OUT OF CHAOS VIA PROCESS COMES ORDER

@simonrae

CURATING THE #CREATIVE HE COURSE January 2017

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creative academic magazine

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COMMISSIONING EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Norman Jackson

The purpose of this issue of Creative Academic Magazine is to collate the content for the #creativeHE Creativity in Higher Education course that was offered between January 16-21 2017. To make this available quickly the contributors to this issue have simply collated the posts and added little in the way of commentary or analysis. It's simply a record of the ideas and resources that were shared, in participants' own words.

#creativeHE is a Google+ platform established by Chrissi Nerantzi in 2014 to enable people to learn and share their ideas, perspectives, experiences and practices about creativity, particularly creativity that is associated with higher education.

The platform now has over 400 subscribers and it regularly engages 30+ participants in conversations about creativity. In the course of a week several hundred posts and comments can be made but the platform does not facilitate curation of these contributions or navigation through the interweaving strands of conversations. The absence of tagging tools means that it is impossible to conduct searches on a particular topic or question so the archival value of the site is significantly reduced. This state of affairs causes frustrations that were neatly captured in the comment by one of the contributors to the January 2017 #creativeHE conversation.

Viki Salmon

Hi all. I'm desperately trying to catch up with everything this week but finding it hard to locate the original posts from Chrissi. The format of this page is a bit all over the place. Anyone have an idea how to simplify it?!

Paul Kleiman

Yes, the 'jumble' of posts is both confusing and, for someone coming in very late in the day to the activities, somewhat frustrating as, for once, some form of linearity would be useful!

Sebastian Kozbial

I found it awkward too - particularly when I wanted to find a particular post that I've read but not commented yet...

A lot of curatorial effort is invested by the organisers in developing the content of an open social learning online course or discussion and by everyone who actively participates in the course and donates resources to the conversation. Once the course has finished, although the site remains open to those who participated, and to anyone who has subscribed to the community, there is often little interest in the content it holds. As new conversations emerge the older materials get buried and forgotten. Perhaps what is needed is to be able to create a portal within which separate conversations could be hosted each with its own Google+ platform so that the themes of the conversation can be tagged through the main navigation bar.

Anna Foss

Thanks so much to Chrissi Nerantzi and those who set this activity, and to Norman Jackson for this super collation. Since I have arrived so late to all these fascinating discussions I was finding myself getting very lost! (Sorry too many other commitments currently). I have gained so much from reading all these contributions I'm now overwhelmed (in a nice way) with stimulating thoughts

A social learning space without people is a dead space and if it is not accessible or searchable to the wider universe of learners via the internet it has little value as a resource. The approach we have adopted is to work collaboratively with Creative Academic to collate the resources of the #creativeHE site through a magazine. The magazine is published under a Creative Commons License so we are able to provide both the #creativeHE and Creative Academic communities, and the wider world, with a flavour of the content and the way we contributors have tried to make sense of the content.

In response to Viki's frustrated comment above we conducted an experiment to organise some of the content in this way during the #creativeHE event and several participants comments on its value. So perhaps there is merit in trying to create these sorts of curated resources while conversations are unfolding.

Thank you to Chrissi Nerantzi for facilitating the process of curation and we hope that this curatorial issue of the magazine will provide a useful resource for the #creativeHE community and platform and be of interest to our own readers.

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Creative Pedagogies & Learning Ecologies Project
http://www.creativeacademic.uk/2016-17-programme.html
January 2017

#CREATIVEHE COURSE, January 16-20 2017

Posts made by Chief Instigator Chrissi Nerantzi explaining the course and the daily challenges / activities to encourage participants to use their creativity

POST 1 COURSE OUTLINE & PREPARATION

A warm welcome to all!

It is lovely that you decided to join us for the next five days. We hope #creativeHE will be valuable for you and your practice. Together we will learn how we can be a little bit more creative in our learning and teaching in higher education.

Within our community will be professionals who teach or support learning in higher education, students but also the wider public. This mix is what makes learning so so special and we are all going to experience it.

The plan for Monday until Friday is
•Day 1 Monday: Creativity in HE
•Day 2 Tuesday: Play and games
•Day 3 Wednesday: Using story
•Day 4 Thursday: Learning through making
•Day 5 Friday: Celebrating creativity

The majority of activities are asynchronous. We suggest that you access this Google+ community, our #creativeHE hub, regularly during the week and participate as fully as you can in the activities and share your thoughts with others. On Friday, we will be connecting with the tweetchat #BYOD4Lchat via Twitter. This will take place from 8-9pm UK time and we hope you will be able to join in. More information regarding this will be shared as we progress through the course. Furthermore, if you are an instagram user, you are very welcome to use the #creativeHE hashtag there too for contributions relating to the course.

As you engage with us this week, some of you might complement your online #creativeHE engagement with other activities locally or in other distributed networks. Please feel free to share some of these with us here - and reach out if you need any help, ok?

Suggested readings for the week ahead

1. Jackson, N. & Willis, J. (eds) (2016) Exploring creativity in development, achievement and innovation, Creative Academic, Issue 4, April 2016, available at http://www.creativeacademic.uk/uploads/1/3/5/4/13542890/cam_4a.pdf

2. Nerantzi, C. & James, A. (eds.) (2015) Exploring Play in Higher Education, Creative Academic Magazine, Issue 2a, Issue 2b, June 2015, available at http://www.creativeacademic.uk/magazine.html

3. CELT Storytelling resources http://www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/teaching/storytelling.php

4. CELT LEGO in HE resources http://www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/teaching/lego_sp.php

5. OU report: Innovating pedagogy 2016
http://proxima.iet.open.ac.uk/public/innovating_pedagogy_2016.pdf

Feel free to use a portfolio to capture your learning during the week and share back with us through the #creativeHE community and/or Twitter using the community hashtag.

If you are registered on the MMU unit FLEX 15/30 [Creativity for Learning] or FLEX 15/30, you can use any parts of #creativeHE as triggers for your assessment in your portfolio. Please see the handbook for related information

Others, might be interested in submitting evidence to claim a participation badge. The #creativeHE community badge is available to you all. Can you find the page through which you can claim a badge?

Day 1 of #creativeHE is on Monday ;) Until then, please use the time to familiarise yourself with the week ahead - and with other people in our community:

> have a good look around the community where this message is posted
> say hello to others in a creative way:
> consider presenting yourself as an animal or mythological creature (this could be one not yet discovered) that says something about who you are as an individual.

Don't list your accomplishments or qualifications or work experience - unless you can do it in a limerick

Don't tell us where you live - unless you can include images to fascinate us

Do tell us what moves you - and what you love about the possibilities of #creativeHE

Do give us strange and random facts that we might come to know you by. Feel free to ask any question you might have linked to the week ahead!

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

Let's open our minds to new (im)possibilities!

Chrissi, Sandra, Nikos, Norman and Ale

POST 2 Day 1 (Monday 16 January): Creativity in HE

Hello everybody,

Great to see that so many of you have joined us here. Can we turn this community into a colourful tapestry? We think we can. Together.

http://www.publicdomainpictures.net/
pictures/160000/velka/piles-of-white-boxes.jpg

Today we will explore what creativity means in the context of learning and teaching in higher education, discuss some of the related theories, and relate these to our own practice.

Please consider the following activity. Feel free to do more if you want to and share an activity you would like to engage others ;) Remember the readings too!

FIRST CHALLENGE
All about your boxes!
Think back to a previous learning experience that you feel was particularly creative and inspiring; that engaged you and promoted your learning in some memorable way. Summarise your thoughts around this specific creative

and inspiring teaching situation that you experienced as a learner by creating a promotional box for that situation. Design effective packaging highlighting your key take aways from this experience (check out what this should include! We are sure you will find some resources online to help you with this). What made this experience so special for you?

Share your box here in the community and engage with others in conversations around their boxes.

At the end of the day, reflect on this experience: What have we done? Why did we do it that way? What take aways have you got so far?

Feel free to share interesting resources linked to today's topic and consider claiming a participation badge if you engaged in today's activities.

Stay tuned, here in the community, on Twitter and on Instagram using #creativeHE.

Wishing us all a creative day together,
Chrissi, Sandra, Norman, Nikos and Ale

Day 2: Play and games (Tuesday 17 January)
Hello dear colleagues,

It has been fascinating to see some of your boxes appearing here as the day progressed and the conversations around them. Thank you so much for engaging in this task which such rich imagination and creativity. How could you use something like this in your practice?

Today, Tuesday, we will be exploring play.

Is there a place for play and games in higher education? Let's start looking at this today. Well, we are not just going to look at play, we are actually going to play a game together.

We are proposing the following activity for today. Feel free to share your additional play activity with us all.

SECOND CHALLENGE - playful induction

c1.staticflickr.com

We are inviting you to create a playful induction activity that can be used face-to-face or online when a new group of learners comes together. The main purpose is to get to know each other, to open up and lay the foundations of the learning community that is to be formed. The activity should enable the teacher/facilitator to participate.

We would like you to create or adapt an activity that would be useful for you and could be shared further.

We can't wait to find out what you did come up with. Share your playful ideas here with us all and engage in conversations with others to find out more about their ideas.

Suggested reading: Nerantzi, C. & James, A. (eds.) (2015) Exploring Play in Higher Education, Creative Academic Magazine, Issue 2a, Issue 2b, June 2015, available at http://www.creativeacademic.uk/magazine.html
For an acerbic counter-narrative - listen to Will Self's A point of View (BBC Radio 4, Sunday 8th January 2017): 'The fun of work - really?' Self offers a counter-argument as to the role that play has in our schools. It is challenging - and just a ten-minute listen: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b086th59#play

If you capture your engagement here in the community and/or your portfolio, consider claiming the play badge. Stay tuned, here in the community and on Twitter using #creativeHE.
We wish you all a playful day

Chrissi, Sandra, Nikos and Norman

Day 3: (Wednesday 18 January) Learning through story

Hello everybody,

Our community is still growing and engagement is strengthening, which is wonderful. The induction activities you shared yesterday evidence playfulness and inventiveness

Did yesterday generate new ideas for your practice? Would you consider play and games for learning & teaching?

Today we will be exploring the use of story for learning and teaching and we are very interested in finding out how you currently use story and what difference this makes to the student experience and their learning.

We are proposing the following activity for today. Feel free to share your additional activity with us all.

THIRD CHALLENGE - Tell a story

Tell your story!

Find one of the five chapters of the following book that speaks to you and create a picture book that captures the key ideas and messages of that chapter - but in a story format.
Consider using Storybird at https://storybird.com/ - or use another tool if you prefer.

Interested in Comic Books or Graphic Novels? Why not tell your visual story that way? (Check out this blog from Nick Sousanis on using comic book formats - which he liked so well, he delivered his PhD as one: http://spinweaveandcut.com/ - especially the section on comics: http://spinweaveandcut.com/comics/.)

When you have created your story, share it here in the community & comment on stories contributed by others. As always, reflect on this experience at the end of the day: what were the key take aways for you today? What aspects of story are you thinking about using with your own students?.

The book is the following:
Piaget, J. (1972) To understand is to invent. The future of education, New York: Grossman Publishers, available at http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0000/000061/006133eo.pdf

Further suggested reading: CELT Storytelling resources http://www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/teaching/storytelling.php

Day 4 (Thursday 19 Jan 17): Learning through making

Hello! How is everybody today? Great to see you engaging with the daily activities. We loved the conversations around story and that some of you have also experimented with new storytelling tools.

We are excited as we will continue our exploration and experience learning through making. There is of course a link to play and being playful in learning and teaching and we hope you are starting to embrace such approaches.

In order to get some insights into learning through making, we invite you today to engage with the following activity. Feel free to share an idea for a further activity with us all.

FOURTH CHALLENGE

Let's make a model!
We often complain about learning spaces… in school, college, university. Well, today is your chance to create a model of your ideal learning space. Feel free to use any materials you like or have access to and create that special environment that would help you learn. When creating your model, focus on a specific learning situation so that the model can be contextualised.

Take a picture of your model, if you created a physical one, and share it here in the community. As always - get involved and interact with others and their models. What is emerging?

Suggested reading: CELT LEGO in HE resources http://www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/teaching/lego_sp.php

Consider claiming your participation badge if you are engaging in any of the activities today.

Stay tuned, here in the community, on Twitter and on Instagram using #creativeHE.

See you online ;)

Chrissi, Sandra, Norman, Nikos and Ale
https://s.iha.com/6717400004084/Luxury-vacation-rental-Saint-pierre-de-plesguen-Tiegez_4.jpeg

Day 5 (Friday 20 January): Celebrating creativity

Hello everybody,

This is our final #creativeHE day. It has been a fascinating journey and we really enjoyed learning with you all and can see plenty of experimentation and playfulness. We are amazed how you engaged creatively in the daily tasks and also started reading some of the related literature.

FIFTH CHALLENGE

Suggested tasks for today:

Reflect: Today, we would like to invite you to reflect on the last four days. What did you find eye-opening and will definitely consider for your practice?

Start putting together an action plan that you could use as a scaffold to introduce specific changes in your professional or personal context. What is your rationale for these changes? What do you anticipate achieving? Share your draft actions plans during the day with us all and engage with each other's ideas for action.

Catch-up: If you started a bit late, today, might also be a good opportunity to catch up and engage in some of the activities you have missed and also comment on each other's contributions.

#BYOD4Lchat: A special tweetchat is going to be offered today, Friday, at 8pm UK time and we are all invited to join. This will be part of the open course BYOD4L which is running this week in parallel with #creativeHE. Today's chat has a focus on creativity, so it is really perfect for all of us to join in and connect the two communities. All you need to do is to go over to Twitter and check out @byod4l and the tweetchat hashtag #byod4lchat. During this chat, please use #byod4lchat and #creativeHE. Enjoy an hour of speedy exchanges and connections to ideas and people!

Suggested reading: OU report: Innovating pedagogy 2016
http://proxima.iet.open.ac.uk/public/innovating_pedagogy_2016.pdf

Remember to claim your participation badges for your work during #creativeHE (see https://courses.p2pu.org/en/courses/2615/content/7440/)

>>> continue using this community if you have found it useful to share ideas and practices with others

Thanks again for being with us this week and all your creative contributions which helped us explore together creativity in higher education.

This is just the beginning... Please feel free to continue using this community space and the #creativeHE hashtag on Twitter and/or Instagram. Learning and development has no end ;)

See you online,

Chrissi, Sandra, Norman, Nikos and Ale

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e7/The_open_window_(6028681236).jpg

FINAL POST
Thank you everybody for joining #creativeHE this week and for your insightful explorations.

The #creativeHE team

http://www.slideshare.net/chrissi/creative-he-january-17

Creativity Unleashed: The Amazing Affordance of a Box! What does it tell us about creativity?

Norman Jackson #creativeHE Facilitator

One of the interesting insights I gained through the #creativeHE conversation this week is the amazing affordance for creative thinking in a box when it is part of a social learning process. In response to Chrissi's invitation 30 participants shared their ideas on how a 'box' might be used to represent an inspiring teaching and/or learning experience.

> *Chrissi Nerantzi*
> *Day 1 (Monday 16 January): #Creativity in HE*
>
> *Today we will explore what creativity means in the context of learning and teaching in higher education, discuss some of the related theories, and relate these to our own practice. Please consider the following activity: Think back to a previous learning experience that you feel was particularly creative and inspiring; that engaged you and promoted your learning in some memorable way. Summarise your thoughts around this specific creative and inspiring teaching situation that you experienced as a learner by creating a promotional box for that situation. Design effective packaging highlighting your key take aways from this experience. What made this experience so special for you? Share your box here in the community and engage with others in conversations around their boxes.*

Sarah Ney

My box is a present. I called it "The Gift of Learning" as learning for me is like receiving a present and teaching giving one. I highlighted three take aways from a recent experience in a dance class. In addition to the more traditional teaching of the moves and a short choreography the teacher then gave us a situation and left us 10 minutes to work in groups with fellow students to bring the situation to life by using movements we knew and creating them, too. In turns we shared our routines and got cheered, then we discussed what the others thought we were representing and our choice of movements. Felt really

inspired and grateful that the teacher allowed us to express our own creativity and vision. I think that this type of learning/teaching can apply to any situation, not just (performing) arts.

Norman Jackson

love your idea and story +Sarah Ney and the pedagogic practice you describe involving the teacher giving you the encouragement and the space to be creative and 'getting out of the way' so you could. All too often teaching simply gets in the way and less is often better when it comes to facilitating creativity. It seems also that this is a pedagogy that engaged you emotionally - perhaps that is a necessary requirement for enabling learners to use their creativity.

Lauren McNeill

When thinking of a particularly memorable creative and inspiring learning experience, I remember a very fun, inspiring and creative 2 hour lecture that I attended. The lecturer was very *enthusiastic*, which is I feel is also a key inspiring element. The lecture contained different elements, including an *interactive online quiz* that helped to confirm the learning throughout the first part of the lecture. The lecturer then incorporated more time in the second part of the lecture to focus on the learning outcomes that *as a group we felt needed more time to ask questions* and a different examples were used. I felt that by including an interactive online quiz where you could be anonymous, helped to highlight what I did understand and what I did not understand. This then focused the second part of the session in a very flexible way that was adapted for the learning require-ments of the class.

The lecture was in Forensic Biology, the learning outcome was to be able to describe how molecular biology techniques can be applied to the evaluation of DNA evidence - so this lecture incorporated quite a few aspects including different genetic variation, different types of DNA analysis (molecular biology techniques) and evalua-tion of the DNA evidence through interpretation (the process to collection of evidence to court).

I understood the different requirements of the learning outcomes, as they were broken down into easily identifi-able areas. I would say that through the use of different elements to increase engagement and understanding, enhanced the ability of the learning outcomes of the lecture to be achieved. By including the quiz, it focussed and engaged the students to see if the learning outcomes set had been achieved (through specifically designed questions). And by using a quiz, this highlighted areas that may not have been understood during the first part of the session. By assessing the learning outcomes at the end of the first part of the session, this engaged students and focussed the lecturer to ensure all the learning outcomes were achieved by the end of the session.

The use of slides, pictures, key information and a video were also key in achieving the learning outcomes of the session.

By making a lecture adaptable, this also ensured that the learning outcomes were achieved.

Sebastian Kozbial

The productive element of a class is, I believe, key. For that reason, I often go back to classes where I didn't realise how quick it went and where I was asked to produce/participate 'a lot'. Just before Christmas, I attend-ed a CPD session organised by CELT here at Manchester Met that consisted of two separate classes – an input (not very interactive) and output (the participants were respon-sible for interviewing an actor, who was pretending to be a real candidate). I enjoyed it for several reasons: firstly, although my group mates and I had prepared for the inter-view, the candidate was very problematic and we had to react and change our questions/the way we interviewed him; secondly, it felt like a real interview, as we had to follow the given procedure and our performance (the actual interview) was later evaluated and de-constructed; and finally, we had to think on our feet and this made me forget that this was 'only' a practice.

The above was also interesting, as it was a new experience – interviewing a candidate and then chatting to the same person and asking how we did – very insightful.

Further to my last comment - I present Sebastian's box. It's only the first draft, but I feel the main concepts (e.g. motivation, the idea of practice and production, including relevant and new skills, and often daunting challenge --> the crab that can turn out to be a great experience) are there.

Norman Jackson

Thanks for sharing +Sebastian Kozbial yes a challenge with uncertainty especially if not encountered before is a fantastic space for encouraging you to respond to whatever emerges and makes you feel alive... is this quite rare in your experiences of higher education?

Sebastian Kozbial

An interesting question... it used to be, but I try to challenge myself by doing various courses in order to improve my 'learner experience' and transfer this into my teaching.

Jennifer Willis

I'm interested in why you said 'it used to be'. As a teacher, do you feel constrained by having to meet targets and follow a prescribed course? If so, perhaps the creativity lies in how we respond to spontaneous issues in such a way as to bring the group back to the prescribed course without quashing the interest of students or their willingness to ask questions.

Now retired, I have the luxury of tutoring small groups of children (an age group I had not taught before). I am forever inspired by their curiosity and divergent thinking. I feel privileged to be able to respond to their questions, and to know that they feel secure in asking them, but I am aware that some parents (and the business' owner) disagree with my departing from the supposed aim of teaching English and creative writing. I justify my overstepping the brief by my profound belief in teaching being a lifewide experience. No knowledge or learning experience ever goes to waste. Sadly, we seem to have lost this flexibility in the context of formal education.

Sebastian Kozbial

My friend's son is ecstatic every morning as he is going to school where learning is, according to him, fun, interesting, challenging and, from what I can tell, innovative. This, of course, is down to people like yourself who teach with passion and treat this process as, using your words, privilege. As a student, I often felt that my classes are rather dull and there weren't many positive challenges. The only type of challenge was high level of input... which can often be discouraging. I wrote 'used to', as this was the case when doing my MA and some lectures would treat some sessions with disregard. Anyway, I am certain that many of us have similar thoughts and can remember great classes/teachers and equally poor ones too.

Jennifer Willis

What a great image, Sebastian! Would you place motivation as the most important requirement for creativity? I don't just mean creation out of practical necessity, but also the intrinsic rewards derived from creation? (I love the originality of the on button for the letter O!) You seem to gain satisfaction of the higher needs - self-actualisation through achievement, and are open to risk-taking in the face of the unknown. You show that you are willing to work on things till you get the best possible product?

Is that a fair assessment? I'm interested that you put the university on top of your box - is this essential to your creativity?

Sebastian Kozbial

I think it's fair – thanks for your comments – although the second draft of the box shows that the 'monsters' that live in the shadow can often be more familiar and cuddly than once anticipated. Motivation is definitely the most important for me, intrinsic motivation that is, when I am motivated – everything that I do, even if I don't completely succeed, is much easier and more enjoyable. The recycling logo indicates that we should try and utilize new skills in different situations, and this is exactly what I enjoy doing – improving myself (or at least trying). The logo of Manchester Met was placed on the top of my box, as I believe this place being the key in my professional development.

Norman Jackson

I like your design +Sebastian Kozbial the open lid is very inviting makes me want to dip in or perhaps its because all that curiosity and energy is bursting out? I have been trying to open some discussion around how teachers enable learners to harness their intrinsic motivations... do you have any thoughts?

Lucy Pittaway

Sorry for the late arrival of my post! It's been a crazy day of teaching, poorly children and a PTA meeting! Alas, I've made it here before midnight!

So, 'creative' to me means getting messy and being experimental, and on that basis I was struggling to think of a time in HE when I've ever had the luxury of that. But, then I reflected on a time where 'mental creativity' was used in a Health & Wellbeing course I went on at MMU which actually changed my life.

I'd decided to go on an Anxiety course, on the basis that I'm a year manager and see so many students with anxiety and I don't know how to help them. When I arrived I quickly realised that most people in the room actually were suffering from anxiety themselves and weren't there like I was to learn techniques for others. The lecturer asked for a volunteer to come to the front to share their anxiety story...needless to say, there were no volunteers as everyone was too anxious! I on the other hand thankfully don't suffer (or so I thought) and so put my hand up to volunteer!

The lecturer asked what my anxiety was, and without thinking I said 'my step children!' I said that I was struggling to know how to handle them, how to get close to them, how to get to know them etc. As a result every Friday when i know they are on their way I end up feeling fretful and short tempered. The lecturer taught me to think of a real situation that had happened in the past with the children that had made me feel sad, he told me to play the situation through in my head. Then he said STOP! Freeze it there. He then told me to turn that image to black and white in my head, and stare at it.

We then paused, and he asked me to remember a positive time with the children where I had been comfortable and happy in their company. Again, I had to play the situation through in my head like a movie. We then paused it, froze the scene and changed it to colour. I had to concentrate really, really hard on the image and visualise all the colours. (This is all in front of about 20 other lecturers!)

He then stood in front of me and kept throwing the black and white image at me physically with his arms, every time it got close to me I had to bat it away and bring in the positive colourful image. This lasted about 10 minutes. I felt quite stupid at the time. But by the end, I was fighting back the tears! I couldn't wait to see my Step children as I felt like i'd just turned a massive mental corner of being able to love them!

This was 3 years ago, and still occasionally a little bit of anxiety creeps in about seeing them, but as soon as it does, that colourful image just hits me automatically and I'm fine again!

So my box....wow! It would simply have to be black and white on the outside but the most amazing bright colours on the inside, where it would contain a 'flip book' representing my happy memory with the kids!

Sandra Sinfield

Thank you+Lucy Pittaway for sharing this powerful and moving story. I enjoyed so many things about this story - one that you went along thinking you were only going to get something to help others... and then discovered that you did want that help yourself (this must be true of so many teaching encounters) - obviously I love the power of the change and the mechanism of the process - and I love that change is possible. I think that is Gert Biesta who says that one of the great things about human beings is that we can change - we can be educated - it is something to celebrate and not to apologise for...

Jennifer Willis

Here is my story, followed by my 'box' and its explanation.

Maybe I am cheating by talking about a teaching experience, but it taught me a lot in return, in the spiral of learning and teaching and learning….

It happened about 20 years ago, when I was teaching French for the Open University. I distinctly remember the first time Ernest came into my tutorial – he was a stroppy 70 year-old and I did not expect him to return. But he did, and we soon developed mutual respect and affection.

One of the problems I always had with FE and HE was the boundaries between teacher and pastoral carer. So, when, in our second year together, Ernest began first to lose weight then to turn worryingly jaundiced, I was concerned and spoke to him. I was distressed to learn that he had pancreatic cancer.

When he was no longer able to get into London for our tutorials, I kept in touch with him and visited him at home in an outer London borough not too far from my own home. Our meetings were a strange mix of informal teaching and practical and moral support for him as he declined. Eventually, he entered a hospice, and I continued to visit him there.

Now I come to the point of this story. The last time I saw him, he was nearing death (and died within hours) but he had not lost his thirst for learning. As he lay dying, unable to see, he wanted me to play word games with him, to give him an abstruse French word and test whether he knew its meaning. How could I not have been moved by this fiercely proud man's refusal to give in to his mortality?

It brought to mind a Zen story that you may know. There are many versions of it, but here is one:

The Strawberry
A Zen Tale from Japan
There was once a man who was being chased by a ferocious tiger across a field. At the edge of the field there was a cliff. In order to escape the jaws of the tiger, the man caught hold of a vine and swung himself over the edge of the cliff. Dangling down, he saw, to his dismay, there were more tigers on the ground below him! And, furthermore, two little mice were gnawing on the vine to which he clung. He knew that at any moment he would fall to certain death. That's when he noticed a wild strawberry growing on the cliff wall. Clutching the vine with one hand, he plucked the strawberry with the other and put it in his mouth.


He never before realized how sweet a strawberry could taste.
https://www.storyarts.org/library/nutshell/stories/strawberry.html

The lesson I learnt that day has remained with me ever since.

Explanation
My box refuses to take a rigid form, and changes shape like an amoeba. It blurs boundaries between teaching, learning, formal roles and personal relationships. Ernest is shown in ghostly grey as he loses his battle with cancer, yet is defiantly clinging to the strawberry, as in the Zen parable. Even in the face of death, he is practising his French, saying 'Not yet'.
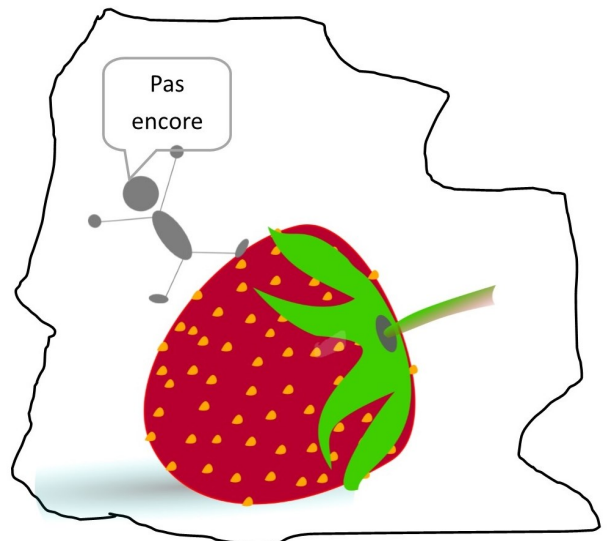
Norman Jackson

A very moving and deeply personal story +Jennifer Willis which shows just how much learning gives us our sense of being alive and being/feeling human. Also wonderful dedication and a tribute to you as a caring teacher. It reminds me of Giles and McCarty's (2016) relational, caring and accompanying conception of pedagogy, 'pedagogy…. is always relational in nature, and as such is central to our everyday teaching strategies'. It's through these caring relationships and the teacher's encouragement and demonstration that 'we are making this journey together', that a climate or culture of trust and respect emerges.'

Giles, D.L. and McCarty, C. (2016) Creating meaningful learning spaces through phenomenological strategies. In L.S. Watts & P. Blessinger, (eds) Creative Learning in Higher Education: International Perspectives and Approaches. New York, United States of America: Routledge, 65-80

Chrissi Nerantzi

Your story touched me deeply Jenny. There was a strong will to continue regardless. Not giving up. I see this as a way of creative being. Your story also showed the important role real caring plays in human relationships and what really matters. To be there for each other. Far too often people focus on themselves and what they can get out of a relationship while the true value is just being there for each other, in my view. Thank you for making us all think Jenny.

Tom Burns

+Jennifer Willis What wonderful stories - of life and being alive. Although a strawberry may never taste so good and 'French' be so important when meeting our after lives, these stories are great illuminations of the human spirit - although the most touching and thoughtful is yours. Locating appropriate pedagogy for FE, HE in the suburbs, the periphery and other (non-institutional) physical and metaphorical locations/spaces. But most importantly in the heart and a heart that acts.

Sandra Sinfield

Dear +Jennifer Willis - what a powerful story full of love... and to Death he said - not yet!

Jennifer Willis

Thank you all for your wonderful feedback. I told Ernest that I was writing a poem about him but it has remained in my head. It begins with his splendid name, Ernest Hector Jones. Perhaps this story is compensation for the unrealised poem.

I do believe the relationship between teacher and student is essential to the success of their joint enterprise. This is something I am struggling with in my current teaching situation, which I shall post as a separate response to today's task.

Paul Kleiman

I have to be honest. This is not my box...well, it is mine in the sense that I often (mentally) carry it with me. However, I didn't create it, though I had a hand in creating it.

It came out of a residential workshop I ran on creativity in HE. At one point the participants were asked to go out into the local town, and to come back with something that expressed 'creativity' for them. Two of the participants has scoured the charity shops and had found the lovely wooden box and the very squishy and springy coloured thing. They'd managed, after a great deal of effort, to cram the coloured thing into the box, put the lid on it and get it to stay shut, and brought it back to the workshop.

Of course, as soon as the lid was slightly loosened, the 'thing' sprung out   violently , never to be put back in its place.
So many things, including....

- But we do love our boxes in higher education! So what does that say about our attitude towards creativity.
- Once creativity is released, you can't put it back in box.
- Creativity is hard to restrain in a box.
- Once you take the lid off, you realise that others, too, are either trapped in their in their boxes, or like you, have taken off the lid and are ready to release their creative energies.

Lucy Pittaway

I love this post. One of the most influential things Celt has taught me, is not to constrain assessment styles. I have loved in the past how assessments have been so fluid, and as long as they meet the learning criteria there are multiple ways to submit the work, and i think this toy within your box sums that up really well. you have different colours representing different methods, they all feed out in different directions, but ultimately all feed back into the same point. I certainly agree that creativity should never have a lid, only the producer knows when enough is enough!

Chrissi Nerantzi

Hi Paul, this is wonderful. Thank you for sharing this special box with us. Very interesting what you say about what happens when creativity is released. How can we help others to reach that state of being? Just wondering. What does everybody else think? Do you remember your special moment? Or did it happen without realising?

Chrissi Nerantzi

Hi Lucy, lovely to see you here and great to hear about your discoveries. Fluidity and flexibility definitely important for assessment but also how we approach learning and teaching more generally. What do these approaches mean for students and teachers? I love the way you interpreted Paul's box. Does this relate to your thoughts around this +Paul Kleiman ?

Sandra Sinfield

I love that bursting colourful creativity box, +Paul Kleiman - and that it emerged from a challenge that you set your own students. This is exactly the sort of challenge that I would like to set participants in my own courses!

Norman Jackson

My box is very boring compared to your wonderful creations. Its a representation of a visit I made to Southampton Solent University last week to have a number of conversations with university staff. I view my experience as a facilitated learning experience and my box identifies some of the many features that facilitated the growing of new ideas and relationships.

A few days ago I visited Southampton Solent University at the invitation of Osama Khan who is the Director of Learning and Teaching. Osama and I used to work together at the University of Surrey and we are friends as well as partners in promoting innovation in teaching and learning. So our starting point was not on this day but some 10 years ago and we shared a lot of history and knowledge in between. His invitation to participate in a conversation had grown out of a desire to become more involved in Creative Academic's 'Creative Pedagogies' project so I was quite motivated to discover how we might collaborate.

Over the course of about five hours Osama introduced me to several of his colleagues who he had connected to my own interests. He had sent me an agenda (series of topics for discussion) which was important because it enabled me to prepare and to take information relating to the ideas I wanted to discuss. All we did was talk, but the interactive conversations helped me gain a good understanding of the ideas and interests of the people I chatted to and I was able to share my own ideas with them in the process.

Osama also showed me the amazing new teaching and learning spaces that the university has created and the thinking behind the design of the spaces. I learnt much in this process of 'gentle unfolding' storytelling. Towards the end of the visit we sat down and I interviewed him for Creative Academic Magazine on his thoughts about creativity in higher education teaching and learning.

Perhaps you might think 'how could this be a situation that stimulated my creativity?' Well it did. The whole experience - my preparations and the thinking I did before my visit, the conversational interactions, my wander-ings with intent through the wonderful teaching and learning spaces - provided me with an ecology that encouraged me to see new affordances for collaboration in the relationships I was developing and new ideas we discussed. My follow-up actions have been to try an capitalise on these.

Osama invited me in to his professional world and created an ecology that enabled us to connect our interests, purposes and needs in a search for something - but none of us knew what it was. The process he facilitated simply enabled relationships to develop, values to be shared through the stories we told, ideas and possibilities to be explored, and stuff to emerge in an organic and ad hoc way.

So how might I relate my experience to a pedagogy for learning and creativity? When viewed through a pedagog-ic lens the experience was organised and facilitated by Osama. It had a structure formed by the rough agenda Osama had prepared but it felt open, in the sense that, other than time, there were no real constraints on me. It was 'explorative' in the sense that everyone was involved in inquiry to gain as much understanding as possible in the time available. We were all interested and curious. Conversation was encouraged and people shared their experiences and ideas willingly in a thoughtful, respectful, friendly and enjoyable way. Much of the sharing took the form of narratives and stories. Throughout the process Osama acted as an enthusiastic 'guide by my side' (1) and I am also reminded of Giles and McCarty's (2:67) relational, caring and accompanying conception of pedagogy, 'pedagogy…. is always relational in nature, and as such is central to our everyday teaching strategies'. It's through these caring relationships and the teacher's encouragement and demonstration that 'we are making this journey together', that a climate or culture of trust and respect emerges.'

Activity 1 invited reflections on an inspiring experience - if inspiring means to make you feel that you <u>want</u> to do something and believe that you can do it - then my experience achieved this goal.

On the train on the way home I formed an idea (an idea that I had not had before that had grown through this process) about how I might collaborate with Osama and his colleagues in a way that I hoped would be mutually beneficial. I put my idea in an email and sent it to them. I'm waiting to hear their response but the point is that the experience enabled me to see new affordance in the relationships and situations and I acted on the affordance which is an indicator of an effective teaching and

learning process. If my idea leads to collaboration then for sure it will result in considerable affordance for creativity. From a pedagogic viewpoint I guess it means that everyone in a learning process has to take responsibility for the creative outcomes that the situations afford.

This reflective exercise has helped me see the involvement of a pedagogy in this type of professional scenario.

My experience was not at all box like but I can use an open box as a framework to map some of the features and dimensions of a rich ecology for learning and creativity facilitated by OK but co-created by everyone who was in-volved, and Carl Rogers' concept of creativity (3) as an emergent phenomenon seems to fit quite well my experience.

SOURCES
1 McWilliam, E. L. (2009) Teaching for creativity : from sage to guide to meddler. Asia Pacific Journal of Education, 29(3). pp. 281-293. http://eprints.qut.edu.au/32389/1/c32389.pdf
2 Giles, D.L. and McCarty, C. (2016) Creating meaningful learning spaces through phenomenological strategies. In L.S. Watts & P. Blessinger, (eds) *Creative Learning in Higher Education: International Perspectives and Approaches*. New York, United States of America: Routledge, 65-80.

Hazel Marzetti

My promotional box would be small, just big enough to fit a single envelope in and would be made from clear perspex, because this represents my most creative learning experience. My most creative learning experience was during my masters and was an exercise in learning to do good observation. As a class we were instructed to go and take 15 minutes in a place, strange or familiar, and to use all of our senses to observe the environment. I completed my activity in the concourse of Glasgow Queen Street Station waiting for the last train on a Saturday night, and then went back to the class to discuss it.

For me this was the most creative (formal) learning experience because it gave me the scope and autonomy to go out and complete the task wherever I wanted in a format I felt comfortable with - represented by the perspex. However, there were enough parameters that I did not feel over-whelmed by the choices I was to make, and felt intrigued by the task, this is therefore represented by the single envelope of instructions inside of the box. It was the right balance of support and autonomy.

Ruth Proctor

I really like your idea and how you describe the right balance of scope, support and autonomy and not being overwhelmed by limitless choices. I think sometimes it can be intimidating when learners are encouraged to 'be creative', when the possibilities are overwhelmingly endless. Sometimes it's hard to take risks and fight the fear of possible failure. I like how your example overcomes those potential barriers.

Lucy Pittaway

That sounds a very cool task, and represented very creatively by your clear box and envelope! Can I just ask what was the MA in? As I'm wondering why you were observing etc?
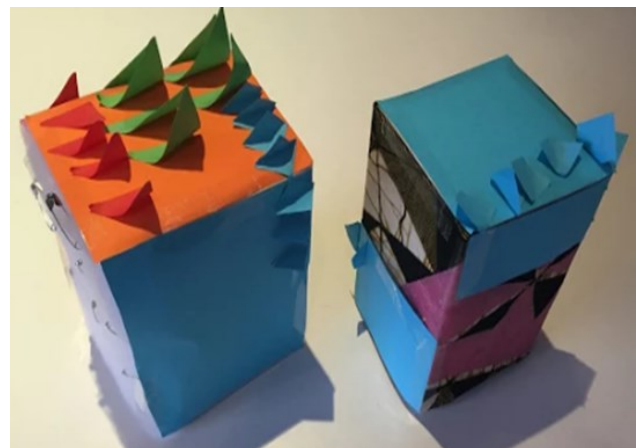
Sarah Easom

My box designs express creativity in learning in two ways.

In relation to the specific context of my learning (on a Fashion course) they communicate a development of specific knowledge in:
1) engineering of materials;
2) perception and how it changes;
3) colour, pattern, texture;
4) proportion;
5) illusion of shape and silhouette;

However, in terms of more general learning these boxes aim to represent creativity as:
1) a dialogue and varied process;
2) an iterative practice;
3) learning by doing;
4) a prcoess where imagination, knowledge and insight may be applied and challenged;
5) working with uncertainty (a bit like today!).

Norman Jackson

thanks for sharing your colourful boxes +Sarah Easom Your artefact and your explanation communicates lots of personal meaning which I think this exercise is intended to show.. our creativity is apparent when we turn experiences and abstract ideas into objects and invest them with meaning. I often see objects in art galleries and wonder what meaning the artist gave them -usually it just says something like blue box with organge top and red green and blue folded triangles.. your explanation is far more meaningful

Sarah Easom

Thanks Sandra and Norman, I think sometimes that creativity can be a bit like 'black box' technology where peo-ple are outside of it and it has a mysterious quality. In these designs, they are fun, playful, but open to interpre-tation and reflection rather than hiding anything. But as with all creative processes, its a journey and now that I have had the day to reflect on my own design (and see it in relation to others') and ideas I can reinterpret them.

Norman Jackson

+Sarah Easom how right you are to highlight the space for reinterpretation.. I think this is the space that often gets overlooked.. doing anything that requires us to be creative involves a continuum of activity in which we continually readjust our perceptions, use our imaginations and reasoning to crystallise our ideas and embody them in action. Although we have to work within the time frames of a particular activity, project or performance - it doesn't stop us from continuing to reflect on, reinterpret and adjust or even radically change after we have produced or performed and been exposed to other ways of seeing something.

Karen Tuzylak

I was thinking about a previous learning experience and as I did found myself going from room to room in my house looking for inspiration and picking up bits as I went.

The box is ideal as when you pull of the lid it explodes open (box). Which kind of sums up my experience. There shouldn't be a lid on learning. When you learn you don't know which direction you are heading in and shoots of thoughts go out in all sorts of directions. Sometimes it is a dead end or you hit a few bumps (like my knotted ribbons)other times the learning is never ending or blossoming like a flower (flower). Part of the experience is like a battle, hence the soldier. It can hurt your head but that is okay (Paracetamols) and when you do final feel like you understand it makes it a real achievement (medal). There are bits of learning that are really heavy like bricks (Lego) but other elements of learning are light like feathers (feathers). There is a love/ hate relationship (heart with holes). It feels like you are going on a journey (car) and it is okay that you don't know the destination yet. Your eyes are open to new possibilities (eye stickers) . Learning can be fun with lots of sparkle and games (glitter, toys) but It can feel like information overload (pen drive). There will be gaps in learning and you add bits over time (incomplete sphere). That you need to retain everything but it doesn't matter if you remember it all it is part of the journey. Opening the box is the first step.

Norman Jackson

love the chaos and messyness of your representations +Karen Tuzylak which does reflect trying to do stuff life but can't help thinking that this contrasts with the order we often try to impose in formal education

Elaine Brown+1

I love the spontaneity and raw energy of your collection ▫It reminded me of a Survival Kit, and I wondered of what a Learning Experience Survival Kit (LESK) might comprise? I feel sure come one much wittier than me can think of a better acronym

Sandra Sinfield

Brilliant +Karen Tuzylak - and +Elaine Brown - I think that every student needs just exactly this sort of LESK! We must apply for funding immediately! :-D

Hazel Marzetti

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Ruth Proctor

I'm just trying to think about boxes and learning...like Karen I had a scout around my house for inspiration and found a record player in a box, paint box, music box, sewing box, Lego box, chocolate box, sparkly decoration box [which should probably be back up on the loft by now] a writer's box [from Shakespeare and Co. - which is a giant box of delights in itself] and a treasure box.

The treasure box is a set of 1930s Practical Infant Teacher books my brother-in-law got me for Christmas. My family&friends know that I am obsessed with play, influenced by my past life as a nursery teacher and my current role as a Primary Ed. lecturer, - and how I am trying to find out what we might be able to learn about learning through play in HE. It's fascinating to see some of the Language around creating and creativity in these books, - thinking about what has changed as well as what hasn't changed at all.
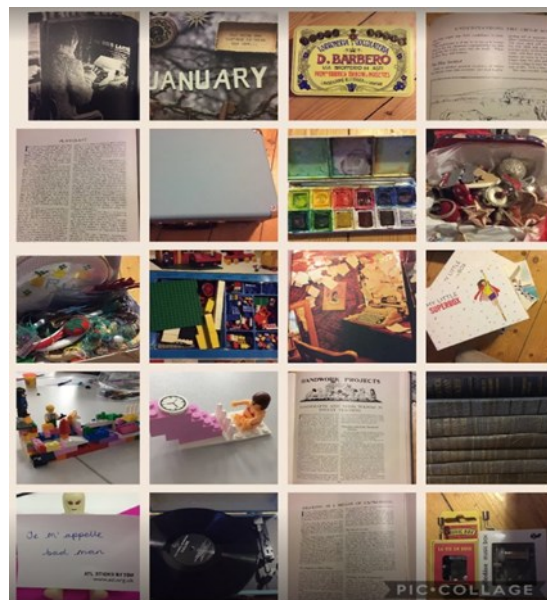
Putting together the collage, as a sort of virtual photo box led me straight to my library and a real creative learning highlight of my year last year, the Playful Learning conference at Manchester Met. I learned a lot from the experience and not necessarily what I imagined I would learn. Something that struck me then and that I am finding more and more, is that although I think play can be creative, and that play can be solitary, I've shifted to see creativity as more of a social, collaborative process than the lone genius having a spark of brand new creation.

...I confess I also peeped at other people's contributions before beginning this post...I think there is a place for being inspired by others, sharing ideas and building creative contributions together.

I'm really looking forward to getting involved in this week, although it's a really busy time for teaching, I know I will be inspired and have lots to think about and try out in the classroom. I might be exhausted by the weekend but I'm sure it'll be worth it.

Ruth Proctor

I've changed my mind. I think I'd like this box instead.

Chrissi Nerantzi

LOve your honesty Ruth. The person who can't change their mind, can''t change anything. So you are on the right truck/track ;) This picture reminds of a day we organised in a primary school with a colleague from Salford. Was a special day.

Maybe you could tell us a bit more what makes this box special for you? Think about how this links to you as a learner. How about your students?

Sandra Sinfield

This reminds me of a Maker Day in my class where we took in a load of clean recyclables - and challenged people to make a revision game...That went well in itself - then later in the year the students themselves adapted it - so that you had to play several supplementary games to get points - and those with the most points got first pick of the recyclables... for the next competitive challenge.

It was really interesting to see how much this sort of 'competition' did motivate people - especially those students who had sort of sidelined themselves for most of the year.

Norman Jackson

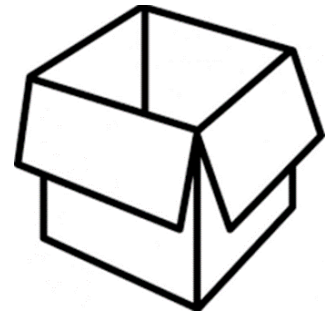These boxes offer affordance for so many things

KONSTANTINOS KARAGIANNIDIS

In this box,we see that the we can start and conquer the Knowledge from the beginning(square 1),as it happens with a white paper in which we start writing!
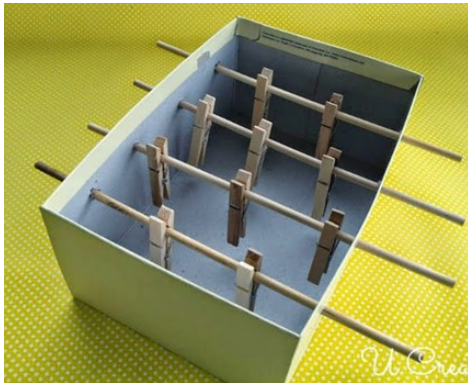
VASILEIOS GKETSIOS

yes, I like this box because it shows how one can begin from the start and build slowly the knowledge.

Sophia Moisiadou And it is 3D... showing that Education is a connection of all the aspects of life... cultural, political and economical.

Sophia Poultidou

Here is a box which is converted into a soccer toy. This box apart from playing can be used also in education. The idea of this box can teach people to work as a team. They have to work together and coorporate in order to achieve common educational goals. Also people move the pegs in this toy which means that people participate actively in the process of learning. They are energetic participants, not passive recipients like in the traditional way of teaching.The most important principle of this box is that there is movement inside the box. This means that knowledge is something active and poweful, not something stable.

KONSTANTINOS KARAGIANNIDIS

Team working is a innitiation in learning better!

VASILEIOS GKETSIOS

Active and dynamic learning is something that moves every one to learn and participate in the educational process

Sophia Moisiadou

Very innovative idea... And the metaphor you made, felicitous.

elenh tsikelh

+Sophia Poultidou i really joined your creative box ... Team collaboration is very important because imparts the creativity and power of the team

Dora Koutsou

Nowdays it seems that education is fitted in a box without any holes, strictly closed and severely adapted to its goals and content. The above description could refer to the greek educational system that the main characteristic is lack of creativity. The box that i present instead describes that creativity is the greatest expression of liberty. It is drawing a parallel between the current condition on education and the progress that has to be done in order to overcome the disadvantages of our educational system. I call it "Thinking outside of the box".

KONSTANTINOS KARAGIANNIDIS
PROBABLY YOU ARE REFERRING TO ANOTHER COUNTRY

Alexandra Gkouzou+1
We, indeed, have a long way ahead... but we are strong...we are creative...we are full of hope, the chance of a change is in our hands, let's make a difference!!

Froso Paschalidou+1

so simple thoughts Dora and so difficult to implement in our modern schools! thinking out of the box undoubtfully can make a difference! so many new and innovative ideas remain inside children's mind because our old fashioned educational system, supressess them!

Sarah Easom

Learning and creativity cannot be contained. It will fly away.
I really like your box design for this message.

Zogia Manou

+Dora Koutsou I believe that, despite the intense efforts toward embracing creativity in greek educational system in recent years, progress has not yet been significant.

Natassa Kailari

I found this picture as to be my box..actually box in a box!!!I think it is quite representantive of what i think education (of all levels) should be like. When you teach you open a white box where nothing is "written"...you expect your students to "write" something on it. You should urge them to express their thoughts, their feelings, their fears, their concerns, their ideas and so on. But, nothing can be actually be specified, cause a new box comes out of the first box and another box comes out again and onother appears again and so on. That is, creativity pressuposes no goals and freedom in learning, no borders in thinking and interaction

Nikos Fachantidis

+Natassa Kailari I found "box in a box" an interesting representation for the inter-connectivity of the learning subjects, which we should consider in order to obtain holistic teaching approach.

KONSTANTINOS KARAGIANNIDIS

building a 'tower' of Knowledge!the sky is the limit!

VASILEIOS GKETSIOS

I like this box because it enables the student to create knowledge step by step

Natassa Kalari

Very interesting perspectives!Inter-connectivity can promote creativity, connection to real life situations and step by step learning sets stable basis of learning.

Vicky-Anneta Tsoulfaidou

+Natassa Kailari, i liked your idea of boxes ,coming out of boxes. I think it shows, that learning experience can be limitless and educators should give their students the opportunity to explore the depth of cognitive objects. This can lead to new knowledge and make learning experience more interesting and creative!

VASILEIOS GKETSIOS

Within this box, will see that the knowledge is revealing as the light it appears in the box is revealing and it attracts the interest of all community

KONSTANTINOS KARAGIANNIDIS

i think that it's the best way to attract someone'sattention to learn!

Sophia Moisiadou

The light and not the shadows of it... Like the allegory of Platon!

Sophia Poultidou +VASILEIOS GKETSIOS I really like the comparison of knowledge with light. I think that knowledge help people to extend their horizons, learn stuff that they don't know so light is the most right thing for someone to describe the power of knowledge!

Christina Hesford There is no light without dark though. This suggests that there is always an unknown in learning (others what are we trying to learn). And therefore shows the potential for fear in learning environments. Fear of not knowing. Fear of getting it wrong. Once you're in the light it's great, but getting there can be very difficult!

AIKATERINI ROUSOU

Reading the activity of day 1 about boxes of learning, it just came to mind an old book-film "Forrest Gump". Those who have read the book or seen the film, they should remember a very characteristic phrase that Forrest Gump says ... "Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you gonna get".

I would rephrase that line, by saying that learning is like a box of chocolates. So, opening the box, you may find a variety of interesting information and thoughts. Some thoughts may inspire you to do things you really like, just like eating a piece of chocolate you really love. Some other thoughts may leave you with a bit of bitterness by having some not so sweet experiences, just like eating a bitter piece of chocolate. Some thoughts may make you want to learn some more about things you didn't know about until now, like picking a chocolate you wouldn't know the taste of. I hope you can empathize with this thought of mine!

KONSTANTINOS KARAGIANNIDIS
learn and eat at the same time what a pleasant experience

elenh tsikelh
+AIKATERINI ROUSOU i really love this movie and i believe is an amazing comparizon. Actually the knowledge that you take maybe don't ike you but all of "magic chocolates" have as basic purpose to make you better

AIKATERINI ROUSOU+1
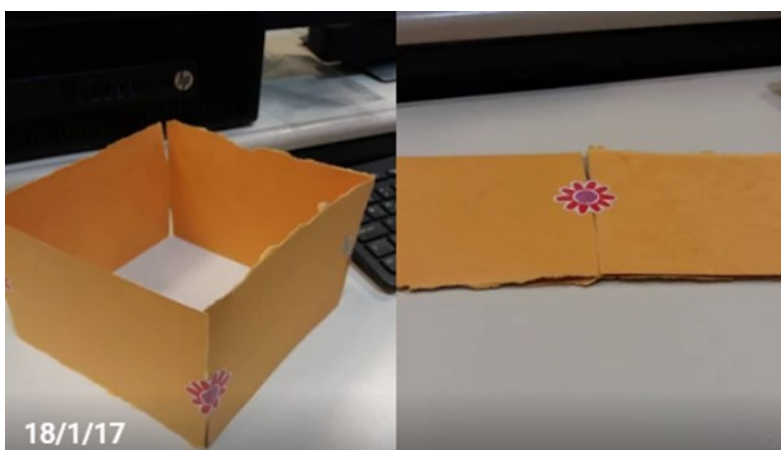Thank you +elenh tsikelh ! Yes, I agree, knowledge is not always pleasant but it still can offer you wizdom..

Alexandra Gkouzou+1
Food for thought .... your post drove me on thinking that learning into your approach is a sweet testing of untested... an incredible adventure…

Katerina Doupha
+Anastasia Michali (Uom)This is the box we have just created. It is a folding box. It is like a learning ecosystem which can be transferred to different classes, different environments. You can unfold it if you wish, but you can also keep it folded away and ... "think outside the box." It is all about versatility!

The box has no bottom and no top and this signifies that it is not a container in the constrictive sense of the word.It is not closed, it is always open to ideas and interpretations. Students are free to put anything they like inside. They are also free to make things appear from inside the box, just as a magician performs a sleight of hand.

KONSTANTINOS KARAGIANNIDIS
A practical way of learninig and playing as well!Use it as a toy!

VASILEIOS GKETSIOS
I like this box because it gives great freedom to the student to create knowledge as he wants it to be.

Sophia Poultidou
+Katerina DouphaYour box is so beautiful not only beacuse it supports openess in education but also beacuse it is handmade. Great construction skills girls!

Norman Jackson
love the idea of accommodation and openness +Katerina Doupha because it has no top or bottom you can form it into any shape to suit the circumstance

Vicky-Anneta Tsoulfaidou

I found this image of a carton box, on the net and using some simple Word options on my computer, I made this beautiful-I think-pink box!

It really looks like someone drawn it.

So in order ,for someone to be creative, and to enjoy him/herself in a creative learning enviroment, let's first: Think out-side the box. Trust our inner intuition. Imagine. Cooperate. Express our personality. Respect other people ideas. Unfollow classic approaches in learning. Try new teaching approaches. Use art.Communicate with each other. Be open and be present. Seems to me like a good start!

elenh tsikelh

There are three boxes that when i saw them inspired me immediately!!! They appear differ-ent kinds of images in every side of the box. They make me thought that in education every individual has a different past and view of life so we have not to forget to respect other's ideas and the way that they learn. Knowledge is not absolute but has the unique ability to be transformed…

Alexandra Gkouzou

This was an old tv series in Greece…
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EU7hS6qQlEI

…girl's name is Paraskeuoula and she was keeping this box under her bed…every night she had the opportunity to watch a show only for her…

This box for me captures the magic that words and a restless mind can create… not only for one, but for all those who have the opportunity to participate one way or another… we should put this magic in our teaching, in our thoughts, in our hearts and in everything we say or do…

KONSTANTINOS KARAGIANNIDIS
A sympathetic play that every child likes it!A dream box!

Sophia Poultidou+1
+Alexandra Gkouzou I remember "Paraskevoula", I watched it as a kid. I was fascinated by the magic that was hidden inside that box. I totally agree with you that it is very important to put magic in our teaching. In that way knowledge will make sense not only for educators and learners!!

Bravo Alexandra! I remember this tv series some years ago! It was surely a very intersting and educative series. Storing creative ideas and magical thoughts in your own box of magic can provide you with your storage of ideas!

Sophia Moisiadou
We can bring a simple carton box to our class and create from this a whole project with the students.
Being 3 teams we can form a game: 1st team: design and color the box, 2nd team: create crafts and items from any material (papers, recyclable etc.) so as to put them inside the box, 3rd team: observe what the other teams are doing and start to think about the connections between the schedules and the items.

In the end: all the students see what had created and think all together a scenario for a game or a story about this box and its content.
So... education for me is something simple and important that can be amazing and more useful than we could imagine... just by living it personally and together from more aspects and ideas!

KONSTANTINOS KARAGIANNIDIS
team building!

VASILEIOS GKETSIOS
i adopt the idea off co-education because it helps one another of learning in a more easy and pleasant way

elenh tsikelh
+Sophia Moisiadou this is a very smart idea because you can practically be creative and watch your imagination take place only with a box!!!

Froso Paschalidou
your idea totally relates with Dora's suggestion! it is very simple and easy to put in practice! all we need is imagination and every day stuff! the rest can be created during the process! this is one srong example of improvising and thinking out of the box!

Jasmine Renner
So glad to be able to participate once again. For me creativity is like a "card board" of flying giant bird" Once awaken to its innate essence in you, you never go back. teaching students how to harness this innate power and to feel comfortable expressing it out in formal academic settings can be a challenge. The bird connotes the ability to possess freedom of thought, move-ment, action and delivery. Students need all of this as a practice of learning and instructors need to facilitate and embed instructional practices like this into their day to day activities.

This picture I have posted in my story line captures the idea of creativity being unleashed out and the symbolic pictures of white birds with wings connotes our ongoing attempts of freeing our minds, spirits and abilities to simple become comfortable with our creative essence to the point of being "normal" in a world that might consider you abnormal sometimes.

Norman Jackson
welcome back +Jasmine Renner and thanks for sharing your thoughts. So many of the contributions echo your idea that education should be about sustaining and the fundamental right to self-expression and for teachers to encourage the use of this right through their practices and the learning activities they facilitate

Sian Etherington
This is my very low -tech picture of a box of creativity....The box is open so it's ready for things to come out of it. The things inside it allow people to create in a range of modes (pencil for written mode; camera for images; paintbrush for colour; modelling clay and hands for building). There is an af-fective element to creativity so that it goes beyond cognitive engagement to a more holistic response. There is group / community engagement so that responses are personalised but also move beyond each individual to something greater. A range of interpretations of a task are possible, but there has to be
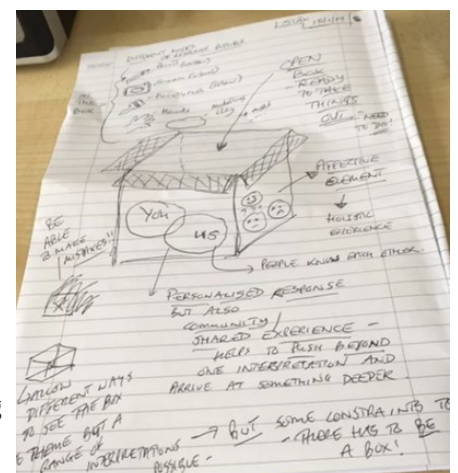
' a box' -i.e. some framework or constraints - creativity needs some boundaries. Most crucially mistakes must be possible - and even celebrated on the way to something new.

Norman Jackson
thank you for sharing your perspectives +Sian Etherington you make good use of your box both materially and metaphorically and I like your idea of annotating it which helps us understand the meanings you have given it.

Olga Broupi
In my own perspective, this box (with the entagled parts) represents the interdisciplinary approach in education, where a subject is analysed through different curricular disciplines.

The interdisciplinary approach is seen as a way to support goals such as transfer of learning, teaching students to think and reason, and providing a curriculum more relevant to students. I think this method is essential because it serves the student's deeper learning needs of today and tomorrow.

Higher education which emphasizes in a thorough understanding of current real life problems, in my opinion, requires interdisciplinary reflection.

The most challenging part is for teachers/educators to adopt this approach as their teaching method and also help their students learn how to approach issues in an interdisciplinary way.

Zogia Manou +Olga Broupi
The educator's role is really crucial in motivating creativity. Creativity is encouraged when students look beyond the correct answer and learn to see common things in a new perspective.

Chrissi NerantziOwner
Γεια σου +Zogia Manou interesting what you say about the role of the educator in developing creative thought and action. All educators can be creative, but they are not using their creativity for teaching. What then? Is there no hope for students who have such teachers?

Zogia Manou Γεια σου +Chrissi Nerantzi! I want to believe that a creative person will always find a way to express his/her creativity, even if the teaching environment is not supportive.

Norman Jackson
I love the idea of entanglement- entanglement is in everything imagination-reasoning-action-embodiment and entangled boxes helps us to appreciate it.

Olympia Deligkari
Here is an interesting box that it actually represents a paper suitcase. The diverse stickers on it depict the willingness and the intention to travel all over the world. In my mind, this box symbolizes the mobility of ideas in the educational context of higher education and contains useful educational and learning tools. In other words, I believe that this box-suitcase can be used to carry not only the prerequisite knowledge and skills, but also ideas in and values which learners can always bring with them. Therefore, emancipatory education and self-directed learning are promoted. Some critical questions emerge regarding the following:

• How the role of the educator in the light of the modern world can be defined in order lifelong learning to be promoted?

What kind of values should be inculcated in the learners so that they can be led to an emancipatory learning?
• What skills should carry in their educational suitcase in order to use them in each learning environment?

Alexandra Gkouzou
Very interesting approach…

Norman Jackson
+Olympia Deligkari nice idea that higher education helps ideas and people travel

Froso Paschalidou

I chose this picture because it reminded me of the current situation in education. Students have to keep in mind whatever they learn in boxes. Of course, i am talking about the fragmentation of knowledge, which blocks students' imagination and creativity. Also these "boxing" prevents cross-curricular education, which is very important for acquiring a more rounded knowledge and developing critical reflection.

So contrary to the above i suggest open and connected boxes, so that the knowledge can be spreaded throughout the boxes, meaning the different subjects and improve critical thinking, via dialogue and conversations based on valid information and arguments! This way students will feel more free and knowledge won't have to be boxed, thus improving creativity and free thinking and promoting connection between seemingly different subjects.

Zogia Manou

For me, creative learning is like a big box of colours. Different colours, different tools, different textures represent education's versatility.

One is free to use anything he/she likes, or even mix different materials. There are no rules, no limits, no restriction… Moreover, this wide open box also indicates that creativity cannot be restrained.

Christina Hesford

I've been struggling with this assignment since it emerged on Monday. As a teaching assistant on Textiles in Practice, but also as a person with my own creative practice (I am a weaver and textile artist), I am around creativity most of the time and doing creative things. I was finding the directive to make a box which explained a creative learning environment very contrived. I could just tell you about the creative environment and its aspects that I thought were beneficial. Did the making of the box really expand my thinking or perception of the environment I was thinking about? Would it lead to new perceptions as I made it? Was the box just a visualisation of what I already knew? Was it making for the sake of making? Let's do something creative, get your pens and paper out. (I realise this sounds very sarcastic, but please bear with me...)

Then I realised I couldn't answer these questions until I tried it myself. So, here is my box.

It is actually a fruit bag full of pom-poms. The learning experience that came to mind for me as being most effective wasn't really creative. It was a one-to-one tutorial with a teacher. I was asked to talk through my current sketchbook and work. The teacher would let silence spiral once I finished talking, or if I asked a question. She was thinking, but it forced me to think too. Sometimes she asked a question back, forcing me to answer my own questions or challenging me. I felt like a porous being, hence the fruit bag with holes in it. My teacher was drawing the information and answers out of me, hence the fibres and strings of the pom-poms emerging from the bag.
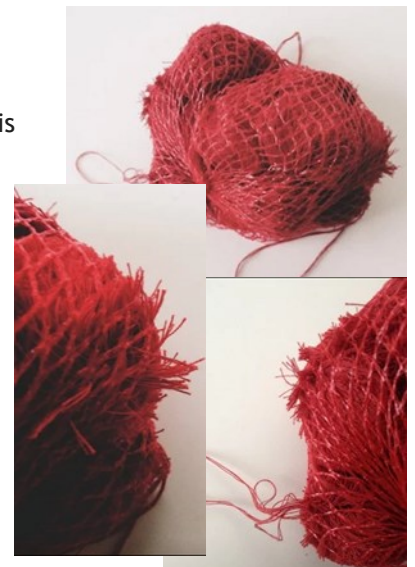
I also felt like I was absorbing information from my teacher. Hence, the holes are again important, as information can flow both ways. The empty spaces within the bag are also important as there is room to be filled. I struggled with the box because it is hard. It is a specific shape. There is no room for nebulous-ness, for organic growth. For me, the most important aspect of this model is the ability for information to be absorbed through the holes, and sent out through the holes.

So - did making a box help me to explore the learning experience I had chosen?
No, not really. I thought about the situation I had chosen, and was already thinking about cells as a metaphor for the experience. Hence why I chose the nebulous bag.

However, my 'box' is useful for explaining my thoughts to others. It provides a visual aid for explaining my thought process and reasoning. So the 'box' is not useful to me, but it is useful to you, my colleagues, just as your boxes are useful to me in giving me an insight into your learning experiences and other ways of doing things.

The main thing that this activity has made me think about is whether this was truly a creative activity?

I found that this activity allowed thoughts and concepts which usually remain in the head to be seen in a 3-dimensional manner. The learning process wasn't necessarily an increase in creativity (i.e., I didn't have any new ideas of revelations as a result), but the physical act of making acted as a vehicle for learning about the subject in a different way.

It has just occurred to me that I said I didn't learn anything new, but this entire post is actually about me trying to define creativity in this context, and understanding the usefulness of the activity, thoughts which the activity inspired.

I've realised that I need to re-define what creativity means to me for the learning context. Perhaps I need to consider how these creative learning tools could enhance a creative student's understanding of an art theory or their own creative process, as opposed to developing their ability to create.

What are everyone else's thoughts on whether this was a creative activity?
What do you mean by 'creativity in learning'?

Chrissi Nerantzi
Hi Christina, lovely to see you here and great that you engaged critically and creatively with the box task. It is important to be honest and you did this here. Always valuable to debate and discuss as this process will help us make new discoveries. And I think you made one, when you said that the box might help you to explain to others something that with words alone might be harder?

You mention 'absorbing information' I am wondering if you would like to explain this further. Is this what learning is?

I am looking forward to finding out more about your ideas around creative learning or creativity in learning. Let's also see what others will contribute too. Looking forward to continuing the conversation.

Jennifer Willis
+Christina Hesford Thank you for a very insightful account. The main thing I take from your post is that the task made you reflect critically on your practice and views, and these are great outcomes.

Like you, I found the notion of a box too constraining so opted for an ever-changing shape around the learning process.

You raise an interesting point about creating for creating's sake. Do you feel that creativity has to be
(a) spontaneous and (b) not necessarily produce something functional? Is there a distinction between creation and invention?

Christina Hesford +Chrissi Nerantzi
Yes, I definitely realised that taking part in this activity wasn't all about what I might learn for myself, but what I might contribute too!

Christina Hesford +Chrissi Nerantzi

Yes, I definitely realised that taking part in this activity wasn't all about what I might learn for myself, but what I might contribute too!

Absorbing information - I suppose it's a part of the learning process, maybe near the beginning, but not all of it. If we just absorb it, it could sit there and slowly fade unless it is engaged with. It could be absorbed, accepted, and stored. It could be absorbed, considered, and rejected, so expelled from the bag. Or any other form of interaction, such as development of the information, acquisition of more, improvement of the information.

But does all of this processing have to happen in the mind? Not necessarily... Possibly this is where creative learning could come in to it - as a method for processing and re-evaluating information. I sometimes find it hard to just sit and think about something, so actions that help with processing might extend and improve mine, and others, learning.

What do you think about 'absorbing' as learning?

Christina Hesford
Hi +Jennifer Willis ,
It's great that we both felt we had the freedom to work outside of the prescribed 'box'. I wonder how we can install this freedom within students? I often hear students fears about 'getting it wrong'.

So to answer your questions:
a) Spontaneity in creativity. Actually, I don't think spontaneity is a big part of creativity at all... In my own practice, as well as what I teach, being creative is about giving yourself the resources to consistently create. It is a cycle that I take myself through and that I think anyone can take themselves through, or a cycle which can be facilitated, with the right tools. I wrote an article on developing this cycle for any area, not just textiles, here: http://www.textileartist.org/christina-hesford-do-we-all-have-creative-bones/

b) Creating something functional. I don't think creativity has to produce something functional either. If you look at children's drawings, parents often want to know what a picture is of, whereas the child was happy to make marks. When I was learning to weave, I was encouraged to make lots of samples and testers: this is logical because it allows me to learn many processes without committing to the production of say, a blanket, which is all one pattern.

I'd love to hear you opinion on whether creativity is spontaneous and whether creativity needs a functional outcome?

Christina Hesford
+Jennifer Willis Also, here's a diagram I drew as part of the above article, explaining the creative cycle I've worked to over the past few years, as it seems relevant to the above post.
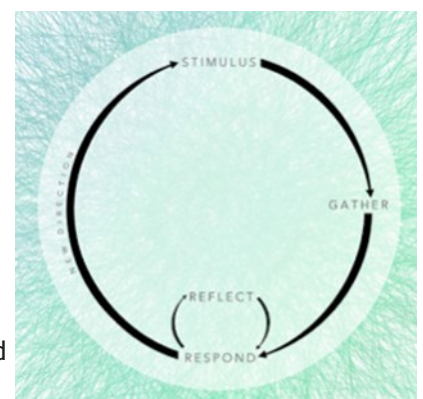

Norman Jackson
A wonderfully thought provoking exposition +Christina Hesford of a thinking and doing process stimulated by the affordance in a challenge, acted upon and embodied in the making of the representation then reflected upon as a whole to construct new meanings - then further elaborated in the unfolding conversation. I enjoyed being involved in your journey and you are quite right to say that in the context of this #creativeHE event our creativity is more about serving and contributing to the social learning experience than it is serving the need or desire for something that we are trying to achieve elsewhere in our lives. Its a social sort of creativity the sharing of which contributes to our collective understanding.

I think you offer us a good example of personal creativity in the sense described by Carl Rogers (1960) 'the emergence in action of a novel [something that did not exist before] relational product growing out of the uniqueness of the individual on the one hand, and the materials, events, people, or circumstances of his [her] life' Where the product includes the insights as well as the artefact.

Rogers, C.R., (1961) On becoming a person. Boston: Houghton Mifflin

Jennifer Willis In answer to your question about spontaneity, this is something I have struggled with. On the one hand, I like the spontaneous act of creativity, but on the other, I recognise I can be creative in response to a specific brief.

I see this in my students, too. One of the young ones' favourite creative writing exercises is based on magic dice. They thrown the dice, which have pictures not numbers on them. One of the dice comprises magic powers e.g. ability to time travel. They have to make up a story using each of the words and the magic power. The speed at which some of them can do this is amazing, and we have a huge variety of stories.

Turning to the issue of utility, no, I certainly don't think a creative piece needs to have a function other than to please or give us something we enjoy.

Maybe this links to our other conversation about tactility. Creation is born of the need to express an emotion, and how else could we do this than through some physical act, which is received through another's senses. I need to give this more thought ….

Kostas Batzilis

Hi everybody! I chose this box because it is open and because of the phrase formed by these colorful cubes. Thinking outside the box should be the main idea and initiative for every educator. As a metaphor that means to think differently, unconventionally, or from a new perspective. I believe that this idea promotes creative and critical thinking. For me, teaching how to think critically and read between the lines is an essential part of the educational process.

kevin byron

My contribution to the Box:
This represents a box for which the inside is the outside. It aims to show visually that creative thinking doesn't exist in isolation from critical thinking (analysis,synthesis, decision-making, assessment etc). Any activity that engages the imagination also engages our critical thinking skills at the same time to guide us to the best ideas. The notion of suspending judgment when working in groups (ie only be creative) may appear to be taking place overtly but covertly we continue to engage our critical faculties. In the classroom we aim to give precedence to creative thinking by designing open-ended challenges for which there are many solutions. The individual then explores their own solution through a continuous interaction between their creative and critical thinking skills. When we simply wish to 'transmit' information or facts through conventional teaching the emphasis is on critical thinking but the student also engages their creative thinking in order to understand what is being taught. The teacher designs the kind of thinking that should take precedence but the learner engages both forms of thinking. All this is to say there is no 'outside of the box'!
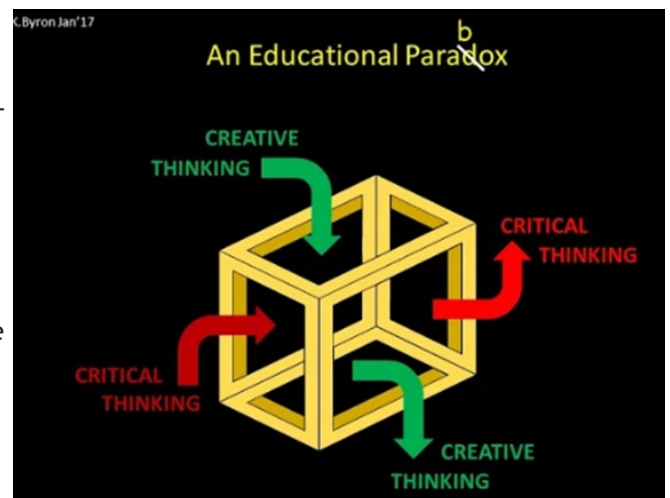
Christina Hesford
Hi +kevin byron,
This is such a great perspective on the role of critical thinking alongside creative thinking, that I had;t thought about before. Thanks. You're right too, they are both necessary parts of the process, and at times one will have precedence over the other.

Do you have any techniques/workshops you use for developing critical thinking or creative thinking? Can they be taught separately?

kevin byron

Thanks Christina - it's not a popular view by many people I've met who facilitate creativity in education, but a few minutes of self-reflection in any creative activity informs us just how much we interlace creative and critical thinking. Even idle day-dreaming is an inner dialogue on the borderlines of awareness in which critical thinking guides our creative imagination to its destination. One of the challenges in trying to give equal status to critical thinking is the word itself. Some people interpret this as criticising rather than the broad spectrum of skills that give shape and meaning to creative thoughts.

It's an irony in fact that all of the writing on the CreativeHECommunity web-page is a form of critical thinking accompanied by images that need to analysed to some degree. I have never been comfortable with the notion of divergent (creative) thinking being seperable from convergent (critical) thinking.

Recent work on brainstorming by Charlan Nemeth has shown that if groups debate and critique ideas in a brain-storm they generate 20% more ideas than groups who suspend judgment. This is simply enabling the group to work in the same natural way that we do on our own.

Regarding developing critical thinking (something which conventional education does well - probably too well), I tend to design my workshops with exercises in which a lot of dialogue between the attendees is required before the creative activity can begin. This dialogue concerns a critical appraisal of what they are aiming to do together. If we give exercises like "Invent101 new uses for a house-brick", I don't regard this as having much value because the imagination runs riot and lots of ideas appear that are impractical. If instead we said "Invent 101 ideas for a house-brick that you could put into practise" fewer ideas will arise but they will have been focussed through critical thinking on real-world uses. There are a number of things that can be taught directly in critical thinking workshops such as logical fallacies and cognitive illusions and there are many of these (see fore example the on-line version of The Skeptics Dictionary) However too much of this is like too much creativity - it leads to mental fatigue. The best way to design a workshop in my view is to have a mix of both these thinking skills and as a facilitator we can spot when to switch from a greater emphasis on one mode over the another.

A final note on this subject, I believe it's a myth that high school teaching kills the creativity that flourished in children when they were in junior school. What is really happening in high school is that the wild imaginings of childhood are being tempered by the reality of what is actually possible. This doesn't stop us having imaginative excursions in our mind, but we take with us the newly learned concrete facts that enable us to prune ideas that can't work. So a dip in creativity at high school in my view is a good sign that our creativity is being informed by an understanding of the world we live in.

Norman Jackson

thank you for reminding us +kevin byron that boxes are only our perception of reality and mercifully we have our ability to think in ways that enable us to change our perception of what the box is. As all these fantastic contributions to the conversation have illustrated.

Norman Jackson

+kevin byron +Christina Hesford there are some really interesting perspectives on the interactive way in which perception reasoning and imagination interact in just about everything we do in the book by Anne Pendleton-Julian and John Seely Brown called 'Pragmatic Imagination'. http://www.pragmaticimagination.com/

https://www.deepfun.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/imagination-1.jpg
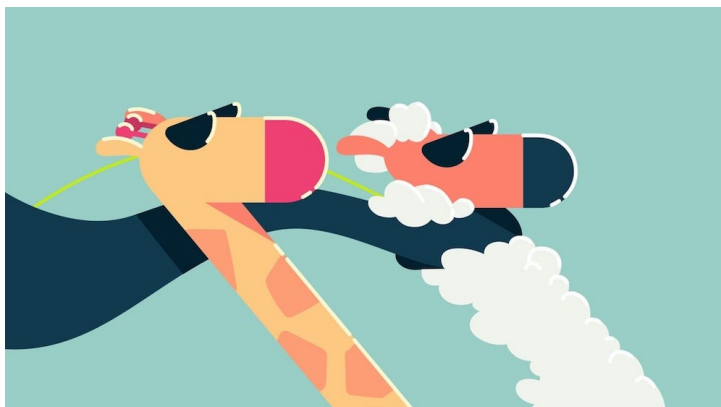
This final post reveals the value in curating the posts so that people can utilise the resources after the conversation has taken place.

Anna Foss

Thanks so much to Chrissi Nerantzi and those who set this activity, and to Norman Jackson for this super collation. Since I have arrived so late to all these fascinating discussions I was finding myself getting very lost! (Sorry too many other commitments currently). I have gained so much from reading all these contributions I'm now overwhelmed (in a nice way) with stimulating thoughts - just a few noted below which triggered the following personal reflections.

Thanks Sarah Ney for the image of a present - it immediately struck me as a reminder of how, when things work well, I gain so much from my learners and the experience of supporting them - what a gift they are to me! "We are making this journey together" as Norman Jackson says.

I was really inspired by Jennifer Willis' post about "teaching being a lifewide experience". I agree that it is frustrating in some ways working in current structures that I find it difficult to bring experiences learnt outside of my profession (e.g. from broader life) into the workplace. ...although now I wonder how much I create my own barriers? I suppose I mean that I don't have formal / academic qualifications from my broader life experience. Perhaps keeping them separate is okay? Perhaps I do use such skills/experience without realising?!

I think this links a bit with what Sebastian Kozbial said about utilising "new skills in different situations".

I am often challenged by the idea of creativity as "messy". Images such as that from Karen Tuzylak are amazing and I'm sure hold true for so many in so many ways. However, with my own background in mathematical modelling, I strive for something more ordered and tidy, even when grappling with creativity. In mathematical modelling we put people in boxes and then move them between boxes. I often feel like I am on the periphery of different boxes but perhaps 'my box' is an animation of me removing some of these 'walls'. In fact, Sarah Easom helps me with this with the "working with uncertainty" phrase and "black box" terminology since the former was actually the topic of my mathematical epidemiology PhD and the latter is used so much in describing models!

I found very useful Kevin Byron's box and links make with critical thinking, and the balance between divergent and convergent thinking.

I leave this week with the sense expressed by Jasmine Renner that I now join with any others striving to: "become comfortable with our creative essence to the point of being "normal" in a world that might consider you abnormal sometimes.

Image source: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/550c33c6e4b09fa40565c247/
t/55c8be43e4b03a2e8b306a2c/1439219268383/

PLAY, PLAY, PLAY.
Is there a place for play and games in higher education?
Jenny Willis

The theme for the second day of this course was play and its relevance to higher education. Chrissi outlined this in her introduction to Day 2. She offered a variety of stimulus material to prompt conversation and invited participants to give examples of activities that might be used as icebreakers for a new group. The teacher/facilitator had to be included, and there could be scope for developing the idea further.

Chrissi Nerantzi, Day 2 (Tuesday 17 January) #creativeHE

Today, Tuesday, we will be exploring play.

Is there a place for play and games in higher education? Let's start looking at this today. Well, we are not just going to look at play, we are actually going to play a game together.

We are proposing the following activity for today. Feel free to share your additional play activity with us all.

Play! Play! Play!
We are inviting you to create a playful induction activity that can be used face-to-face or online when a new group of learners comes together. The main purpose is to get to know each other, to open up and lay the foundations of the learning community that is to be formed. The activity should enable the teacher/facilitator to participate.

We would like you to create or adapt an activity that would be useful for you and could be shared further.

We can't wait to find out what you did come up with. Share your playful ideas here with us all and engage in conversations with others to find out more about their ideas.

Suggested reading: Nerantzi, C. & James, A. (eds.) (2015) Exploring Play in Higher Education, Creative Academic Magazine, Issue 2a, Issue 2b, June 2015, available at http://www.creativeacademic.uk/magazine.html

For an acerbic counter-narrative - listen to Will Self's A point of View (BBC Radio 4, Sunday 8th January 2017): 'The fun of work - really?' Self offers a counter-argument as to the role that play has in our schools. It is challenging - and just a ten-minute listen: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b086th59#play

If you capture your engagement here in the community and/or your portfolio, consider claiming the play badge.

Stay tuned, here in the community and on Twitter using #creativeHE.

We wish you all a playful day

Chrissi, Sandra, Nikos and Norman

Norman has already described the difficulties of curating posts in Google communities. If this was hard on the first day, how much more complex it became as the week progressed e.g. new participants replied to task 2 on different days, making their posts difficult to find, and threads of conversations became confused. Matters were further complicated by the continued participation of some members beyond the formal end of the course on day 5.

I have spent many hours trying to curate Task 2 in a way that is comprehensible and fair. In doing so, I have taken a different approach from Norman, but I hope that I have retained the integrity of conversations. First, I have not included any posts that were made after day 5: interested readers can go back to the actual site for these. Secondly, I have numbered and titled each game, using either the name given by the contributor, or, in the absence of one, creating a descriptor of my own. This resulted in 32 discussions focused on a proposed game/activity. They are presented in inverse order: the first ones listed were actually the last ones posted.

In addition to these conversations, there were 3 which were more theoretical, discussing principles rather than a specific activity. They all relate to play but two straddle the themes of days 1 and 2. I have taken these three out of sequence, and grouped them together as 33-35.

A final note about language: for many participants, English is a foreign language. They are to be congratulated on their linguistic skills, and willingness to expose any grammatical weaknesses on line. Their actual words are reproduced unedited in order to reflect their individual personalities.

1 Olympia Deligkari
Categories or Similarities
Hi everybody!

A very interesting and easy to implement to the educational setting icebreaker activity is called Categories or Similarities Game.

To start up, each team must find a certain amount of things they all have in common (similarities) before the other teams in this simple competitive ice-breaker game. It works great for medium sized groups, or even really large groups of 20+ people if you split into smaller sized groups.

Materials needed
We won't need anything special to play this game. If we wish to make things more official, we can use a piece of paper and a writing utensil for each team to record their similarities on, although this is not necessary.

How to play the get-to-know-you game:
1. The educator divides his/her group up into separate teams of about five people each. Ideally he/she should ends up with at least 4 different teams with a minimum of 4 people per team.
Tip: She/he can try to make teams of people that are not already close with each other. This makes the game more fun and serves as a great icebreaker for people to get introduced to one another!

2. The educator instructs each team to talk amongst themselves and find out at least 6 things that every single group member has in common with the other members.
Tip: She/he might consider not allowing teams to use simple things like physical height, hair color, current cloth-ing items worn, etc. Limiting the similarities to non-physical things helps people to learn more about each other and engage in active, more meaningful conversations that will promote inclusion and lasting connections be-tween team members.

3. This game is played as a race and each team is competing to come up with their six similarities before the others. The game ends once every team has come up with six things they have in common, or once the time set aside for the game has expired.

4. Alternative: If the educator prefers to play a quicker alternative, she/he can assemble the whole group and instruct them to form teams based on categories of things that they all have in common. This can include any-thing from favorite colors to least favorite movies and beyond. In this alternative, she/he can set the minimum size for each team in order for the activity to be over.

Winning the game
The winner of the regular version of the game is the team that most quickly identifies 6 similarities they all share. In the alternative game there is no real winner and it is used as a simple and quick icebreaker game for large groups.   Good luck and have fun!

Vicky-Anneta Tsoulfaidou: +Olympia Deligkari, Wow! Such an interesting and fun game indeed! I liked more the first option, because it is far more exciting, when there is some competition. Your game, helps team members to know each other, because it is not easy to find six similarities, in a group. I would only recommend a price for the winning team!

Olympia Deligkari: +Vicky-Anneta Tsoulfaidou Thank you very much for your apt comment! Of course it would be intriguing a prize to be offered to the winning team!

<div align="center">*</div>

2 Eelenh Tsikelh
Game of Possibilities

This creative game has been impressed in my memory because it reminded me the game of charades. It is the ideal ice breaking game between the individuals make them feel free and creative.

Game of Possibilities
Time: 5-6 minutes
Number of Participants: One or multiple small groups
Tools Needed: Any random objects
Rules: This is a great 5-minute team building game. Give an object to one person in each group. One at a time, someone has to go up in front of the group and demonstrate a use for that object. The rest of the team must guess what the player is demonstrating. The demonstrator cannot speak, and demonstrations must be original, possibly wacky, ideas.

Objective: This team building exercise inspires creativity and individual innovation.

AIKATERINI ROUSOU: Very creative game! It activates thinking, imagination and performing skills!

<div align="center">*</div>

3 Anastasia Michali
Writing a collective story

Good morning everyone, I have been reading your ideas about ice breaking and story activities and they are really inspiring!

My activity is about writing a story in class. The teacher or a student takes a piece of paper and writes a sentence on it that occupies two lines approximately. Then he/she covers the first sentence with something and a student comes, reads the end of the sentence and continues the story. Every student comes and continues the story in the same way!! When every student has written, they read the story aloud!

This can be used to break the ice and establish a warm atmosphere. It can also be used to do some language practice. And it can foster creative thinking, due to the unexpected stories that come up. Have fun!!

Alexandra Gkouzou: Perfect idea for kids and adults too. The kids could make pictures for the story...and all these could be the story of the class.

Sandra Sinfield Hi +Anastasia Michali - a lovely idea. What about writing the story into a Word Document that everybody can see? One of my second year students asked to do this with a group of first years as a way of loosening them up about writing generally. First they agreed a genre - they elected a scribe to type it up - and off they went. The second year, Dom, pointed at the first class member to start the story... they then pointed at another ... and so it continued in a zig zag around the class. It was fun and interesting - and hopefully modelled that writing should not be put off - but started.

On the other hand, timing is all! The students chose the genre of romantic fiction - but the activity happened just before an assignment hand-in date when they were all really stressed - and it showed. The lovely romantic fiction attempt soon turned into a horror/murder mystery. I was thinking that this would make great research - have a story session with the same group of students once they have received work back - is the story itself happier and lighter?
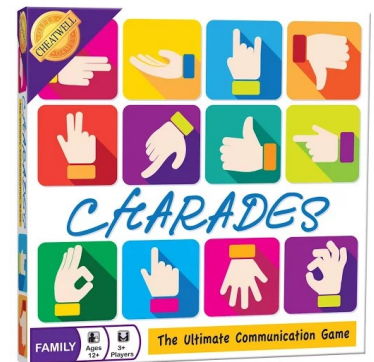
4 Dora Koutsou
Lost on a desert island

Here is my favourite ice breaking activity!
Lost on a Deserted Island is teambuilding activity that also helps people share a little about themselves. Given the scenario that everyone is lost and stranded on a deserted island, each person describes one object that they would bring and why each person is asked to describe what object they would bring and why. This need not be realistic: if someone loves music, he or she might choose to bring a guitar, or an animal lover might choose to bring a dog, a food lover might choose to bring sirloin steaks, and so on. Encourage people to be creative.

After everyone has introduced their object and why they have chosen that object, the teambuilding portion follows. Divide into smaller groups and ask everyone to work together to improve their chances of survival by combining the various objects that they introduced. If necessary, you can add more objects, but be sure to use all the objects that everyone mentioned. Lost on a Deserted Island is an approachable way to get people to open up and share a little bit about themselves and what they enjoy or value.

Sandra Sinfield Hi +Dora Koutsou - a lovely, creative and engaging induction activity that draws everybody into the process.

When you have used this - do people just join in - do you get refusers (and if so - what do you do)? What do the students say after such an activity?

<div align="center">*</div>

5 Paul Kleiman
Crosby hunt

Due to other commitments I've managed to miss contributing to the week's activities apart from my Box idea at the start. But I've been reading through the many inspiring ideas and interesting comments, and trying to catch up.

I was particular struck by the number of examples, for icebreaking, of getting students to do something together and, particularly the use of 'hunts' of various types - scavenger, treasure etc. I've certainly used a treasure hunt, based around Liverpool (where I was teaching) as a great way not only for students to bond, but also to get to know the city.

Another time we took all the design students (c. 70 in an old doubke decker bus) to Crosby, on the coast. The long and high sea wall at Crosby is made of all the rubble from when Liverpool was bombed during WW2. There's still a treasure trove of old tiles, glass, bits of this and that to be found. We simply said, 'You've got the whole afternoon, go round in small groups, and make something.' It was great, especially as the sun shone. The only photo I can find from that day is this one. Everyone took lots of photos, which they turned into an exhibition back at the institution.

Jennifer Willis+Paul Kleiman A great story, Paul and a shame you haven't got the other pictures. This one is very haunting, though, in its symmetry and precision. A metaphor, perhaps?

Hunting is a favourite with children, of course, so this is my pretext for sharing an image of my own! A couple of Easters ago, I ran an intensive week of reading and writing for some KS2 children. On the last day, I hid mini chocolate eggs everywhere so that they could hunt them as they do in Europe. The picture is blurred, but captures their excitement as they rushed around.
Jenny

Sandra Sinfield Oh dear lord, +Paul Kleiman – what a wonderful thing: the bus, the trip, the making, the exhibition! Sort of jealous right now!

A much less powerful activity that we do (and apologies if we have swapped on this before!!) – is to get first year students to go out and around the university spotting learning – learning spaces – learning hindrances – and then to communicate via – poetry, 3D object, knitting, comic book, jigsaw puzzle, video, animation, collage, dance, cabinet of curiosity, installation. As yet – no one has chosen the installation! :-D

Sebastian Kozbial+1+Sandra Sinfield +Paul Kleiman +Jennifer Willis For slightly older or more technologically adept children (adults of course), I would suggest using 'Aurasma' – this piece of software runs on any smartphony and can 'alter reality'. You can take a picture of a 'hunted treasure', something that participants need to find, and then take another picture of another object and swap these! When using this software, mobile phones are able to recognise the swap and you could end up with looking at the Eiffel Tower instead of Geoffrey Manton… or perhaps something smaller and more generic – like an Easter egg instead of a bus timetable… videos can also be used.

Sandra Sinfiled +Sebastian Kozbial… and the first team back with the alphabet wins… ?

Christina Hesford+1+Paul Kleiman This is a great idea as the images of works made on the day also had a longer lifespan by becoming the content of the exhibition. Excellent!
+Jennifer Willis
I did an Easter Egg hunt for adults a few years ago and some of those people still reminisce to me about the event now. It was fun to see adults playing and watching the sense of healthy competition emerging. It was a very interactive way of exploring a new environment.

<div align="center">*</div>

6 Jennifer Willis
Magic dice

+Christina Hesford Hi again, Christina. In answer to your question about spontaneity, this is something I have struggled with. On the one hand, I like the spontaneous act of creativity, but on the other, I recognise I can be creative in response to a specific brief.

I see this in my students, too. One of the young ones' favourite creative writing exercises is based on magic dice. They throw the dice, which have pictures not numbers on them. One of the dice comprises magic powers e.g. ability to time travel. They have to make up a story using each of the words and the magic power. The speed at which some of them can do this is amazing, and we have a huge variety of stories.

Turning to the issue of utility, no, I certainly don't think a creative piece needs to have a function other than to please or give us something we enjoy.

Maybe this links to our other conversation about tactility. Creation is born of the need to express an emotion, and how else could we do this than through some physical act, which is received through another's senses. I need to give this more thought ....
Jenny

<div align="center">*</div>

7 Alexandra Gkouzou
Nutrition board game

I put games in to my teaching. The image below is the draft of a board game designed primarily for children, but with small changes can be used for all ages. The theme of the game is nutrition. Pink cards are questions with Right and Wrong answers… green cards are Multiple-choice questions, you will see some blue boxes in the game there the players can read information on the value of water and exercise to gain point for stopping there. It is a pity that I can't show you the final form, this picture hopefully helped you understand. Through this game I want children or adults players learn even a few things about nutrition. I can't tell you whether it will be successful or not, because I haven't finish my construction, but I think that it is a playful approach for this subject.

Alexandra Gkouzou: And this is the dice.
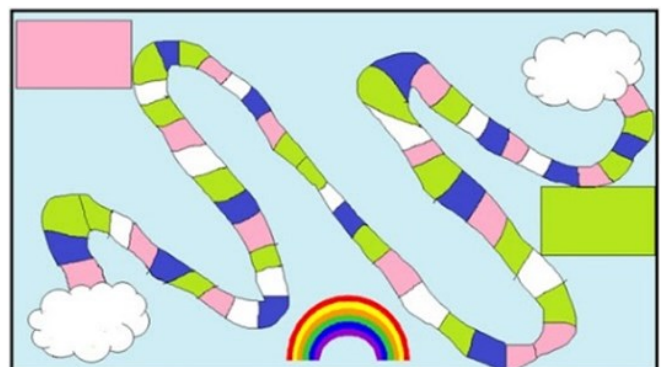
Sandra Sinfield I do love the idea of this game, +Alexandra Gkouzou. Have you thought about getting the students themselves to make the game - from design - to rules - to Q&As?

Alexandra Gkouzou+1 Yes, but it would take a lot of time. I don't have a class, so this would be a little tricky in the library that I use for projects like this, they let us use the space for 1 or 1.30 hour top. Your proposal was my first idea and the ideal situation.

<div align="center">*</div>

8 Kostas Batzilis
The Picture Pieces Game

Here is an activity I have taken part to in the past and I really liked. It is known as "The Picture Pieces Game". This problem solving activity requires that the educator choose a well known picture or cartoon that is full of detail. The picture needs to be cut into as many equal squares as there are participants in the activity. Each student should be given a piece of the "puzzle" and instructed to create an exact copy of their piece of the puzzle five times bigger than its original size. They are posed with the problem of not knowing why or how their own work affects the larger picture. The educator can pass out pencils, markers, paper, and rulers in order to make the process simpler and run more smoothly or even participate. When all the students have completed their enlargements, ask them to assemble their pieces into a giant copy of the original picture on a table. This problem solving activity promotes teamwork and demonstrates divisionalized 'departmental' working, which is the understanding that each person working on their own part contributes to an overall group result.

Sandra Sinfield Hi +Kostas Batzilis - what an intriguing activity - I really like this and would love to use it myself. Have you used it - and if so - does it work - how do people respond to the challenge - are they engaged - is there laughter?

Chrissi Nerantzi Γεια χαρά Κώστα, What a wonderful activity to create mini and enlarged puzzles that bring people closer together. Wondering if there also could be tasks linked to each piece, or connecting pieces that would help students to work closer together and work something out beyond the puzzle, perhaps?

<div align="center">*</div>

9 Alex Kaitai Liang
Guess Who's Who

Hello everyone. Happy new year to all. I am glad to join the creativeHE community. I am a lecturer in computer science. I would like to put more creativity into my learning & teaching, specially in some programming courses.

Before taking Day 2's task, I had never related play and games with my teaching. But now, I am going to change.

First, I need to ask myself what creativity is. In my eyes, creativity may be equal to innovation. Prove something to be wrong, assemble new components from the existing, and invent brand new things that are three main ways leading to innovation. Here I choose the second way.

So, how should I combine play and games with an induction activity, say the introduction (lesson) of Java programming? I may leverage technology and a game.

What game will I use? I may leverage a game, called "Guess, who is who". I may separate the whole class into a few groups; each of the group includes 5-6 students. After that, I may require the students to anonymously write down information which can be used to clearly identify herself/himself among others.

Where do the students write the information on? Since it is a programming course, writing the information on a piece of paper that seems very trivial and cannot provoke the students' curiosity and interest about technology. So, I may make use of moodle's Forum. I may require all students to login moodle's Forum and upload the information anonymously (Note I am not quiet sure if they can upload message anonymously......), so that others can read the information there.

What information should the students upload? Since it is a programming course, I may encourage the students try to use programming language to describe themselves, like System.out.println("I have blue eyes and sharp dark hair."). But consider that few students self-learn programming, I may just request the students to use their own "languages", say Spanish, Italian, or even the languages they can create immediately, to describe themselves.

What next? After uploading their self-description, the students may try to identify who is who within their respective groups. Of course, since some description may be written in foreign languages, or Java/C++, or totally can-not-be-understood symbols, the students need to guess via their logical thinking and imagination. I may encourage the students to work together to figure out what those "weird" symbols mean. Note is it like problem-based learning, tackling problems to learn new information/knowledge?

What's more? What is the main purpose of bring the game into the induction? I guess the students now may know each other quite well via the game. But it is the programming induction. Maybe, I may mention that all the "languages" shown in the Forum that are quite similar to "programming languages". The former, like English, Finnish, are used in human-human communication, while the latter, such as Java, C#, are for human-computer communication. I guess relating the programming languages with our daily use languages that may eliminate the students' fear on programming learning. Note is it like case-study, using the game as a case?

Maybe? I may request the students to give me one-minute feedback letters at last. From the letters, I may see which aspects I can improve in the future while putting games into class.

Furthermore? I have the following questions. 1. how to guarantee the students' engagement? (Maybe no all students are interested in play and games) 2. how to assess the students' in games? (how to make sure they obtain the LOs during games)

Sandra Sinfield Hi +Alex Kaitai Liang - lovely to see you thinking about bringing more games/play into your teaching - and i hope to see some more of your posts about that here in the Community even once this week is over.

One cool thing that I did one year was to ask the students to produce a self representation to bring to class the following week…

That next week we did a discussion activity - then students had to draw a representation of their discussion partner…

We then called up people to display their self-representation - and compare it with the one produced by their partner - and to discuss - compare - laugh…

It was a lovely way, we thought, for the students to engage with each other - whilst bringing a bit of themselves into the room.

*

10 Mar Kri
Matching pairs

A useful icebreaker and a fun one too I have used a few times with students is setting a circle around with -1 chair from the total number of people in the group. So for example there s 40 people we set a circle of 39 chairs.to start with there is a person standing in the middle of the circle and begins the game.he has to say a question or statememt out loud to which anybody who is in agreement with it or it applies to them has to stand up and swap chairs with the rest of the people who have stood up E.g. anybody who has green eyes …or stand up if you like dogs OR stand up if feel you are a good listener. One can actually amend this to a more depth and or challenfing level that feels appropriate to the groups needs.

http://f.tqn.com/y/grammar/1/
W/6/5/0/-/Getty_adjacency_pair-
97221002.jpg

11 Mari Kri
Creating a web of responses

A similar one is providing a bit more of structure ,where the facilitator has pre-pared a piece of sheet with a number of qs /statements (as the numbers of par-ticipants). You also need to have a big ball of string. the person who s holding the string needs to throw it to somebody somewhere in the circle by saying their name. The person who receives the string ball has to choose one of the statements and give his answer to. the statements used in the past have been a but more personal. the exercise has been used in the context of ice breaker but within a cohoert that has some famikiarity with each other already. The aim is to challenge and invite students to take risks to self disclose and deepening their reflections (some of the statements for example have been :name the most empowering moment in your student life /personal life, recall and share a touching moving conversation with somebody.

By the end you have a beautiful web design where everybody is inter connected. I have used this so to reflect on the feelings of this interconnectedness and how it feels to end it..(i.e. the web is then dropped on the floor and put back .

links with practice of therapy and endinfs are also often made as part of the learning outcomes of the exercise. These are not my own exercises but we /always tend to approach it and add more things or change ,depending on the audience I have.now challenged to start making my own.mmmm...thanks everybody ..

Chrissi Nerantzi: Hi Mar, thank you for sharing these activities with us all. The wool one sounds like something I have been doing for some years now in a range of situations including conferences ;) Pleased you have tried it too. The chair activity is a great one too. Both of the activities require something so that they work. What is the magic ingredient? Would love to hear your thoughts on this.

It its good that you are experimenting with ideas and we are looking forward to your ideas as well. Speak again soon.
Chrissi

<div align="center">*</div>

12 Sebastian Kozbial
Creating questions

Referring to suggested reading, I really like the phrase 'possibility thinking' to describe imagining and imagina-tion in HE. In the following description, my possibility thinking has been cut loose… [please see the attached photo]

Although each term I am involved in various inductions (mainly students with English as a second language), I'm not entirely convinced if I'm being creative enough. I usually create some answers about myself and then students need to create (grammatically okish) questions – then the roles change slightly and, in groups, students need to create their own answer and others try to form questions.

13 Sebastian Kozbial
Pasta Towers
I've used spaghetti pasta and marshmallows to build towers in groups (who can build the highest tower that 'survives' for 1 minute wins); I often use technology (e.g. nearpod, kahoot, padlet or socrative) and make sure it is useful rather than disruptive.

14 Sebastian Kosbial
Optimist, pessimist
Nonetheless, the task I would like to propose today is slightly more outside of my comfort zone… using Lego (this idea is based on Stephanie Aldred's video).

Phase 1: Each person is asked to select two characters (two personas representing themselves – an optimist and a pessimist).
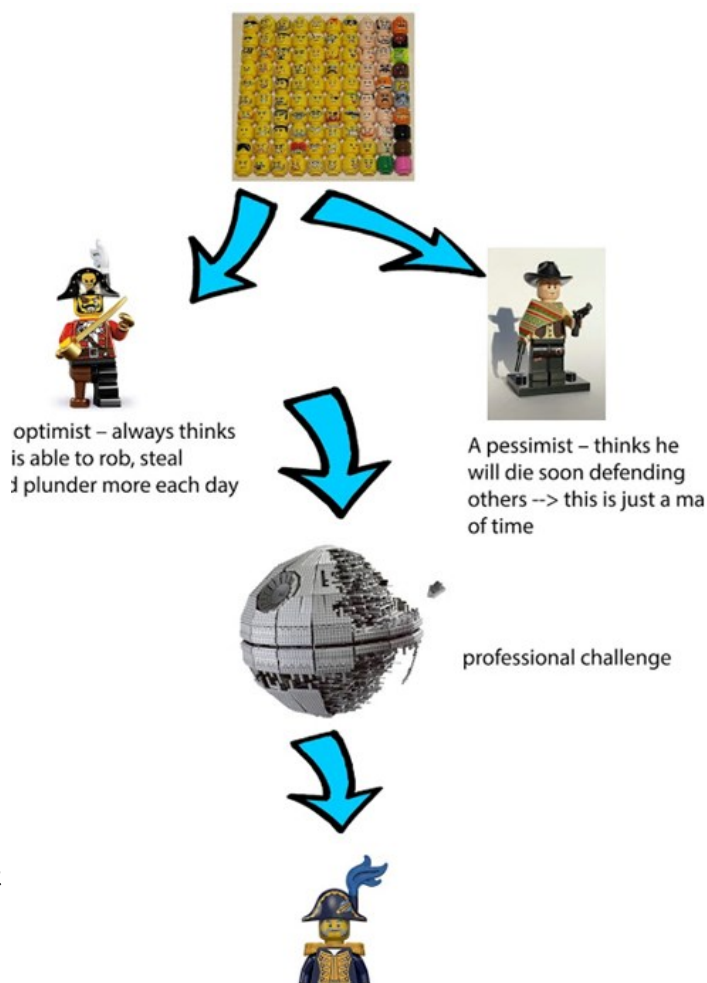
Phase 2: After, using Lego blocks, they need to create a representation of their biggest challenge or obstacle that they have experienced/are experiencing in their life (this can be professional or personal, something that they are comfortable sharing with others).

This can take a form of anything at all, but participants need to be encouraged to explain the use of colours, shapes (any metaphors/representations?).

Phase 3: The next step of the task is to create two possible solutions/two ways of tackling this obstacle – one from the pessimist's point of view and another from the optimist's point of view. Is that what they really did/are doing? Which personality is more familiar to them – why? Are they more one or the other, or perhaps a mixture of both? How does that influence their work?

This activity is more of a journey task without winners or losers; it could act as a facilitator in order to encourage the participants to share information about themselves that they would not normally. A person responsible for leading this activity would also be involved.

I believe it could be very imaginative and fun to do. Reflecting on problems and sharing with others could also be a useful task in terms of personal development or even reflective learning (including Gibb's reflective cycle), but I may be getting ahead of myself.

optimist – always thinks is able to rob, steal d plunder more each day

A pessimist – thinks he will die soon defending others --> this is just a ma of time

professional challenge

Jennifer Willis +Sebastian Kozbial What a fantastically imaginative task! I love the idea but as a linguist, appreciate how difficult this would be for people whose first language is not English e.g. it requires use of a number of tenses. Would you give them any linguistic support for the task?

Jenny

Sebastian Kozbial Thanks for your comment Jennifer! Challenging is the word – but we need to remember that second language learners need to be stimulated and shouldn't be treated as cognitively impaired. Level depending, some help would be required and/or it had to be modelled first; the outcome might be less or more complex, but correctness is seldom a goal in an EFL classroom – particularly during induction sessions. Let them experiment with what they know J without the fear of doing something 'wrong' or being judged.

Jennifer Willis I quite, agree +Sebastian Kozbial and certainly didn't mean to imply that we treat ESL students as impaired! I fact, I find that vocabulary is less of an issue now as many students have bilingual dictionaries on their phones!

I've just been reading the Piaget piece offered for day 3, and can see how well your idea would work in terms of overcoming prejudice from the personal, to the small group, to the international level.

Jenny

*

15 Una Barr
Bouncy Ball Game

An ice breaker I like to use is the 'bouncy ball game where students take it in turns to write questions on a bouncy ball. The group stands in a circle and the ball is bounced between them. The person who catches the ball has to answer the question their right hand points to. (Image taken from Pinterest).

Sandra Sinfield: What a seemingly simple - but really useful activity. One thing that students always feed back to me is that they want to be known as people - by their tutors as well as their peers. All the activities that allow them to tell us something about themselves is really useful and empowering... especially when as elegant as these...

Sebastian Kozbial: An excellent idea! I'll be using this for sure!

*

16 Karen Karen Tuzylak
Personalised T-shirts

Each year I set up a Facebook community in the Spring for those students arriving in the Autumn. This helps them to get to know each other and ask questions. I ask them to create a T-Shirt that tells us about themselves. I have made one too.

When they arrive we wear our t-shirts and play a game to find people who we have something in common with or have put something on their T-Shirt that they have a link with.

Sandra Sinfield: AND... as I have said in the bouncing ball post and the cut-out person posts as well; what a seemingly simple - but really useful activity.

One thing that students always feed back to me is that they want to be known as people - by their tutors as well as their peers.

All the activities that allow them to tell us something about themselves and who they really are, are really useful and empowering... especially when as elegant as these...

Karen Tuzylak: My students have often said to me, I feel like you know me other tutors do not. Having pictures of the students in their t-shirts has really helped me. I teacher hundreds of students and I am getting there with the names but a quick look at the pictures helps. I make a point in every session to mention as many of them by name as I can and refer to something I know about them.

Jennifer Willis: +Karen Tuzylak I quite agree, Karen. Everyone needs to feel important and individual, so it is fantastic if you can use their names. I have always struggled to remember names, especially if you only see people once a week. The pictures would be a great way of helping me remember. Thank you.

17 Ruth Proctor
Play Dough and Lego models of oneself

My induction activity is similar to Lauren's, I tried it this year together with my PG Early Years students.

I set out play dough and Lego around the room and invited the students to begin playing with them. As they started exploring, I began making my own model of me on a very poorly constructed Lego bike. I asked them to make a representation of themselves using the materials. I shared my model and said that I'd also made the bike, [- I had to say what it was, they never would have guessed otherwise - it didn't even have wheels, -] as I'd just got a new bike and I was really looking forward to getting out and exploring on it. [I also wanted them to know that there wasn't a wrong way to build a model and that they could be as literal or abstract as they wished.]

I invited them to add something to their model which would tell us something we didn't already know about them that they were willing to share. I think I also said they could choose whether to choose something that was the truth or a lie. I'm not sure why I did that, maybe so that those that were less comfortable opening up to new people could could contribute without having to feel like they were oversharing.

Some students have said that they find it easier to talk about the models and share their ideas when people's attention is on the model rather than on them.

[With that in mind, I also used puppets & Lego mini figures for my first speaking and listening activities in my Primary Language sessions this term.]

After we'd done this activity, we were going to be using the materials again so that we could create models and ideas around the type of Early Years teachers that we hoped to be. I talked a little bit about Papert's construc-tionism, having stumbled across the idea when reading Chrissi's article with Craig Despard on "Do Lego Models Aid Reflection in Learning and Teaching Practice?" (JPAAP, 2014). I really liked this idea of creating knowledge and making meaning through the process of making models.

Having encountered some resistance to playful activities previously, I wanted to give a little bit of context to why I felt that there might be a place for play in the HE learning environment, and hoped that through encountering the theory and taking part in an activity the beginning students might also potentially make some connections between their own experiences and what is going on in Early Years environments when children are playing.

[...that, and there are bits of my old job that I miss, so I am always looking for an excuse to play.]

Sandra Sinfield Wow. What an excellent way to start a course. I love the way that you get the students immersed in hands-on physical play - that allows them to speak through those objects... and that models a very powerful, embodied way of thinking, communicating - and learning.
Recently in our second encounter with a PGCert course we asked them to model a post-apocalyptic HE session - some used chalk and paper, some used modelling putty, and some used collage... Next year - I will adapt this activity for the first session. Thank you!

Chrissi Neranzi Hi +Ruth Proctor, So wonderful to read this and how you are transforning the experience of your students through transforming your teaching and how you work with them. I like the fact that you didn't just ask them to do something but did it with them. This is so so important. What would you say to your colleagues to give such approaches a go? Especially the more sceptic ones? Chrissi ps. Pleased the paper was useful ;)

*

18 Lauren McNeill
5 words Play Doh

A playful induction activity that I would include, would be with the use of play-doh, play-doh tools, pens and paper. The first part of the task would to try to make a small play-doh version (using a variety of bright colours and of themselves and the tools) and to give a brief summary on a piece of paper with 5 words to describe them-selves. They will then introduce the play-doh version of themselves and they're 5 words. The words can be playful and silly, serious and/or poignant.

This initial activity will hopefully allow the group to relax (including the instructor whom would be involved).

<div align="center">*</div>

19 Lauren McNeill
Food as aspects of learning

The second aspect would be them to work as a group (or small groups depending on the size of the group). The groups will then describe a piece of food (which will represent what aspect of learning is important to them) in order to make a recipe for a meal - for example, chicken could represent visual learning through the use of pictures and videos, mashed potatoes to represent inclusion of learners, and different vegetables to include active learning in a positive environment.

The play should hopefully establish a relaxed, positive learning environment where the instructor can also learn from the learners.

Thanks,
Lauren

Exploring play for Learning

Mar Kri Create I take you mean invent a new one ?or could it also be one used before ??

Lauren McNeill Hi Mar Kri,
I just made up the idea this morning (not sure if a similar idea has been used before sorry), I haven't used it before but I think I would implement it in the future.

I hope this helps.
Thanks,
Lauren

Lauren McNeill Hi Mar Kri,
I also deleted the top paragraph, which may have been confusing - I meant to delete prior to posting. It was about the activity designed for today.
Thanks,
Lauren

Sandra Sinfield This is a lovely thought experiment +Lauren McNeill - and I am sure that you could make it work. Why not have a look at +Ruth Proctor's post - she uses something similar - getting students to model themselves in Lego or Play Dough... and she takes part also. Everybody introduces themselves through their objects - which reduces stress - and she then goes on to ask them to model the practitioner they will become. I have also asked students to model the HE system they would build... All these actions allow embodied learning and thinking through making. Do you think that you will actually use these techniques in practice? I hope so.

Lauren McNeill+1 Hi Sandra,
I would definitely like to incorporate this in practice! I really enjoyed reading Ruth's and feel I could incorporate aspects of Ruth's into my own teaching.
Thanks,
Lauren

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20 Katerina Doupha
Scavenger Hunt

An activity that reminds me of my childhood is the "Scavenger Hunt" that can be used as an ice breaker game in Adult Education also. Ice breakers are also useful to start out meetings and encourage interpersonal communication.

Scavenger Hunt
Put an adult twist on this well-known game.

1. Divide the group into teams of up to five.

2. Provide them with a list of items to find.

3. Choose items that can be found in the immediate area, pockets, purses, or on-line. For example: a credit card, a digital photo of a bald man's head, a pair of reading glasses, a baby picture or a recording of a toilet flushing.

4. Tell participants to use the many types of technology that adults carry on a daily basis – cell phones, PDAs, laptops, etc. The team that finds the most items wins.

Chrissi Nerantzi Thank you for sharing this lovely game. Have you used it? Share your story with us. How did people feel that this was a competition and not only a game, from what I can see. Also share with us the purpose of such a game so that we get a better understanding of it. Thank you.

Sandra Sinfield I love the idea of a scavenger hunt, +Katerina Doupha. One thing that intrigued me (when playing learning games as a participant or using them with students) is how much of the fun and engagement comes from the spirit of competition. There was a moment in UK education when all competition was seen as a BAD THING - but I have seen in practice how a little bit of it - seasoned with laughter - is actually very engaging.

*

21 Olga Broupi
Fabulous Flags

Fabulous Flags (also known as the Personal Flags) is a useful icebreaker activity to help people convey what represents them or what is important to them.

Each person draws a flag that contains some symbols or objects that symbolizes who they are or what they enjoy.

The teacher also takes part in the activity and he/she can show his/her own flag.

This get-to-know-you activity is best done indoors and can also be used in an online learning enviroment. Any number of people can participate.

Materials required are: sheets of paper, pens, and colored pencils/crayons/markers.

The instructions of the activity are very simple. The teacher/educator explains the activity.
Everyone starts to draw flags that represent or symbolize themselves. The design of the flag, the symbols or objects should symbolize who they are or what they find enjoyable or important.

For example, one could draw:
- a guitar (representing a passion for music)
- a tennis racket (someone who enjoys sports)
- a country like India (representing an affiliation with a country)

The teacher has to give everyone a set amount of time to draw (e.g. 10-15 minutes or so)

After everyone has finished sharing the individual flags and explaining the meaning of what they drew, everyone has to brainstorm ideas on what to draw for a large class-wide flag.
s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/236x/2c/ee/10/2cee1098e93fa69d8d32a88135b84c33.jpg
s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com

22 Sophie Moisiadou
Carton Box games (Day 1 response that overlaps with Day 2 task)

We can bring a simple carton box to our class and create from this a whole project with the students.

Being 3 teams we can form a game: 1st team: design and color the box, 2nd team: create crafts and items from any material (papers, recyclable etc.) so as to put them inside the box, 3rd team: observe what the other teams are doing and start to think about the connections between the schedules and the items.

In the end: all the students see what had created and think all together a scenario for a game or a story about this box and its content.

So... education for me is something simple and important that can be amazing and more useful than we could imagine... just by living it personally and together from more aspects and ideas!

Konstantinos Karagiannidis: Team building!

VASILEIOS GKETSIOS i adopt the idea off co-education because it helps one another of learning in a more easy and pleasant way.

elenh tsikelh +Sophia Moisiadou this is a very smart idea because you can practically be creative and watch your imagination take place only with a box!!!

Froso Paschalidou your idea totally relates with Dora's suggestion! it is very simple and easy to put in practice! all we need is imagination and every day stuff! the rest can be created during the process! this is one srong example of improvising and thinking out of the box!

*

23 AIKATERINI ROUSOU
Bind Draw

Hello to everyone!
This activity has to offer many ideas of games which can be incorporated into teaching! One of these is called the "Blind Draw".

It is one of the team building games that can be easilly used for icebreaking. We divide our class into teams of two and have the players sit back to back. One team member will be given a picture of an object or word. Without saying what it is, the person must describe the image to their pair, without using words that will directly describe the subject. For example, if the image given was a lion, the person may describe a large, furry creature with big hair . If the image was a clown, it should be described as a person with many colours on him. This way, the person describing should use their communication skills, whereas the person guessing should activate their imagination and composing skills.

Sandra Sinfield: This seems to be a lovely activity for encouraging students to engage - to listen - and, hopefully, to make some mistakes and laugh about them - what do you think?

*

24 Sophia Poultidou
Two Truths and a Lie

There is a creative way to help team to know each other better and easier. The game is called "Two Truths and a Lie". In this game people have to form groups of 2-3 people.

The game starts out by having every team member secretly write down two truths about themselves and one lie on a small piece of paper. It is important here not to reveal the small piece in anyone! Once each person has completed this step, starts a 10-15 minutes open conversation, where everyone quizzes each other on their three questions. The idea is to convince others that your lie is actually a truth, while on the other hand, you try to guess other people's truths/lies by asking them questions. After the conversational period, people are gathered in a circle and one by one repeat each one of their three statements and have the group vote on which one they think is the lie.

This game encourages better communication, as well as it lets people get to know each other better and of course to have fun :)   blogs.sch.gr/giorgiotis/files/2012/02/pinokio.jpg

Sandra Sinfield: Hi +Sophia Poultidou - have you actually played this game - and if so - did people play? Did it work? How would you arrange the room for this activity to take place?

I have seen people try this - in rows - and with a whole class - and it just did not take off... But I could see it may be working if people were divided into threes... What has been your experience?

Sophia Poultidou+1Hello +Sandra Sinfield I took part in this activity as part of an educational program at University The arragement of seats was circular and we were working in pairs of two people except of a group that had three people because we were in total 15 people. The activity was carried out very well, intrigued by-standers and the ice was broken between us as we don't know each other. I believe that each activity should be adapted to the needs of the team to be successful, so in my opinion the number of member in each group shouldn't be stable, 2 or 3.

<div align="center">*</div>

25 Vicky-Anneta Tsoulfaidou
Creating an oral story

Hello again! First of all, there is surely a place for play and games, in higher education. Adult students and adults in general, experience a similar need for having fun and enjoying themselves, as children do. Play and games can be very creative strategies, when used in higher education. I hope we can all recall to our memory, a playful and amusing learning experience we had, and instantly smile about it. Not to mention that most of the times, higher education's objects can be boring, and that definitely does not rise our interest in them.

So in order to fulfill, this second's day activity I remembered a game we played, in a theatrical team I partici-pated. The game is about making a story. It is a teambuilding game, since all team members participate in a way, to make the story whole. I changed a little bit the scenario, to match the goals of the activity.

All the members of the team, along with the instructor, are sitting in a circle. At first the instructor introduces him/herself , with his/hers small name and says his/hers favorite thing in the world and why he/she is so fond on it. It could be anything: food, hobby, music, actor, movie, etc. Then he/she invites team members to do the same. This is the first step of the activity. Then the instructor, starts telling a story. He/she says only one pro-posal and asks team's members, to continue the story. Every member has to add a proposal to the story. The only limitation, is that the story must in a way, refer to their expectation of the learning community to be formed. What do they expect, how do they like to work, what is their personal philosophy in education. They can import, this kind of information to the story, by creating a character or propose an action. In the end, the story is completed and the instructor can write on the board the main suggestions of the team.

Chrissi Nerantzi: Hi Vicky, thank you for sharing this activity you experienced. How did this make you feel?

Also you mention that subjects can be boring in HE. I am wondering if it is the subject or how it is taught? What would be your suggestions to change this? What would you do differently and why?

Vicky-Anneta Tsoulfaidou Hello Mrs+Chrissi Nerantzi, sorry for delaing my aswer, was out all day shopping :) First of all, the activity i experienced made me feel quite happy. It was fun and amusing and creative as well. In the start, everybody felt a little hesitated, but soon the ice broke and we were all waiting to add, our proposal to the story. It excited our imagination, and every member of the team contributed, to make the story whole. At some points, the story became funny, at some others it became sad. Every member of the team, contributed in his/her way , by expressing thoughts and feelings. The most interesting thing for me, was that there was a member of the team, quite strange as a person. He didn't talk too much and also he didn't interact with the other members of the team. At the end of the story, in a kind of magical way, team members rejected this per-son (His character in the story, i mean), from the team. I don't know how ethical or right was this, but it surely impressed me.

Vicky-Anneta Tsoulfaidou My alternative use of the activity, to adjust it to higher education goals, made me feel quite creative. I don't know if it can be succesful or not, but i think if we are not wiiling to try new things, we simply can not know what is going to happen. So experimentig is a good thing, in order to be creative or even innovative.

As far as the second question, is concerned, i believe that both subjects and way of teaching can be boring. Sometimes we chose a learning programme, and not all the subjects arise the same interest in us. This is some-times inevitable. On the other hand , the way we teach affects in a great way how interesting a subject can be.

To make a long story sort, i just want to add the idea, of using various techniques in our teaching. Such as teaching outdoors when the weather is good, going educational visits, play games, using experiential education, use new technologies (3D, Robotics), and last but not least, use arts in our teaching (painting, sculpture, music). Hope i corresponded in a way, to your questions.

*

26 Sophia Moisiadou
Game on creating a new team of students:
All the students and the coordinator choose one person from the team.

When the music start, they should start to run around the person that have chosen. As a result everyone is running around one person and an other one running around of him/her !

Froso Paschalido: This can surely cause laughter and lessen anxiety, which is strong in a first meeting between classmates. A good strategy which definitely promotes participation and engagement and makes students get to know each other.

Sophia Moisiadou: Sometimes we really believe that these games are not suitable but if you try it, only then you understand how easily they can change your mood!

Natassa Kailari: It can indeed provoke laughter and maybe doubts about its effectiveness, but it is truly a very good tactic to break the ice.I once organized a theater game course with two of my collegues and we tried many methods of this kind in order to relax kids and make them feel comfortable. The target was to make them feel free and act as best as they could do.Methods that used music and movement in the space were really effective!

*

27 Froso Paschalidou
Guess Who's Who
I kept thinking about this quite a while! An interesting, yet easy activity, which can help break the ice among students. So here's my proposal...

First the educator writes all students' names in small pieces of paper, along with his/her name!
Then, he/she gives each student a piece but not with his/her name
but with another name. The educator gets a piece of paper too.
The next step is to read the name aloud and give a small description of who they think this person is, how he/she looks like and at last try and find him/her among the classmates.
This way they will get to know each other easier, because description helps remembering someone better.

In addition, they will laugh with the possible descriptions and thus decrease anxiety.

Moreover educator's participation will make students feel more intimate with him/her and create a good first impression.

Sophia Moisiadou: I am "stealing" it +Froso Paschalidou! Very clever idea... and it gives mystery and humor, two important things for the beginning of everything.

Sebastian Kozbial+1 +Froso Paschalidou I like this a lot. It could also be done by sticking people's names on each participant's back (or forehead). So the roles change slightly, and they need to guess who they are...more difficult, I guess but might also be quite fun.

Froso Paschalidou +Sebastian Kozbial i think that's a very interesting alternative activity, which can promote thinking and conversation, two necessary elements in education! thanks for the suggestion! :)

*

28 Sarah Ney
Uncommon characteristics

A game I like to use with newcomers as well as groups who already know each other:
Individually, student think about two things about them that are less "common": " I only have 4 toes on my left foot", "I went skydiving", "I am allergic to coffee", "I met the Queen", etc. They write it down and add another one that is not true.

In groups or with the whole class they then share these three things and their partners can ask them questions and guess which one is not true.

It makes people talk a lot as they are usually quite keen on sharing something special about them and the rest of the class is intrigued and wants to know more.
They also get to know each other in a different way than the usual name/where I live/profession

Chrissi Nerantzi: Hi +Sarah Ney thank you for sharing this activity with us. I like the idea, it is fun and playful, which I suspect will relax students and help them open up. How would you handle a case when somebody refuses to participate? Just wondering if you experienced such a situation.

*

29 Zogia Manou
Escape the classroom

My icebreaker activity is called "escape the classroom".

Once the students enter the classroom, the teacher locks the door, using a bike chain on the door handle as a keypad lock. The students, in order to unlock the door, have to work together to solve the clues in the right order. They must cooperate to uncover more clues, which are everywhere in the classroom. Clues are lying out in the open or hidden just about anywhere in the room. Numbers, symbols or pictures on the walls, but no apparent guide to understanding what they are there for.

First of all, students have to search through drawers, boxes, underneath desks, behind chairs, or even on the blackboard. The first clue leads to a puzzle, which will need to be solved to find the next clue and so on. The puzzle's solution leads to a helpful information, like a piece for the next puzzle. Students share informations about what they found and organize things that might fit together. In case they're stuck, teacher gives them a hint to help them continue.

Types of Clues and Puzzles
• Jigsaw puzzles
• Word puzzles
• Math puzzles
• Number patterns
• Riddles
• Ciphers
• Images and photos
• Paintings

Benefits of this activity:
• It's student centered.
• It challenges students to cooperate and persevere.
• It promotes collaboration and team-building.
• It develops problem solving and critical thinking skills.
• It enhances communication skills.

Karen Tuzylak That sounds exciting I may 'magpie' that one. :)

Lauren McNeill This is a really great idea! I agree with Karen, I may have to include this one :-)

Dora Koutsou What an icebraker!! I will definitely include it in my favorite ones. I am looking forward to plan & apply it on the classroom. Its all about learning through cooperation & creative problem solving :D

Zogia Manou +Karen Tuzylak, +Lauren McNeill, +Dora Koutsou Thank you so much! I hope you all have the opportunity to use this activity in your classrooms soon!

Kostas Batzilis It is probably the best idea I read. This activity must be really effective concerning team building since the students have to cooperate as effectively as possible in order to win the competition. Reminds me of the "escape rooms" which is one of the most popular ways of entertainment lately and one of my favorite too! I am looking forward to applying it!

Natassa Kailari +Kostas Batzilis +Zogia ManouThat's exactly what I thought as I was reading this activity:escape rooms!!It is a very interesting idea indeed and I am looking forward to plan a similar one!Well done!

Sandra Sinfield What a truly wonderful game +Zogia Manou - I absolutely MUST try this out with students. I love the way that it is both cooperative and competitive - and it models collaborative learning as well. I bet that everybody's talents must in some way be utilised in the attempt to escape - so every student is and feels valued. How wonderful is that?!

<div align="center">*</div>

30 Natassa Kailari
Cobweb game

The game I will present you is a variation of a game I participated in, during an advisory course for teachers.Although we use it to exchange wishes in the last day of the courses, I believe it could be much proper for getting to know each other as well.

The team stands in a circle so that everyone can see each other. The teacher/educator holds a skein and ties the end of the thread in his finger.He introduces himself and tells something that characterises him, eg. his favorite moto or his hobbies etc.Then he picks one person of the group, he approaches him and gives him the skein.The second person introduces himself in the same way and he chooses another person to give him the skein while he holds the thread.In the end a kind of cobweb is being formed and the meaning of this game is that everyone acts and interacts under this cobweb and that all the members of the group are participants and connected to each other.This moving in the space and approaching each other breaks the ice and make people feel more comfortable in the room.

<div align="center">*</div>

31 Lucy Pittaway
Creating a water feature

Love Play! With a 6 year old and a 1 year old in the house I get plenty of opportunity for it at home. But as I heard someone say on the radio last week, why do we encourage our children to use their imaginations through play so much and then as soon as we hit adulthood, it becomes 'inappropriate?'

I feel my most creative and playful when I'm outside, so my induction activity would definitely happen in the park ground of MMU. I also love water play (probably because I'm a Pisces and I'm from Devon, so playing in rivers and the sea was a daily occurrence!) So for my activity, I would split the class up into teams of four. I'd give each team a large bucket of water, all of them containing exactly the same amount each. I'd also give them an empty bucket. In a box they would be provided with all sorts of objects such as bottles, pipes, funnels, sand buckets etc. Using a flat piece of chipboard and some nails, and wire etc, they would need to devise a water feature using as many different objects as they could. After a specified length of time they would be asked to pour their bucket of water through the feature (with everyone watching each others!) to see who collects the most water the other end in their empty bucket! The team who has used the most objects and still has the most water at the end wins a prize!

Norman Jackson love your water play ideas +Lucy Pittaway your playful induction activity is another example of a pedagogy where the teacher sets up the situation, provides resources and a challenge then gets out of the way and gives the students space to play, experiment and make.. the 'getting out of the way' approach doesn't fit the general pedagogic models of sage on stage, guide on side, meddler in middle,

Sandra Sinfield I really love this induction activity - and will pass it along to some of our more playful members of staff forthwith :-D

Chrissi Nerantzi+1 Hi Lucy, What a lovely picture and activity. Interesting what you say about the 'inappropriateness' of play in adulthood. Wondering what your response would be in the context of your practice. The idea of going outdoors really feeds the brain, I think. Do you notice any difference in the energy levels? Looking forward to more conversations with you and all this week. Chrissi

Sebastian Kozbial+1 I absolutely love this! I think this could be an excellent induction task, and it would be a good challenge too - how could we do it online though :)

Sandra Sinfield Hey +Sebastian Kozbial - once you workout how to do it online - do share!! ;-)

Sebastian Kozbial +Sandra Sinfield Haha...will do - definitely.

<p align="center">*</p>

32 Danny Orwin
Someone I admire

My playful induction activity is nice way of getting to know a group of students.The students and the facilitator team sit in a circle.

The facilitator asks everyone to think of someone well known or famous they look up to or admire. Going around the circle once, each member to describes the person they are thinking of without saying their name. The group needs to guess who it is.

Once someone has guessed the name the tutor then asks the original person to explain: Why did they choose this person? What is it about this person that they respect? Which of these qualities would they like to see in themselves?

During the activity, there is emphasis the importance of listening and paying attention to the speaker, getting to know each other and what kind of qualities they like in people.

This can be adapted to specific subjects (ie when teaching Filmmaking) to understand each other's area of interest and reference base.

Lucy Pittaway Great idea. This could certainly be adapted to various subjects and units I would think. So rather than thinking of famous people they could think of theories, processes etc, describe them and the others have to guess the title and maybe author. A great way to revise!

<p align="center">*</p>

Conceptual conversations

33 Jennifer Willis Cultural values and expectations of education

Will Self's reflection on how schools have changed and our delusional fun society chimes with my own experience of education in the 50s and 60s, thereafter of teaching in inner London in the 70s and 80s. To make learning at all palatable to our disaffected youth (and to survive the mayhem of daily life in the classroom), we had to find ways of making lessons fun. I did not realise the degree to which I had internalised this philosophy until three years ago, when I began tutoring an age group new to me in a totally new environment.

As I enter the innocent-looking building, converted into inviting classrooms, well-resourced with individual computers and books galore, I step into another world. Literally: I cross thousands of miles and decades in time into an oasis of South Korea. The school is owned by a husband and wife of Chinese and Korean origin. Despite living and have studied at postgraduate levels in the UK, Jay (as I shall call the owner) remains fixed in her traditional teaching methods.

Last week, the BBC showed a programme in which 3 Welsh children experienced schooling in S Korea. If you have not seen this film, take a look and you will understand the culture in which I am teaching. Children come straight from school, are exposed to several 1-hour lessons ranging from Maths and English to Mandarin and Korean, before going home with homework to complete for each subject. They attend lessons at the weekend and only the most sacrosanct holidays are days off from the school.

I should point out that these include young children, barely of school age, all or whose parents (of diverse ethnic origins) are intent on maximising their education and hopefully gaining a place in the selective schools that make our area of Greater London one of the most expensive to live in. I love the value these people place on education, but I am torn between my instinctive pedagogical style and that which the school espouses.

Only on Saturday, I was chastised by Jay for daring to bring out a word game – tiles with letters, similar to Scrabble, with which they had to make a collective, cumulative worm. This is not a black and white issue, though: I have had to confront the fact that maybe I have 'dumbed down' my teaching, and could have set higher aspirations. Nevertheless, for me teaching does not amount solely to rote learning and the regurgitation of lists of words. I want my students to enjoy learning and to explore beyond the boundaries of a topic. This means engaging in discussion, at the end of which there may be little written down, but much stored in the mind.

There is room for play and humour: students and teacher are real people and have lives which we can share e.g. when I have been abroad, we talk about it and look at photos from my time away. A recent example was particularly successful, with the children creating stories based on some of the animals I had seen in the Kruger Park. So what has this to do with play? Play is intrinsic to my original field, modern languages. Everything we do is role play and simulation of real life, from oral practice to written language. I have, however, found students of all ages uncomfortable with the methods. Ultimately, we have to decide if, and if so, where, to compromise and accept that mixing pedagogical styles may be the most productive approach. And so it is with Jay: she tolerates my less rigorous style of teaching, knowing that the children enjoy our lessons, but I know where to draw the line. Together, we offer a package which the children accept without confusion. Here were some wishing our newsletter readers a Happy New Year. Notice that one slipped in a heart with her hands, to signify love!

Sandra Sinfield First of all I was left slightly speechless by the picture you painted of this rather relentless educational programme - especially when delivered to ones so young!

It does remind me of Diane Reay and her talking about the 'scholarisation' of childhood - and the way that increases the anxiety and stress for all - and reinforces failure and defeat for those excluded from the conversation - a lose/lose model if you will!

BUT - I feel hope for the cracks in the armour - the moments of learning joy - the love - that you seem to include...And, yes, that it reminds me too of the rigour and high expectations that we can also bring to all our teaching contexts...

Sebastian Kozbial I can definitely relate to your story Jennifer. I have taught in China and I saw how different teaching, and education in general, can be. There was little room for play or being creative – I was not allowed to divert from set rules of that school where drilling and repetition were the most important 'teaching methods'. Homework had to be in the form of gap-fill activities, and my every attempt to alter lesson plans to make my classes more fun was emphasised as improper teaching.

Jennifer Willis Thanks you +Sebastian Kozbial. How long did you teach there for?
My sense is that these methods are highly successfully in superficial learning, but they do not enable depth of exploration. This is, from a Bourdieusian perspective, exactly the point: education is used as a form of social control, for political not individual advantage. Pierre Bourdieu would see this as 'symbolic violence'. People are unconsciously led to view this as the desirable form of learning/teaching, thereby preempting any threat to the status quo.

Perhaps I am straying off the subject, though ...
Jenny

Sebastian Kozbial +Jennifer Willis I've not stayed for long for that very reason, only 6 months (I moved to another country). This teaching approach was based on Ivan Pavlov's idea of classical conditioning and first described by Skinner. Once very popular and, for many, effective in terms of a quick yet 'shallow' progress; see the video and let me know what you think https://www.callan.co.uk/the-callan-method/videos/ J

34 Alexandra Gkouzou
Putting magic into teaching *(this is another conversation that straddles the themes of days 1 and 2)*

This was an old tv series in Greece... https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EU7hS6qQIEI ...girl's name is   Paraskeuoula and she was keeping this box under her bed...every night she had the opportunity to watch a show only for her...

This box for me captures the magic that words and a restless mind can create... not only for one, but for all those who have the opportunity to participate one way or another... we should put this magic in our teaching, in our thoughts, in our hearts and in everything we say or do...

Konstantinos Karagiannidis A sympathetic play that every child likes it!A dream box!

Sophia Poultidou+1 +Alexandra Gkouzou I remember "Paraskevoula", I watched it as a kid. I was fascinated by the magic that was hidden inside that box. I totally agree with you that it is very important to put magic in our teaching. In that way knowledge will make sense not only for educators and learners!!!

AIKATERINI ROUSOU+1 Bravo Alexandra! I remember this tv series some years ago! It was surely a very intersting and educative series. Storing creative ideas and magical thoughts in your own box of magic can provide you with your storage of ideas!

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35 Katerina Doupha
Thinking outside the box

+Anastasia Michali (Uom)This is the box we have just created. It is a folding box. It is like a learning ecosystem which can be transferred to different classes, different environments. You can unfold it if you wish, but you can also keep it folded away and ... "think outside the box." It is all about versatility!

The box has no bottom and no top and this signifies that it is not a container in the constrictive sense of the word.It is not closed, it is always open to ideas and interpretations. Students are free to put anything they like inside. They are also free to make things appear from inside the box, just as a magician performs a sleight of hand.

Konstantinos Karagiannidis A practical way of learninig and playing as well!Use it as a toy!

VASILEIOS GKETSIOS I like this box because it gives great freedom to the student to create knowledge as he wants it to be

Sophia Poultidou +Katerina DouphaYour box is so beautiful not only beacuse it supports openess in education but also beacuse it is handmade. Great construction skills girls!

Norman Jackson love the idea of accommodation and openness +Katerina Doupha because it has no top or bottom you can form it into any shape to suit the circumstance

Christina Hesford This idea has so many positives. No top or bottom, the sides don't all connect, you could take the stickers off and re-construct it into something else. The constant evolution and re-evolution of how we teach and how we learn.

*

Day 2 asked whether play and games are appropriate in Higher Education. The conversations that emerged show that participants were strong supporters of play as a pedagogical device at all levels of education. They share their experience and are keen to learn from each other. Their rich exchanges provide evidence that I analyse in CAM7B February 2017.
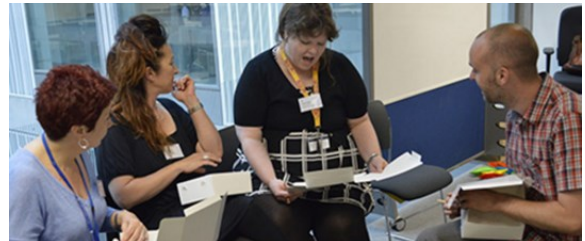
Day 3: (Wednesday 18 January) Learning through story
Chrissi Nerantzi

Today we will be exploring the use of story for learning and teaching and we are very interested in finding out how you currently use story and what difference this makes to the student experience and their learning.

We are proposing the following activity for today.

Tell your story!
Find one of the five chapters of the following book that speaks to you and create a picture book that captures the key ideas and messages of that chapter - but in a story for-mat. Consider using Storybird at https://storybird.com/ - or use another tool if you prefer.

Interested in Comic Books or Graphic Novels? Why not tell your visual story that way? (Check out this blog from Nick Sousanis on using comic book formats - which he liked so well, he delivered his PhD as one: http://spinweaveandcut.com/ - especially the section on comics: http://spinweaveandcut.com/comics/.)

When you have created your story, share it here in the community and comment on stories contributed by others. As always, reflect on this experience at the end of the day: what were the key take aways for you today? What aspects of story are you thinking about using with your own students?.

The book is the following:
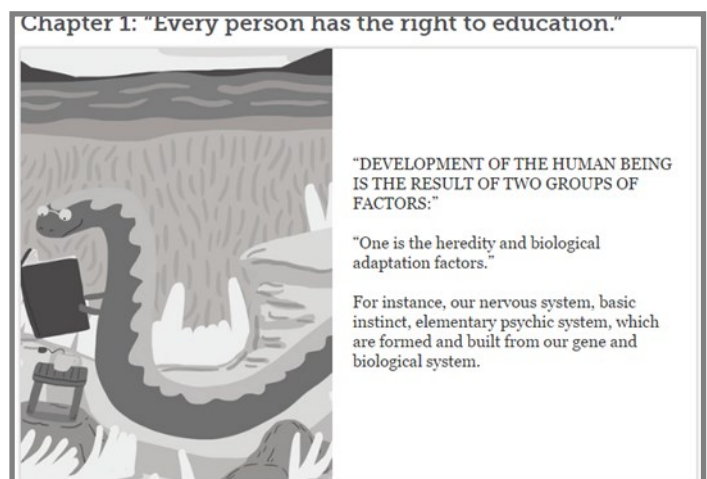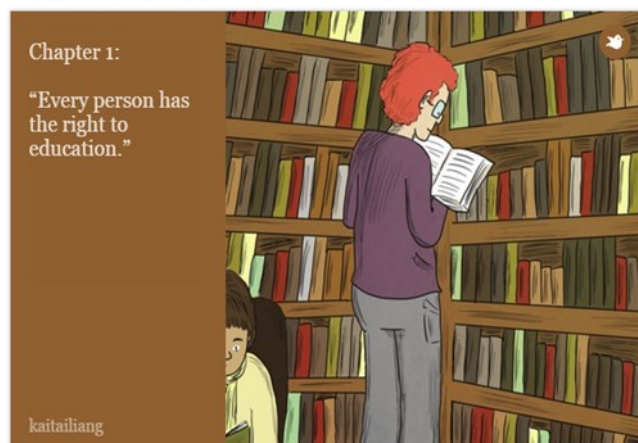Piaget, J. (1972) To understand is to invent. The future of education, New York: Grossman Publishers, available at http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0000/000061/006133eo.pdf

Further suggested reading: CELT Storytelling resources http://www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/teaching/storytelling.php

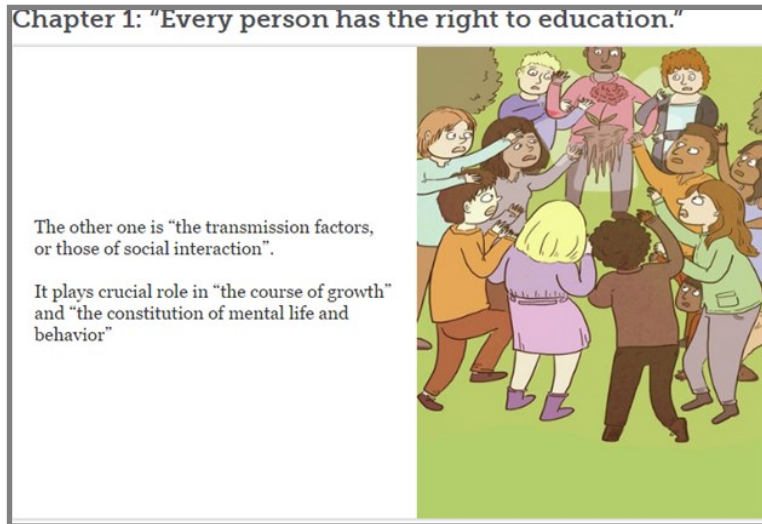## Alex Kaitai Liang

This is my first time to make story telling.
Piaget, J. (1972) To understand is to invent. The future of education, New York: Grossman Publishers, Chapter 1, pp. 43 - 56.

Chapter 1: "Every person has the right to education."

Chapter 1:
"Every person has the right to education."

Chapter 1: "Every person has the right to education."

"DEVELOPMENT OF THE HUMAN BEING IS THE RESULT OF TWO GROUPS OF FACTORS:"

"One is the heredity and biological adaptation factors."

For instance, our nervous system, basic instinct, elementary psychic system, which are formed and built from our gene and biological system.

Chapter 1: "Every person has the right to education."

The other one is "the transmission factors, or those of social interaction".

It plays crucial role in "the course of growth" and "the constitution of mental life and behavior"
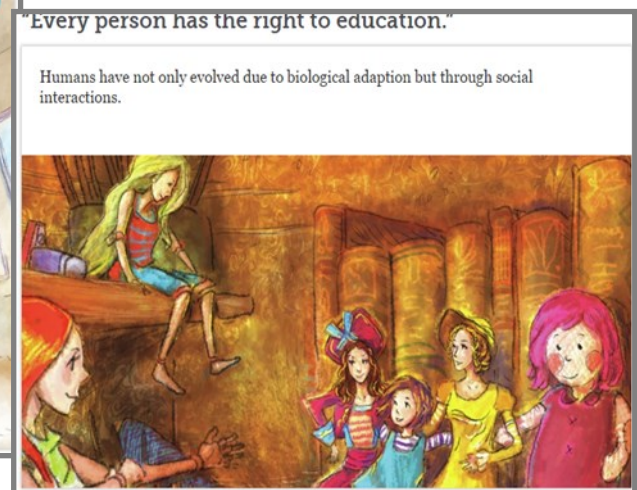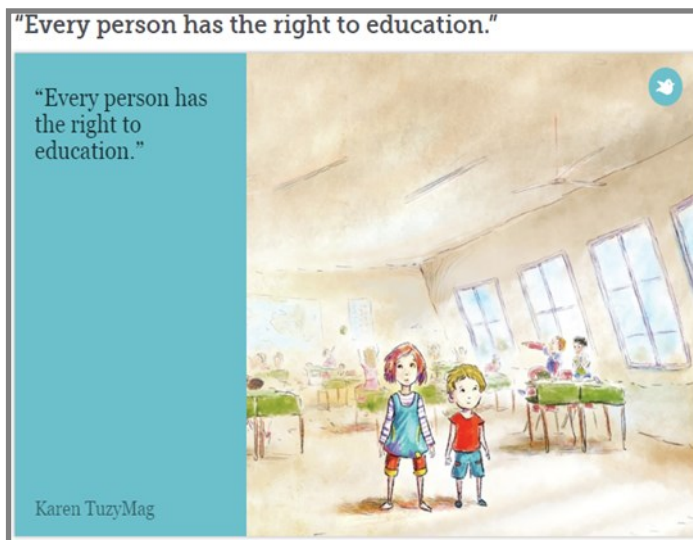
Karen Tuzylak

Every person has the right to education. I really enjoyed the process of creating a story book. It really helped me to summarise the main points. Choosing pictures to try to represent my words developed my thinking. Enjoy

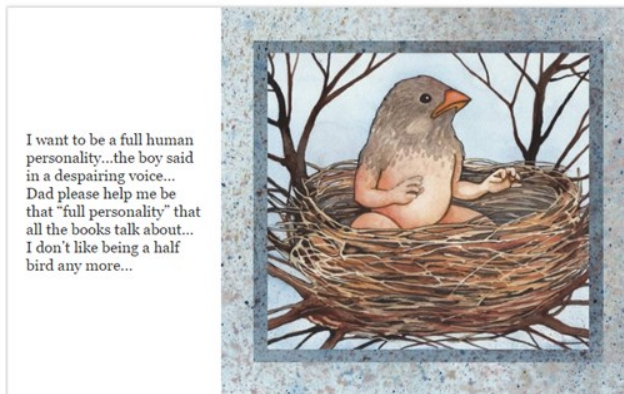**"Every person has the right to education." by cpdkarentuzylakmaguire - Storybird**

"Every person has the right to education."

"Every person has the right to education."

Karen TuzyMag

"Every person has the right to education."

Humans have not only evolved due to biological adaption but through social interactions.

Mar Kri

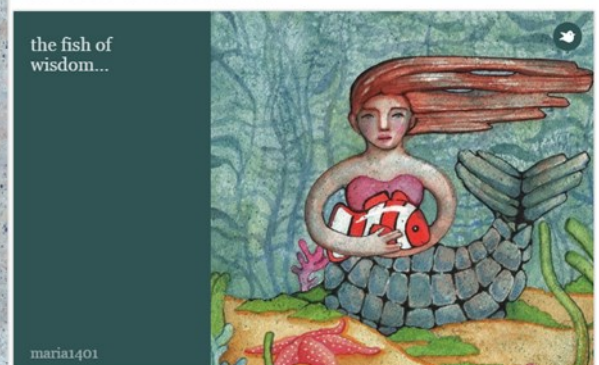hi everbody, https://storybird.com/books/the-fish-of-wisdom/?token=9yn6vyv9f3

It was my first time I played with this story telling..I will definitely use it with my students..!! I am open to comments feedback, I know it doesn't fully grasp all themes of chapter 4, but I felt it was impossible to follow the task and not play with the process in the way it felt in the moment... It is impossible to stop thinking of possible changes. i had to stop myself.. it captures some of the themes appearing on chapter 4 of Piaget's book, and inevitably influence by my own aspired philosoph□

the fish of wisdom...

I want to be a full human personality...the boy said in a despairing voice... Dad please help me be that "full personality" that all the books talk about... I don't like being a half bird any more...

the fish of wisdom...

the fish of wisdom...

maria1401

Jennifer Willis

Here is my response to Day 3. I have attempted to represent what Piaget proposes in chapter 5 of the reading. I see this as a cycle of development from (1) understanding by the individual, to individual tolerance(3) by overcoming egocentrism (2). this leads to greater individual willingness to work in groups. Individual and group tolerance develop, enabling expansion of group tolerance to other cultures and eventually globally. At this point, we have the potential for a global pedagogy. The cycle can then go on endlessly.

Hope this is not too simplistic an interpretation!
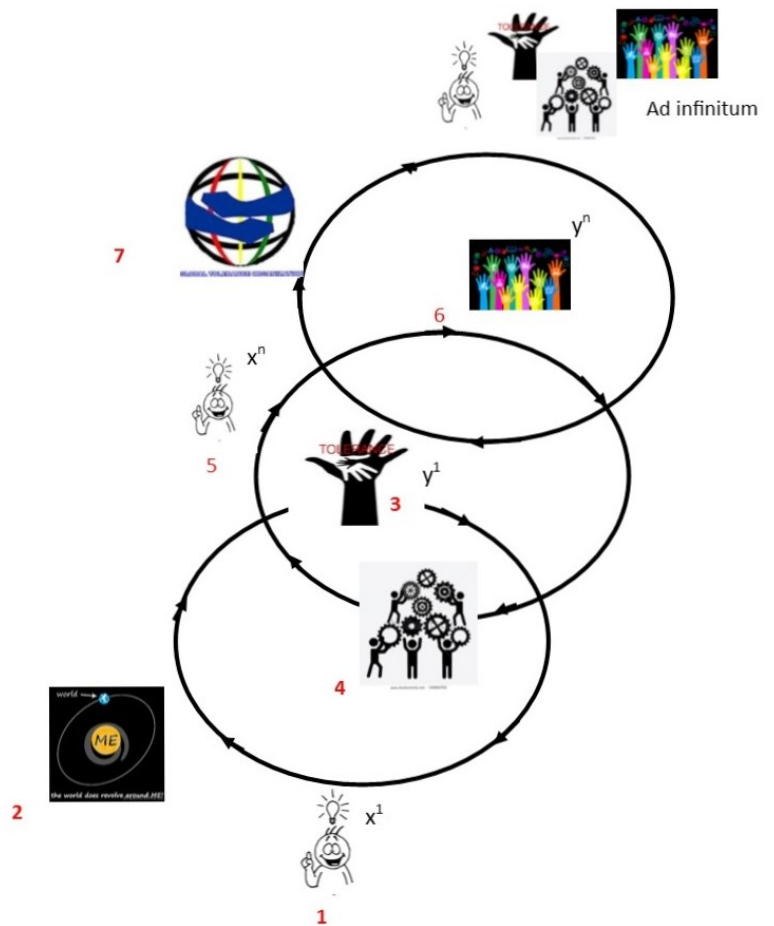
Lauren McNeill

Chapter 5:
"Education shall promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further

Quotes from - To understand is to invent - The Future of Education

laurenmc86

"social reality, in general, and particularly the present international reality, are among the things we least understand"

"two world wars have been necessary for us to become conscious of this interdependency of nations, as well as to realize at the same time how difficult it is to re-establish unity, or equilibrium, once it has been lost, and the narrow kinship of the conflicts that arise among nations and the internal conflicts of these nations themselves"

We are not adapted psychologically to our social state, and this is the basic fact we must begin with in order to construct an international education. And "we" means not only the masses of mankind lost in front of this universe of complex and interdependent relations; it is also even the men of state.

Norman Jackson Moderator love your story +Lauren McNeill pictures and words are very powerful thank you for sharing your creative use of storybird

Lauren McNeill Hi Norman, Thank you! It was a really interesting and thought provoking read.
Thanks,
Lauren

Chrissi Nerantzi Owner Hi Lauren, Pleased you found this activity useful and picked a chapter of the book you could relate to. I can see an emphasis on international and from picking specific quotes from this chapter, I can sense that you can related to these. It might be useful also to include your authentic voice and how these ideas link to your practice? How does the reality look like now and what can you do about it? A few things to think about.

Just make sure add the full source, ok?

Great synthesis of text and images.
Chrissi

Lauren McNeill
Hi Chrissi, I really did enjoy this activity! I've added the full source at the end of the storybook too, thank you for reminding me!
Thanks, Lauren

Danny Orwin Very interesting reading, and thought provoking about the responsibility of an educator! Will definitely reflect on how I can incorporate these ideas and themes into my teaching.

Sandra Sinfield Moderator Really interesting +Lauren McNeill. Like +Danny Orwin I am thinking about how to adapt it into my teaching - and one immediate idea that springs to my mind is to ask especially first year under-graduate students (who tend to hate and resist academic reading) - to each choose a chapter or journal article from the Reading List - and to make just such a StoryBird - and to have an Exhibition (either virtual or F2F) of all the products...
Hmmmmm - can I build it into my PGCert and ask those tutors to do the same? May be I'll risk it next time :-D

Sebastian Kozbial
Day 3 - A picture story - It has taken me a while, but it is ready.

Jennifer Willis
WOW! No wonder it took you time, Sebastian, what a beautiful story and wonderfully illustrated!
I took the same chapter but hadn't time to put it into a storybird - my result is so pedestrian by comparison with your story.

I particularly like the underlying message. We have a common interest in language, so you will know how language is often used as a political tool. In my husband's native Sri Lanka, he and his fellow Tamils were expected to convert overnight to Sinhalese - needless to say, it didn't work, and the subsequent Tamil diaspora of the educated people has left the country diminished.

Understanding, tolerance and friendship
kozbials

My doctoral thesis looked at how access to other languages (initially Latin in England) was used as a means of sustaining social stasis. Your story is a great illustration of this.
Thank you!
Jenny

Sebastian Kozbial +Jennifer Willis Thank you for your kind words; it would be great to read your PhD thesis as it sounds very interesting.

Christina Hesford +Sebastian Kozbial, Your use of poetry, image, and story made Piaget's concepts much more accessible, both conceptually and emotionally. I felt really engaged and intrigued about what was coming next. It has also inspired me: now I want to do this challenge!

Sebastian Kozbial +Christina Hesford Many thanks for this. It took me a while and I am genuinely touched by your comment. I wasn't sure if the whole concept was going to work, particularly towards the end where the rhyming was weaker and weaker to emphasise on the chanigng wind...

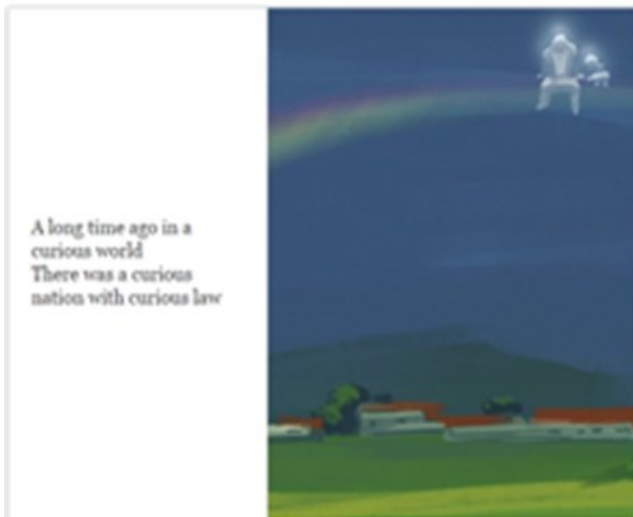

Understanding, tolerance and friendship

Understanding, tolerance and friendship

Chapter 5

"Education shall promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groufis, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace."

Understanding, tolerance and friendship

Understanding, tolerance and friendship

A long time ago in a curious world
There was a curious nation with curious law

Every single citizen – old or young
Had to learn the elephant language, the language of the strong
Every single person – clever or without a clue
Studied lexis and grammar and studied these hard too

Understanding, tolerance and friendship

Jnderstanding, tolerance and friendship

'Without any weakness – the language of the strong
As there's only one truth that we must hum like a song
Like the sun that we follow – wherever we stay
We must study this language until our last day...'

Then a new king came to power through death and war
A new-old king with a new-old postulation
'We need to change these old ways and start learning from the mice nation!'
Nobody knew what it meant – nobody protested
The old followed still – the young accepted

Sarah Easom

I have drawn this 8 screen story to visually describe the written text.
"Every person has a right to education"

1) Personal development
2) Social interactions
3) Community of interaction
4) Global interactions
5) Global Connections
6) World in the head
7) Knowledge
8) Parenting

Then the cycle begins again.

Sandra Sinfield A powerful reflection +Sarah Easom - I hope you don't think I'm being facetious when I say that it reminds me a bit of the Bayeux Tapestry Given the thrust of this course - do you think that people also have the right to Ecologies of Creativity?

Norman Jackson +Sandra Sinfield perhaps its helpful to view the ecologies we create as the means to giving our rights to learning, education and personal development substance and meaning.
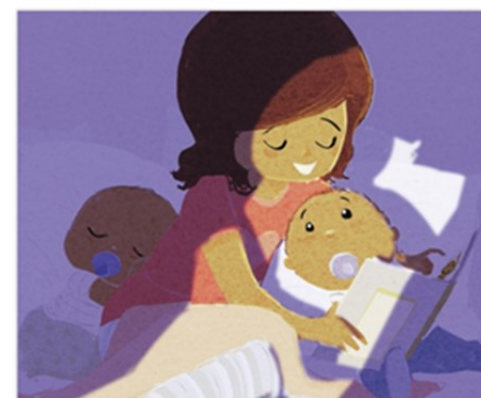
I like your visual story +Sarah Easom it reminds me of Egyptian pictographs and I guess they are symbolic representations.

"Every person has the right to education"

"Every person has the right to education"

"Development of human being is the result of two groups of factors: the heredity and biological adaptation factors"

Zogia Manou

Sandra Sinfield Hi +Zogia Manou - what a wonderful illustration of that chapter (do remember to add your full references to the artefact itself). You have used those images to elegantly bring the quotes to life... Is this now an activity that you might adapt for your own students? If so - how might you go about it?

Ruth Proctor
https://storybird.com/books/a-teacher-sits/?
token=9g6qa5edsf
My Story

A teacher sits...

RUTHPROCTOR
A teacher sits...

Once upon a time a teacher sat and read a chapter in a book and wondered what it meant for her...

A teacher sits...

She thought about her day and the conversations she'd had with her students. Some of us here just don't know if we want to be teachers, they said. Why did you leave, they said. I always wanted to do this job I said. Do you enjoy it, they said.

A teacher sits...

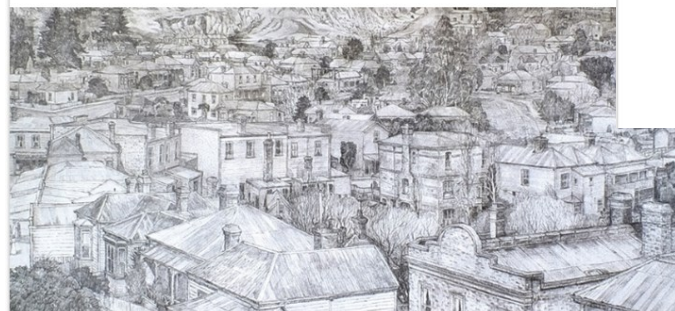Education should be free... she read.

Education should be free... she thought.

A teacher sits...

Not only free from cost but free for all.
& freeing.
Education can be empowering.

Might tuition fees and some current assessment practices "jeopardise the joy" of learning and the relationships between students and teachers? she read. p73

Sarah Ney
Day 3: Story

Teaching Understanding,Tolerance,Peace

Teaching Understanding,Tolerance,Peace
sney

Teaching Understanding,Tolerance,Peace

"de-centering" the individual: make them give up their subjective or egocentric attitudes and lead them to reciprocity and objectivity

Norman Jackson thanks +Sarah Ney I guess the openness of social learning practices such as #creativeHE in which we are all teachers and learners helps fulfil this goal

Sandra Sinfield A brief but powerful story, +Sarah Ney. Now that you have tried this activity yourself - is it something that you could use with your students? What might you ask them to create with Storybird?

Ellie Hannan
+Sarah Ney I really like the story - your use of images really added to the sentiment!

Danny Orwin
I was particularly struck by chapter 3, "Parents have a prior right...", thinking back especially to experiences of learning in further education, and the feeling of excitement when teaching got creative. Sometimes it seems like the aim of learning can be too results focussed and this can come from parents as well as education institutions.

I tried to use the storybook images to create a feeling of optimism when informed parents can understand how creativity, and especially creative problem solving in learning can be very powerful and effective.

Chapter 3 "Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children."

Chapter 3

"Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children."

DannyOrwin

Chapter 3 "Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children."

Chrissi Nerantzi Hi +Danny Orwin thank you for engaging in this task. I can see that you are very much looking for a more integrated approach of schools into life. I am wondering what your position is about universities. Where do you see these sitting in relation to society? Something to think about and contextualise to your work perhaps.

The whole history of human society shows a progressive reduction in the extent and rights of the family, and a correlating extension of the powers of the state.

This final story was shared under the Day 4 Making Activity

Dora Koutsou

Hello again! I would like to share my brief story that can be used in teaching peace at schools. Storytelling is a powerful teaching technique and for sure can be used in higher education as well. Now that I have tried this activity myself i think i will definitely use with my students in various ways. https://storybird.com/books/love-knows-no-boundaries/

Love knows no boundaries

Love knows no boundaries

dwrakou

Love knows no boundaries

Johnny the bunny was standing alone nearby the river of the village. He was staring at the flowers. He didn't know if he was happy or sad.

Love knows no boundaries

He had been walking about in a dream all week. What could be wrong with him?

Love knows no boundaries

Then he met Kornilius.
-"Hello, Johnny" said Kornilius. "You don't look very well. What's the matter with you?"
-"I don't know" Johnny said. "I feel like laughing and crying at the same time. And there is something going thump-thump inside me."
-"Maybe you caught a cold" Kornilius answered. "You should go home, your mother will take care of you".

Love knows no boundaries

When Johnny arrived at home, his mother was making some cookies for brunch.
- "Mum, my heart goes thump- thump".
- "Yes son, mine goes thump-thump as well"
-"But mine sometimes thumps faster than usual, come and listen" Johnny said.
Mother Sophie came closer to Johnny to listen to his heart.
- "Aha... this heartbeat my son means you are in love!!!"

Love knows no boundaries

"In love?" said Johnny surprised.
"Wow, I am in love!!"

Love knows no boundaries

He went to his friends to tell them the news.
-"I am in love my friends!"
-"Well that's good news! Who are you in love with?"
Johnny hadn't stopped to think about that.
-"I am in love with Nora, the pretty, lovely cat."
-"You can't be". Kornilius said. "A bunny can't be in love with a cat. She is a cat and you are a bunny. She is brown and you are white".

Love knows no boundaries

Johnny the bunny was sure that everybody would be opposite to his love.
But he did't care.
He started writing poems and songs for Nora.

Love knows no boundaries

His love for her was so big. Nobody could stop him. For Johnny it was so normal to love her.

Love knows no boundaries

He started writing letters to her. He sent to Nora some of the poems that he wrote about his feelings and he was asking her for a date.

Love knows no boundaries

Nora was very surprised when the letters arrived. "Who could have sent me these beautiful poems?" she cried and hang them on the wall.

At the date Johnny couldn't pluck up the courage to tell her that he was in love with her. But after a while he started singing to her all the poems he wrote about her. He had a stunning voice.

Love knows no boundaries

The next day Nora invited Johnny to her house.

Johnny's heart was going thump-thump faster than ever and his face turned deep white.

"Nora are you gonna be my girl?" he said.
"Of course, Johnny. I am in love with you"

Love knows no boundaries

Ever since they had each other dearly. A bunny and a cat. White and Brown.

Love knows no boundaries

Love knows no boundaries.

CREATIVE SPACES - COLLATION OF POSTS

Paul Kleiman

> ### CHALLENGE #4 Making a Model
>
> We often complain about learning spaces... in school, college, university. Well, today is your chance to create a model of your ideal learning space. Feel free to use any materials you like or have access to and create that special environment that would help you learn. When creating your model, focus on a specific learning situation so that the model can be contextualised. Take a picture of your model, if you created a physical one, and share it here in the community. As always - get involved and interact with others and their models. What is emerging?

ELENA TSIKELH

When mindfulness meets the classroom!

Hello everyone. This day was very interesting because it makes me to travel in other cultures and as a result in other alternative kinds of classrooms.

The ideal classroom for me it will be a spacious classroom, bright enough with many species of plants outside and within it. Ideally in tha centre of the class i would like a big circular carpet in which classmates could sit around it. With regard the sides of the classroom, the first side from where the sun rises will have a large window. The second side will have 3 big libraries with inspiring books. The third side will have a big board and the last one a space in which classmates can put their shoes. It may not be the typical way to start an English class, but some students are familiar with five-minute mindfulness exercises—from counting breaths and focusing on the sensations of breathing, to visualizing thoughts and feelings—that he uses to help train their attention, quiet their thoughts, and regulate their emotions. Here is the article that inspired me.
https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/08/mindfulness-education-schools-meditation/402469/

LAUREN MCNEIL

Day 4 – I really enjoyed this activity, I brainstormed ideas on how I wanted to create the ideal learning environment with a perspective of utilising accelerated learning. I want the space to be open and relaxed in order to create a positive learning environment. Considering a lot of different elements to ensure a positive learning environments made me think about the big and small details, not just the teaching material, but everything that is incorporated and I feel something a may have previously overlooked. It made me think what is the ideal learning space from a student's perspective too, and this is something I wish to investigate.

….I will ask students what they want is their ideal learning space is. I think it is important that each individual student has a say and to incorporate their ideas into learning materials. By actively involving them, I also think this will help motivate and inspire their desire to learn.

I have a three hour lecture coming up, which is a long to keep minds motivated and have decided to include a few different idea's into the lecture. I have already incorporated colour, images, videos and a quick quiz (half-way to assess the learning outcomes and what we can focus on in the second half to ensure that learning outcomes are achieved but also for a fun interaction – all anonymous), but I have also decided to include an activity to design a Lab-on-a-chip device in groups, to get their creativity going and to bring paper, lots of colourful pens and play-doh to see if they can model their idea's. I really do think this will get their minds inspired and creativity flowing.

DANNY ORWIN

Considering the learning space for each activity, and the environment when students walk in the door, and how that affects the way the teaching/student interaction.

SEBASTIAN KOZBIAL

Creative space – do you not need a creative teacher first? Am I a creative teacher…

I am fairly confident that I would need a very large room to fit everything I would love in my ideal learning space (16 individuals from various countries studying English as a second language):

- Computers, no – laptops for every student
  - Comfortable chairs and desks that can easily be rearranged
  - A digital projector – no a digital smartboard! (connected with the laptops)
  - A very fast broadband that never fails (particularly during important presentations or lesson observations)
  - Windows and skylights (so we can observe the movements of the stars and planets, as we have a powerful telescope in our class!)
  - A separate space at the back to sit down – a carpeted piece of floor where everyone can take their shoes off and sit down, or lay down and play and learn
  - The walls mustn't be white – but the colours could easily be changed (students would pick the colours each week/month/term)
  - An outside space where we could go and have inspiring discussions, share food and enjoy the weather (now I know this might be slightly farfetched)
  - It would also be at a comfortable temperature, so we don't need to wear heavy coats
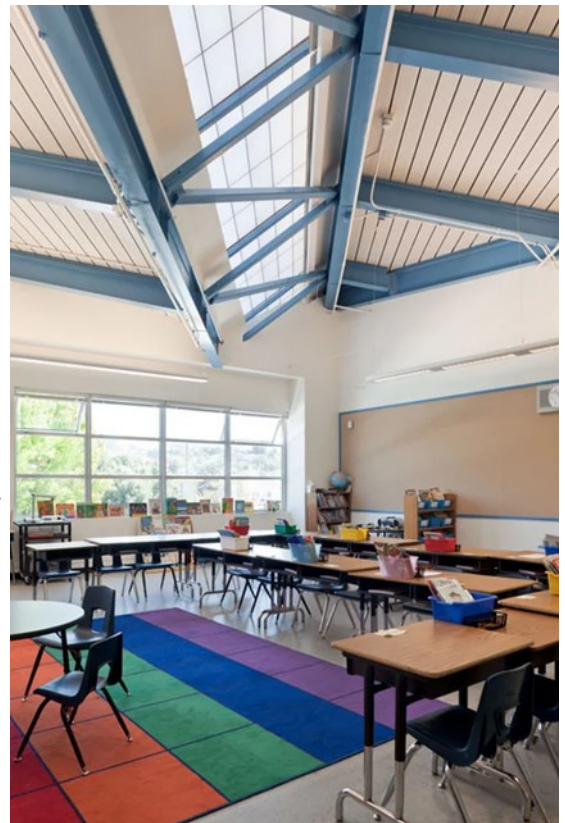
These were my ideas that were confirmed by my class morning… however, towards the end of our discussion – one student said 'as long as we have a teacher that believes in us – we are happy'.

When working in China, I was asked to use all sorts of fancy gadgets during my classes including portable cameras with microphones, so the parents could watch and hear their offspring 'live' at home. I was also involved in 'Reading Project' in the UK, where children were very surprised to see a colourful book and how quiet a library can be. Although I believe that a creative space and equipment can do wonders and I honestly cannot wait for the new 'Humanities Building' (in place of Mabel Tylecote) to be ready, I also think that what we can be very creative with very little – especially after completing the first three days of this course and reading your post and comments. Hence my first sentence, creative space – do you not need a creative teacher first? Am I a creative teacher – I am a creative teacher and will be even more so!

Sandra Sinfield

What a wonderful reflection on positive learning spaces - and all great ideas - empowering ideas - but your student is so right - a teacher that believes in the students! And you are...

One of my inspirational people is Carl Rogers who says that we need to exhibit empathy, unconditional positive regard and congruence... What do you think - is it about the values we have - the pedagogy strategies we use - or the resources?

Chrissi Nerantzi

Hi +Sebastian Kozbial
"as long as we have a teacher that believes in us – we are happy" such powerful words! How does everybody else feel about this? And what does this really mean for learning? What does really matter?

Jennifer Willis

Yes, Sebastian, I think it is the skill of a creative teacher to inspire their students even when resources are scarce. So I would agree with Sandra Sinfield that it is our own pedagogies rather than the resources that are paramount. How many times have I played picture bingo on scraps of waste paper to the delight, and learning, of language students? All they needed was something to write with and their minds, plus the scrap of paper.

I hope things are different now, but I have a strong memory of the first time I visited Southern Ireland (in the 1980s) and young children were sitting on the kerb, making up games using the grit and stones around them. My father tells me of how he and his peers in the 1930s would entertain themselves by creating games from the resources around them, and more recently, my husband recounted how, as children in Sri Lanka, they improvised cricket balls and wickets from the detritus around them.

Maybe I am just showing my age, but I do wonder if we have lost the ability to create our own entertainment. How would today' children fare without the ready-made games and resources they are mostly able to rely on?

And finally, on a more positive note, Chrissi Neranzti, you will have heard this from me before, but I believe that the essential prerequisite to a good teaching/learning experience, is the relationship between learner and teacher. This means mutual trust and respect, to secure the environment for risk-taking and potential failure, without fear of shame; the setting of expectations that are realistic yet challenging, and always lots of positive but constructive feedback.

I rest my case!

Jenny

Sebastain Kozbial

Jennifer Willis this reminds me about the best game ever that I, as a child, used to spend hours on - creating your own games (rules, cards etc.); both thinking and using your hands to design something novel - often far more enjoyable than the act of playing :)

PAUL KLEIMAN
Reflecting on the conversation

Looking at and reading through the many fascinating posts, one - perhaps obvious - thing that the conversations have confirmed for me is the importance of space: mental space, breathing space, physical space, etc. How many of the spaces in which we operate in higher education are genuinely 'fit for creative purpose'?

The importance of space was brought home to me a while back when the new design course I headed was located in a newly re-furnished building. The rooms were no more than large standard rooms, which could just as well have served as open plan offices. Low ceilings, standard lighting, white walls, etc, with a limited view out of the windows. A bit cramped when all the students were in.

We felt that the work they produced also felt a bit 'cramped'. After a year of us complaining that the rooms were not fit for creative purpose, and the estates people complaining that we made too much of a mess, we were offered a chance to re-locating to the top floor of a now empty adjoining five-storey 70s-built building that had been used for various purposes including a college of FE.

It was one of those classic, frame-plan buildings, with huge open spaces, high ceiling and large glass windows covering the whole front and rear. The building, and especially the top floor, was in a bit of a state, but the view from the corridor with the windows was just stunning: over Liverpool, the River Mersey, the Wirral to the Welsh mountains.

Estates said we couldn't move in until they'd painted the whole floor in the corporate colours. We said, save the money, we'll move in and let the students decide how they want the place. Which we did.

We had lots of space, so some students decided to set up their own individual work-space. Other students decided to set up their tables in a large square so they could work/talk together. We raided the paint store - with permission - and students used whatever spare paint they found to decorate the space.

It looked rough and ready, but it worked. It felt like a real arts studio / arts lab / creative space. Students noticeably stayed and worked longer and harder. But the really noticeable thing was that the work expanded in terms of ambition, quality, risk. I know - from my own experience - that stepping out of the lift in the morning and seeing that view and then walking into those studio spaces just raised the spirits, and set the creative juices flowing.

Sandra Sinfield
Again Paul Kleiman you take my breath away - and make me slightly jealous! (Slightly? Muchly!)

What to say? Whilst I think that we can transgressively occupy and liberate many different types of spaces - I know that you can't make a cramped space bigger. Your students' work shrank - not surprised.

When it has happened to me and my students - I felt aggrieved for them - it felt like the institution itself was saying that they weren't worth it - that we had no space for them - that they were only an inconvenience and an encumbrance.

Now we often have the alternative problem with many HEI trying to create social learning spaces - at worst spending money on them whilst simultaneously cutting staff...

How much more creative if they moved away from corporate visions of HE - and created these emergent spaces - and let the students occupy them - and the learning emerge?

Norman Jackson
Hi Paul Kleiman spaces -real or imagined are essential.. Yes it's great to have the right physical spaces but you know after a previous #creativeHE conversation I realised that some of the most productive spaces are betwixt and between.. they or on the train, on a walk, in the bathroom or supermarket - simply because thinking is not limited to a particular sort of space.. Yes it's great to have great physical spaces but let's encourage students to utilise the affordance in all the spaces they have in their lives
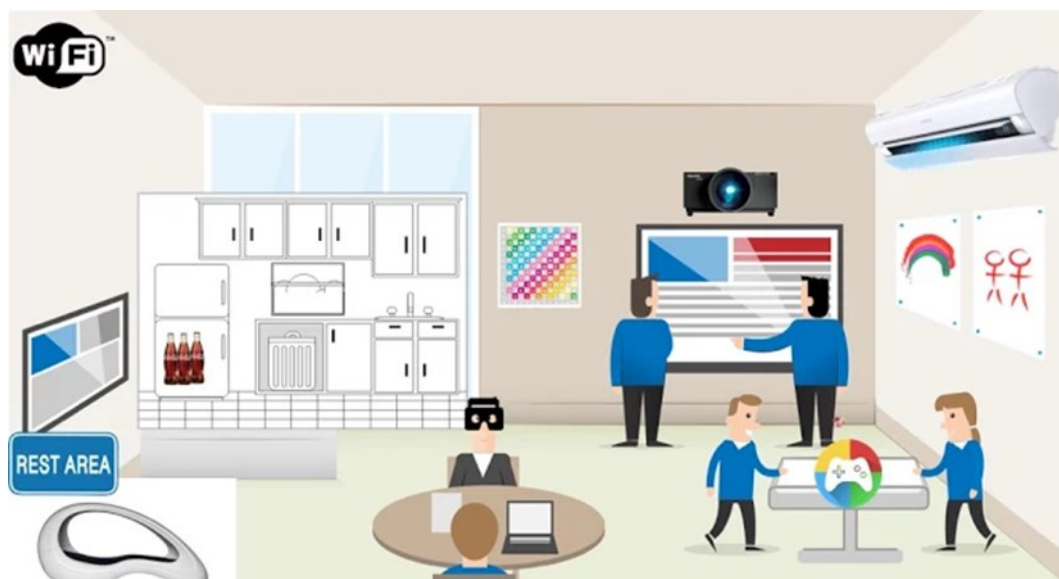
KAREN TUZYLAK
Whilst considering learning spaces. I thought about what environment I like to work in and realised the environment needed to be flexible!

ALEX KAITAI LANG

If possible, I would like to create the following "smart learning space" for me and my students in programming learning.

I may need some computers, big screens, projectors, tables, chairs, Wi-Fi connection, on-line discussion forum, snacks, soft drinks, playground, kitchen, nap area, VR facilities, and an indoor heating/cooling system.

The role is simple. If the students are tired, they rest; if they are hungry, they eat; if they are confused, they ask, communicate and work together via the real-time on-line discussion forum which is shown on big screens; if they are bored, they enjoy movies, musics, games via Internet and even with VR facilities.

The computers, big screens, projectors and Wi-Fi are used to build up efficient and effective communication among us (even if we are learning in a large group); while the rest of the facilities are designed to satisfy the students' (basic) physical needs.

The only tricky part in the learning space is that we all need to use programming to "unlock" everything (which we are going to need). For example, the fridge is connected with Wi-Fi and is locked, we need to program to unlock the fridge to take a Coca-Cola.

One more thing is that the facilities will warn us when an exception happens. To address the exception, we also make use of programming. For instance, if the amount of Coca-Cola suddenly drops to 0, the fridge will inform a warning shown on the big screens. We may write a program to order more Coca-Cola on-line.

The smart learning space does show the power of technology to the students, more importantly, it brings "what they've learned" into their daily lives.

Chrissi Nerantzi

A lovely space! How far is it the space - and how far the teacher? Are you joining us for the Tweetchat tonight to discuss further - access Twitter and look for #BYOD4L.

A multi zone space sounds very attractive +Alex Kaitai Liang I have to say. Often we are "not allowed to eat/drink" near a computer screen or in the library, for example.

I am wondering if you would consider discussing your ideas with students and see what they think? Do they want different things?

Ellie Hannan

Hi Alex, Your idea of problematising the faculties is really interesting! As I read your post I thought how you could 'gamify' your course content in some way - use a sense of role play to get your students on board with activities. I've heard of Escape Rooms in which you need to problem solve together in other to escape. I have also come across some training (by Learning Technologists at Leicester College, I think) that was offered in the form of a mystery themed clue finding game. Staff had to solve the clues in order to move to the next stage of the game, all the while learning about technologies they could use in the classroom.

Alex Kaitai Liang

Hi Ellie, thank you for the comment and inspiration. Role play is very suitable for small group teaching, I think. Thank you, Chrissi, for the comment. You are right. Due to the policy, eat and drink are forbidden in computer lab. I guess, sometimes, more freedom/free space indicates more creativity. Sometimes, even we say no to sth, students may still choose to do so. If the students can be educated to write program, I guess they can be educated to protect the lab environment. Of course, eating and drinking may incur some unpredictable trouble, but I would love to discuss this with the students.

NORMAN JACKSON

Anonymous student contribution: what do teachers do to help you use your creativity?

I define creativity as the ability to express and develop ideas and to apply them in new and exciting ways. In order to achieve creativity there must be space to explore, although all lecturers had the same time and finance limitations, there was a clear difference among some lecturers who gave us the space to be creative and those who didn't.

The best lecturers were those who ensured all students had the opportunity to express and develop ideas. Although the sessions were structured they were flexible and the lectures encouraged thought through posing questions rather than feeding us information. Similarly, they were aware of the individual needs of students. Some students could talk constantly for 2 hours, but they were able to curb that enthusiasm so everyone had equal control over the direction that the class went. I believe the flow of ideas across the classroom was a form of creativity, one that not only increased our knowledge of a topic but also our passion for the subject.

The lecturers I describe above I was mostly exposed to on my undergraduate politics degree. My masters was a conversion, therefore there was a lot of criteria to fulfil and lecturers often resorted to the easier, but less engaging traditional lecture format. My main issue with the lecturing format that involves the teacher transferring their knowledge to you is that it takes all of the control of the learning process away from the student, the student is unable to choose the pace of the sessions or how to learn or evaluate the information. As a result much of the allocated time can be spent with the individual struggling to understand the vast amount of information without engaging in the topic.

Having said that, the one area that I had full creative license was within my dissertation, where I was given an unlimited space in order to create an original piece of research. Here the problem was having the tools to be creative, the lack of support meant it was hard to know how to implement my ideas in an academic way. I had to discover how to do many things for myself.

Overall offering creativity within academia is challenging, I believe a good lecturer provides the individual with the tools and the space to be creative.

DANNY ORWIN

It took my by surprise thinking about this. My first thought of favourite spaces (in particular) to learn of been in studios, empty and and free to run around and fill with people or things! After that I realised this meant it was flexible spaces, where you can adapt to the task at hand, or particular need. It would have smart furniture, which could be flexible and adapted. The space could be social or changed for quiet, reflective work.

The space can be used for the kind of learning the student wants. The space would have controllable blinds for light, but a connection to outdoors, or easy access.

I think in the future teaching spaces and open learning spaces will become more merged and the boundaries lessened, creating new possibilites.

Chrissi Nerantzi

Hi +Danny Orwin some great ideas here and I can see that you are in favour of more fluid and interconnected learning spaces. What would be different then? Just wondering if you would like to add a few things about this. Think about physical and virtual spaces and communities perhaps?

Lovely you joined us here.
Chrissi

SOPHIA POULTIDOU

Hello everyone!

In my opinion classrooms need to look different from how they did one hundred years ago, but we're still seeing rows and rows of desks! Although standing desks have become a visible presence in classrooms, I hope that there are more ambitious plans...

My personal ambitious model of learning space looks like a coffeehouse chain. The majority of people visits in a daily base a coffee shop. Many of them like to study or work in a coffee shop. The reason for that preference is that a "coffee shop environment" encourages community-building through increased and intentional emphasis on communication and collaboration.

This coffee shop style classroom can have flexibility. Cafe tables and chairs, a couch, pilate balls and hokki stools can replace desks. In that way students are able to choose where they want to learn, sitting on a stool, on the couch, in groups on the rug etc. This can improve concentration and engagement.

I am not sure if this idea of coffee shop style is good but I am sure that rows of desks should definatelly change and each space should be configured differently, depending on what works for the teacher and, more importantly, for the students.

static01.nyt.com/images/2013/06/21/science/21wellCoffee/21wellCoffee-superJumbo.jpg

RUTH PROCTOR

At the moment one place I go to learn is Gladstone Library in the first picture (see below). I love it there, it has books, quiet cosy corners, gardens to wander round, delicious food, spaces to talk, silent, secluded places for writing, workshops, guest speakers, free wifi and newspapers and even places to sleep.

I've tried to include some of those features in my Lego model, which hopefully shows a space which feels some-times feels likes you are jumping in at the deep end, not knowing what lies beneath and sometimes safe and comforting, like you are having fun with one of your best friends - which hopefully the other photos illustrate.

My learning place has outdoors and indoors.

My model has a space for building dens / corners to hide away in.
This den has a part see-through roof so you can lie-back and do stargazing to wonder at the magic of universe or contemplate how to make sense of the world.

There's a space for dressing up or role play - so you can try out different ideas and ways of being and see which appeal.

In the ice castle, there's a kitchen for creating and a place to talk with friends and family over food, as I would want my learning environment to be social and connected and a welcoming place. It would make you feel safe and like you belonged. But from that safe space it would let you take risks...the monsters at the back are to represent the beautiful risk of learning.

A little room at the top for writing and looking out over the world. Sometimes we might just want to watch what others are doing before jumping into the learning ourselves.

The aerial is to represent access to virtual learning environments, something I've learned, particularly through things like this week is that although I often feel that learning takes place between people, sometimes you might connect with them remotely without ever meeting in person outside of the digital world.

There's a space for pic-nicking and catching up with friends.

The baby and the white beard are to show that this is a learning space for young and old. We can learn so much from each other.

There's space to make music, explore, discover, experiment.

Space to take photographs of the big picture and the smallest details.

A birdhouse and some animals. A construction area for learning through building, making, creating.

A forest, nature and a growing area.

Walkers and space for walking and wondering/wandering + cycling, so that we might learn through / from / by / whilst moving too.

My learning place has ladders and stars for opening up the world for everyone.

My model has the sea / beach and space to swim - represented by the pineapple and swimsuited mini figures.

The silver pineapple is a sculpture, my learning environment would showcase artworks.

The lights with the forest trees were supposed to represent natural light and the snow fresh air - something missing from lots of classrooms.

The sheepskin is to represent the relaxing, comforting environment I would want to create.

& finally the 'hope' pebble is to show that even on this dark day, I still hope that education can empower and set us free.

Sorry, this post is so long...once I started adding bits to the model I couldn't stop...

Sandra Sinfield
Hi Ruth - I do so love your creative, modelling ideas! I wonder whether you return to modelling with your students.

I know that you might open your first session with a cohort with students modelling themselves and then modelling a good practitioner (possibly a good practitioner space?)... Do you conclude with a final modelling session - to see what might have changed?

Ruth Proctor

Thank you so much Sandra! I have my first session back with that same group I used the icebreaker activity with next week - they have just finished their first teaching placements - so I would love to give it a try.
...I'm hoping to find out how their thinking about play/ful-learning has changed or not since they started on placement ...and also how they currently feel about the acceptability of play as a way to learn in HE. Could be a generative way to find out!

Norman Jackson

sounds pretty much like the space of life to me +Ruth Proctor full of affordances and symbols that have meaning for you. Thank you for all your great contributions to the conversation this week.

Karen Tuzylak

What a lovely learning space Ruth. Very creative. I like the symbolism of each item.

NORMAN JACKSON

I wanted to connect the idea of 'making a model' to the 'making of a story': a story that expresses my idealistic notion of a space within which ecologies for learning and creativity can form. To my mind the best learning situations result in experiences from which we create meaningful and memorable narratives.I see my life spaces, contexts and circumstances as providing the fundamental affordance for learning and creativity. So the context for my 'model' is my life - my lifewide experiences through which I learn. I have written about and reflected on my model in my #creativeHE blog
http://www.normanjackson.co.uk/creativehe

LAUREN MACNEILL

My model of my ideal learning space is extremely varied.

I brainstormed ideas on how I wanted to create the ideal learning environment with a perspective of utilising accelerated learning. I want the space to be open and relaxed in order to create a positive learning environment.

An appropriate temperature that will allow an appropriate physical state, as well as a relaxed and stress-reduced environment that offers a positive emotional state. The space offers a multi-sensory environment that also includes flexibility for a variety of teaching methods (IT packages, videos, images, music) and scenarios, colourful, engaging and inspiring room that stimulates and motivates. Posters/images of up-to-date information that incorporate teaching. Comfortable chairs :-) to enhance a comfortable environment.
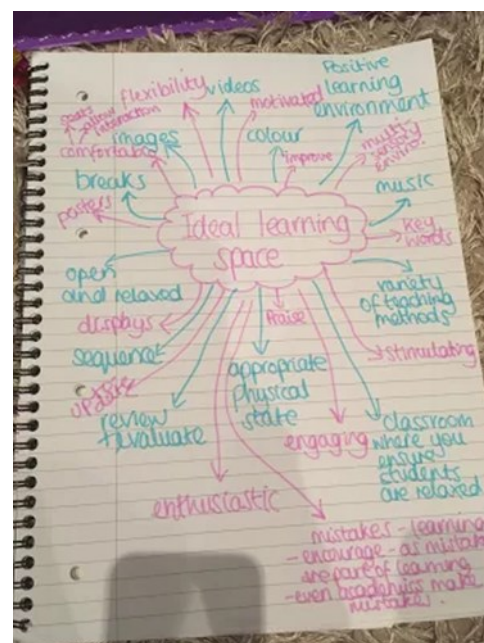
I made a little collection of colourful and playful objects to represent idea's for my ideal learning environment.

Picture 1 and 2 – In my ideal learning space model, I have a flowers and carrots (to represent growth and development through a stimulating, positive, motivating and engaging environment), I have a variety of toys (representing how everyone is an individual, and that the ideal learning space should include multisensory and a variety of equipment environment), welcoming, open and relaxed environment (open door), pens/writing board (different teaching equipment – images, videos, displays, music), a flexible space to learn, and lots of colour (for stimulating, colourful and enthusiastic environment. The water bottle is also to represent a refreshing environment :-)

Picture 3 – This displays a brainstorm of ideas for the ideal learning space in order to create an optimum learning environment.

Thanks,

Lauren

DAY 5 Reflect & Make an Action Plan

Reflect: Today, we would like to invite you to reflect on the last four days. What did you find eye-opening and will definitely consider for your practice?

Start putting together an action plan that you could use as a scaffold to introduce specific changes in your professional or personal context. What is your rationale for these changes? What do you anticipate achieving? Share your draft actions plans during the day with us all and engage with each other's ideas for action.

Catch-up: If you started a bit late, today, might also be a good opportunity to catch up and engage in some of the activities you have missed and also comment on each other's contributions.

Suggested reading: OU report: Innovating pedagogy 2016
http://proxima.iet.open.ac.uk/public/innovating_pedagogy_2016.pdf

Alex Kaitai Liang
Day 5: Celebrating creativity - MMU

I wished I could add some creativity in my teaching before joining this community. After 5 days' training and learning, I feel more confident in provoking students' learning interest.

I guess I will reuse my Day 2's idea in the first class of programming.

The Day 3's training was about teaching via story. I actually implemented this idea in my last Friday's programming class by making a story about father-and-son to explain the relationship between a class and a subclass (programming terms). For example, a subclass, a son, inherits the legacy, like member/variable, action/methods, from a class, its father. I found out that telling a story would allow students to more easily understand what I was teaching (compared to pure textbook teaching). I guessed this was because the students realized that they jumped "out of the textbook" to have extra fun in the classroom. However, I think that telling a story has limitation in teaching. A tedious story may make the teaching worse, because the students will lose attention very easily. So, I guess I will keep a story short in the future. Since the story is short, I may only use it to explain some non-complicated/complex programming concepts.

Day 4's task was learning via making. I watched the video about Lego building - interesting and inspiring. Let students make and think what a thing is before their learning that is reversed teaching style. I would like to combine it with problem-based learning. I will request students to build a bridge (with parts A, B and C), but only deliver brick A and brick B to them. The students may need to find the part C on their own to complete the mission. I guess one of the easiest ways for me to implement this idea is to assign a programming task in which parts A and B are taught in the class but the part C is regarded as an extra-curriculum learning.

I have not made any specific action plan for learning via story and learning via making. But I will prepare them in the upcoming week. I guess I will use story for L4 students who needs more inspiration, while learning via making is for L5 students who have more programming experience.

Norman Jackson
thank you for your appreciation +Alex Kaitai Liang we are delighted that you have identified some ideas through the course that you are able to turn into new practices.. it shows the value in this social learning process +Chrissi Nerantzi

Ruth Proctor

Day 5 - Reflection and Action Plan

A really important thing I've learned this week is to make time to do new, fun, scary, enjoyable, challenging things. Even when life and work feel ridiculously busy, somehow you end up feeling more enthusiastic and have more energy when you make time to fit the good stuff in. [...which reminds me, I definitely need to make time to go on a bike ride this weekend.]

I will keep trying to be playful.

I will include cardboard boxes in my EYFS workshop in a few weeks.

I will make space for storytelling and storybird in an English Specialism session, - encourage get the students to story their proposed research projects.

I'll make my own research comic too - talking to some of my students this week they said they would like to see more of their tutors' writing and research to support them with their writing and ideas too.

I will make models with my PG EY group when they come back to univ. and talk to them about play/ful-learning in their work-place & univ. based learning.

I will read and write about play and being playful.

I will talk to people on-line and in person about their ideas for creative and playful teaching and learning.

I will work to show all my students I believe in them and want the best for all of them.

Danny Orwin

Reflection/Celebrating Creativity Activity

I found the different interpretations, and creativity and variety in responses eye-opening and valuable. The learning through Story activity was insightful, and something I can definitely incorporate in my teaching, the ability to interpret ideas and theories into new ways of understanding them.

I will keep trying to be playful.

Making sure to be creative and introduce different ways of engaging with students. I will also continue to ask them to reflect on how/what they want to learn (something I have done this week with Level 4 workshops!), to allow me to react to their needs.

Considering the learning space for each activity, and the environment when students walk in the door, and how that affects the way the teaching/student interaction.

I will ask other staff members how they incorporate creativity in designing their learning, and how best to research new ideas. These conversations alone will spark ideas from myself I'm sure!

I will continue to develop my early teaching practice to develop into a confident educator, by reading the material this week, suggested readings again, and start my blog.

Chrissi Nerantzi

fantastic +Danny Orwin. really lovely to hear you got something from the activities and our conversations here this week. It was especially wonderful to read about your plans to work closer with colleagues to enhance your practice as an individual and collectively and identify opportunities for related scholarly activities. Consider using an action research approach and involve your students too ;)

Sebastian Kozbial

Day 5 : Wow – what a frustrating week… each day I wanted to create something that I had never done before; moreover, I also wanted it to be fun and meaningful. I am not entirely certain if I had succeeded, but I gave it a try. All comments from the moderators and my course mates were great, hopefully a few more will come as I write this, and I've tried my best (despite a terrible teaching load this week 18h) to reply and comment on other posts. The first day was probably the most frustrating in terms of changing my thinking slightly, I often work with clear guidelines and objectives but here I was given a lot of freedom. My box ended up being quite… good – if I may say so myself J - after an hour of planning and deliberating, I decided to use Photoshop and stick several labels that represented various ideas. I enjoyed this so much that after posting my box online, I created another one – a better representation with more logical construct. This showed me that re-thinking something that works is often the way to 'greatness' – just like in teaching.

The second day gave me headache, again originality was my aim and I tried to create something from scratch. My task might be slightly complex to implement, as shrewdly observed by one of my course mates, especially with lower-lever learners (English as a second language), but the concept of 'possibility thinking' was at the heart of designing this. When planning this activity I felt both frustrated and excited, on the one hand I wasn't sure if I was going in the right direction, but on the other hand – I felt exuberant when thinking about various possibilities and how students could react to such a game using Lego. The next opportunity I have, I shall definitely try this one out. I need to be more adventurous when it comes to new tasks and new ideas.

The third day was just excellent. I am a huge fan of supporting/encouraging reading practice, and learning through stories is simple, encouraging, powerful and creative! After reading all chapters from Piaget's To understand is to invent. The future of education, I decided to focus on the one that speaks out to me the most – Chapter 5. Despite of making notes and then transferring these and adding pictures, using storybird, I wasn't entirely happy with the outcome. Then I decided, that's right, to be more creative and write a poem – to convey my understanding of Chapter 5. Through simple rhymes, I wanted to illustrate that our lives are often controlled and structured in a way that we dislike – that power can be misused and mixed with ill intentions. When rhyming stops, the message changes – we have a right to our believes but we need to be tolerant… I cannot express how much I enjoyed this activity. Without a doubt, this one is my favourite so far!

The fourth day was quite difficult, so I decided to seek help and I ask my student If the description of my ideal learning space, which I had created, was to their liking. Some agreed, some added extra items, new ideas… but one student surprised me saying that supportive teachers who believe in their students are more important than any equipment…. I welcome any comments J

Looking at a draft action plan, there are several aspects of my teaching that I am planning to change after these four days – at the same time, I think that with time there will be more to add to this list – as my reflection needs more time and focus (and research too):

1)I will try being more creative – (wow, how insightful) I really liked the idea of students being responsible for their own learning through stories – I want to create a small project where students find their favourite story (in their first language) and then they create a picture story in English – this way they can share a cultural aspect of their country and use English as a medium of communication.

2) All discussions that we have had this week also made me think about the use of technology (blogs, google classroom, Edmodo) to support learning through the concept of ongoing conversation/sharing content. I used to think that my students wouldn't be interested, but I will give it a try and I think it is a great way of practicing English – here students could take ownership of their digital spaces too – they could suggest good ways of learning, useful websites – all these little things that we encourage them to do but never fully support... or can't check.

3) When completing Day 2, I've also realised the need of teachers' participation – I will definitely try being more actively involved in doing various tasks with students. After day 2, I started researching more about this concept, and I have found a few publications that support the above. In my context, this can be particularly useful when, for instance, creating a paragraph essay – I usually help students, offer useful language and suggest improvements – in the future,

KEEP CALM BECAUSE IT'S JUST THE BEGINNING

I will also write one in class, so the students see the process, corrections, cross outs, imperfections that then can be improved. This should build their motivation and help understanding the process of writing… and this is just the beginning.

Norman Jackson
these are great reflections +Sebastian Kozbial and very helpful to +Chrissi Nerantzi to gain insights into how you have experienced the course and how you have valued and benefited from it. Please let us know how your plan for action works out Thank you for all your contributions over the week.

Chrissi Nerantzi
Hi +Sebastian Kozbial what a fascinating journey you had and thank you so much for sharing with us all. You are very honest and open in the challenges you faced and the discoveries you made. I am so pleased this was a valuable experience for you despite the difficulties.

Fantastic to hear that the story idea is generating plans to try with your students. Combining written text and image can make a real difference. Also have a look at Mayer's theory of multimedia learning (this link might be a useful start https://sites.google.com/site/cognitivetheorymmlearning/multimedia-principle)

Lovely that you are state that through experiencing this course as a learner, you have come to realise the role facilitation plays for learning. There are a few models around and I will let you discover these and share with us when you find something interesting, ok?

Thank you again for being with us this week.

Sandra Sinfield
I, too, valued this reflection +Sebastian Kozbial - and the struggle that you capture - and the revisiting and discussing that you did... I do hope you share those stories with your students also. I have found that because many of my students are 'non-traditional' they see their struggles as aspects of their deficit or weakness - it is so empowering when they can see that (good) struggle is the point - and applies to us all!

Sebastian Kozbial+1
+Sandra Sinfield Your final point is very close to what I believe. Additionally, if you struggle but you continue to develop, you appreciate your achievement far more.

Christina Hesford+1
+Sebastian Kozbial +Sandra Sinfield This is such an important point! If students can push through their struggle, by the end they will have developed holistically by learning perseverance, potentially discovering pride in themselves, as well as achieving the learning outcome.

Sarah Easom
Day 5. Reflection on the last four days.

Looking back on the week's events two very important things I have personally found eye-opening and will consider further for my practice are:

1) The importance of reflective practice as discussed by Donald Shön. The reason it is relevant to this week's activities is that I have realised there are many aspects of learning and teaching that are tacit or implicit. So what I have learned this week is it would be useful to communicate different learning and teaching methods to students more explicitly. This could include Peer-to-Peer learning, student led workshops and feedback sessions. Perhaps because I teach a creative subject (Fashion Design) I was already familiar with some of the ideas and methods introduced this week, however, I know realise that a lot of this was tacit for myself and I now have an enriched and deeper understanding of the value of these for my own teaching practice.

2) My second main takeaway I have had this week is the significance of the learning and teaching environment. This connects to the work of psychologist James J. Gibson (1977) and his theory of 'affordances.' In this work Gibson explains the mutual relationship between an animal and it's environment. In addition he also uses the concept of a 'niche', which describes a specific set of relationships that afford the animal to benefit from its surroundings. My action plan therefore will explore the potential of enhancing the learning and teaching environment to afford the students the best possible methods and situations for their development.

Action Plan
- Introduce students to peer-to-peer learning as part of their personal development.
- Develop a pro forma for this activity.
- Encourage students to keep a journal of reflective practice as part of their ongoing development.
- Explain the importance of the teaching and learning environment and enable students to redesign their studio space on a trial basis for several sessions.

Rationale
- To make explicit the types of learning and their benefits which are currently implicit.
- To contribute to students' understanding of ongoing personal development and learning.
- To make time for reflective practice rather than it being seen as a 'bolt-on' activity.
- To enable students to inform their own learning and understand the importance of their environment(s) for creative exchange and development.

Jennifer Willis+1
Thank you for this insightful summary and your great action plan +Sarah Easom. I am sure Chrissi will be delighted by how much you have taken from these four days.

I think you are right that a lot of what we do we do instinctively, relying on tacit learning.

I also like your comments on the environment. I recall when I started teaching in Paddington in the 70s, once I had established myself so as to be entitled to 'my' teaching room, the first thing I instinctively did was to try and make it more welcoming. Simply putting up students' work gave it value, and made it less likely that the posters would be vandalised. I'm not sure that I had verbalised this, at the time.
Jenny

Norman Jackson
thanks for sharing your reflections +Sarah Easom I also think affordance is important. In fact one way of conceptualising personal creativity is its about seeing and acting on affordances that probably unique to you.. But I see affordance as part of an ecology involving the individual, with their unique set of qualities, skills, experiences, beliefs, values and more..... interacting with their environment to fulfil particular purposes. We are exploring these ideas in Creative Academic Magazine (a partner of #creativeHE) and we welcome your involvement in our exploration of how teachers' pedagogic practices relate to the ecologies they create for students' learning. The January issue is out at the end of next week. http://www.creativeacademic.uk/magazine.html

Sandra Sinfield
Thank you for this thoughtful reflection and useful Action Plan +Sarah Easom. You are so right about needing to tease out the implicit - and make real space and time for reflective learning. I ask my students to blog about their learning - and i saw their practice evolve - the first time students were wary and I allowed choice (paper based or online) - and the ones that had not blogged wished they had been pushed to do so; the next year, more students blogged - and made their blogs very rich and visual; the third year a completely different set of students also blogged via visually engaging blogs - but now they started to read and comment upon each others' blogs - so the reflective process became more dialogic and useful...

Chrissi Nerantzi
Hi +Sarah Easom, so wonderful to read that this week has been useful for you and triggered new thinking and ideas that could be developed for implementation. This space is open all year round and we hope that you will consider taking up +Norman Jackson offer and write an article for the magazine (after you have done your assessment for this unit, would be my suggestion ;).

Will you be able to join us this evening for the tweetchat?

Sarah Easom
Hello Chrissi Yes I will join tweetchat tonight. I don't know twitter but will give it a go. Sarah

Lauren McNeill

Day 5 – Reflecting on the last four days of creative learning activities.

I am not the best at reflection (but really want to improve so any suggestions/advice gladly received) but looking back over the activities undertaken and I have a few important aspects both personal and professional, which I found intriguing, thought-provoking and will definitely incorporate in my practice as they have changed my perspective on how I want the learning experience to be:

Day 1 – When thinking of creative and inspiring learning experience: I did think of this example quite quickly as it did stand out, however, reflecting on why it should out took me longer to process. The lecture was in Forensic Biology, the learning outcome was to be able to describe how molecular biology techniques can be applied to the evaluation of DNA evidence - so this lecture incorporated quite a few aspects including different genetic variation, different types of DNA analysis (molecular biology techniques) and evaluation of the DNA evidence through interpretation (the process to collection of evidence to court).

I understood the different requirements of the learning outcomes, as they were broken down into easily identifiable areas. I would say that through the use of different elements to increase engagement and understanding, enhanced the ability of the learning outcomes of the lecture to be achieved. By including the quiz, it focused and engaged the students to see if the learning outcomes set had been achieved (through specifically designed questions). In addition, by using a quiz, this highlighted areas that may not have been understood during the first part of the session. By assessing the learning outcomes at the end of the first part of the session, this engaged students and focused the lecturer to ensure all the learning outcomes were achieved by the end of the session. The use of slides, pictures, key information and a video were also key in achieving the learning outcomes of the session. By making a lecture adaptable, this also ensured that the learning outcomes were achieved.

By breaking down all the key elements, I realised what I felt worked really well and why. I think that is was really important to me, as this is what I want. To inspire creative learning in memorable way. Allowing me to now incorporate elements of this memorable experience to incorporate in my teaching.

Day 2 (play and games) – I struggled a bit with this at first, as I was trying to put myself in a real situation when I would be able to use this. Then I decided to think of a fun and creative way to relax the group by all making a version of ourselves and being able to describes ourselves in just 5 words. I think this would help establish a relaxed environment and importantly included myself (the instructor). Ensuring a positive emotional state by reducing stress by introducing ourselves through an object.

Day 3 (story telling) – I really struggled with this. I read most of the book as I changed my mind on three chapters that were all very important to me. It was incredibly difficult task which of the chapters I wished to tell as a story, as well as what images went with the story I wished to tell. However, I felt the last chapter, "Education shall promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. " made me question how this could be incorporated into education. It is really important and something within education that should not be overlooked. It raised questions, making me reflect on what I can do to make sure that I incorporate this inspiring read into my teaching. I think that the quote: "it is only by starting with a group of active methods, with first priority being investigation in common (work in teams), and the social life of the students themselves (self-government), that the study of national and international attitudes as well as the difficulties of their coordination"

I think there were so many interesting elements to this chapter, but I feel this is potentially where I could aid in actively ensuring this is incorporated into my teaching.

Day 4 – I really enjoyed this activity, I brainstormed ideas on how I wanted to create the ideal learning environment with a perspective of utilising accelerated learning. I want the space to be open and relaxed in order to create a positive learning environment. Considering a lot of different elements to ensure a positive learning environments made me think about the big and small details, not just the teaching material, but everything that is incorporated and I feel something a may have previously overlooked. It made me think what is the ideal learning space from a student's perspective too, and this is something I wish to investigate.

An important aspect of teaching is engaging in my pedagogy in order to enhance my theory and practice to teaching. By utilising important literature throughout my teaching career. I have understood the link between

theory and teaching and ultimately how to improve my teaching skills by ensuring that the learning outcomes are tailored to the teaching material but also the many benefits of creative learning and incorporating this within lectures, tutorials and workshops as much as I can. I think sometimes that I want to make sure that all elements of my teaching are memorable by creating a positive impact on the students experience and also encourage their desire and passion to learn. I am naturally a creative person and have always had a love for art and play (I think I enjoy crafting as much as my 5 year old daughter). This course has allowed me to realise that just because science is not traditionally thought of as a creative subject, that I can actually incorporate brilliant creative ideas and techniques to increase learning, ensuring that the scientific subjects I teach are creative. Especially as scientific research stems from creative idea's, teaching should also reflect this. I really like this quote from Creativity in Education and Learning: a guide for teachers and educators (Cropley, 2001):

"Although creativity was initially looked at as an artistic/aesthetic phenomenom, in more recent times researchers have broadened the approach by looking more closely at creativity in mathematics and natural sciences."

Reflecting my feelings that science is and should be creative, especially as that is what I love about science. Now I need to actively ensure that I always think to incorporate creative learning.

Accelerated learning is a concept that I have also enjoyed learning about and incorporating into activities. I had not come across this until last week and have read literature regarding this. One very helpful book, the Accelerated Learning pocketbook (Best, 2003) inspired so many ideas and techniques that I will and have incorporated into my teaching.

I will incorporate creativity into lectures, tutorials and workshops that I run, as I feel that this has a profoundly positive impact on learners and that is my main goal. To make sure that learning outcomes are achieved, by helping to inspire and motivate learners to learn.

I think this last week has shown me that feedback from learners is important to me, it will help build a framework for continuously improving my teaching and striving to think outside of the box.

I will ask students what they want is their ideal learning space is. I think it is important that each individual student has a say and to incorporate their ideas into learning materials. By actively involving them, I also think this will help motivate and inspire their desire to learn.

I have a three hour lecture coming up, which is a long to keep minds motivated and have decided to include a few different idea's into the lecture. I have already incorporated colour, images, videos and a quick quiz (halfway to assess the learning outcomes and what we can focus on in the second half to ensure that learning outcomes are achieved but also for a fun interaction – all anonymous), but I have also decided to include an activity to design a Lab-on-a-chip device in groups, to get their creativity going and to bring paper, lots of colourful pens and play-doh to see if they can model their idea's. I really do think this will get their minds inspired and creativity flowing.

Sandra Sinfield
Some really thoughtful reflections +Lauren McNeill - and interesting to see someone from the more 'traditional' topics (just generally including all the STEM subjects here with a casual wave of my hand!) - wrestling with creativity & creative practice. What do you think that your students will GET from you adopting some more creative strategies? Do you think that they might resist you - and if so - what's your plan for overcoming this? I ask because when we bounced in and told our Education students that we were going to get creative, they all slumped and looked sad and put upon - we had to hold our nerve! So - we started creatively and did not let up until creative was the new normal!!

Norman Jackson
Very interesting and thought provoking reflections +Lauren McNeill thank you for sharing your joys and your struggles. But most of all for showing us how you have used the course to help you think and stimulate your own creativity. The activity you planned to use with your students looks great and highly relevant to what you hope they will be interested in. I think this is one of the main issue with discussions about creativity - how do take ideas and activities that work in one setting and turn them into practices that others, who perhaps are less than enthusiastic, will see as relevant, challenging, enjoyable and useful. Please let us know how you got on.

A REFLECTIVE CONVERSATION by the #creativeHE organisers

Chrissi Nerantzi [Manchester Metropolitan University]

& Sandra Sinfield [London Metropolitan University]

This contribution is written in a dialogic form and its content emerged naturally through an asynchronous conversation captured in Google docs as a result of an invitation by the Commissioning Editor to provide a retrospective perspective on #creativeHE to conclude this issue of the magazine.

Chrissi: The open course #creativeHE was created in parallel with the running of the Creativity for Learning module which was approved in 2014 and offered since January 2015. It has been a fascinating experience so far and each time it is so different. Some colleagues are coming back regularly and others keep joining us.

In January 2017 we offered #creativeHE as a 5-day block course for colleagues studying towards academic credits at Manchester Metropolitan University in a open cross-institutional collaboration with London Metropolitan University, the University of Northampton, the University of Macedonia, Lifewide Education and the Creative Academic. For me this was an opportunity to break free and connect with a diverse group of individuals from differ-ent universities and walks of life and therefore there was the potential to enrich their learning experience. This was the plan...

Sandra from London Metropolitan University and I where the organisers this time round. *I asked Sandra, 'what made you say yes' ;).*

Sandra: One thing that made me say yes was the belief that you should always say yes to that which scares or unnerves you in some way. And what can be more scary than organising and running a course together with someone who you have not met in person? Scary, no? But also rather cool. Of course it's not all about me (!) - the real pull was the opportunity to work with Chrissi on her inspirational - and oh so timely - creative project.

People approach the role or place or process of creativity in the UK HE context from different perspectives - from our own #creativeHE community a range of intersecting drives are already emerging. Some want to devise a taxonomy or an ecology of creativity to disseminate, to scaffold understanding and make an academic case for the embedding more formally of creative practice. Some feel that creativity is a fundamental human aspect - related to 'flow' and to play - we are all Homo Ludens (http://art.yale.edu/file_columns/0000/1474/homo_ludens_johan_huizinga_routledge_1949_.pdf) rather than Homo Sapiens - denied of play we are denied our true humanity.

Some want to breathe new life and energy into university practice to counter top down micromanagement, to devise more vibrant pedagogy than that which emerges from managerialism and a target-driven academia… What I am particularly interested in is creativity as emancipatory practice - as a way of breaking ourselves free of the constraining bonds of traditional schooling. I see creative practice as a way of de-schooling ourselves (Illich http://thenewobserver.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/deschooling_society.pdf - and I see that creative practices in the classroom set our students free to think, experiment, explore - they become able to express themselves - and to see what they think and feel - and to take that further… I see happier, more confident students emerge from creative classrooms, students with self-efficacy engaging more successfully in active learning - who also then engage more successfully in more traditional academic pursuits: the academic reading, the research and the writing.

Chrissi: It's very interesting what you say about the different perspective you see emerging through our #creativeHE community with a focus on creative practice as empowerment. I can sense this too and it is very interesting and encouraging as I often hear academics saying that they feel that they need permission to use creative approaches in their teaching and are afraid to try different things as they feel that they don't have that permission. It is very sad, I feel, that many feel that way. I really hope that #creativeHE helps individuals to feel empowered and ready to act. To be brave and experiment with more creative approaches in their practice. I have seen this happening as a result of #creativeHE with colleagues who have joined us since January 2015 who have really embraced a new and perhaps more exciting way of teaching. *Do you feel that colleagues from your institution have also benefitted Sandra and if yes, in what way?*

Sandra: Yes - I do - even if we are spreading slowly at the moment. Last year we 'embedded' #creativeHE into our *Becoming an Educationist: reading, writing, inquiry* (#becomingeducational) first year undergraduate module - with accompanying face-to-face *Play with Paper and Paint* 'workshops' - we also embedded creative practice into our *Peer Mentoring in Practice* second year module - which supports the *Becoming* one.

Play with Paper and Paint got busier over the year - especially in our July *Staff Development Festival* where we had a room full of people happily making and painting and playing… and where of course we tried to raise the profile of #creativeHE - and get more people to sign up this year. *Becoming* was our first year academic skills/HE Orientation type course - designed at the module spec stage with reading, writing and reflecting in mind - and with much emphasis placed on plagiarism. An 'okay' brief - but a bit unambitious - and a bit negative: "Hello new students - well you're all a bit rubbish aren't you, we'll have to fix you - and what's more - we think you're all about to cheat like crazy!" Assignments = three learning logs - one research project - one essay. Well - we looked at that and thought: "You're a bit rubbish aren't you? Our students are capable of MUCH MORE than that." So we built in simulations and roles plays - and playing, painting and making - and textmapping - and freewriting - with music - and real research - lots of multimodality and digital stuff - culminating in student performances. Assessment = three PROJECTS, real research - essay… AND...

We told the students we were wrapping *Becoming* around #creativeHE to see what happened when you did something like that. We also pointed out that one of the texts that we were using for textmapping (http://www.textmapping.org/scrolls.html) and notemaking was Norman Jackson's Creativity in HE paper - quietly making the links between theory and theorised practice and what we were actually doing in our classroom. The students loved the textmapping and the play that this approach to reading embodied. If you watch the first couple of minutes of the video on this site: http://learning.londonmet.ac.uk/epacks/posters-digital2/) - you will see reading undertaken like community quiltmaking: discursive, engaged, dialogic and fun. Students are making collages, cutting out illustrative pictures, colouring in key points - and talking and laughing as they engage with a complex academic text. When we told Norman what they had done with his work - he sent a message back to the class - wishing he'd been with them - and congratulating them on their achievements. We thought that that was a great way to bring learning and academia itself truly alive for our students…
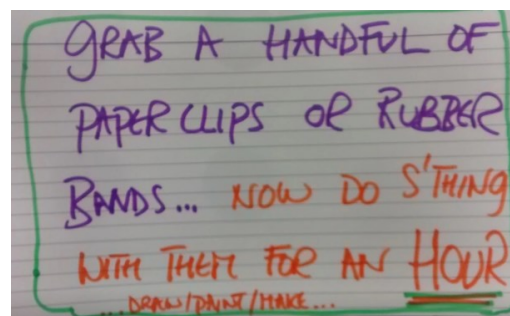
Next steps: Together the three (of us) tutors involved in those modules are now writing about those experiences of playful teaching and learning. Students from the *Becoming* module are involved with a University Teaching Fellowship project - developing inspirational resources for our staff and students. As for spreading the influence of #creativeHE ever wider, I am drawing it to the attention of various Groups at the University that are investigating Improving Student Outcomes, urging them to offer it as CPD for staff. Within my own Unit: Centre for Professional and Educational Development, I am arguing that #creativeHE could seed the Negotiated Study Module on our MALTHE (MA in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education).

Chrissi, I am wondering how is #creativeHE impacting on real practice at MMU? Have you any concrete examples of fresh classroom practice developed as a result of #creativeHE - or that has fed into #creativeHE?

Chrissi: Many of the colleagues who have participated in #creativeHE are also registered as formal students on a range of modules linked to our Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching or the Masters in Higher Education. Part of their assessment is to reflect on their practice and identify opportunities for the implementation of more creative approaches but with a purpose. In some cases, colleagues are asked to implement an innovation. They have a range of examples in #creativeHE, combined with the assessment linked to a specific module, and this leads to specific changes in practice. It is always an amazing experience to explore colleagues' portfolios. You can really see and feel their creative development and how they are becoming more confident innovators, taking more risks.

When I developed the Creativity for Learning module and opened it up for it to become #creativeHE, I wanted to lay the foundations for a community to form where colleagues would be free to explore and play with new and novel to them ideas and concepts around learning and teaching. When I developed the course, I had no idea that it would work or how. But I am pleased that the playful approach paid off and that the Playground model, this is how I call what we do in #creativeHE, really provides for many the space for exploration and discovery and actually try things they would never dream of doing before. Just yesterday, I met one of my current colleagues on a module who also participates in #creativeHE and she told me that the storymaking activity really opened her eyes to new possibilities for engaging students in reading academic articles. I have struggled with this before and have tried a wide range of approaches but I can see how this media-rich story-making approach could actually work with students, undergraduate and postgraduate.

Beyond the changes to teaching practice, I have also seen colleagues from my institution, adopting a more scholarly approach to learning and teaching and sharing their work more widely through conference contributions and academic publications. Many of them have actually contributed to the Creative Academic Magazine encouraged by me and Prof. Norman Jackson who leads the Creative Academic network and it has been a wonderful opportunity for them to develop their academic writing skills and find a creative outlet for their work. Also, some colleagues have presented their work around creativity through our internal learning and teaching conferences and in-house publications.

In a recent webinar with colleagues from my institution who are working towards FLEX [Creativity for learning] credits, a colleague asked me if my feedback on their work would be done in a creative way too... I smiled. I guess I need to think about this and come up with something that would make my colleagues smile as well ;) I have used audio and video in the past, but I think, there is now an opportunity to explore more novel ideas. Mmm...

Sandra, I am wondering what you are taking away from our January #creativeHE iteration and what we could try next time, in May?

Sandra: I take many valuable things away from the January iteration... One thing is that you, Chrissi, are a very generous course collaborator with a real desire to share the 'power'. It was unnerving to be asked to have real input into something that was already so perfectly formed - but liberating - so thank you. It reminds me that we can bring Freire and Illich alive in our own practice - they are not dry theory - commentators off to the side - urging utopian but unobtainable practice: #creativeHE and creative practice can act as midwife to de-schooling and co-learning. Perhaps this is something to think about for the May iteration; we might want to suggest that whilst people are absolutely welcome to participate singly - we gently urge them to find a study partner at

their institution with whom to discuss the activities and compare notes. A second thought is that we seed the idea that participants organise a F2F workshop whilst #creativeHE runs, along the lines of our *Play with Paper and Paint* perhaps.

Key takeaways for me include the variety of induction activities that were shared. I loved the waterbottle one - and of course Paul Kleiman's tale of charabancs to the seaside - installation building and recording - and the setting up of an instant Exhibition. Well that was just breathtaking. I thought the boxes exercise stunning - the creativity exhibited dazzled - what explosions of colour and ideas! Like you I was really impressed with the StoryBirding (https://storybird.com/) of the reading. Participants produced some wonderful work - and it is already something that I want to embed into my own practice. It was so good, I do not want to take it away - but I would (also?) like to get our participants making textscrolls (http://www.textmapping.org/scrolls.html) and experimenting with different ways of using them with their students. A

possible Maker activity to include could be to collect a bunch of clean recyclables - water bottles, coffee lids, jars - plus sugar paper and paper clips, felt tips and old magazines… and either a) select from them to make a revision game for your students or b) offer them to your students and set them the challenge of making a revision game for your own course? And finally - as for offering feedback to your students in a more creative way: read their work and produce a reflective collage on an A5 index card - they have to analyse that to determine your opinion and grade!

Chrissi - what were your key highlights from this run - and what are you already dreaming about for the May iteration?

Chrissi: I like dreaming…. How did you know Sandra? :) It was wonderful to read your ideas, literally, about the next iteration especially as some of them echo things I have been thinking about and dreaming about. Isn't this strange?

Also, recently I shared a short survey with past #creativeHE participants and I think, one of them mentioned that they would like participants to lead more, so maybe this could be something to consider also for the next iteration. It is, linked to your ideas around co-learning I feel and what you suggest around finding a buddy perhaps and organising something locally? Maybe we could, instead of us coming up with the daily activities, to find two past participants who would like to work with us in shaping the week? Do you think this could work? I am looking forward to discussing this with you.

I have really enjoyed seeing this community growing and individuals coming back to participate again. Each time it is of course different and I think the nature of the activities but also what participants bring create unique learning instances for all of us.

It was a pleasure to work with you Sandra and I know how hard it is to do this on top of a busy day. Clear and frequent communication has helped us coordinate activities together with the team of facilitators that also were part of the team Norman, Nikos and Ale. We thank them for their valuable contributions during the week.

Image credits
Illustrations by Chrissi Nerantzi except for the playground which was drawn by artist Jill Harper https://harperjill.com/commissioned-works/illustration/

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

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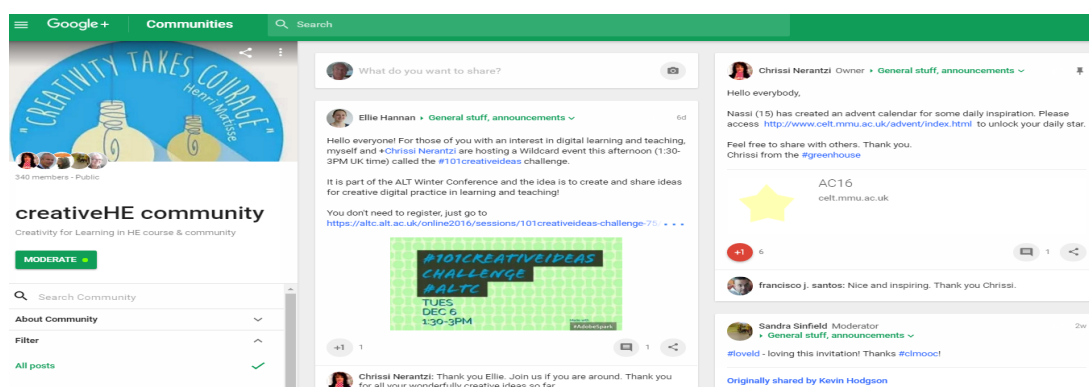
relevant to their own interests, motivation, and desire to produce something that is important to them!

But there is a third characteristic of playground pedagogy that should be infused into at least some of our formal learning situations if we are to improve the efficiency of learning. This characteristic, pure and simple, is enjoyment! Whenever people ask me to define what I mean by enrichment or high end learning, I always answer with what

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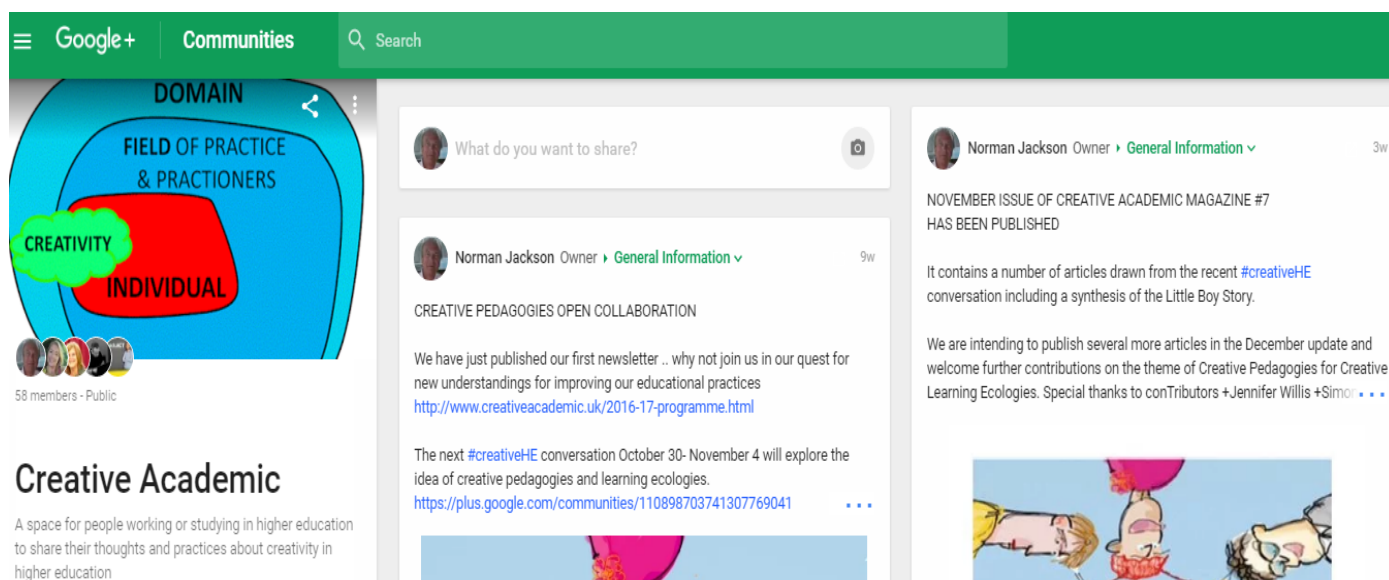
NEXT #CREATIVEHE CONVERSATION
Exploring the Role of the Body in the Process of Creation
April 15-21st 2017

While we may take for granted that musicians, dancers and other performing artists embody their creativity, embodiment is rarely talked about explicitly in higher education teaching and learning practices. Perhaps we take it for granted, alternatively we might not think of teachers as performing artists, and then there is the Ken Robinson view!!

This conversation coincides with World Creativity and Innovation Week and the space we are creating for conversation is our contribution to this global event together with an issue of Creative Academic Magazine. Both projects are being led by Lisa Clughen (Nottingham Trent University) and we are excited about the possibilities that Lisa is creating for exploring new territory.

In engaging with the role of the body in the process of creation we are also continuing to explore the idea of 'ecologies for creativity'. We are particularly interested in exploring the way in which our creativity emerges in and through our actions and interactions with our environment and the affordances, people, materials, tools, situations that are in it.

This is an open exploration and we welcome everyone who is interested in exploring and sharing their perspectives, practices and or research.

Norman & LIsa

WORLD CREATIVITY & INNOVATION WEEK https://wciw.org/

Typically [professors] live in their heads. ... They look upon their body as a form of transport for their heads. It's a way of getting their head to meetings.

— Ken Robinson —

AZ QUOTES