/how the tone of the piece has changed.

- Listen to Gotye's 'Somebody that I used to know', and write a set of lyrics with a dual narrative that tells two sides of the same story.

- Listen to The Kinks' 'The Village Green Preservation Society' and write a personal reflection on how the world has changed since your childhood. Draw out specific lines from this and re-work into a set of lyrics.

> At the end of this module, the students had analysed song lyrics in a way more commonly suited to poetry and literature, and therefore recognised them as an important artform, something all too rare in academia. They had also experimented with rhyme, structure, character, and message to complete an original set of songs. Most importantly, though, they had spent twelve weeks talking about a subject they loved. After all, in the words of Paul McCartney: 'We don't work music, we play it'.

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PLAY: MUCH MORE THAN PURPOSELESS ACTIVITY
Debra Josephson Abrams

For decades, Debra Josephson Abrams has taught English to native and non-native English users. Her expertise includes Freiean pedagogy; teacher training, peer coaching, and mentoring; multiple intelligences and learning styles; composition pedagogy and practice; critical thinking, critical literacy, and critical reflection; research and research training; curriculum design; and formative assessment. Her email is partsofspeechec@gmail.com

Some whisper, some laugh and guffaw, some argue. They gesture wildly, demonstrate their ideas with their hands or drawings. From the air, from their minds, from their partners they search for the English words they need. They are furiously engaged in play, and they have forgotten that I—the teacher—am in the room. It is just as education should be.

As the final project in my ESL reading course for pre-college students, I chose to have students create a game based on the novel we had read. The project worked so well that I repeated the assignment the following term.

The significance of play in childhood development is well-established, well-researched, and long-accepted. However, it is only recently that the value of play throughout our lives—including and perhaps especially in higher education—is receiving the attention it deserves even though the value of adult play has been documented as far back as ancient Greece[1] Research demonstrates that "[…] Play enhances creative thought, fosters trust, helps develop divergent and conditional thinking, and reduces stress—all of which can lead to increased learning"[2]. In *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*[3] , cultural historian and linguist, Johan Huizinga, examined the role of play in history. Play is "a significant function […] which transcends the immediate needs for life and imparts meaning to the action." Ethologist, painter, and writer Desmond Morris has long known that "play is vital to the acquisition of complex skills"[4].

More recently, psychiatrist Stuart Brown has noted, "Nothing lights up the brain like play. Three-dimensional play fires up the cerebellum, puts a lot of impulses into the frontal lobe -- the executive portion -- helps contextual memory be developed"[5].

In Brown's book, *Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul*, in his TED Talk, "Play is More than just Fun," and in his many

> *Who knew that we learn empathy, trust, irony, and problem solving through play, something the dictionary defines as 'pleasurable and apparently purposeless activity'?* Krista Tippett, On Being ("Play, Spirit, and Character")

interviews, Brown observes "that humans are uniquely designed by nature to enjoy and participate in play throughout life" (NIF). In the course of a lifetime of research, Brown, founder of the National Institute for Play and the former Clinical Director and Chief of Psychiatry at San Diego's Mercy Hospital and Medical Center and Associate Professor at University of California at San Diego, found that those deprived of play are "fixed and rigid in their responses to complex stimuli, they don't have a repertoire of choices that are as broad as their intelligence should allow them to have, and they don't seek out novelty and newness, which is part of an essential aspect of play in both animals and humans"[6]. Brown cites no fewer than five types of play—body play, rough and tumble play, spectator play, ritual play and object play[5].

Because I am a committed Freirean, I believe authentic education is transformative and liberating, and because I embrace multiple intelligences and learning styles pedagogy, it was easy for me to design a final course project based in play. Research demonstrates that problem- and project-based learning (PBL) "situate(s) learning in a meaningful task" and is "part of [the] tradition of meaningful, experiential learning" espoused by Kilpatrick and Dewey. "The evidence suggests that PBL is an instructional approach that offers the potential to help students develop flexible understanding and lifelong learning skills"[7]. Here are the steps I took to develop this play-based project.

A strategy for play

With about two weeks left in the term, I introduced the final project. In the first term during which I used the final project game, students and I read Gary Paulsen's coming-of-age novel, *Hatchet*; in the next term, we read Lois Lowry's teen and young adult dystopian novel, *The Giver*. For most students, the course novel was the first and only novel—in any language—that they had read.

I asked students what games they had played and do play. On the board, I created a graphic organizer (brainstorm web) of their responses: soccer; Monopoly; Risk; video games; card games; dominoes; Clue. On the screen, I projected pictures of board games.

Next, I asked students what the characteristics of games are. "Rules." "Pieces." "Dice." "Questions." "Prizes." "Points." "Cards." "A name." I explained that in their groups, students would create a game based on the novel and other material we covered during the course. I reviewed the requirements (rubrics; see appendix) with them: Not only did students have to create the game, but they had to present the game to the class, and all class members—including me—had to play, even if it were for only one turn. I brought to class scissors, butcher paper, glue sticks, colored paper, a stapler, and many colored markers, all of which students could use to create their games.

Over the course of the next two weeks, I gave students a minimum of 20 minutes per class (class meets five days/week) to work on their projects. Once students began, they were autonomous and fully engaged, working eagerly, assiduously, attentively, collaboratively. I suggested that they exchange contact

information should they want to meet outside of class to work on the projects. Ultimately, students had at least three hours of class time to work on their games, and nearly all groups spent time outside of class on their projects. In class, they drew, crumpled their drafts, threw them away, and began again. They debated which questions they should ask. They debated if they should use dice or a game spinner and investigated where to get dice or a game spinner. They debated the game name, the rules, the points, the pieces, the design, the artwork, the prizes, the carrying case. They identified group members' interests and strengths and delegated duties: This one would be the artist; those two would choose the vocabulary words; that one would comb the novel for questions to ask. In a way that was absent from other lessons—no matter how lively and engaged those lessons—the classroom burgeoned with learning, critical thinking, *education*.

Not in my wildest imaginings did I envision the results the students produced. Clearly, they had internalized and demonstrated the major themes in the texts, but what I was even more impressed with was their attention to detail. For example, in the *The Giver* game colour appears only in the images of memory, which is a central point of the novel. The survival bag, in the game "Survive" based on *Hatchet*, holds question cards and other game pieces that players can use to help them "survive" the game. In the novel, the protagonist relies on a survival bag, which he retrieves from his downed plane, to live. Look at the detailed faces of the game pieces representing the main characters in *Hatchet* and the tiny hatchet on the spinner.

You can see the varying levels of artistic skill in the games; I did not evaluate artistic skill. For one, I am

not an artist (I happily draw stick figures to illustrate my ideas, and my students have a grand time attempting to decipher my scribble. My camel has been mistaken for a dinosaur). Moreover, it was essential that students know they were free to express themselves in any way that best suited them and their groups, and they should be proud of any artistic expression. And they were.

If history is our guide—as it should be—the benefits of play will hold these students in good stead as they move into their careers. Brown asserts that Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL)—a high-tech company specializing in robotic space exploration—and the US's NASA and Boeing will not hire employees "even if they're summa cum laud from Harvard or Cal Tech—if they haven't done stuff with their hands early in life, played with their hands [because] they can't problem-solve as well. So play is practical, and it's very important"[5].

Although George Bernard Shaw—unlike Brown—was not a scientist or brain researcher, he did know the value of play, observing, "We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing." Many decades later, Brown concurs and implores, "I would encourage you all to engage not in the work-play differential -- where you set aside time to play -- but where your life becomes infused minute by minute, hour by hour, with body, object, social, fantasy, transformational kinds of play"[5].

And there you have the doctor's orders: Play!

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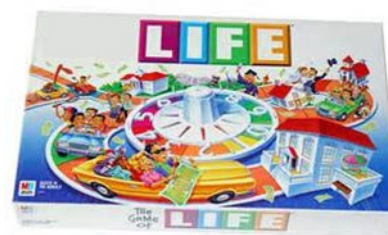

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APPENDIX Final Project: Game

Here are the instructions and the grading rubric for your *final project*.

Your game must:

1. Have a name.
2. Include questions about *The Giver*, one word from each chapter of *Vocabulary Power* chapters 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, and 24 (total six words), and two of our Word Wall words: eight (8) words total
3. Clearly identify which chapter each answer is from (*The Giver* and VP) and what page the word wall word is on in *The Giver*. **Example:** Answer from *The Giver*, chapter 3, page 10. **Example:** *Vocabulary Power*, chapter 15, page 114.
4. Have written instructions and rules in clear, concise, grammatically correct English that are easy to understand and use; be prepared according to the syllabus.
5. Get everyone involved and give everyone a chance to play.
6. Have pictures and other visuals that are connected to the focus of the game (e.g., your game is about *The Giver*, so you should not have pictures of computers or phones).
7. Have pieces that are big enough to hold; be easily transported (moved from place to place without losing pieces).
8. Interest the audience.
9. Have challenging questions (something more than, "What assignment is Jonas given?")
10. Must be in a carrying case (box, plastic container).

Group:_____

Possible points 55/Group score_____

Categories	0	1	2	3	4	5
Has a name						
Has questions from *The Giver*, *Vocabulary Power*, and our						
Has questions from *The Giver*, *Vocabulary Power*, and our						
Identifies where you found the information for your answer						
Has easy to understand instructions and is easy to use/						
Has pieces that are easy to use, big enough to hold, and						
Appropriate visuals/pictures						
Interests the audience						
Has challenging questions						
Involves everyone; everyone plays						
Has a carrying case (box, container)						

Final Project Presentation: Grading rubric

You must:

1. Introduce your game:
explain how you decided to create it;
explain what steps you took to create it;
share what mistakes you made in the creation process and how you solved them;
explain how you decided on the name and what the name means.
2. Explain the instructions and rules (how to play).
3. Speak loudly and clearly for everyone to hear and understand.
4. Look at everyone (make eye contact with everyone) when you speak.
5. Give everyone in your group a turn to speak for an equal amount of time (total group time=no more than 10 minutes).
6. Be prepared to answer questions from your instructor and your classmates about your game; all group members have a chance to answer.
7. Make sure that everyone in the room can see your game.
8. Give everyone a chance to play.

GROUP grade: Total possible points=30/Group score_____INDIVIDUAL Grades=5 points each/total 10 points/
Your score_____

Categories	0	1	2	3	4	5
Loud/clear speech						
Eye contact						

USING PLAY IN HIGHER EDUCATION
Animating Emotional Vegetables

Ellie Livermore

Eleanor is the Multi-media Resource Developer for the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching at Manchester Metropolitan University. She is a graduate of Manchester School of Art and uses her background in running art workshops and community projects to inform a creative approach to teaching in Higher Education.
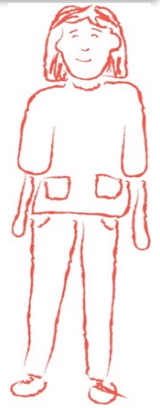
In spring 2015, Dr Jenny Fisher, a Senior Lecturer in Social Care, invited me to collaborate on a project that was looking to produce a new and innovative form of assessment. Jenny had developed an idea to use animation as a form of assessment for second year undergraduate Social Care students. I would be teaching alongside Jenny, Hayley Atkinson and Marian Foley to support seminars, working with students to create animations.

The assessment was fifty per cent of a unit that considers the role of communities in delivering social care, and how communities can be engaged in co-producing their care. The project had transformed a unit by replacing the traditional group PowerPoint presentation with the more creative form of assessment of an animation. Animation is a technique used for creating moving images and is popular in films, television programmes and other media. It typically features movement and sound and can include characters and voice-overs.


For the assessment, students had to create a two-minute animation about a community and a social care organisation that supported communities in improving their well-being.

One of the key skills for the students to learn was how to storyboard, as this would enable their development of the animation. Storyboarding is a process, usually done by hand, in which an animator plans the full animation. They denote with drawings and words what happens in the different scenes, including speech, sound effects and movements. It is a useful tool for planning similar to planning a piece of writing. This process would help the students to plan how they would present and communicate their groups' work for assessment.

In this article, I would like to share what I did to encourage the students to use storyboarding. The activity that I planned was new for the students. In the previous seminar, I had showed a video to introduce the idea of storyboarding. However, I did not feel like I had really got the idea across in the best way for the students. For me, animation has the potential to go beyond simply presenting information. You can have characters, emotions, movement, sound, humour – the lot! I needed to think of way of bringing out all this potential with the students in an engaging way, and the video and my explanation had not achieved this.

I brought my problem to the 'Sell Your Bargains' activity (Nerantzi, 2013), held as part of the *Creativity for Learning in Higher Education* unit I was doing at Manchester Metropolitan University. In pairs, we wandered Manchester's city centre with a budget of two pounds. Each having brought a teaching problem with us, we used each other to bounce ideas or make suggestions about how we might resolve our issue using only our creativity and our small budget.
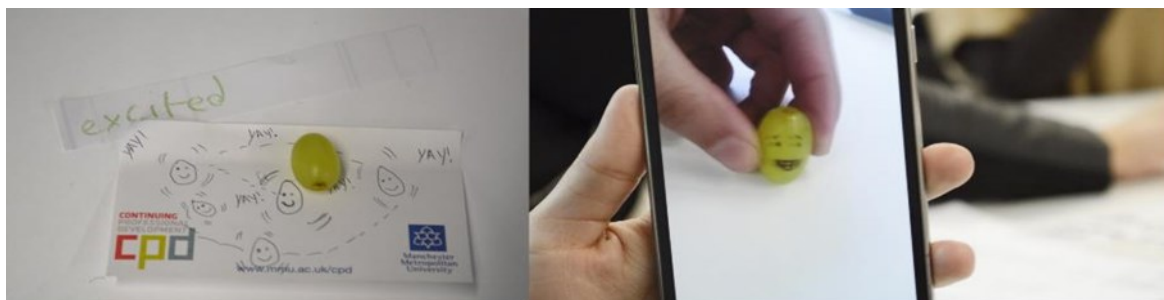
Through the game, I conjured up a plan: I would bring some colourful objects into the class, give each student an emotion, and ask them to draw the object 'being' that emotion. With a little further planning, I chose fruit and vegetables as my colourful objects as they were easily available (and in budget!). I would write the emotions on slips of paper to be chosen at random. Students would draw the vegetable and personify it, indicating how it would look, sound and move – all things that need to be considered when animating.

The novel task seemed, to me, quite simple! The simplicity made me feel confident it would work and that the students, few of whom consider themselves creative, would trust me enough to try it – to play! And so, as the students arrived, I asked to them take a slip of paper, pick a vegetable and to animate it.

They reacted wonderfully, getting excited by the choice and the hilarity of personifying their vegetables. Some were puzzled at first, but not put off. Because I was using it as a warm up task, and there was not a large group of students, I was able to speak with each student as they came in and I think this helped them feel comfortable with the idea of playing in the university setting.

I was really heartened by how the students came in and got on with it, despite not know exactly why they were doing it. There was laughter and playfulness as they thought about the unusual task. Everyone, even those who needed a little encouragement, drew something.

Where they had time, I also encouraged them to use their mobile phones to film their vegetable doing as they had drawn, including movement and sound effects. Impressively, several got this far, eliciting the help of peers to make short clips. We brought the results of the activity, which lasted about 15 minutes, to the front and used them to discuss storyboarding and animation. This time, they seemed really to see the potential in the process and, importantly, to see the difference between making an animation over a PowerPoint presentation.

Throughout this quick activity, I encouraged a playful approach, saying they weren't going to be judged on their artistic abilities. They just needed to use their imaginations and give it a go. I believe the activity achieved what I set out for it to achieve, which was to experience the creative process of animation storyboarding. I think looking back at their assessments, the activity impacted on the way they planned and executed their animations. One group, for example, handed in a fully annotated storyboard along with your animation to show how they had developed their ideas and where they had made critical judgements with regard to communicating their research. Another group embraced the idea of using characters and emotion by interviewing service users at their organisation, and using the audio they collected as the voice-over for characters in their narrative.

Play, brought the process of storyboarding to life, helped the students feel creative and gave a real buzz to the seminar. I felt really proud that I had tried something different and it had worked. The journey I went through with colleagues to think up the idea is definitely one I would use again: playfulness breeds playfulness!

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USING PLAY IN HIGHER EDUCATION: PLAYDOUGH FASHION

Emma Jenkins

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Students of Apparel studying garment technology at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) are taught pattern cutting using a mix of flat pattern and toiling techniques, allowing them to explore the subject in a dynamic and tactile manner. They are encouraged to realise, or imagine the impact of their two-dimensional pattern making on a three-dimensional garment. However, in my experience when we as teachers start encouraging students to take their pattern cutting skills further and grade their work in to other sizes pattern cutting becomes about charts, numbers, equations and x and y-axis. This is typically taught as a demonstration or using specialist computer software and removes the students from the active making element of the process. It seems that even though grading must be highly accurate, to ensure that the style of the garment is faithfully represented in each size, a tool is required to help students under-stand core-grading theory in a way they can relate to more meaningfully.

As part of the Creativity for Learning in Higher Educa-tion course at MMU, I participated in a workshop introducing LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®. This appealed to me, because the action of modelling had tangible parallels with the technical application of my subject area. However, I was worried that in the context of garment technology and fashion, our students would struggle to see its potential, because of its hard and unwieldy structure in comparison to the soft, flexible fabrics they are familiar with. Therefore, I started exploring alternative methods of modelling, including play dough.

Play dough is cheap, simple and fast to make in a range of colours. It is pliable, tactile and easy to experiment with, being simple to manipulate, destroy and re-use at will. I used it to help visualise grading theory, planning a session where students were asked to sculpt bodies and consider how they grew and changed over time. We modelled basic play dough patterns and worked through a grade, using contrasting colours to keep a track on the alterations made to the length and width. We also completed a traditional grading exercise to create a comparable paper pattern to evaluate the results, which were remarkably similar.

I was relieved to see that students appeared to be in-trigued at what was planned for the session and eager to begin. My observation was that they were actively engaged in the tasks and were not distracted, even when students from other classes attempted to get their attention and enquire as to what they were doing (the technology studios are open plan, separated by glass panels). Evaluation of the session confirmed that they had enjoyed themselves and indicated that with appropriate instructions they were quite confident in attempting to continue and grade corresponding patterns independently.

It felt like a bold step to use what could be perceived as a child's toy to explore a concept, which is core to our theory and practice. However, the students' engagement and enjoyment were evident and the initial results incredibly positive. It was a rewarding experience, which I would like to explore in other contexts and that others, who observed the session are also keen to pursue – watch out for a play dough fashion revolution.

USING PLAY IN HIGHER EDUCATION: REFLECTIONS ON PARTICIPATING IN A CREATIVITY FOR LEARNING HE COURSE

Helena May Kettleborough

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At MMU I teach on the Responsible Business course, a mandatory course for second year undergraduate students in the Business School, with Helen Wadham as Unit Leader[a]. We teach the drivers for Responsible Business. For example, the Living Planet Index[1] reports that since 1970, the 'number of wild animals on Earth has halved in the past forty years'[2] and that they are still declining. It also reports that levels of consumption are too high for the earth to sustain - at UK rates, 2.5 can teach these figures to our students how do we make them meaningful so that the students might embed them in their lives? Philosopher Gregory Bateson suggests that art can help bridge different sorts of thinking.

> "There are bridges between one sort of thought and the other, and it seems to me that artists and planets are needed.[3] While we poets are specifically concerned with these bridges" [2 p470]

The *Creativity for Learning in HE* course, enabled me to get to grip with some of these questions in day to day teaching. I was required to make a practical impact. I decided to make one small creative intervention in each Tutorial over the spring term with the aim of making theory more accessible and to encourage students to write the best assignment they could.

Being on the Creativity for Learning course was significant. The day I registered, I went out and brought some coloured pens and every workshop put them out on the tutorial tables. It was the course creator, Chrissi Nerantizi's approach that we should try and extend ourselves in what we did. In the delivery of the workshops, she pushed us, taking us out into Manchester for an afternoon session to encourage us to think beyond the seminar room. Some of the interventions I tried came directly out of creativity workshops, e.g. for the workshop on Responsible Marketing and Advertising, I put ads from the papers all over the tables and on the floor to grab the attention of the students. In another, to help students understand the interconnected stages of a written assignment, we played dominoes in the icebreaker. I regularly used individual free fall writing to encourage the students to think about the progress they were making and help plan the work ahead.

Whilst all interventions were interesting, the one which was simple and yet effective, was when we were studying Sustainability Strategies, a potentially challenging but important part of the course. I brought in A3 paper for each student. Armed with the coloured pens, I asked each student to draw a representation of the strategy we were studying from the diagrams on Power-Point. The students used the pens provided and the creamy sheets of A3 paper. John Elkington's[4] strategy became a variety of coloured pillars. McDonough and Braungart's cradle to cradle theory[5] became a cherry tree and the Natural Step[6] became varied representations of a funnel through which humanity and all the species on the planet need to pass. I knew I had done something right when a fortnight later, I was talking to one of the tutorial groups and a student pulled from his bag the folded A3 paper and found the theory we were talking about. In the regular end of term feedback, encouraging comments were received.

The course helped me to keep to the challenge of introducing something creative in a Tutorial every time and also to value interventions, however small. Using play in learning gave practical life to the idea of the unlimited possibilities of learning in helping create a more sustainable world, a concept I studied in my PhD[7].

What next? We are preparing an academic poster to present our creative interventions and what we have learnt. I will be working on weaving small creative interventions into my teaching as an integrated whole. As a group, one of the ideas is that we create an 'I love learning' campaign. Perhaps we can make creative interventions to make the plight of animals come alive. Watch this space.

This article is written in a personal capacity.

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a For further details of MMU's work on sustainability, see http://www.mmu.ac.uk/environment/policies/

PERPLEXING PROPOSITION

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Let me start by saying "today IS A GREAT day!" Hmm, I wonder how many of you reading this are relating to the words? Not convinced? What if I go on to say *WHY* it's a GREAT day? …

Well it is because YOU have been awarded….. a PRIZE!

Ok, so NOW how do you feel? Are you thinking 'how can every one of you reading this be a prize winner?' Are you annoyed that I'm wasting your time when you're incredibly busy? Are you sceptical? Unsure? Do you think this is a joke? Do you secretly hope it might be true?

If you are still reading this then perhaps I should explain, are you good with numbers? Read on; for tomorrow you will wake up with your prize…. £86,600 will be deposited into your 'bank'.

Isn't this fantastic? Does it sound too good to be true? A dodgy scam to get your bank account details, or odds are, you really are confused now- what's the catch?

Back to me for a moment, I guess it's all in the timing and admittedly it does also depend on how I deliver this good news for how convinced you are at this stage.

To be honest this IS [in part] too good to be true, so, YES, there is a catch. There are RULES. Let's keep this short, I will list them:

1. You have ONE day to spend the money,
2. At the end of the day any balance remaining in the account *will* be removed and the account closed.
3. [For those creative thinkers of you already plotting ways to get round the rules], no, you may NOT transfer money into any other account.
4. The good news is you DO have a choice on how to spend it.
5. But BEWARE - the bank can take away some or all [eek] of the balance unexpectedly.

Still puzzled? Or have you left the room? I'm happy to answer questions. Now write down what you would do with the money – what value does it hold for you?

I know you will all have different approaches for how *you* will spend it. You may be frustrated that you can't save any of it, will you give some or all of it to charity? When you have written your list – do you have enough money for all of the things you want to do?

Hold those thoughts but let me move on, I want you to look at this picture: yes it's a black hole, you are aware of them, right? Perhaps you don't know how they work, are they scary or they are too far away and so completely irrelevant?

More importantly, what has this really got to do with the prize money?

Well I must admit that I am not good with numbers, oh and did I mention that I made a mistake… sorry, please switch the pound sign – it should be seconds. Yes, this is still a prize, its just that it is 86000 *seconds*, equating to 1440 minutes and that's the prize you are awarded with every single day.

For each 24 hours you have a maximum available time (though remember you need to sleep!), you can't bank it for another day, you can give some [or all] of it away. You do have a choice how to spend it though this will be impacted by constraints on your time and sometimes something unexpected comes along to steal some or all that is left.

The essence of this 'game' formed the initial part of a session for final year BA(Hons) Fashion Design and Technology students. The aim was twofold, firstly to offer a different perspective of time from which to engage the students in the subject of critical path. This was prior to a follow-up experiential session where they developed their own personal critical path.

The session was facilitated through a presentation and delivered in a weekly meeting, where announcements and information is shared and at a stage where the teaching team had identified that there were general feelings of 'not enough time'. Feedback from the students has been very positive, with good engagement levels in the follow-up activity. Anecdotally it was noticed that students displayed their critical paths within the studios and updated them regularly.
Image source: http://powerlisting.wikia.com/wiki/black_hole_manipulation

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Robots first appeared in science fiction literacy and had been imagined and presented as anthropomorphic humanoids for supporting humans in everyday life activities. However, in most cases they turned out to be dictators. Therefore Isaac Asimov's Three Laws of Robotics[2] are established. Although very early, a surprising multitude of efforts had been made (even from 30s many humanoid robots have been presented in exhibitions), rapid robotic evolution has been accomplished mainly in the industrial area. The first robot for home service, was delivered many decades after the first robot appearance with the figure of a humble floor vacuum with cylindrical shape of 20 cm high and 40 cm diameter. Since then, although more than 10 million home robots have been sold worldwide, none of them have managed to fulfill the human-robot natural communication and humanoid operation, which had been presented in the early science fiction literature works.

But the lack of humanoid communication and intelligence capabilities doesn't seem to bother kids. By using their imagination kids can readily anthropomorphize non living entities, compensate robot's handicaps and manage to play effectively. In fact, this need to compensate the robot's handicap gives kids the much needed reason and space to exploit their imagination and use and develop their creativity.

Does this work in a university level as well? Are simple robotic kits (like Lego, Roamer and Beebot) sufficient to support playing activities or do we need to exploit sophisticated robots (like Aldebaran's NAO or Honda's Asimo)? In other words, how sophisticated should a robot be in order to support effectively the implementation of creative and playful activities and enhance collaboration between university students?
Playing with robots -

WATCH THESE CLIPS OF CHILDREN PLAYING WITH ROBOTS
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s4orQTPhVFY
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bxQZA4YHpbk
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=skXYr8BzjpM
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nNbj2G3GmAo

Learn traditional costumes and dance
In June - July 2011, the Intensive Program "People and Space in the Borderland of Western Macedonia: Tracing historical, social and intercultural features", took place at the Educational Department of the University of Western Macedonia in Florina. Postgraduate and undergraduate students from Dutch, Cypriot and Greek universities participated.

From our experience of the previous year, we knew that due to the international and intensive character of the program, students faced communication and cooperation problems so team building activities would be necessary at the start of the program. To handle these issues we came up with a schedule to implement robotic games in order to facilitate team-building with activities relevant to the curriculum. We chose to design a cultural project on traditional dance and costume. The purposes of the project were:
1) getting to know the culture of Florina (knowledge acquisition),
2) creating interaction, communication, familiarity and acquaintance among learners through activities with robotic constructions (team building) and
3) increasing satisfaction and entertainment through hands-on and self-expression activities which will promote their creativity (enjoyment).

Robot architecture
Socially assistive robots (SAR) must engage the user effectively, without the need for extensive training. Because of the time restriction we decided not to start from scratch, but to give the participants a common robotic platform as a base. The robots were designed and constructed so as to move on the floor and also to face in every direction (upper body torso rotation). In order that users could synchronise its movements (dance steps) with the music, a microphone was incorporated into the robot.
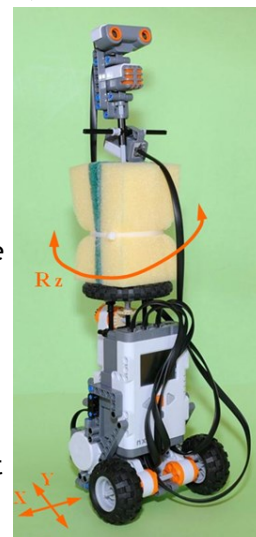
The dimensions of the robot were decided so it would be able to perform the "Zaramo" dance on a table, furthermore it was also built large enough in order to give participants the ability to dress it.

Hands-on and self-expression games/activities
The 25 participants were divided into 6 teams, in order to have small groups. The teams were mixed to prevent aggregation of expatriates and possible acquaintances. A scoreboard was given to each team, in order to evaluate other teams' performance at each game/competition. The process was divided into five phases:

Phase 1: introductory or informative
Participants were informed about the general purposes of the scheduled bonding activities and the stages of these activities. Moreover they discussed the possibility of connecting robot activities with cultural goals (e.g. dance, theatre, social aspects, etc.). In order to familiarize the participants with the cultural and traditional aspects of the city of Florina, we brought in authentic traditional costumes and projected videos about the local dance called the "Zaramo."

Phase 2: best costume contest
The objective of this activity was the creation and decoration of traditional costume, as a garment for the robot dancer. Each team was supplied with materials (corrugated paper in various colours, paper napkins in various colours and with various designs, ribbons, sea shells, markers, pencils, scissors, glue, etc.). After completing the costume, they dressed the robot, like dressmakers do with fashion models.

Each group presented its creation (a robot dressed in their costume) and evaluated the other teams' costumes. The evaluation was based on the oral presentation and the criteria were the quality of the fabric (quality textile) and decoration of the clothing of the robot (art).

Phase 3: contest in the synchronization of the robot
In this phase, each team had to synchronize the movement of its robot according to the repeated patterns of dance music. All robots "knew" how to dance Zaramo. The robots were programmed to start dancing "Zaramo" by the clapping of hands, to make the six steps of the dance, and then stop. So, a student (representative of the team) had to clap his hands as many times as necessary in order to give rhythm to the robot mimicking the traditional motions, based on the music and patterns of Zaramo (according to the video that was being played). At the same time, the other groups were rating the robot's motion control of the contestant group. In the end, all the robots were placed in the traditional circular shape, to dance Zaramo all together with the synchronized hand-clapping of all groups.

Phase 4: dance contest between groups
The goal of this activity was the transition of knowledge (dance learning) from the robot control activity to the individual. The participants in order to learn Zaramo placed the 6 steps (in the form of footprints) of Zaramo on the floor. The practice was followed by a dance contest between the groups. Each team had to dance in a circle and was rated by the other groups, with specific evaluation criteria (rhythm, sequence of steps, etc).

Phase 5: Evaluation and reflection
At the end, an individual questionnaire was given to all participants, which aimed to evaluate the educational process and to reflect on this game-style educational experience.

Discussion
Most participants claimed that it was their first participation in such activities and they considered them very innovative. A few (6/25) stated that they had similar experiences with robot toys, Lego bricks and video-games such as Guitar Hero.

Participants recognized many different game elements in the activities, like (10/25) synchronizing the robot dance and/or dressing robot, (9/25) cooperating with teammates, (6/25) competing and (3/25) generally having fun.

The majority of the participants (17/25) stated that they worked together in order to make the costume and to dance and the rest of them (8/25) stated that they cooperated in every phase of the project.

activities captured the participants' attention. Questionnaire analysis showed that the combination of such technology with cultural activities can offer a context not only suitable for learning, but also for team building. Social interaction with robots motivated participants to achieve progress in learning and communicating/collaborating as a team.

Through the participants' responses we can see that robot costume design and guidance was the most communicative and co-operational part of the project, while Zaramo dancing was the most self expressive part. Nevertheless it is combinations that offer the context for adults' team-building, creativity and full enjoyment of learning.

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLxDI21F9GE
2 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Runaround_(story)

In the particular project we were interested in examining if robotic activities can offer a proper learning environment for non robotic aspects of learning and also proper context for team building for adults. From the project implementation and data analysis we saw that the project had a positive impact in both major goals.

Robots served as dynamic tools. We took advantage of their construction and architecture, specially designed and adapted it to our project needs (anthropomorphism, dimensions, etc,). Also the intelligence and interaction that robots brought to the

*The **Zaramo**, (Greek: Ζάραμο) is a dance from the northern Greek region of Macedonia, common in Florina regional unit.[1] The name Zaramo comes from the south-slavic phrase za ramo ('shoulder to shoulder').*

The dance is done in two or more separate lines, men in one line and women in the other. The men start out with the right foot, put the left one behind the right, move the right to the side, then lift the left leg, then lift the right leg. The women do the same, but instead of lifting the leg, they step to the side, and then step forward.

Adapted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zaramo_(dance)

PLAYING WITH IDEAS

Kerry Moakes

Kerry is a lecturer in the Faculty of Education at Manchester Metropolitan University where she teaches on the undergraduate Childhood Studies programme.

Most of my career has been within the context of higher education. The interdisciplinary field of childhood studies offers alternative methodological approaches and theoretical depictions of the child, her experiences and the people, the institutions, discourses and practices that shape her. Utilising this theoretical field to reflect critically upon teaching and learning in HE will potentially offer the opportunity of alternative theoretical and practical innovations, which thus enhance the student experience. Play and learning are highly contested concepts in the field of childhood studies. The contributions are derived from diverse philosophical and theoretical positions which foster enduring dialogue within academic literature and practical arenas.

The diverse and multiplicity of perspectives which surround early years practice and pedagogy can, and I argue should, inform classroom practices in HE. Within the early years community, play is believed to serve many roles[1]. Brooker *et al*[2] present the 'sprawling body'[3] which emphasises the ontological and epistemological conflicts that exist in relation to how and why play matters. Rather than assert, value over one or other of these perspectives, one of the important contributions offered by them is the framing of their handbook of 'Play and Learning in Early Childhood'[2] with reference to Donna Haraway's work[4].

Haraways' work is immensely complex and explodes the notion that 'nothing is beyond question'. However, in my initial tussles with this work as part of my PhD, I am drawn to the interconnections between activism and 'becoming worldly with'[5]. Haraway explores the importance of relationships and interactions with things other than humans and how 'becoming with' objects impacts on the person and thus the world in which the human and the 'beyond human' interacts.

The resonance of this was experienced within a teaching session in which I incorporated the use of Lego and involved the students in a series of experimentations, constructions and co-constructions. The students were asked to create different aspects of their educational experience individually, which ultimately led to a group construction of education today. The Figure depicts the teacher in an elevated position and a conveyor belt which produces children who have knowledge of traditional subjects such as maths and science (pictured symbolically). The students' diverse and individual conceptions of their own educational experiences were discussed and then fused to create an assemblage.
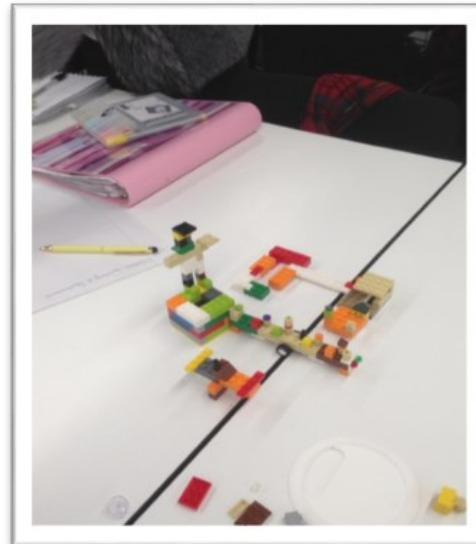
With reference to Haraway, it is possible to consider the students 'becoming with' Lego. In the context of HE spaces, this exploration with materials attempts to shift students' preoccupations that learning, becoming and being-successful are hierarchical, meritocratic processes which are rooted in linear notions of individualism and developmentalism. The removal of predetermined outcomes in play-based learning can open up the HE space as a space in which the student has agency and opportunity. For students who intend to work in the early years sector, experimenting with objects can influence their pre-conceptions about what learning is and enable them to reflect upon the restrained and sterile policy perspectives around the value of play in children's learning. 'Becoming worldly with' makes learning more complex and thus leads students to 'grapple with'[5] their own experiences and in turn reflect on the interconnectedness of spaces both micro spaces and macro social and political contexts. Through a process of 'grappling with' it is hoped that students have the

opportunity to practise activism in their lives. Such approaches reasserts the pedagogical purpose of the university which Giroux[5 p14] articulates is about promoting thinking 'about the issues affecting their lives and the world at large, potentially energising them to seize such moments as possibilities of acting on the world and for engaging it as a matter of politics, powers and social justice'.

Giugni's [5p26] states 'become worldly with' [is] an activist practice of engaging the politics of assemblages of relational entanglements that produce and are produced in everyday life…' By bringing their individual Lego models together to participate in the group construction the students are relationally entangled in the production of an aspect of everyday life, in this example, the models represented educational experiences for children today. The value of collaboration in learning has been widely reviewed[6], however, applying Haraway's work emphasises the complexity of the interactions between people, objects and spaces. It is through recognition of this complexity, feeling unsure and perhaps unsafe, that a 'grappling with' emerges. Giugni's[5] asserts that this 'grappling with' leads to activism becoming part of being. Without activism as part of being the significance of HE is diminished and reduced to producing 'fodder for the corporation'[7]. For the early years students with whom I practice, this ontological shift which roots activism in being, is essential to quality practice in the children's workforce.

A more straightforward summary could be that in the context of early years practice, a knowledge of theoretical contributions to our understanding of play and the relationship with early learning is important, as is practical experience working within children in a setting. However, I would argue that more important than this is students' opportunity to feel an educational experience which 'pushes' them to *feel* education differently and thus become different. When presented with Lego in the classroom there were a mixture of feelings, just the mere presence of the boxes of Lego impacted the students' relational interactions and attitudes. Through introducing play in the classroom there was a sense that students were 'grappling with' their being in a space.

It is through this 'grappling with' that we can attempt to re-establish higher education as space which enables and fosters democratic, critical questioning. A space in which 'nothing is beyond question' (4). This was illustrated acutely when in the universities Internal Student Survey (ISS), a student commented 'Try to make it a bit more fun and interesting (playing with Lego for 3 hours straight is not fun).' At this juncture, it is perhaps worth returning to Giugni's[5] appraisal of Haraway in which she expresses the importance of ways in which activism can be fostered through alternative theoretical encounters. As such, applying creative play-based approaches in the classroom can evoke feeling and freedom to question. Play-based activities, can help to dismantle the hierarchical preconceptions of the classroom that students, this preconception evokes familiarity, safety, security and structure whereas, different objects in different spaces, creates something different, perhaps uncomfortable which opens up the potential for learning.

In summary, in order to ensure that HE creates 'employable' graduates, students' experience of university needs to be within contexts and spaces which interrogate, critically question and challenge everything including the institutions, the ideologies and the practices which we have become passively invisible to them. From the perspective of HE educator, I commit to play in the classroom as a means of creating intra-actions in which 'the material and the discursive are mutually implicated in the dynamics of interactivity'[8]. Put more simply, I believe that through the process of interaction with the environment, whatever that environment might be, something changes, the ways of thinking, feeling and talking are changed and as such we are pushed to continually 'grapple with' in a process of activism and 'becoming worldly with'[5].

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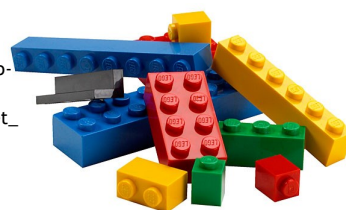
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BUILDING BLOCKS FROM CLASSROOM TO THE REAL WORLD

Ling Lim

Ling Lim is a Research Fellow in the Centre for Aviation Transport and the Environment at Manchester Metropolitan University. Her main research experience and interest lies in the application of computational techniques in the area of environmental science, especially looking into the environmental impacts of aviation industry.

Tackling multi-disciplinary issues on aviation impacts

Students on the Level 6 unit of "*Aviation and its Environmental Impacts*" will find their studies relevant when they read news headlines such as "*EU suspends extension of plane emissions trading rules*"[1] and "*EU hails ICAO plan for global green tax on aviation*"[2]. Unlike other units in the Division of Geography and Environmental Management at Manchester Metropolitan University, the unit is delivered by research staff from the Centre for Aviation, Transport and the Environment. The team adopts research-informed teaching[3] to motivate and provide context to the curriculum. This popular unit covers a broad range of fields from science to economics, and leads the students to discover for themselves how these factors affect aviation-related policies. One key aviation policy that is highly topical is the emissions trading scheme or market-based measures (MBMs). Hence, a session was designed to introduce students to various mitigation options and illustrate how MBMs, despite being the best available solution, are plagued with problems, the main one being the intricacies of international negotiations.

Role-playing, LEGO® Science Play and the intricacies of international negotiations

At first, the students were divided into teams named after aircrafts (e.g. A380), with each team member assigned a country that represented a category of international aviation emitter (e.g. UK – high-income, big emitter). Then, the students collected points for their team by answering questions throughout the lecture. Each team was awarded 'mystery' boxes of different sizes based on the number of points collected. Students were then briefed on the aim of the role-playing activity, i.e. to identify the complex issues involved in international negotiations. The students imagined themselves being delegates in the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) council where they would have to defend the interest of their 'respective countries'. There was excitement when they discovered LEGO® bricks in their mystery boxes. Each student was allocated a

number of bricks based on the country they represent. Using the bricks as an analogy to emissions, they discussed how to get more bricks to build their models (analogous to needing more emissions allowance for economic growth) or how to reallocate the bricks fairly (emissions allocation). Finally, a representative from each team shared their discussion points with the rest of the class.

Active learning and learning through play

Bunce et al.[4] show that the active learning method produces fewer attention lapses compared with the traditional lecture setting. Therefore, a 2-hour session, inter-mixed with various activities such as a quiz, role-playing and playing with LEGO®, provided an interesting and engaging learning environment for the students. The quiz demonstrated the students' pre- and post-lecture knowledge, which were vital information for me, as a facilitator to the role-playing discussions, as implied by Watson and Gable[5]. The idea behind adapting LEGO® Serious Play®[6] (no date) and using the bricks as a science prop in the role-play, provided an informal setting, whereby each student has the opportunity to share his or her opinion and contribute to the group and ultimately, the class discussions. The LEGO® bricks of different shapes and sizes were also representing something that can be calculated but cannot be seen, such as emissions and the economics of trading bricks (as an analogy for trading emissions)[7]. The education philosopher Piaget[8] advocated learning through play for children, so why not for students in higher education?

Experiential learning and future development

I have learnt that simple elements such as team names based on aircrafts, 'mystery' boxes and LEGO® bricks proved to be effective attention-grabbing props for the students. Once you have their attention, the learning begins, connections are made, memory cells triggered and teaching becomes a more fulfilling exercise. The short survey conducted at the end of the session showed that most of the students enjoyed the session, found the activities stimulating and that they achieved most of the learning outcomes set at the start. As for the LEGO® activity, it did what it was supposed to do, i.e. make the students participate in discussions. Some even commented, "*met others from the student group I've never met before*" and "*added different points of view from many individuals*". However, as expected some students dislike the activity, "*what would my parents think?*", referring to the use of LEGO® at university.

Will I use these learning activities again? In a heartbeat, but they do require some modifications. For example, having a more balanced team division and using technology such as Nearpod® for the quiz part of the session. This will encourage everyone to participate, instead of only those willing to speak out. Also, during the LEGO® activity, I should provide some guidelines or specific models to build under timed conditions. This may encourage a more coherent set of discussion points and prevent the students from straying outside the topic. Perhaps next time, they would be able to link the discussion points to headlines such as "*EU backs compromise on plane CO_2 emissions*"[9]. I believe most of the students from this session will know that international negotiations can be extremely challenging, and that things are always not as straightforward as they seem.

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A PLAYGROUND MODEL FOR CREATIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Chrissi Nerantzi

Chrissi is a playful academic developer who works in the Centre for Excellence for Learning and Teaching at Manchester Metropolitan University in the United Kingdom. She can't stop experimenting and questioning. And this is often risky! But definitely worth it! Her curiosity and passion for creating stimulating and playful learning and teaching experiences can surprise, intrigue and make us feel uncomfortable but all for a good reason: to help us open our eyes and minds to new possibilities and make valuable discoveries.

ABOUT PLAY

Play is essential and central to our development. Humans have evolved thanks to play (3). Claims that without play "our behaviour becomes fixed. We are not interested in new and different things." Sadly, as we get older, the opportunity and encouragement to play diminishes as more serious social activities, study and work come to dominate our life. In our professional roles do we fear that we will be ridiculed and opposed by doing something wacky, something playful, something that is actually fun? Well, wacky ideas can change the world. They rattle the cages of the status-quo and bring imbalance until the dust settles again. Isn't this what learning is all about? Can we afford not to play, especially in HE the greenhouse for innovation and knowledge creation?

PLAYGROUNDS

This article will focus on play in higher education in the context of professional development of academics linked to teaching.

Play can happen everywhere, the same as learning. However, in many countries there are dedicated areas for play and 'playable spaces' (21). These are playgrounds. Playgrounds play a vital role in children's social, cognitive and physical development. They are places for having fun, exploring and discovery. They have been shown to increase creativity and enable children to experience varied situations and take risks (21).

Playground Fuji Hakonelzu National Park, image source http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c5/Playground_at_Fuji-Hakone-Izu_National_Park.jpg

Playgrounds are dedicated spaces for play. A lot of imaginative thinking, planning and design goes into them as well as considerations for health and safety to ensure they are safe. But can a place be safe or is safety a function of the way people interact with the space and the things it contains? Often playgrounds are fenced and the ground is soft to protect from falls. The whole appearance and functionality also depends on the resources available in the space. There are a number of pre-designed affordances for play available in a playground, but usually the only instructions are notices about what you should not do! Rather the affordances challenge and encourage creative exploration, stretch and challenge our abilities, and encourage us to take risks in order to discover how far we can go.

GENERATIONS AND PLAYGROUND RELATIONSHIPS

My own experiences have led me to the following thinking: We take babies, toddlers and young children to the playground. We supervise them at all times. We hold their hand and always stand nearby to help. Our eyes follow every move they make, every step they take. Occasionally we go down the slide together and sit on the swing together, when we are able of course (and no-one is looking!). Often we get immersed in our child's play and the world stops for a moment or a bit longer. This helps us make really special connections with our children. Have you done this? Have you seen this happening? What do you remember?

When our children get older, they become more independent and do not need our help to enjoy the affordances of the park without our supervision. As parents or carers we can sit on the bench and enjoy chatting with others although occasionally we shout 'be careful!', 'don't do that', or 'get down from there' to stop them damaging themselves. We become the playground rule makers... our children bend or break the rules, as we have done many times when we were children. Our children find pleasure playing with other children, challenge and help each other. They make valuable connections. They are taking risks, explore possibilities and from time to time they might hurt themselves. They learn through fun and occasional pain.

Later still, we allow children to go to the playground on their own and when they become teenagers it is cool to collect there in the evenings, while hanging around with mates. When teenagers are no longer teenagers, they come back to the playground with nostalgia when they have their our own children or are carers and the cycle begins again. I have gone through the full circle myself and my boys are going through it now. What I am trying to say is that playgrounds are an important part of our growing up and as parents they are important to helping our children grow up. As we go through life our relationship with these play spaces change. From re-active player (baby), we become pro-active (toddler) and initially still supervised players to fully pro-active player (child, teenager). We also play the role of role-model (older child) and then observer and supervisor (older child, parent, carer), a guide on the side without however joining in.

You on the swing...
How do you feel?

MY PROPOSITION

So if play is important for our development and wellbeing in our everyday world, it must also be important for development in the professional world? In this article I will argue that play is important to professional development and illustrate this using a play space that I designed and facilitated in order to foster creative development for a group of higher education professionals. As the facilitator of the process, modelling playful practices with a purpose, reflecting on the process and the outcomes and supporting colleagues were all important to me to make this experience worthwhile for all involved. I attempt to develop a pedagogical playground model together and welcome your feedback and suggestions. Additional content and visual aids to support my brief descriptions of practice can be found in a slideshow (see notes at end of article).

PLAY IN HE

In my experience, play is not a widely used approach in higher education in the context of learning and teaching. But when used imaginatively and integrated with reflection, it can be extremely rewarding for both teachers and learners. Bateson and Martin (2013) recognise that play opens up new possibilities for creativity, while James and Brookfield (2014, 55) emphasise that "an engaging classroom uses approaches from an eclectic array of sources to stimulate student learning and bring a re-energizing breath of fresh air to our teaching practices." In this article I argue that play and playfulness can be an important component of this 'array of sources to stimulate student learning'.

What is stopping us from re-imagining higher education as an infinite number of playgrounds in which we can play with ideas and our own responses to such ideas in ways that foster imaginative, innovative or different ways of thinking and action, which have the potential to foster new knowledge creation for the social good? It is my belief that conceptualising higher education in this way will help teachers to assist students to discover themselves and their purposes, and become creative as well as critical thinkers, and establish habits of lifelong and lifewide learning. To grow as individuals and professionals during and beyond their studies, after all play is the fertiliser of the brain (3). Play provides the learning or problem framing context that will help us think and act creatively outside- and inside-the boxes we inhabit!

I have started formulating a conceptualisation of my pedagogical approach using the playground metaphor outlined above. I see it as an ecology for learning and creative achievement (10) that is dynamic, adapts and changes in the moment and over time, perhaps as a continuum with three phases of development that lead progressively to autonomy and empowerment or which also seems to have parallels with Ramsden (2008) and the three main theories of teaching but also the PAH continuum (13) (6) (see Figure 1):

Playground Pedagogy	Three main theories of teaching (Ramsden, 2008)	PAH continuum (13) (6))	Creativity and Learning Ecologies (10)
Playground 1.0 supervised > feeling safe, developing trust	Theory 1: Teaching as telling, transmission or delivery - PASSIVE	Pedagogy	Education 1.0/ Creativity 1.0/ Learning Ecology 1.0 – instructivist
Playground 2.0 participatory > gaining playful confidence through guided playful learning	Theory 2: Teaching as organising or facilitating student activity - ACTIVE	Andragogy	Education 2.0/ Creativity 2.0/ Learning Ecology 2.0 – constructivist
Playground 3.0 self-determined > autonomy, developing and sustaining play-active practice	Theory 3: Teaching as making learning possible – SELF-DIRECTED	Heutagogy	Education 3.0/ Creativity 3.0/ Learning Ecology 3.0 - connectivist

Figure 1. Playground Pedagogy, the three main theories of teaching (Ramsden, 2008) ; the PAH continuum (13) (6); Creativity and Learning Ecologies (10)

A PLAYFUL DESIGN

The 'Creativity for Learning' blended-learning module is part of the Postgraduate Certificate and the Masters in Academic Practice at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU). It is also offered as an openly licensed course at the same time (https://p2pu.org/en/courses/2615/creativity-for-learning-in-higher-education/) that brings together colleagues who study for credits and others who do not from within MMU and elsewhere. Within MMU the module is optional and colleagues who are keen to explore further their creative capacity and practice as a teacher can join in. They are made aware from the outset that they will be challenged and feel uncomfortable at times as the safety net of their own beliefs might crumble under their feet. This self-selection perhaps means that colleagues who are already open to creativity are more attracted than others who are perhaps more conservative as a teacher. But this is just a speculation at the moment.

The example will hopefully provide food for thought and encourage others who are keen to become more playful in their teaching to create learning ecologies that are full of surprises that stretch beyond the boundaries of the physical and virtual classroom that connect formal and informal learning and seize the affordances that surround us in the modern world.

'Creativity for Learning' is currently running until the summer 2015. The climax will be the sharing of innovations during MMU's Learning and Teaching Conference in July. So everything is fresh and alive.

The authentic voices of participants have been collected week-by-week via the Value Jar (pictured) using an appreciative enquiry approach. I triangulated these with my thoughts and observations together with voices from the literature (Figure 2). The analysis and synthesis of these voices are what led me to the definition of a playground in the context of learning and teaching in H.E.

Right: Figure 2. Triangulation of voices

A PLAYGROUND AND OPPORTUNITY TO PLAY

The module is all about exploring creative and playful approaches to learning and teaching through participation, modelling and immersion in new play spaces. New playful experiences and the effects of such experiences are intended to generate fresh ways of thinking, stimulate changes to practices, attitudes and behaviours and trigger deep and meaningful reflection. It was vital to keep the module fresh, upbeat, playful and challenging.

I visualised the module as a pedagogical playground and an invitation and opportunity for colleagues to play with ideas and practices using active, experiential and collaborative learning approaches. I hoped that the affordances for play would empower them to challenge themselves, take risks, experiment and reflect on their achievements and transform their ideas, attitudes and practices in the process. All this is happening in the pedagogical playground were community becomes our foundation and driver for playful engagement, learning and experimentation.

Within the module (pedagogical playground), we move organically between Playground 1.0, Playground 2.0 and Playground 3.0 depending on what we want to achieve and where we want to go but also who is driving (determining?) the play. In order to boost confidence and competence from the outset, as facilitator I initially adopted a more hands-on approach to orchestrate play, as it would happen in the real playground (Playground 1.0). Gradually, I relinquished control and participants gained more autonomy to experiment, take risks, make mistakes and create their own play-activities, on their own and with others (Playground 2.0). As we progressed through the module, my strategy changed from "push" to "pull" to enable individuals and groups to determine for themselves the desired direction of growth and application to own practice (Playground 3.0).

Throughout the process we engaged in playful experimentation and thinking with our head, hands and hearts which are very important for professional development (22) using a scaffold approach in the spirit of the playground. The key features of the approach, brought in progressively are:

- Community Spaces – Connecting people
- Open Spaces - Expansive minds
- Story Spaces - Connecting hearts
- Making Spaces – Connecting hands
- Thinking Spaces – Connecting minds

The following sections describe the rationale for each of these pedagogical features, which are content and process at the same time. They also provide an explanation of how they link back to the playground idea and the module itself and include specific examples from practice. Photographs that capture activities and colleagues engaged in these in this module can be found at https://www.flickr.com/photos/21614692@N02/sets/72157650429760242/ .

COMMUNITY SPACES: CONNECTING PEOPLE

Knowing each other makes a massive difference for learning and teaching. We open-up who we really are and do stuff we would not perhaps normally do. We are more open to perspectives of others and tolerate each other as well as show our own real emotions and know that it is ok.

When we are positive about each other as human beings, accept and respect individuality and show empathy, we are less critical about things we normally disapprove. At the same time, we seem to become more open to receiving criticism as this is then seen as a caring behaviour and we look after each other. Goleman (2002, 2010) wrote "positive groups help people make positive changes, particularly if the relationships are filled with candour, trust, and psychological safety." Trust plays a key role in learning communities. In high trust communities focused on a common goal, there is also high learning (1). Could this provide a useful lens we need to pay closer attention to so as to lay foundations to build our learning playgrounds?

The idea of community spaces and community as a space to develop trust provided the starting point of this module and enabled us to experience Playground 1.0.The main strategies for building a sense of community were helping colleagues to feel safe to open up and I include myself in this process. Playful activities, such as the "Shoebox" for example, where items from the past, present and future were shared with the whole group, helped create memorable hooks and connections to each other but also community and identity.
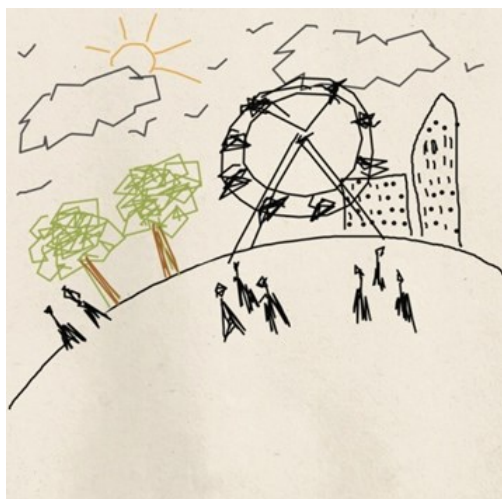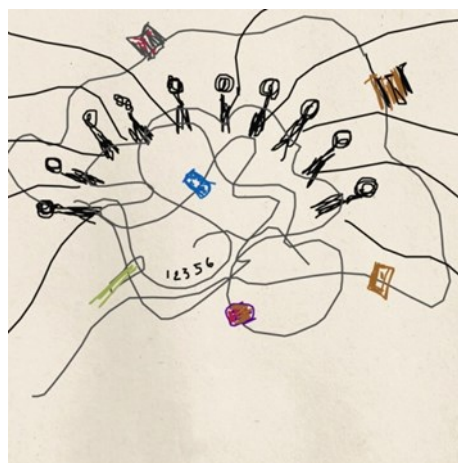
Authentic voices:

"I have realised that there are many people interested in creativity just like me."

"It made me feel braver. It helped me start thinking about the opportunities that could come from this experience."

"It helped me to connect with who I am, what led me to working within HE which is my passion for creativity. It was also valuable to meet other colleagues who potentially I will collaborate with in developing creative approaches to teaching."

OPEN SPACES: CONNECTING IDEAS

When we think of learning we often think of it as a "sitting-down" activity... but is it? Does it have to be? Is it always good or appropriate?

Fresh air is good for us. Getting out of stuffy classrooms, walking around and learning in different places and spaces is revitalising. Learning happens everywhere, in physical and digital spaces. Wenger et al. (2009) talk about a patchwork strategy to connect social media spaces for communities to come together. Extending the opportunities beyond the digital will help us create further bridges for un-interrupted learning. Creating a natural blend and move seamlessly between spaces and places, physical and digital ones that are immersive and lead to fertilisation of ideas, that bring people together, I think this is key.

Could play, playful activities and games help? Walking, talking, playing, having fun and challenging? Especially games we play in different spaces, games that pose problems and are collaborative seem to work (24). Montana (2011, 4) referring to pervasive games says that they "expand the magic circle of play socially, spatially or temporally". Learning could or even should be magical and full of surprises and suspense, for the learner and the teacher.

However, a place is just a place, a tool is just a tool. It needs people to bring these to life and appropriate them. Creativity and playfulness helps us "lose" and "find" ourselves and discover new opportunities for learning in surprising places and spaces. Many of these haven't been designed especially for learning but foster it naturally if they are inhabited by a community and where there is community there is openness. Openness to ideas, openness to play, openness to think and to do the unexpected. Is it worth thinking of the world as a global playground for learning?

Within the context of the module, the connections we made among us and the wider communities, locally and globally, played a key role in building confidence and extending engagement beyond the known and the near through guided playful exploration, which helped us reach Playground 2.0. An example strategy includes the collaborative game "Sell your bargains" which transformed Manchester City Centre into our open playground. This created excitement and suspense. The game enabled colleagues to work in twos or threes on their pedagogical dilemmas using a real challenge and together come up with an innovative and playful solution to be developed further and implemented in practice. All ideas were reviewed by the group and the most creative ones won a prize. However, for some, the extrinsic reward somehow seemed to spoil the genuine enjoyment of this playful activity, which for me somehow separated play from games might be seen as competitive, even if not intended.

Authentic voices:

"How amazing to get out of room with walls and walk!"

"Collaboration works! Especially in a different environment, with people with similar passion and different viewpoints."

"I enjoyed engaging in conversation in dynamic environment/settings. Sharing our problems with others and finding resolution. Surroundings definitely enhanced our ideas and brought interesting topics to our conversations."

STORY SPACES: CONNECTING HEARTS

We are natural storytellers and story makers. We seem to be more able to remember, connect, think, reflect, feel and empathise more when news, information, facts, concepts and experiences are shared through stories. Stories bring people together. They create community.

We have to admit, that there is some real magic in stories! We do not just connect with the stories of others or even our own, we also live and re-live them, therefore stories also help us break-free from our own beliefs and give us the opportunity to "encounter different reality" (15). This is extremely important for learning as learning is change! Stories will help us see through the eyes of others, un-think, re-think and new-think about our position in the world! But there is not just thinking! There is also feeling and stories are a powerful tool for putting strong emotions into action and therefore can make us feel exhilarated, happy or sad.

Stories are naturally embedded within pedagogical approaches such as Case- or Project-Based Learning but also Problem-Based Learning for example. There, the engagement with the story is the trigger to explore, enquire and learn. Learning that starts from a story, practice to construct theory. This upside-down model of learning through story is extremely valuable as it helps learners to make personal connections and the hooks they create, the unique ways they connect with the story, will capture and captivate their interest to dig deeper into the story itself and through it make new and exciting practical and theoretical discoveries.

Stories, our own personal stories created an opportunity within the module to make these emotional connections with ourselves, others and the world around us, strengthen and sustain our engagement and curiosity for learning within Playground 2.0. Storytelling and storymaking were used for community building, engagement with the literature but also to introduce story as a pedagogical tool. Content and process merged as it commonly happens in academic development and modelling approaches and practices becomes a valuable experience and food for thought for their practice.

Authentic voices:

"Sharing experiences, opening up and seeing the world in a different way"

"The realisation of the power of storytelling allowing individuals to connect with each other through verbal communication."

"We explored storytelling as way of connecting students at emotional level. Instigating emotions in students to help them connect with concepts they are learning to connect to a wider world."
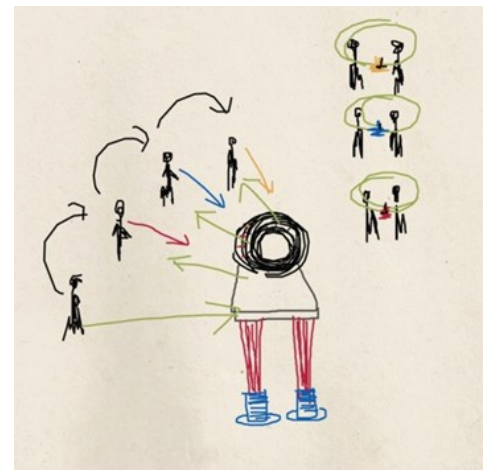
MAKING SPACES: CONNECTING HANDS

We are all makers! We love making stuff! We get a real kick out of it!

Especially in recent years there has been an explosion of making activity that is shared at a global scale. Gauntlett (2011) speaks about the DIY culture, in the physical and digital world which also resembles what is called the IKEA effect (17). Social media and a plethora of tools and platforms enable us to express creatively in new ways, share our creations easily, inexpensively and quickly and co-create with others far far away and nearby (9). There are now so many opportunities at our fingertips... sometimes we think there are too many.

"Being creative, the act of creating and making is actually fundamental to what it means to be human." (9)

We are playful, give our imagination wings and make things happen and make things. We create new objects, models, artefacts, processes, videos, animations etc. – through these we learn, we de-code and re-code challenging concepts and make sense of the world or as Mugan (2012, 7) put it "a model is a linking of concepts into an understanding of how a small piece of the world works."

We experiment and play. We learn through the messy process of making and make new discoveries. The creations connect us with our inner selves and others and this might be the real value of making. Making and sharing bring people closer together. They eliminate distance and differences and help us focus on what connects us! Isn't this what is important for learning? Are we, through making, also making a better world?

If we really think with our hands, how can we harness this playful opportunity for learning through making?

Within the module, we practised thinking with our hands and became makers of our own individual and collective creations often using powerful metaphorical language, that helped us express visually and bring our thoughts alive continuing building our relationships with each other but also deepening our understanding about creativity in learning and teaching and progressively moving us towards Playground 3.0. An example includes an activity where we created a 3D model using LEGO bricks and the LEGO® Serious Play® method to visualise our identity as a teacher and share it with other members of the group. The model was useful to externalise thoughts and engage in a conversation around these which might have been tricky otherwise. Using play, model making and metaphors really helps express in richer ways, connect thoughts and ideas and communicate them to others in a way that in enriching understanding and connections.

Authentic voices:

"It is amazing how we have new ideas from making things."

"Playing with ideas leads to innovation. Making allows us to find new points and ideas. Reflecting on our making helps us to understand our ideas, knowledge."

"Today's session allowed me to explore the idea of using LEGO as a basis for the discussion of quite personal feelings and ideas. Explaining knowledge and understanding in a new and interesting way."

THINKING SPACES: CONNECTING MINDS

Theory can be seen as dry, abstract, cause confusion and overwhelm learners as it is often seen as external.

While we already build theory through making and storytelling, it is also important to model an approach that could engage learners in a meaningful and accessible way with theory through collaborative learning.

Theory does not have to be dry, boring and from another planet! But where do we start? There is information and theory overload, as so much is easily available today and the information mountain gets bigger and bigger as we speak. Cousin (2006) for example talks about the *stuffed curriculum* and the importance to be focused and follow the basic role "less is more". Land et al. (2005) ask us to consider the threshold concepts approach. They define threshold concepts as the "jewels in the curriculum" the ones that are fundamental to progress in a discipline or professional area. Often these are the most troublesome. So finding ways to help students make sense of these is extremely important and should be the focus of our efforts. How can we move students from a state of uncertainty to live eureka moments? Nurturing critical and creative thinking, in safe spaces and communities where mistakes are learning opportunities for all is really important. Playfulness and collaborative knowledge constructions can do wonders!

Deconstructing abstract theory and re-constructing it collaboratively in the real world using play and making techniques can help learners "touch" and "feel", the theory and better connect with it, make it relevant to everyday life.

Turning the challenge, at least for some of us, to engage at a more theoretical level, into an opportunity for collaborative and playful explorations, was a conscious decision within this module. The abstract and distant was brought alive and came nearer. This way of learning helped us see, literally and metaphorically, the connections between theory and our own practice and start problematising and positioning ourselves more confidently in the Playground 3.0.

Authentic voices:
"... made theory much more digestable for me."

"Working as a group/collaboratively to farm a shared understanding of complex theories. Loved how visual it was and how the installations grew."

"Working together to discuss theories and using the discussion to make an image really helped me to explore ideas and check my understanding. It was fun too!"

TOWARDS A PEDAGOGICAL PLAYGROUND MODEL?

I am wondering if this story is leading me to the development of a pedagogical playground model that might have wider application. The emerging model based on the pedagogical features is shown in Figure 3. I have more questions than answers and the longitudinal research project being carried out with Prof. Norman Jackson linked to this module will shed light into the experience and effectiveness and impact of this approach for teaching and learning practices.
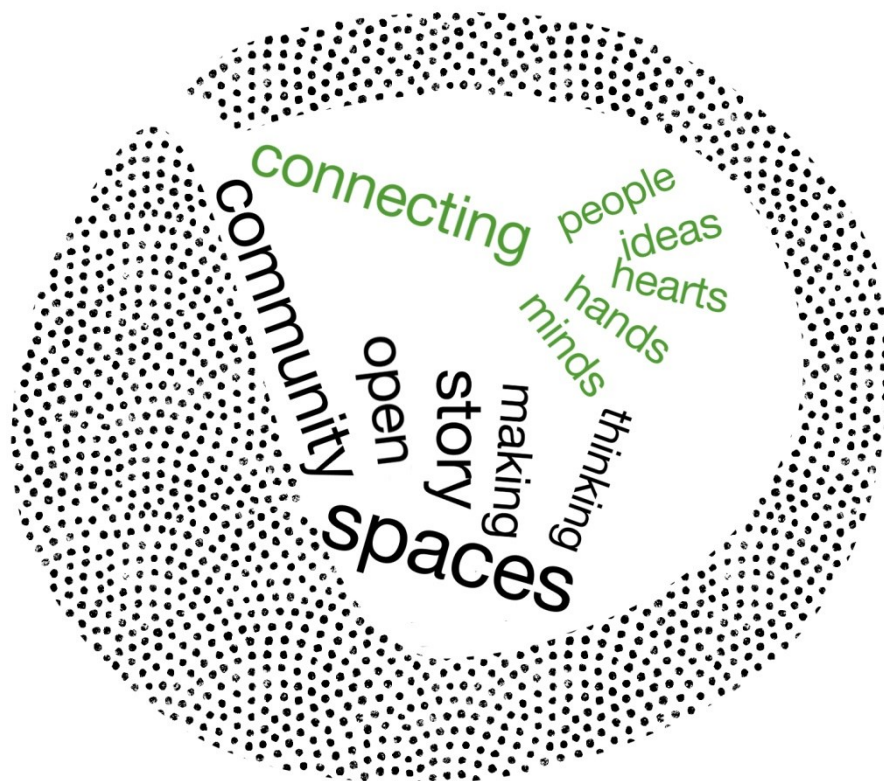
Figure 3 Emerging pedagogical playground model

WHAT I HAVE LEARNT

- Play is definitely worth using for learning and teaching in HE but we need to feel confident and comfortable when using it. Not everything will work as intended! But everything will be a valuable opportunity for reflection, experimentation and learning!
- The approach I used helped to scaffold engagement, boost playfulness and experimentation. Experimentation that had a ripple effect on practices, not just on engagement!
- The real value of engaging in academic development, such as described above, is to model and experiment with less common practices. To take risks in a safe environment and push the boundaries. To open minds and connect hearts and practices to new pedagogical approaches.
- The duration of a course or unit plays a significant role in building community. And as community is so vital to develop trust and foster playfulness, it is worth considering extending activity over a long period of time e.g. 6 to 8 months or even a whole year.
- Authentic learning, contextualised and personalised, with pick 'n' mix features and activities and assessment that is fully grounded into practice are vital ingredients to make this work and be of value for colleagues and their students.
- While the approach represents a thematic journey into pedagogical approaches it can also be seen as a valuable design framework when putting other courses together.

DO NOT BE AFRAID TO TRY

Schopenhauer's (1818, 29) words pop into to my mind as a warning to all those who are new to play in a higher education context: *"All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident"*. These words bring back bitter memories of rejection... but also sweet memories of excitement, craziness, fun, joy, suspense, stimulation and discovery – fruitful learning! The sweet memories outweigh the bitter ones by a mile... actually by many many miles. So don't let critical voices stop you. Don't ignore them though! As Freire (2007, 50) said "while fighting for my dream, I must not become passionately closed within myself. It is necessary to open myself to knowledge and refuse to isolate myself within the circle of my own truth or reject all that is different from it or from me." Take their voices on board to refine your approach. Don't take it personal, it isn't, and continue your quest to make learning exciting for your students and yourself! Above all set yourself free and be a learner yourself. Then things will start happening as you connect more deeply with your students. Palmer (2007, 11) said it beautifully, "Good teachers possess a capacity of connectedness. They are able to weave a complex web of connection among themselves, their subjects, and their students so that students learn to weave a world for themselves."

Wonder and wander! Discover yourself, your students and the world around you through the power of play and turn learning experiences into playgrounds for and of ideas! After all, Plato was right: "We can learn more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation." Just imagine what happens when you combine the two and even add making to the mix!

If you would like to refresh your subject and practice and inject playful experimentation and discovery learning while also transforming teaching into an exciting and highly stimulating experience, why not consider exploring the possibilities a playground approach has to offer?

Useful resources:

A slideshare review of the module is available at

http://www.slideshare.net/chrissi/creativity-for-learning-cohort-1-part-1-brief-review

My reflections on the module can be accessed at https://chrissinerantzi.wordpress.com/tag/creativehe/ .

Photographs that capture module activities are available at https://www.flickr.com/photos/21614692@N02/sets/72157650429760242/

Playscapes is a fantastic resource for ideas about playgrounds, see http://www.play-scapes.com/ also on Pinterest at https://www.pinterest.com/playscapesblog/

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'SERIOUS PLAY': INCLUSIVITY VIA CREATIVITY
Annual PGCertHE Conference De Montfort University

Pam Thompson

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"Play is serious business". An article in the Times Higher (1st May 2014) points to this paradox: that we need activities that are not serious, not work to nourish the body and the spirit and stimulate creativity.

The Conference organised by university lecturers on the PGCertHE programme at De Montfort University is a serious venture in that all assessments are connected with it in some way and yet, if the recent series of work-shops was anything to go by, the encouragement of play was common to them all. This meant that in having a serious pedagogic intent-the brief was for workshop facilitators to design a workshop in their learning sets which would engage the audience interactively and would relate to the conference theme.

The theme of the conference, 'Inclusivity via Creativity: Engaging Diverse Learners in Higher Education,' encouraged playful approaches. Professor Norman Jackson, from Creative Academic, set the tone in his keynote address which focused on learning ecologies and their potential as inclusive concepts for personal creativity. After all, creativity involves taking diversions from tried and tested routes, embracing the unknown, incorporating games, play and humour into our activities. One group's poster designed for the Assessment and Feedback module and on display at the conference featured a large snakes and ladders board which not only caught the eye but reminded the viewer of fun games from childhood.

The lecturers presented in inter-disciplinary Learning Sets. Each group had a distinctive name. 'The Magisters' shared their toolkit for creative learning which encouraged educators to respond in inclusive ways to the dynamic and rapid change in the HE sector. Their toolkit- in-action involved a 3 course meal framework where all the participants had to choose a starter (posing the problem) , a main course (choosing and exploring the tools e.g, flipped classroom, simulation) and a dessert, (reflection on experience of using the tools). This, and other workshops, involved moving from table to table, sharing ideas. Feedback was invited by online poll, twitter and post-its.

'Head to Toe' posed the question of whether there was a place for an eighth pillar of assessment, emotional reactions -beyond the seven already identified by Falchikov[1]. How do students feel about the process of assessment? We then put ourselves in our students' shoes, locating physical feelings about assessments on a body map and completing an 'Empathy Quiz'. The discussions were honest and insightful and were elicited via entertaining means.

How do we deal with teaching and learning and 'complex realities' such as those related to technology and globalisation? Team 'PEP' probed this question from different disciplinary perspectives: politics, project management, engineering and policing, and 'The Allsorts' urged us to 'Revive your teaching!!' and in doing so reminded us that rearranging the environment can be a potent way of altering preconceived ways of thinking and behaving as tables and chairs were pushed to the side of the room and so freeing the middle space for a various experiential teaching methods with the emphasis on student as producer. Here, for instance, was a valuable opportunity to practice the life-saving revival technique of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation on a dummy.

Last, but no means least, 'The Psychonotes' facilitated role-plays via a series of vignettes which focused specifically on diversity and identity where case-studies of issues of inequality, marginalisation were brought to life showing that there were no easy answers to these common scenarios.

As someone said, this was' the best conference ever'. I am biased, of course, as Programme Leader but I agree, that what made this and the previous two PGCertHE conferences, so successful was that everyone truly embraced pedagogical innovation in the spirit of 'serious play'.

Reference

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Creativity Often Requires Perspective Change
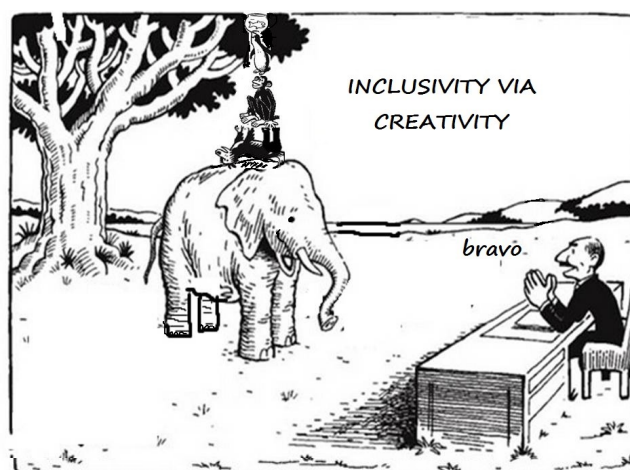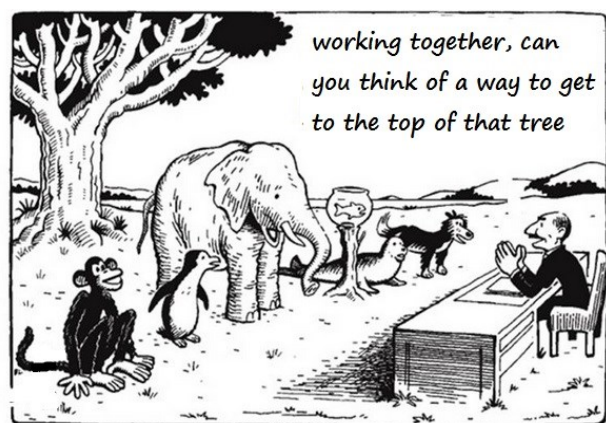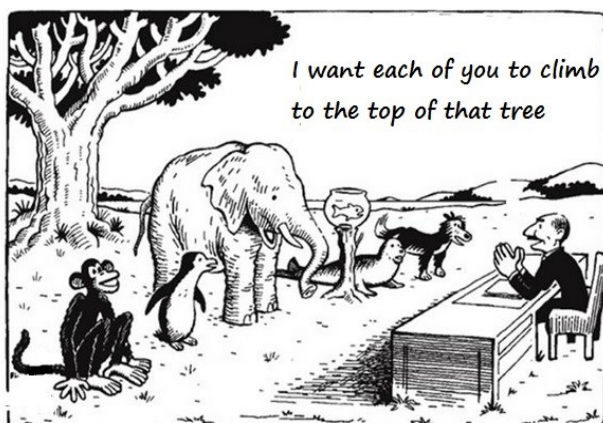
CREATIVE ACADEMIC IN SAUDI ARABIA

Norman Jackson

The idea of creativity is a universal concept and it never ceases to amaze me that academics/faculty hold similar beliefs about creativity and its importance in student development regardless of cultural location. This was demonstrated yet again during a week-long professional development facilitated by Creative Academic and organised by the Deanship of Skills Development at King Saud University: Saudi Arabia's top university.

The programme involved over forty faculty and nearly sixty postgraduate students who were all interested in developing and applying their understandings of creativity in their own teaching, learning and research contexts.

The opportunity to explore and share ideas and practices and participate in creative thinking workshops was greatly appreciated by participants and the new knowledge that was developed was curated on a new website. DSD also commissioned 10 Guides on Creativity in Higher Education which were translated into Arabic for the benefit of all teaching staff.

Creative Academic would like to thank the Deanship of Skills Development for the opportunity to contribute to its professional development activities.

تحت رعاية
وزارة التعليم العالي
تنظم
عمادة تطوير المهارات
برنامـج
رعاية الإبداع
في العملية التعليمية

خلال الفترة
١٠ / ٥ / ١٤٣٦هـ إلى ١٨ / ٦ / ١٤٣٦هـ
لأعضاء وعضوات هيئة التدريس
وطلاب وطالبات الدراسات العليا والبكالوريوس
خبراء دوليون ومحليون - شهادات حضور - جوائز قيمة للأفكار الإبداعية
لمزيد من المعلومات والتسجيل زوروا موقعنا
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Lego in Higher Education 2015 Mini-Conference

21st July 2015

Hosted at the lovely William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow, this day mini-conference is for practitioners of LEGO Serious Play, educators, support staff and researchers who use LEGO or who wish to explore the contribution that these techniques and this iconic toy can make to learning and development in Higher Education. It will challenge some of the misconceptions that can exist in HE about playful modes of enquiry - that they are childish, trivial or inappropriate for level - by sharing evidence of efficacy and impact. The day will offer a mixture of talks, hands on practice and the opportunity for participants to share their own practice.

To Book click here

Programme

10.00 Arrival and welcome/registration

10.20 introduction and housekeeping

10.30 David Gauntlett on research activities with and into the uses of LEGO

11.15 Alison James and Chrissi Neranzti: the place of play in HE: case studies with Lego/LSP

12.00 Lightning talks/open forum

12.30 Lunch

13.15 Hands-on session exploring play in HE through metaphorical modelling (theme: how important is play in higher education)

15.00 Tea break

15.15 Wrap up - thoughts from day, ideas for future activities/events/collaboration

15.30 Networking/ gallery visit for anyone interested

CREATIVITY IN DEVELOPMENT: PERSONAL NARRATIVES PROJECT
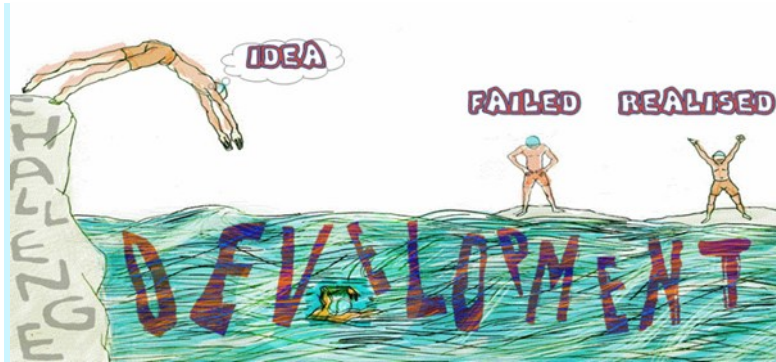
Development is the process that enables everyone to change themselves and to bring about significant changes in the world around them. As an intentional act it involves a *process* to achieve or master certain things or a *trajectory* along which certain things change or are accomplished. It is the means through which new ideas are given tangible meanings, new material or virtual objects are created, and social practices and performances, organisations and communities are brought into existence or changed. Our developmental processes and projects provide the host for much of our individual and collective creativity and this Creative Academic project aims to explore the idea of *creativity in development* by engaging people in creating a narrative of their own developmental projects and drawing out of their experience their understandings of what creativity means in the contexts and circumstances through which it emerges.

This is an open process and participants have the freedom to choose when to start and finish their narrative and to design their own methodology to achieve the twin objectives of

- creating a narrative to describe their developmental process within which creative thoughts and actions are identified and recorded
- growing collective understandings of personal creativity as understandings are shared with other participants

Contributors have the opportunity to use their narrative to write a chapter for an on-line E-Book. But there is no obligation to do so. If the process itself has intrinsic value then this is sufficient.

The project began in 2014 and the first chapters will be published in June and July 2015.

Further details and access to published chapters can be found on the website.

http://www.creativityindevelopment.co.uk/

CAM3 December 2015

'EXPLORING CREATIVITY IN DEVELOPMENT'