# Exploring Creative Pedagogies for Creative Learning Ecologies

**creative academic magazine**

**Issue Number 7B February 2017**

# CONTENTS Creative Academic Magazine #7

*CAM 7 is being subdivided into several pdf's which can be downloaded from*
[http://www.creativeacademic.uk/magazine.html](http://www.creativeacademic.uk/magazine.html)

**Executive Editor Jenny Willis**

Happy Birthday Creative Academic
Making the impossible happen !! :)

@simonrae

# CREATIVE ACADEMIC MAGAZINE #7B
# CREATIVE PEDAGOGIES FOR CREATIVE LEARNING ECOLOGIES
# COMMISSIONING EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

CAM7 is our first attempt to create an 'emergent magazine'. By this I mean we are not finding, editing and organising all the content before the magazine is published, rather we launched the magazine in October 2016 in the hope and belief that every month we will be able to update the magazine with one or more articles relevant to the topic we are addressing *Creative Pedagogies & Learning Ecologies*. **So far this belief is well founded and CAM7A contains articles published between October-December 2017.**

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

In 2016 we began to develop the idea of *creative ecologies* and our intention is to explore and develop the idea further by linking it to *creative pedagogies* - the imaginative ecologies that teachers create within which students learn and are able to use and develop their creativities. In CAM7 we aim to publish at least one article each month that describes an approach to teaching and learning in which the objective was to enable learners to use and develop their creativity either as a specific goal or as an ancillary outcome of other achievement goals . We also try to bring together research and surveys that cast light on the idea of creativity and what it means to the people involved in facilitating creativity or who are trying to be creative. By considering lots of different perspectives and approaches, in different disciplinary, pedagogic and institutional contexts we hope to develop our understanding of what being creative means and what sorts of practices and behaviours encourage and enable students to be creative and to understand their creativity.

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

*Norman Jackson Commissioning Editor*
normanjjackson@btinternet.com
Creative Pedagogies & Learning Ecologies Project
http://www.creativeacademic.uk/2016-17-programme.html
January 2017

# Exploring Creative Pedagogies for Creative Learning Ecologies Project

**Visit   http://www.creativeacademic.uk/creative-pedagogies.html   for updates**

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|---|---|---|---|
| **July 2016** | #creativeHE conversation 'Exploring Creative Ecologies'   √ | | |
| **September 2016** | Launch of Creative Pedagogies & Learning Ecologies Project<br>• **Publication CAM 5 'Exploring Creative Ecologies'**√<br>• **Launch of #101creativeideas project**√ | | |
| **October 2016**<br>**November 2016** | • 'Developing the idea of ecologies for learning & creativity' presentation BERA Creativity SIG seminar at the University of Cambridge: Advancing Creativities Research: Making connections across diverse settings. √<br>• **#creativeHE conversation 'Creative Pedagogies' 30/10 to 04/11**√ | | |
| **January 2017** | • **#creative Creativity Course** (open course Creativity for Learning in HE) 16 - 20 January 17<br>• **Creative Pedagogies Online** Survey aimed at identifying past and present practices and building an on-line resource. | | |
| **March 2017**<br>**Contribution to 'Open Education Week' Mar 27-31** | • **#creativeHE conversation 'Disciplinary Perspectives on Creative Pedagogies'** 26-31st March<br>• **#LTHEchat Twitter conversation** | | |
| **April 2017**<br>**Contributions to World Creativity & Innovation Week April 15-21** | • **Publication CAM 6 'Exploring the Role of the Body in the Process of Creation/Re-creation'** - particular reference to teaching and learning processes. Edited by Lisa Clughen<br>• **#creativeHE conversation also exploring the role of body in creativity** during World Creativity and Innovation Week<br>• **Publication of #101creativeideas project** - 1 idea of an activity to encourage students' creativity will be posted on Twitter each day prior to WCIW | | |
| **May -July 2017** | • **#creative Creativity Course** (open course Creativity for Learning in HE) 22- 26 May 17<br>• institutional professional development events (several planned) | | |
| **September & beyond** | **SYNTHESIS**<br>• **Face to face event 'Exploring Creative Pedagogies & Learning Ecologies'**<br>• **Publication of 'Exploring Creative Pedagogies & Learning Ecologies' book**<br>• **Completion of CAM 7 'Exploring Creative Pedagogies for Creative Learning Ecologies'** | | |

*#101creativeideas project*

*CAM 7 'Exploring Creative Pedagogies for Creative Learning Ecologies' Oct 16 - Oct 17*

*INSTITUTIONAL   PROFESSIONAL   DEVELOPMENT   ACTIVITIES*

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## Meet the Editorial Team of January's CAM₇B

**Norman Jackson@lifewider1** is the Founder of Creative Academic. He is also Emeritus Professor of the University of Surrey, Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and Founder of Lifewide Education http://www.lifewideeducation.uk/ His work as an educator has formed around the challenge of enabling people to prepare themselves for the complexities of their future lives. This has led to research, development and innovation in such areas as students' creativity, lifewide learning, learning ecologies, personal development planning and how universities change.

**Jenny Willis'** career has involved many dimensions of teaching, educational management and research. She first worked with Norman on aspects of professional and personal development, creativity and lifewide learning as a Fellow at the Surrey Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. She is a founder member of Lifewide Learning, conducts research and writes for its publications. She edits Lifewide's quarterly magazine and is also executive editor for CAM. Jenny has a PhD in socio-linguistics and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. For more information about her go to http://no2stigma.weebly.com.

Simon Rae, provides many of our illustrations. He is a retired lecturer in Professional Development from the Open University @simonrae.

# CREATIVE ACADEMIC IS TWO YEARS OLD

How quickly time passes. It's January again which means that Creative Academic is two years old. When Chrissi Nerantzi and I launched our enterprise in January 2015 our goal was to try to create a focal point (or hub) around which people who were interested in creativity in higher education, could connect, explore ideas and share

experiences, practices and resources. From a small group of friends and colleagues our network of interest (subscribers) has grown to over 400 people from over 20 different countries. We also have over 400 followers on twitter.

Our magazine enables us to explore the many dimensions of creativity in teaching. In the last year we produced three issues and we are currently publishing an update to another every month. Our collection of magazines has now been accessed on-line nearly 6000 times.

In collaboration with Chrissi we have helped facilitate six courses or discussions on the #creativeHE Google+ platform and we are using our magazine to curate and broadcast the results of discussions. We have contributed to a number of institutional professional development events in the UK and overseas..
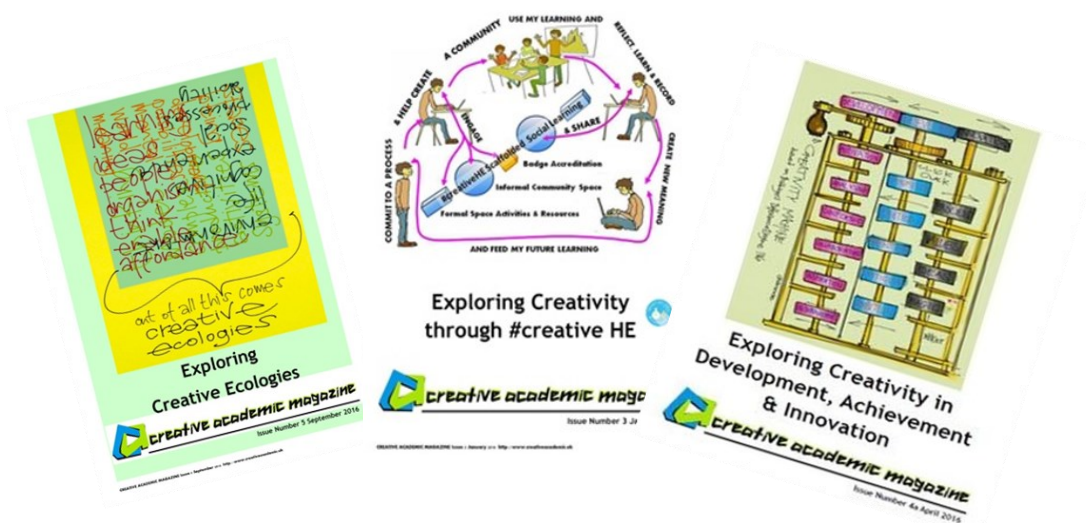
In an attempt to be more strategic, this year we embarked on a project to connect educational practitioners and researchers, educational development teams, networks, communities, universities and colleges who share our interest and concern for students' and teachers' creative development, through a partly planned/partly emergent programme of activities relating to *creative pedagogies and creative learning ecologies. The planned* element of our project involves connecting and integrating the activities of Creative Academic, #creativeHE, the National Teaching Fellowship #pin project focused on Pedagogic Innovators and Lifewide Education which is developing the idea of learning ecologies. The emergent element of the project involves a combination of open invitation to individuals and organisations to join us, together with the opportunistic strategy of contacting individuals or organisations whose work we would like to connect to our own. We are particularly interested in attracting and collaborating with researchers who have an interest in this field of knowledge and practice.

In 2016 we began to develop the idea of *creative ecologies* and our intention is to explore and develop the idea further by linking it to *creative pedagogies* - the imaginative ecologies that teachers create within which students learn and are able to use and develop their creativities. Our intention is to combine and integrate these two ideas through a programme of work over the coming year involving all our partners. Our aspiration is to build

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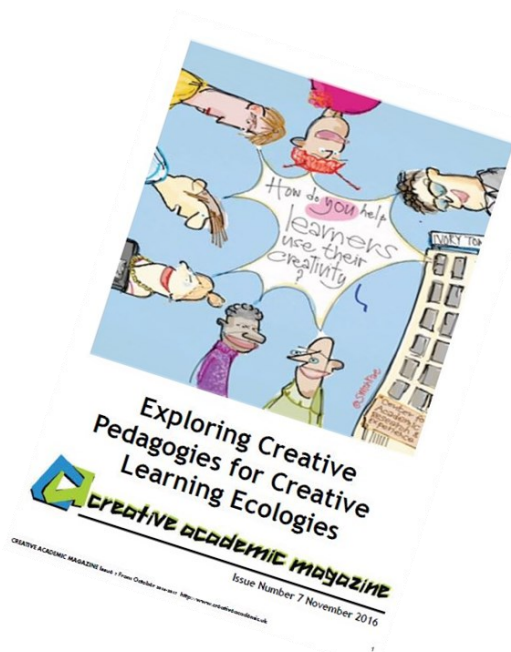
and support a community of interested educational practitioners and encourage and facilitate the exchange of ideas and practices through social interaction (both face to face and on-line discursive events), a book, magazine and a range of open educational and learning resources. So far over 50 practitioners have registered their interest in the project.

We hope that our exploration of ideas and practices will be of interest and value to our communities and to anyone else who is involved and interested in designing and facilitating learning processes and practices that encourage and support the creativity of others i.e. teachers and others involved in educational and learning development. The main elements of our strategy are outlined be-low. They include:

- six #creativeHE google+conversations and courses
- four issues of Creative Academic Magazine (CAM 4, 5, 6 & 7) - one of these (CAM7) will be formed through an emergent process i.e. articles will be published throughout the year as they are received
- participation in institutional workshops/conferences (by invitation)
- on-line surveys - and the production of a database of educational practices relating to creative pedagogies
- 101 Creative Ideas Project (currently led by Eleanor Hannan and supported by Chrissi) aimed at creating an open educational resource - a card set of activities and on-line resources used by higher education teach-ers to encourage students' creative development
- opportunities for students to share their perspectives on the ways in which teachers encourage them to use and develop their creativity
- at least one face to face event of our own to bring interested people together to consider the knowledge that has emerged through this process a book 'Exploring Creative Pedagogies and Ecologies' to consolidate and disseminate the results of our explorations
- in April 2016 we contributed, for the first time, to World Creativity and Innovation Week. Hosting a week long conversation on the #creativeHE platform and publishing an issue of Creative Academic Magazine. One of our community members, Nikos Mouratoglou set up a facebook page to facilitate conversations amongst facebook users.

For an organisation that is entirely voluntary with membership that is free we can look back on what we have accomplished with pride and look to the future with optimism. A big thank you to Jenny Willis, Paul Kleiman and Simon Rea in particular, but to everyone who has contributed time, enthusiasm creativity and hard work to enable us to reach our third birthday. If you would like to help us reach our fourth birthday in style please get in touch.

*Norman & Chrissi Co-Founders Creative Academic*

Congratulations on this tremendous achievement! There's a lot more still to come!

*Jenny Willis, Executive Editor*

# To develop creative students, we may have to re-design our self as well as our teaching

## Tobias Haertel, Claudius Terkowsky and Isa Jahnke

Dr. Tobias Haertel, Centre for Higher Education at TU Dortmund University, Germany, has been working since 2009 on two research projects on creativity in higher education funded by the German Ministry for Education and Research.

Claudius Terkowsky holds a degree in education and is head of the engineering education research group (EERG) of the Centre for Higher Education at TU Dortmund University in Germany. His research fields are: fostering and hindering the creative attitude in higher education and training, lab developing and lab didactics, engineering education culture, design-based research .

Dr. Isa Jahnke, Associate Professor and Director of Research for the Information Experience Lab with the School of Information Science and Learning Technologies, University of Missouri-Columbia, USA, and Professor of Interactive Media and Learning at Umea University, Sweden.

## Introduction

In the current age of creativity, individuals as well as institutions are under constant pressure to innovate[1]. Not only students but also higher education experts, decision makers in educational policy and business associations expect universities to implement innovation in teaching and learning. In the last decade, a movement has grown in higher education; traditional methods of teaching are being superseded by new approaches [2].

In order to develop pedagogic approaches that nurture students' creativity, we have observed in our projects and workshops two important requirements:

1.   University teachers who want to foster their students' creativity need an appropriate and easy to apply method, tool or instrument to (re-) design their courses.
2.   Whoever wants to foster somebody else's creativity needs to be creative as well.

These two propositions are discussed in more details in the following two sections.

## Designing teaching and learning scenarios that foster students' creativity

The question whether creativity is something that can be taught and learned was initially addressed in 1961 by James Melvin Rhodes(3). Referring to the model of 4Ps (Product, Process, Person and Press)(4), Rhodes only indicates the creative process as clearly learnable and teachable. Since these beginnings, a lot of work has been done, and nowadays, it is widely accepted that at least *some* aspects of creativity can be learned (read 4–8). Furthermore, valuable approaches for connecting creativity and higher education have been developed both inside and outside the classroom, although these are not easy concepts to put into practice. Jackson(10) shows that creating better conditions for the emergence of creativity in teaching, and assessing creativity and designing curriculums for creativity can be a rather complex matter that should not only be considered in the university curriculum, but be seen as a part of students' own lifewide learning enterprise. His findings are valuable sources for university teachers and decision makers on how an "imaginative lifewide curriculum"(11) could provide a better framework for viewing and supporting students' creative development and achievements.

However, from the perspective of university teachers, not all creative results might be relevant or compatible with the discipline they are working in, or they might be too complex to be used for designing new courses in a reasonable timeframe. For this reason, Cropley & Cropley(12) introduced the concept of "functional creativity" with regard to higher engineering education. Bringing the complex phenomenon of creativity "down to earth" is a central purpose of this approach but it is limited to engineering sciences. Therefore, the German research project "DaVinci" (2008-2011, funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research) aimed at developing an easy to handle design instrument for fostering creativity in higher education which is based on empirical evidence(13). The resulting model of creativity for higher education consists of six different facets each of the facets is briefly considered below together with the perceptions of higher education experts

# Six Facet Model of Creativity suitable for Higher Education

## 1. Reflective learning

…means to reflect on any information given by a teacher rather than just receiving and reproducing it in assessment situations. When students handle information critically or match it with their individual prior knowledge, they start to 'process' it in their brains and break out of a receptive habitus, only then might they show a creative achievement. In these internal dialogues, knowledge becomes constructed through critical thinking. Unfortunately, a lot of traditional lectures just require students to memorize information, without fostering their critical thinking. One example to avoid non-reflective learning would be to intentionally incorporate deliberate mistakes into a lecture, a task, or a correspond-ing Wikipedia page to provoke one of these precious "Aha" moments (14) when students discover the mistake.
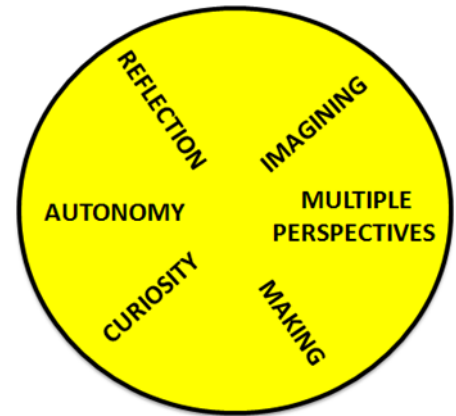


*Figure 1* Six facets of creativity model

## 2. Autonomy: independent self-determined learning

…focuses on students' self-reliance. Curricular structures tend to reduce students' freedom to find their own learning paths through their courses. Some teachers prepare every detail of their lecture or seminar and rather determine students' learning paths and steps quite fine-grained(15). Some students increasingly rely on such fixed structures as well, because they provide safety and make the grading predictable. It is a fine line between openness and guidance. So, a simple way to foster students' creativity in the sense of Facet 2 is to give them their autonomy and agency back in order to encourage them to make their own decisions, for example to look for relevant literature on their own, and try to solve problems on their own or with the help of other students.

## 3. Curiosity and other intrinsic motivations

…is another important facet of creativity in higher education. Some teachers think that students cannot be creative when they are not motivated or are not interested in learning. In their opinion, a "flow" experience(16) is a creative achievement for students. Interest in a topic or motivation are features that cannot be directly influenced by teachers or learners. For example, teachers can foster their students' motivation with humour, but not every teacher has a sense of humour that marries with the academic environment. This facet is tricky. Interest, motivation, curiosity and humour are highly dependent on individual, subjective preferences. However, teachers can at least design learning experiences in ways that are more likely to encourage curiosity and do their best to motivate their students. Whenever possible, they can link theoretical discussions to practical examples and current situations (today's newspaper, TV or social media), or they can try to irritate and break up everyday teaching situations and change the place for learning (cross-action-spaces, (17)).

## 4. Making: learning by creating

…means being creative by creating something. A student is creative when she or he creates an academic product and presents (and defends) it. The products of their research do not have to be restricted to classic academic products such as seminar papers or presentations, they might also be represented in a good blog on a certain course topic or a small exhibition with an academic context.

## 5. Multiple-perspectives

…refers to the ability of seeing and framing a problem from many different perspectives. For some teachers, a student is creative if she or he is able to make use of perspectives other than of their own discipline. Further-more, breaking out of prejudiced thinking is part of this facet. This can be achieved by the (regularly) use of thinking techniques like simple pro-and-contra-perspectives or role-play(18).

## 6. Imagining new ideas

…the final facet of creativity in higher education is the imagination to think of new ideas and it is linked to the successful accomplishment of the preceding facets. For some of the interviewees, creating new ideas is the key concept of creativity - both its general application and more specifically its application in higher education, too. But experts have different opinions regarding the level of originality. For some the idea had to be new and original for the students and not for the teachers, while others stated that students' ideas had to be new and original for the teacher also, but not for the scientific community at all. Finally, one expert said that the function of science was to create new knowledge: Only if students would produce entirely new and original ideas, they would they be creative. This diversity of opinion has important consequences when teachers come to recognise, value and assess students' creative efforts.

## Applying this model of creativity in higher education

This 6-facet model of creativity has been introduced and used by more than 100 university teachers in higher education workshops at different German universities. First of all, the model helped them to define their own disciplinary and individual concepts of creativity. While some teachers prefer for instance Facet 1 for their students' creativity, others say that Facet 4 is important and some think about Facet 6. After assigning themselves to one or more of the facets, teachers have a concrete starting point for their curriculum design projects. They start to strengthen students' autonomy if they think that Facet 2 is important for creativity, or they implement several thinking techniques into their seminars in order to foster multi-perspective thinking and so forth. The complexity of creativity with all its heterogeneity has been brought down to dimensions which are compatible to teachers' working contexts in teaching and learning. They now know *how to start to design* their teaching activities. On the other hand, observations in the workshops have shown that many university teachers also have to (re-) *design themselves* as creative teachers.

## Re-designing yourself as well as your teaching

In all the higher education workshops we facilitated, university teachers never failed to develop original and brilliant ideas to foster their students' creativity. By applying divergent thinking techniques, all of them had visionary ideas that really would mean radical improving innovations in higher education. However, in the following phases, when they were asked to refine their ideas into practical plans for implementation, almost all visionary, radical ideas became incremental. Still good ideas, still improvements and good approaches for fostering students' creativity, but it became obvious that some teachers have problems to understand themselves as designers of innovations in teaching and learning with regard to its consequences:

- University teachers need courage in order to innovate: What students should learn in Facet 4, develop an (innovative) product and show the courage to communicate and defend it (19), is also relevant for university teachers as well. Some of them are frightened to "navigate in open systems" (20), an inevitable condition in innovation processes.

- They need to be open toward uncertainty if they want to foster their students' autonomy: Some teachers have difficulties to give students the freedom to make their own decisions, even if they are wrong. University teachers also need to be open-minded if they want to develop students to think about problems from multiple-perspectives. Some teachers have difficulties to accept scientific methods, habitus or approaches from other disciplines but valuing new perspectives is a central aspect of Facet 5.

- For this reason, our professional development workshops address these needs. They are designed to encourage teachers to foster their students' creativity by applying the model of the 6 Facets of creativity in higher education to their teaching practices, as well as encouraging and supporting them to re-design themselves as innovators in teaching and learning in order to re-design their teaching practices. Both aspects have emerged to be equally important.

Our two day workshops start by encouraging participating teachers to think about creativity i.e. their perceptions of creativity. Next, we invite them to reflect on their teaching and learning practices. We do this by asking them, "How do you 'see' when your students are creative?". They write their responses on cards and allocate their answers to one or more of the six facets described above. This starts a conversation about creativity in teaching practices. Through this activity the teachers relate their current practices to the six facet model of creativity, but usually a teacher does not assign their practices to all of the six facets. The facets which are unassigned (from an individual teacher's viewpoint) are the starting point for thinking and discussing how to improve student creativity toward a specific facet. Overall, this approach to using the 6 facets helps the teachers to reflect, assess, re-think and re-design their teaching and learning practices at the same time enabling them to develop their perceptions of what creativity means. Day 2 is dedicated to helping teachers re-design their current

*Design a human*
*Image source: http://humandesign.net/images/projector.jpg*

practices focusing on one or more of the facets. Through the workshop teachers develop innovative concepts in order to foster their students' creativity based on their existing courses, and we usually ask them to write them down as a poster in order to present their ideas to the other participants.

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# ECOLE 42: A NEW FORM OF EDUCATION FOR THE SOCIAL AGE OF LEARNING

## Dylan Tweney

*Dylan is a writer, editor and journalist. He is editor in chief at VentureBeat and also publishes the haiku magazine tinywords **the world's smallest magazine.***



**École 42** might be one of the most ambitious experiments in engineering education. It has no teachers. No books. No MOOCs. No dorms, gyms, labs, or student centres. No tuition.

And yet it plans to turn out highly qualified, motivated software engineers, each of whom has gone through an intensive two- to three-year program designed to teach them everything they need to know to become out-standing programmers.

*Image Credit: Dylan Tweney/VentureBeat*

The school, housed in a former government building used to educate teachers (ironically enough), was started by Xavier Niel with a 70 million euro donation. He has no plans for it to make money, ever. The founder and majority owner of French ISP Free, Niel is a billionaire many times over. He's not well known in the U.S., but here he is revered as one of the country's great entrepreneurial successes in tech. He is also irrepressibly upbeat, smiling and laughing almost nonstop for the hour that he led a tour through École 42 earlier this week. (Who wouldn't be, with that much wealth? Yet I have met much more dour billionaires before.)



## A culture of continuous challenge

The basic idea of École 42 is to throw all the students — 800 to 1,000 per year — into a single building in the heart of Paris, give them Macs with big Cinema displays, and throw increasingly difficult programming challenges at them. The students are given little direction about how to solve the problems, so they have to turn to each other — and to the Internet — to figure out the solutions.
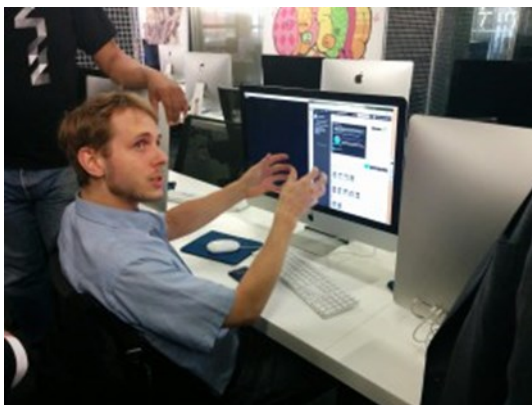


A student at Ecole 42 explains how he created a ray tracing program. Six months before he knew nothing about programming. The challenges are surprisingly difficult. One student I talked with was coding a ray tracer and building an emulation of the 3-D dungeon in Castle Wolfenstein within his first few months at the school. Six months earlier, he had barely touched a computer and knew nothing of programming. He hadn't even finished high school.

In fact, 40 percent of École 42's students haven't finished high school. Others have graduated from Stanford or MIT or other prestigious institutions. But École 42 doesn't care about their background — all it cares about is whether they can complete the projects and move on. The only requirement is that they be between the ages of 18 and 30.

*Image Credit: Dylan Tweney/*

"We don't ask anything about what they've done before," Niel said.

Yet École 42 is harder to get into than Harvard: Last year, 70,000 people attempted the online qualification test. 20,000 completed the test, and of those, 4,000 were invited to spend four weeks in Paris doing an intensive project that had them working upwards of 100 hours a week on various coding challenges. In the end, 890 students were selected for the school's inaugural class, which began in November, 2013. (The average age is 22, and 11 percent of the first class is female.)

890 students out of 70,000 applicants means an acceptance rate a little north of 1 percent, or if you only count those who completed the test, 4.5 percent. By contrast, Harvard accepts about 6 percent of its applicants. And, even with financial aid, it charges a whole lot more than zero that Ecole 42 charges for its classes.



The upshot: If it works, the school's course of education will produce coders who are incredibly self-motivated, well-rounded in all aspects of software engineering, and willing to work hard. (The four-week tryout alone, with its 100-hour weeks, blows away the French government's official 35-hour-work week.)

42's pedagogy is based on peer-to-peer learning that's focused on skill-based learning through experiences. Students aren't supervised by teachers or given a syllabus, but instead, targeted projects that are meant to be fun, collaborative, and educational.

42 brings together students from all walks of life, and everyone is encouraged to apply—there are no specific prerequisites. Instead, we focus on working with quality candidates who have a passion for learning to code. Once a candidate decides to apply and is selected after the online tests, they're invited to "la piscine", or the swimming pool, which is a four-week intensive coding boot camp, where skills are tested through a series of challenges. The piscine is an opportunity for us, and the students, to see if 42 is a good fit for them and if their working style is adapted to our learning process. It's extremely competitive and in fact, only about one-third of the students who participate will be selected after the piscine process.

42 only wants to work with students who are motivated and self-disciplined. These are the values that the entire 42 learning model is based around. Much like working at a startup tech company, the days will be long and there will be numerous new problems arising. But don't get discouraged! We're looking for candidates at all levels of coding, from complete noobs to those who already know a thing or two about code, not just the ones who finish the assignments first. We want the candidate who keeps trying when they hit a wall, and is able to adapt and think on their feet. These are the students who fit the 42 model! Those who are motivated and keep on top of their studies, will go on to complete the schooling process and secure jobs at the world's top tech companies, or even create a startup.

Brittany Dismukes Bir  former student Ecole 42 Paris and COO US42

## A culture of collaboration

All of École 42's projects are meant to be collaborative, so the students work in teams of two to five people. At first glance, the École's classrooms look a little bit like a factory floor or a coding sweatshop, with row after row of Aeron-style chairs facing row after row of big monitors. But a closer look reveals that the layout is designed to facilitate small-group collaboration, with the monitors staggered so that students can easily talk to one another, on the diagonals between the monitors or side by side with the people next to them. Students can come and go as they please; the school is open 24 hours a day and has a well-appointed cafeteria in the basement (with a wine cellar that can hold 5,000 bottles, just in case the school needs to host any parties).



Students share all of their code on Github (naturally). They communicate with one another, and receive challenges and tests, via the school's intranet. Everything else they figure out on their own, whether it means learning trigonometry, figuring out the syntax for C code, or picking up techniques to index a database.

Tests are essentially pass-fail: Your team either completes the project or it doesn't. One administrator compared it to making a car: In other schools, getting a test 90 percent right means an A; but if you make a car with just three out of four wheels, it is a failure. At École 42, you don't get points for making it part way there — you have to make a car with all four wheels.



The no-teachers approach makes sense, as nearly anything you need to know about programming can now be found, for free, on the Internet. Motivated people can easily teach themselves any language they need to know in a few months of intensive work. But motivation is what's hard to come by, and to sustain — ask anyone who has tried out Codecademy but not stuck with it. That has prompted the creation of "learn to code" bootcamps and schools around the world. École 42 takes a similar inspiration but allows the students to generate their own enthusiasm via collaborative (and somewhat competitive) teamwork.



Some prestigious universities have already expressed interest in the school's approach and the idea of franchising the model But even if they never expand beyond Paris, École 42 could become a significant force in software education. Furthermore it provides a model for other forms of problem solving / solution finding education. France already has a reputation for creating great engineers (in software as well as in many other fields). If École 42 adds another thousand highly-motivated, entrepreneurial software engineers to the mix every year, it could very quickly accelerate this country's competitiveness in technology. And the model will force schools like Harvard to make an extra effort to justify their high tuitions. If you can get training like this for free, and you want to be a software engineer, why go to Harvard?

And now there is a US version of Ecole 42 https://www.42.us.org/

**Sources**

*This article was posted on June 13, 2014 http://venturebeat.com/2014/06/13/this-french-tech-school-has-no-teachers-no-books-no-tuition-and-it-could-change-everything/*

*Additional source* Brittany Dismukes Bir 42, a Free Coding School, Opens in Silicon Valley with the Help of French Billionaire Xavier Niel Published on May 19, 2016

https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/42-free-coding-school-opens-silicon-valley-help-niel-dismukes-bir?articleId=6139110354371764224

**A Game & Project-Based Experience**

it all comes down to talent-spotting via a merit-based game. "We have 80,000 applicants a year who play an online game, and 25,000 finish," "We take the 3,000 best and ask them to come to the school for a month - that's 450 hours of 15-hour days, including Saturday and Sunday. After five or six days, a third of them leave. And then we take the 1,000 best."

The survivors - 80 to 90 per cent of whom are French, but which also includes many Americans - win a free education, help in finding accommodation (the owner of Ecole42 is building 900 flats), loan guarantees of €15,000 if needed, and access to high-quality internships. "Forty per cent don't have a Baccalaureate, and half the students in this school are from poor families and wouldn't be able to afford it."

The project-based curriculum consists of 21 modules or "game levels" - designed by six staff in an upstairs enclave called "the cluster". Apart from a five-minute instructional video and PDF, students are left to learn in groups. After a month, they should be able to code in C; they're challenged to build Tetris and Sudoku from scratch using their new skills. They then move at their own pace: the fastest student finished school after 18 months; others will take five years.

Game dynamics are everywhere: to get projects corrected, students must spend "correction points" - which they earn by correcting someone else's project. If there's a disciplinary breach, they have to spin a wheel to learn their punishment: "Take orders at the coffee machine", or "Clean the windows with a toothbrush". Good behaviour earns "wallet points" which can be spent.

*Extract from: interview with Xavier Niel by David Bowman 'This university has no teachers, syllabus or fees, WIRED Magazine Monday 9 January 2017 http://www.wired.co.uk/article/paris-tech-school-ecole-42*

# Teaching and Learning Conversations



Next webinar January 31st 12.00-13.00 (GMT)
'Exploring the Ecology of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education'
Norman Jackson

https://tlcwebinars.wordpress.com/

# INTERPRETING MY PEDAGOGIC PRACTICES THROUGH THE LENS OF CREATIVE LEARNING ECOLOGIES

## Eleanor Hannan

*Ellie creates multimedia learning and teaching resources for academic staff development at Manchester Metropolitan University. She co-ordinates the Good Practice Exchange, a project to collect and disseminate good practice in learning and teaching within MMU and is leading the development of SOTL! – an educational game for teaching research design. She is an active member of the Creative Academic community and has contributed to a number of #creativeHE conversations. She also leads the 101 Creative Ideas project: part of Creative Academic's Creativity in Higher Education programme of work.*

## Background

I participated in the November 2016 #creativeHE conversation which explored the idea of creative pedagogies for creative learning ecologies. One of the invitations within this conversation was to reflect on a situation we had facilitated where we had tried to encourage participants to use their creativity and use the idea of a learning ecology to interpret the dynamics of the situation. The November issue of CAM7 describes this process[1] and the model of a learning ecology I am using is shown in figure 1.

**Figure 1** *Model of a leaning ecology[1]*
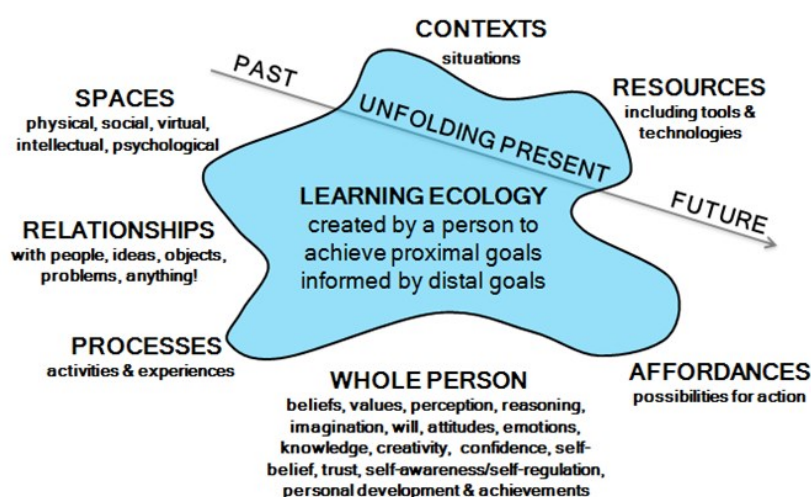


I was intrigued by the idea and wanted to explore the concept of a learning ecology in my own *context* of providing opportunities for professional development at MMU.

I selected an academic staff development workshop that I had organised and facilitated as part of the MMU 'Festival of Learning and Teaching' 2016. The Festival was an internal, distributed conference for all staff at MMU to come together to share their experiences and know how in order to help their colleagues learn and develop their practices. Events, workshops, and presentations took place throughout June.

My session was called 'How to use video with your students'. The two hour workshop aimed to introduce colleagues to a variety of ways of using video in their teaching. The situation provided much *affordance* for participants to be introduced to new ideas, technologies and practices.

## Building an ecology for interaction

For the CreativeHE conversation, I tried to interpret what I did through the ecological framework we were exploring (Figure 1). This model suggests that as the facilitator of the session, I brought all my **knowledge** and **skills**, as well as the **beliefs** and **values** I held to help create the conditions for learning that I wanted participants to achieve. For example, when planning the workshop I had in my mind the question what sorts of things are needed to create a good professional learning experience. I was also conscious that participants themselves would be coming with their own knowledge and skills and their own experiences of using technologies, perhaps even the ones we were using in the workshop.

The **classroom space** I booked for the workshop had moveable furniture so I set about trying to create a space in which participants could move around and interact with different technologies and with each other. I arranged four tables, each with a different approach to video on it (Figure 2).

*Figure 2* Sketch of the way I organised the physical **space** of my classroom
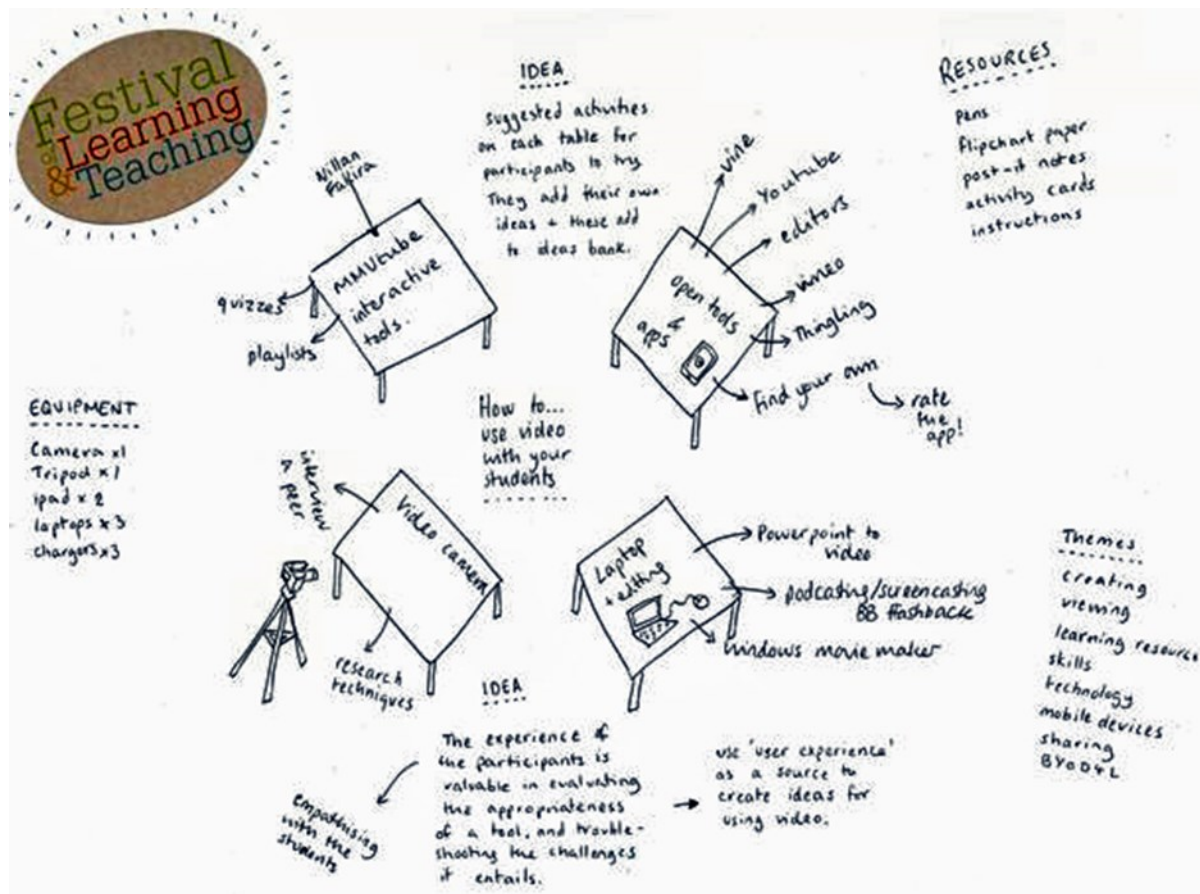


In order to enable everyone to experience all of these aspects I gave participants 15 minutes on a table before moving them to another table in a round-robin style. The first table focused on web 2.0 open tools and apps that related to video. The second focused on activities you could do on your computer i.e. video editing software. The third table had sharing tools like YouTube and Vimeo, and the fourth table focused on video recording, where a camera was set up for participants to use.

An ecology a teacher creates for learning contains **activities** to engage people in ways that certain types of learning are likely to emerge. The activity contains affordance for doing something and creates possibilities for participants to interact with others, including the teacher, **objects and tools** (the technologies I provided). All the activities were underlain by a purpose - like make something or do something. Learning emerges through the interactions and conversations. Perhaps thectivities themselves are micro learning ecologies.

*Figure 3* Example of an activity card - one of the resources I used in the ecology I created for learning



My facilitation was mainly in the form of written guidance, responses to questions and other interactions with participants during the workshop. On each of the tables, I provided a range of cards each containing suggested activities for participants to do that would encourage them to use video in different ways. I gave participants a lot of *choice* so they could select tasks that appealed to them during the 15 minutes they had on each table. For instance, one activity involved an app called Vine (see Figure 3). The activity card explained the app, and suggested creating a short video. To extend the activity, they could post the video online. During and after all the activities, participants were encouraged to note down some ideas for how they could use it in their teaching on the paper in the middle of the table. I included a 'things you'll need' section to help participants decide what was right for them, e.g. whether or not they'd need to download something or create an account in order to access the tool.

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I felt it was important for me to show that I empathised with participants. As teachers we sometimes ask students to do things that we might not even be comfortable with ourselves: like videoing ourselves, sharing unfinished or unpolished work on social media, creating accounts on open tools where we are not sure about the privacy of our work or our data. When using video and other technology, many of these issues arise. To engage with these issues, I wanted participants to experience using the technologies as their students might, and to think about how this might affect their use of those technologies as teachers. For instance, one table was set up with a camera and the instruction to interview a peer about how they would like to use video. This was to get them to consider what they'd like to achieve, but also to give them the experience of putting themselves in front of the camera and see what it felt like.

## Reflecting on my ecology for learning and creativity

During the week-long conversation on 'Exploring Creative Pedagogies and Learning Ecologies' that took place in the Google+ CreativeHE community, I examined this workshop I had designed and facilitated through the lens of the learning ecology model[1]. I mapped my workshop into this model (see Figure 4) highlighting the areas I felt contributed most to it being a learning environment in which participants' creativity could flourish. I felt that the context, purpose, processes and activities, resources, spaces, the past and the unfolding present through which insights and other achievements emerged, were the key sites where my creative pedagogy was grounded. In sharing my thoughts I was able to interact with other people in the conversation and this enabled me to test and develop my understandings. For example, I posted my sketch (Figure 4) and annotated it with my analysis (in blue) and another participant added further annotations (in red).

*Figure 4* *My initial reflections (in blue) on the ecology of my workshop.*
*Further annotations in red were suggested by the facilitator*



*Context and affordance*
These were connected. The institutional conference provided a particular context within which people came together to learn. I saw the affordance to do something which I thought would make a useful contribution on behalf of my department so I pushed myself forward to act on the opportunity.

## Purpose

My intended purpose of the workshop was creative in the sense that I wanted participants to experience the use of technology and apply their emotional knowledge to their professional teaching contexts. The purpose was also to generate ideas and practical experiences that they could use in their teaching.

## Past

In creating my ecology for interaction and learning I drew on my past experiences. Learning ecologies that have influenced me, e.g. as a student at the Manchester School of Art; running creative art workshops for school children and community groups; and postgraduate study on the Creativity for Learning unit run by MMU CELT. These creative influences have shaped my beliefs in what I think good learning and teaching should be like. My ecology for learning drew on these beliefs and experiences.

## Spaces

In order to create experiences for the participants I utilised the space available to me, both literally and figuratively. Firstly, I put time into making the materials look interesting, and laying them out before participants arrived in order to create an sense of intrigue for them. The participants also needed to move around during the course of the workshop, making them literally active. Figuratively, I tried to facilitate a space for playful learning. Participants played with new tools and took part in activities that enabled them to use these tools. Further, the activities were triggers for action. There were no constraints on how they were to be used and they could go anywhere within the time limit. I think I was trying to encourage the formation of a psychological space within which people could experience what it felt like to use and perform with these video technologies.

## Resources

The equipment and software were the main specialist resources that were included in the learning ecology. However, the knowledge of participants themselves was also utilised as a resource. I included empathy as a natural resource that I knew would emerge in the course of the workshop as participants tried to make use of the resources in the activities I had created for them. When we experience things ourselves, we have responses to them. Highlighting these responses to participants and asking them to use it to inform their teaching approach is a non-traditional approach to using resources, but it is something I counted on being able to access for the workshop to achieve its purpose.

## Processes and Activities

I created a lot of potential activities to encourage participants to interact with and use the video-related technologies. The activities, suggested on cards, contained the affordances for learning and the cards explained what these affordance might comprise. Ultimately, participants had to see and claim the affordance for themselves. The element of choice that was brought into the workshop was intended to enable participants to find activities that appealed to them or that they could relate to their own learning and teaching context. Choice in learning contexts is known to increase intrinsic motivation[2]. It also helped create an open learning environment so that no participant would have experienced the workshop in the same way as another. The variation this produced facilitated a flexible and open way of working. Through the practical activities I was trying to encourage a sense of embodiment: the learning I was trying to facilitate involves head, hands and heart.

## Achievements - learning & creativity

It was vital that each participant was able to contextualise the technologies to their own teaching and learning contexts, try them out and achieve some useful learning in the process. The achievements of the participants should have been different as they were able to choose how they navigated the activities. Again, this links to it being an open-ended experience. My professional achievement was to design, experience and witness the effects of my workshop on participants and their learning together with the learning I gained through my whole experience and my subsequent reflections on it (including writing this reflective piece).

As for creativity, I hoped that the playful activities and open-ended nature of the workshop would facilitate participants to generate new ideas for their teaching. Some of these ideas and insights might have been created by the process of doing a suggested activity, others through contrasting their experience of the activity with their experience of their own practice i.e. "This wouldn't work in my class, not if I changed this part it might". By making sure participants shared a table with other people I hoped too that they would discuss their ideas with each other, achieving some cross fertilisation.

In visualising my workshop through an ecological lens I can appreciate much more how so many things are connected and related.

One final thought, in willingly coming together in a staff development workshop - participants are connecting their ecologies for learning and developing within the ecology that the facilitator has created in the manner depicted in figure 5.

This was another useful insight I gained through the November #creativeHE conversation.



**Figure 5** *Coalescing learning ecologies*

### References

1 Jackson, N. J. (2016) Exploring Learning Ecologies. Chalk Mountain
2 Wang, S. & Han, S. (2001). Six C's of Motivation. In M. Orey (Ed.), Emerging perspectives on learning, teaching, and technology. Accessed 15/12/2016, from http://epltt.coe.uga.edu/index.php?title=Six_C%27s_of_motivation
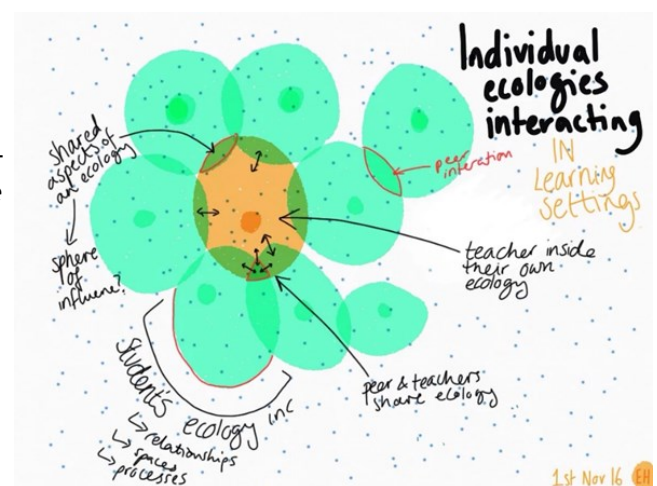
# CREATIVITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION
## Osama Khan

People who lead the development of teaching and learning in universities and colleges have an important influence on the way an institution encourages students, teachers and others who support students' learning and development, to use their creativity. During 2017 Creative Academic Magazine will be interviewing a number of leaders and innovators to gain their perspectives on creativity in higher education.

For the first interview we are delighted to introduce Osama Khan, who is Director of Learning and Teaching at Southampton Solent University. Osama grew up in Bangladesh and attended Comilla Cadet College, a prestigious military boarding school in Bangladesh. He started his career in banking with Standard Chartered Bank after graduating as a Summa Cum Laude with double honours in Economics and Finance from the Independent University, Bangladesh. After completing an international management trainee programme with Standard Chartered Bank, he arrived at the University of Cambridge (Hughes Hall) and gained his MPhil in Real Estate Finance and Economics with distinction.

Osama is a passionate teacher with nearly 20 years' experience teaching corporate finance; real estate finance and investment; economics; mathematics for economics; derivative finance; and investment management. He has taught at the University of Cambridge, University of Hong Kong, and HEC Paris. He is an avid advocate of technology enhanced learning, and has won multiple awards for his excellence and innovation in learning and teaching, including the University of Surrey Learning and Teaching Award 2010. Osama is a practising Muslim with personal interests in community cohesion, multi-faith dialogue, and BME educational attainment. In 2015 he was appointed Director of the newly formed Solent Learning and Teaching Institute.

*Interviewer: Can you please tell me about your role and the work of Solent Learning &Teaching Institute?*

**Osama:** My role is the Director of Learning and Teaching and as part of that role we established a new institute about 18 months ago. In a nutshell, I am in charge of making sure that the learning and teaching is of a good standard, that we are evolving into a good learning community for the university and our staff members are able to continually develop to pursue the excellence in learning and teaching that we aspire.

Solent Learning and Teaching Institute has a bunch of caring educational professionals whose job is to make sure that we enhance the way our students learn and we support and help our academics enhance the way they teach. We aim to have research informed teaching. We are talking about how subject research is brought into teaching, how particular forms of teaching can create a bridge to disciplinary research as well, and how our students can be partners in research processes.

Technology enhanced learning comes under SLTI as well. Recently, the whole of the Library and Learning Resource Centres, and all the computer labs joined SLTI as well which means we are not just concerned with the development of staff but also with some aspects of students' development at well, like study skills. So we can claim that we are a Learning and Teaching Institute. I seem my role as trying to keep that excitement going and move forward this whole community together to fulfil our mission of enhancing learning and teaching.

*Interviewer: The focus of Creative Academic's inquiry is on creativity. Do you think creativity is important to the development of students in higher education? And if it is do you think higher education pays enough attention to this aspect of development?*

**Osama:** I absolutely think that creativity is a very important part of learning and teaching. As a matter of fact, I believe if a teacher reflects on a whole year of activity and thinks that he or she hasn't created anything new in his or her delivery of teaching or the way he or she excites the student community to learn, I would say that that's not a success. Creativity lies at the core of learning and good teaching.

As for whether the higher education puts enough attention to students' creativity, I have many worries in my mind about it. I think the competing agendas of research and measuring the impact of research through REF, the NSS and module evaluation, and now the TEF have all helped to create an environment which is constantly under pressure. Academics know they have to deliver certain KPIs and not surprisingly with so much accountability and performance measurement they play safe. I don't think these conditions provide the right environment for creativity to flourish. There have been some great innovations in learning and teaching but the pace at which we should move forward has definitely being slowed down because of league tables and students being perceived as a paid customer, or because of REF and TEF.

*Interviewer: What does the university do to encourage creativity either in students having opportunities to use their creativity or staff using their creativity to innovate their practices? T*

**Osama:** I would say encouraging creativity is close to the heart of this university. I genuinely feel that. Why? We have a Learning and Teaching strategy with 12 strands and one of the strands is explicitly about how creative and innovative pedagogy can be supported. It's already there and there are milestones and targets for us within the next three to four years to achieve that involves new pedagogy. Pedagogy that's suitable for the type of students we recruit at this university. This university has more than the sector average number of students with learning difficulties. More than the sector average number of students coming from mature population. It has students which are coming from white working-class background, another challenge point. It has more students in black minority and ethnicity than the sector average. You can see our student population is distinctive and we haven't done enough in terms of creating pedagogies that are suitable for our diverse community.

The institution through its policy and strategy appreciates them. It has created Solent Learning and Teaching Institute, it's an institute that never existed before August 15th. The whole purpose is, we bring best practitioners together, we bring innovation into learning and teaching, and innovation and creativity is a major thread altogether.

As a matter of fact we're sitting in 'Spark' an amazing new space that is a physical embodiment of the creativity we want to encourage. This environment is a physical embodiment of the philosophy that we hold for learning and teaching. We want learning and teaching to be flexible, we want learning and teaching to be inclusive for the diverse community of students we cater for. We want any type of students to come here from a social justice perspective to feel comfortable and at ease in this space.

86% of the rooms of the spaces in this building are equipped with agile furniture to enable teachers to configure their own classroom spaces in ways that are most suitable for the types of learning interactions they want to achieve.

In a way, I would say that it's a physical embodiment of the strategy that we hold, of the policy that we hold, the philosophy that we hold, that education is for all. No matter what you have achieved up to the point you come to Solent, we will help you to transform your life. Because we believe in transforming lives in education, we give opportunities to communities which otherwise don't have opportunities in Russell Group universities, for example. That transformative agenda is embodied within this building.

*Interviewer: Given we're concerned with creativity in this conversation, in what way do you think this space encourages creativity to flourish, whether it's teachers' creativity or students' creativity?*

**Osama:** I would like to believe that the unusual nature of this space, including the superimposing pod right at the middle with the bright red colour. All the graphics that you can see on the wall in this building. All the moveable, flexible and accommodating versions of the furniture, which absolutely challenge the notion of traditional classroom and I think, ignites the potential for creativity. I believe that learners and teachers will think that I need to think unusually about my practice, about my interactions, about my subject area. There is some kind of almost metaphysical connection between what you do as a teacher or student and how you perceive your space.

When we designed this space we took inspiration from the amazing spaces that Facebook and Google have created in their headquarters. In a way Spark is our Facebook/ Google space for social interaction and learning, and in the same way that Facebook/Google expect creativity to flourish in these spaces we expect creativity to thrive here.



*Interviewer: What are you and your Teaching and Learning Institute doing to encourage and help academics to enable students to use and develop their creatively?*

**Osama:** There are many things we are doing but I will focus on three examples here. We have a scheme called 'seed funding', it's basically some financial support to enable the seeds that are planted in the minds of our teachers to grow into new practices. We encourage application for our academics for seed funding up to £2500 per project, for them to involve their students in a creative pedagogy, either using technology and or the space that we have provided them or even go beyond the virtual and physical space and create an experience with industry and business that is relevant to the subject. One of the things that we are very keen on, is pedagogy that involves the co-creation of knowledge where students and staff collaborate in an ecology to achieve something so the creativity comes from both students and staff involved in a shared enterprise. Seed funding is one of our vehicles to do that, and whenever anybody wins seed funding we expect them to then write about their ideas and practices and present it internally and externally, so that the results of their creativity can be recognised and celebrated.

The other thing we do is, we have a Research Informed Teaching Team. The idea is once again co-creation of knowledge, but this time the focus is on subject knowledge. So connect the research your are doing in your subject to your course and involve students from your own course to be partners for your research. Or simply design research processes that are used in your discipline into the courses you are teaching to enable students to experience doing research in the way it's been done within the subject area. The traditional model is that everybody writes a dissertation in the final year. We are saying that lets involve our students in research from day one. Encouraging students to find things out for themselves is another way of nurturing their creativity.

The third example I will talk about is to encourage teachers to share their innovative practices through case studies presented at our annual teaching and learning conference. We always have a fantastic conference. It has been a tradition of this university to hold learning and teaching conferences involving the whole community - students, staff, professional services. In fact, we never say this conference is only for teachers. Our learning and teaching conference is for everybody in this university. We are all in the business of education and learning. We build that conference by bringing case studies together. Multimedia case studies of different pedagogies, different practices, different research in collaboration with students and then showcase them in that one single day. We all wait with eager heart for that day and this year it could be on 24th of June.

*Interviewer: To some extent, you've answered my next question on the ways in which you help teaching staff develop that sense of awareness of how they might help students use and develop their creativity. I guess the conference would be a major showcasing event where this can happen, but are there other opportunities for staff to develop their insights and their capabilities?*

**Osama:** Yes, there are. We have an in-house journal called *Dialog* and we always source creative innovative way of learning and teaching and educational research. We also have a workshop series where workshop themes are identified by SLTI, but any member of staff can design and run it. So if we identify a need for a workshop on say 'flipped classrooms', we want an academic champion who is already flipping their classroom to come and talk about it, and talk about the creative process they went through, to develop that pedagogy. We also have a research and innovation conference that takes place around April or May which is quite catalyst in terms of showcasing creativity, in terms of integrating research with teaching. So people can talk about their research and how creatively they thought about involving students and bringing that to their classroom as well.



http://adigaskell.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/creativity.jpg

*Interviewer: this university has a distinctive range of disciplines. Are there any examples that you can use to illustrate particularly interesting forms of pedagogic practice that have been used to encourage students to use their creativity?*

**Osama:** Definitely. As a matter of fact, if time was not an issue, I could have given you so many examples of distinctive signature pedagogies within which students are able to express their creativity. In fact, one of the themes of our 24th of June conference is signature pedagogy.

First I will just explain how we cater for discipline in the work that we do in SLTI. We have five learning and teaching fellows. One-day-a-week work each fellow works with the Solent Learning and Teaching Institute bringing the teaching and learning perspectives of the disciplines from their School. We have five academic Schools every school spares one day of a senior lecturer's time for two years to be the School's champion in learning and teaching. These fellows are not only advocates for teaching and learning in their discipline, they are championing new forms of pedagogy as well. The idea is they bring the disciplinary perspective to any new institutional developments. So if we are developing our VLE, we have five academics inputting into discussions on the design of the VLE offering different disciplinary points of view.

In this way we develop a good understanding of the range of pedagogic practices across the university. To give you an example, as we were discussing this afternoon that our fashion student for example, in the first year quite a lot of them don't even have a traditional lecture. Learning is often through interactive workshops and they always work on briefs taken from the industry. For example every year 'Ted Baker' provides a brief, our students work to the brief choosing the fabric and design. Students present their designs to a small group of academics as the assessment and our shortlist goes up to the Ted Baker office in London and they then choose one design and the designer gets a placement within Ted Baker. In the Fashion School, from day one the classroom is all about what students will actually do once they graduate. In this way their learning is a practical embodied apprenticeship as well as a cognitive apprenticeship.

That's one example of how a discipline creates opportunity for students to use their creativity, another would be the simulations that we use in our maritime education. We have big simulator of how the whole bridge of a vessel works and how the engine room works. Students in this discipline learn the theory in the classroom and they do a lot of activity on the VLE in terms of learning about how the engineering room and all that works. But then they engage in more hands on practical learning when they are thrown into the deep end and have to drive the ship using the simulator. The simulators are actually physical manifestation of what it actually looks and feels like to drive a real ship. That's the signature pedagogy that we experience in our maritime education here and the way our students are challenged to use all their capabilities including their creativity.

Even in our Business School we have signature pedagogies where we constantly use live briefs from the industry, from year one all the way to year three. The idea is once again engaging students with a real life problem or simulation of a real world problem, getting them to work out solutions and pitch their ideas on how to solve it. To give you an example from our Business Strategy unit. Our local theme park was quite frightened by what happened at Alton Towers. They wanted to come up with a strategy that, if -- God forbid -- it happens to them, how could they manage the media, reputational damage, the welfare and health, and safety of their own customers? So the students talked to the managers at the local theme park. They studied the case study of Alton Towers and then came up with a solution which they presented as a crisis management situation mimicking the case study of Alton Towers but customised for the local theme park. That was an assessment embedded within the curriculum, but in the process our local theme park got a range of solutions which they could consider for their own crisis management strategy.



http://cdn.skim.gs/images/ymjtawkrmjvlqyu9d1hl/7-best-theme-parks-in-california

*Interviewer: In all of those examples you are signalling that the way to encourage creativity to flourish in a discipline is to challenge students and make their learning relevant to real world problem solving situations, to involve students grappling with messy problems, things they've never encountered before, possibly to interact with real clients and to be accountable for the solutions they come up with by pitching and discussing their ideas.*

**Osama:** Definitely. In fact, I must also mention one thing that one of our strategic aspiration is we are the applied university in the region. One of the strands of our learning and teaching strategy is to bridge theory and practice. The way we cater for creativity is exactly what you're saying we want to show students how the real life world works by involving them in it. Then through that process they use their creativity in the contexts that they need to use them in real life. I think it's quite artificial, if we only try to encourage creativity through lectures and tutorials, and reading books and journals. These activities are very important part of our education, but in themselves they are not enough. Because this is not the way, for example, you and me are learning. We left university many years ago, but we are still learning every day. But my learning and your learning are totally different. That's the learning we want them to know. It's almost learning to learn, once you are out of educational institution, but we start the journey when they are at Southampton Solent.

**Interviewer: Just continuing this thing then, I'm interested now in examples outside the disciplinary curriculum. Does the university offer any spaces or places, or projects, if you like, where students can use and develop their creativity?**

**Osama:** The university offers many opportunities. We have an office called Research and Innovation Office. Literally last academic year, we launched a project called SURES. Each year one hundred students across the university on a semester basis can apply to be partner in either solving real life enterprise problem within the region -- whatever that be, whether it's a business or whether it's a company who's trying to find a solution. For example, you probably know that hovercraft was invented at Southampton. Two years ago the company had a problem with some of their technical capability in the hovercraft, and a bunch of our students solved it through that SURES process.

Students are signing up saying that, "I'm an engineer. I want to offer something from my knowledge to solve a real life problem". The Research and Innovation Office then acts as a broker between a real life problem and them, and they solve it on behalf of the university under the supervision of an academic.

That's one avenue. In fact, the most proud avenue we have is 'Solent Creatives' which is an agency managed by the university for our students to gain experience of working with business and industry partners and involve real life problem solving with a client. Our music students, our fashion students, our business students, marketing students, tourism students, all sorts of students are actually going through that creative agency and applying their creativity to situations in the wider world. They're creating websites, our students work for music festivals. In fact for the last seven years our students have been recording the Glastonbury Festival. There is an entire truck full of media equipment and production which the university put together, to record and capture it, that creativity comes from our students, of course with supervision from our staff member. That's another avenue. Solent Creatives is a great example of how student creativity flourishes by exposing them once again to the ways of working in the wider world.

**Interviewer:** *Osama, I know you yourself have been responsible for many innovations in your teaching practice, I wonder what lessons you've learned about trying to innovate in a university that you can draw upon in your role as Director of Learning and Teaching.*

**Osama:** At a strategic policy level I think there has to be recognition that innovation requires incubated spaces. What I mean by incubated space is almost like a safe haven for academics that encourages them to take risks in order to innovate and for our learners to participate in such innovations and do things they haven't done before. If a student takes on a risk and gets an assessment brief and thinks, "Maybe there is scope for me to do something interesting, something I have never done before", as an academic we need to appreciate that this is a big thing for the student who has spent most of their academic life avoiding risks. If we really want our students to use their creativity then we don't want them to absolutely stick to the assessment brief all the time, we want them sometimes to surprise us by doing things that we hadn't thought of. Somehow in our teaching and assessment practices we need to create some kind of a safe haven. There has to be some kind of encouragement to say to academics and students that --we need a kind of philosophy like, 'if it goes wrong, fail quick and change quick', so it's okay to fail. If we don't develop this culture at an institutional level, I think we will create a very safe environment, a very stale environment, where people do things the same way year after year.

That's one side of the challenge of encouraging innovation. The other side is rewarding it. Once you have created a new pedagogy, we need to give people the platforms to talk about it; share it and gain peer recognition for their creative efforts. We need to publicly acknowledge that what you've done has made a valuable contribution to the community.

I still proudly have on my wall, my SEPTrE Fellowship and the University Learning and Teaching Award that I got at the University of Surrey back in 2010. I am very proud of these achievements and they are important to



https://i0.wp.com/trak.in/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Startup-Incubation.jpg?resize=350%2C200

me as a teacher it almost epitomizes the fact that I did something that was acknowledged by my peers. You don't need constant acknowledgement. You just need one like that in your career. It's such a catalyst for giving you the confidence to do more. Sometimes senior managers, we may not actually appreciate that a pat on the shoulder could have an enormous significance for an academic to carry on making changes for the next five to ten years time. So to encourage innovation in teaching we need two things: a conscious reward publicly celebrated and a safety net that says, "It's okay. Try this out -- you might fail. We'll allow you to fail and we will still appreciate the fact that you tried".

*Interviewer: My final question, Osama, is to do with Creative Academic. How can Creative Academic help people like you and your university to achieve these goals of encouraging staff and students' creativity to flourish?*

**Osama:** I think what I, and what we would appreciate at Southampton Solent University is for Creative Academic to be a platform where the sort of best practices that I talk about that SLIT are trying to broker or try to disseminate across the institutions can reach a bigger audience. Public recognition and celebration of innovative practices should be more wider than just an institution. We are part of a UK higher education system and even beyond the UK and for a teacher and an institution to receive recognition on a national or global stage has to be a good thing. Also Creative Academic can provide us with a platform where we can meet other creators, other innovators in learning and teaching beyond Solent so that we can be exposed to their thinking and practices and discover what they're doing with their students. That would be a great thing for us.

Of course, as I said one of things that I worry a lot about given our high education, the way it's changing, where it's very market-driven, lots of stiff competition, lots of perception of customer relationships and concerns for high levels of satisfaction with the education we provide. But it doesn't always mean when a customer is satisfied that the product is great. Challenging students to push themselves to be creative can make them uncomfortable and stressed and they may not feel satisfied. Creative Academic could help by facilitating conversations about the dichotomy we are facing now, namely the survival of an institution which is financially feasible, performs well in the league table, with good KPIs some of which could be put at risk through trying to innovate. On the other hand, the key to thriving also lies in creative free thinking and academic freedom to try out new pedagogic practices some of which might not be successful first time around. TEF promised us social inclusion -- great. It promised us that there would be more parity between teaching and research -- great. But the way TEF is now unfolding none of it is actually going to happen.

Creative Academic can provide a platform where higher education can have conversations beyond one institution, and start lobbying vice-chancellors and ministers to look into this problem. Because this is an issue that has the potential to stifle creativity. As an economist, I do appreciate that universities need to run as a profitable business, but to what extent? I know Apple, for example, is a very creative company. But most of the Apple enterprise works towards producing the next version of iPhone . Have we reached the point in universities where we are heading towards the view that we are only about one version of creativity? No, teaching is an infinitely creative process and we should continue to create many different versions of a higher education experience all the time, every day, so how can we maintain that?

## Editor's Perspective



Immediately after my visit I participated in a #creativeHE creativity in higher education course and discussion organised by Chrissi Nerantzi. The first activity was to *'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?'*

My visit to Southampton Solent was fresh in my mind and it had certainly been memorable so I tried to think of it from a pedagogical perspective with Osama as the 'teacher' and me as the 'learner'. Over the course of about five hours Osama introduced me to several of his colleagues who he had connected, through an agenda, to my own interests. The agenda - a series of topics for discussion that was shared in advance, was important because it enabled me to prepare mentally and to take some illustrations of 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. It also enabled me to develop an understanding of the university and what it was doing to encourage creativity to flourish.

During our discussions we wandered through lots of different spaces including the amazing new teaching and learning spaces called Spark and Osama shared 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.

You are probably thinking, 'how could this be a situation that stimulated my creativity?' Well it did. If we include my preparations and the thinking I did before my visit, the conversational interactions, my wanderings with intent through the wonderful teaching and learning spaces and my subsequent reflections on the experience - it provided me with an ecology that encouraged me to see new affordances for collaboration in the relationships I was developing and new ideas and possibilities for collaboration to flourish. My follow-up actions have been to try and capitalise on these.

Osama invited me in to his professional world and created an ecology which enabled me to connect my interests, my purposes and my needs to his own and those of his colleagues 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 pedagogic 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. Conversation was encouraged and people shared their experiences and ideas willingly in a 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.'

This has been a useful reflective exercise to see the involvement of a pedagogy in this type of professional scenario. So my promotional box for this learning experience in which my creative sense making was enabled, looks like this…

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**WORLD CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION WEEK APRIL 15 – 21 2017**

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

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

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

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## will participate in WCIW 2017

Creative Academic will participate in this global event. During WCIW we will publish Creative Academic Magazine #6 on the theme of 'Exploring the Role of the Body in the Process of Creation' Lisa Clughen, Nottingham Trent University, is the guest editor for this issue.

During WCIW Lisa will also be facilitating an online discussion on the role of the Body in the Process of Creation on the #creativeHE platform. We welcome your involvement in this conversation. It's a topic that is rarely discussed in higher education.

## More from Creative Academic
http://www.creativeacademic.uk/

Search

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

## Google+ Discussion Forums
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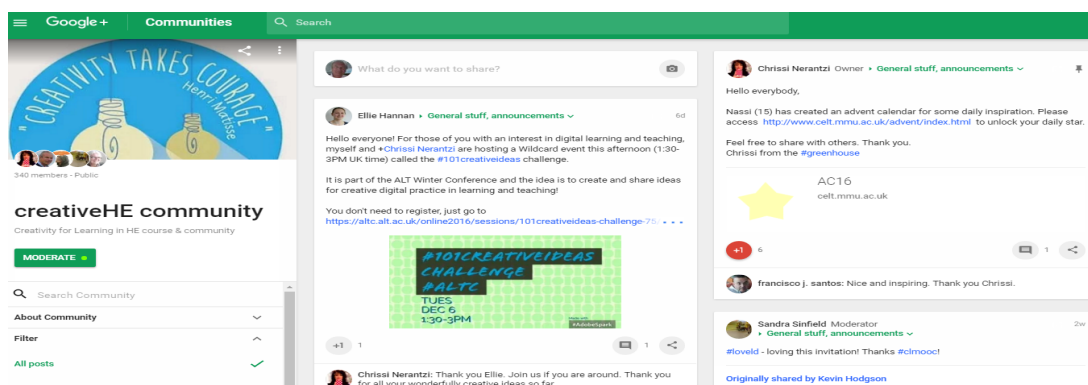
relevant to their own interests, motivation, and desire to produce something that is important to them!

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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THIS WORLD IS BUT A CANVAS TO OUR
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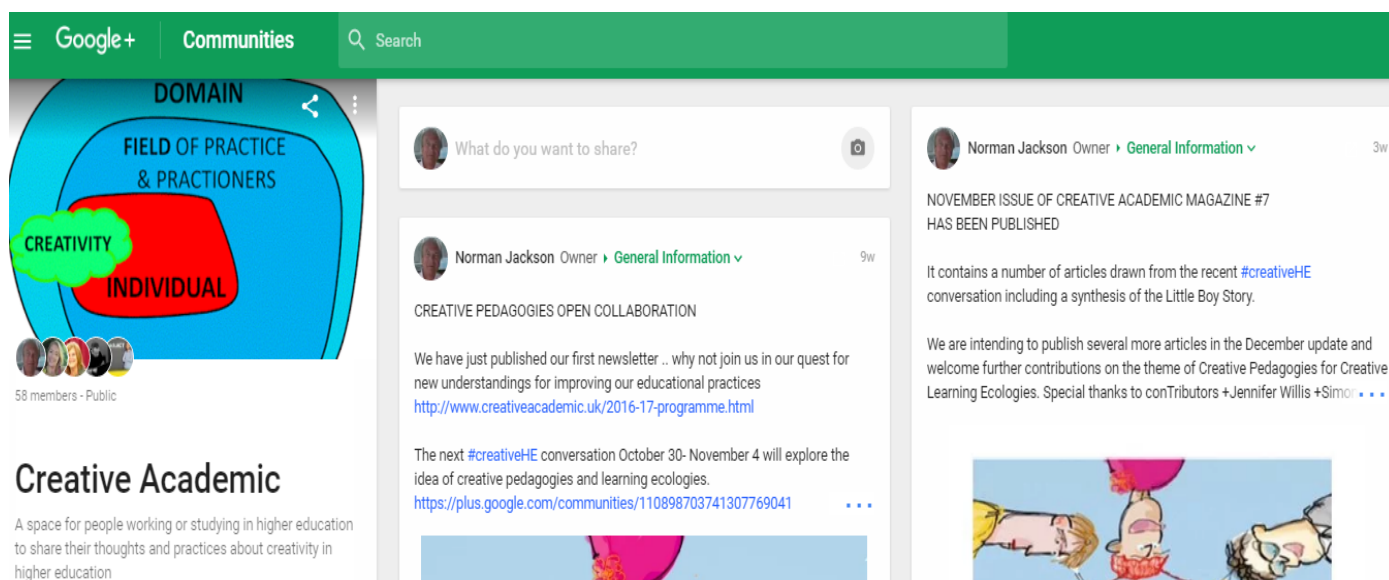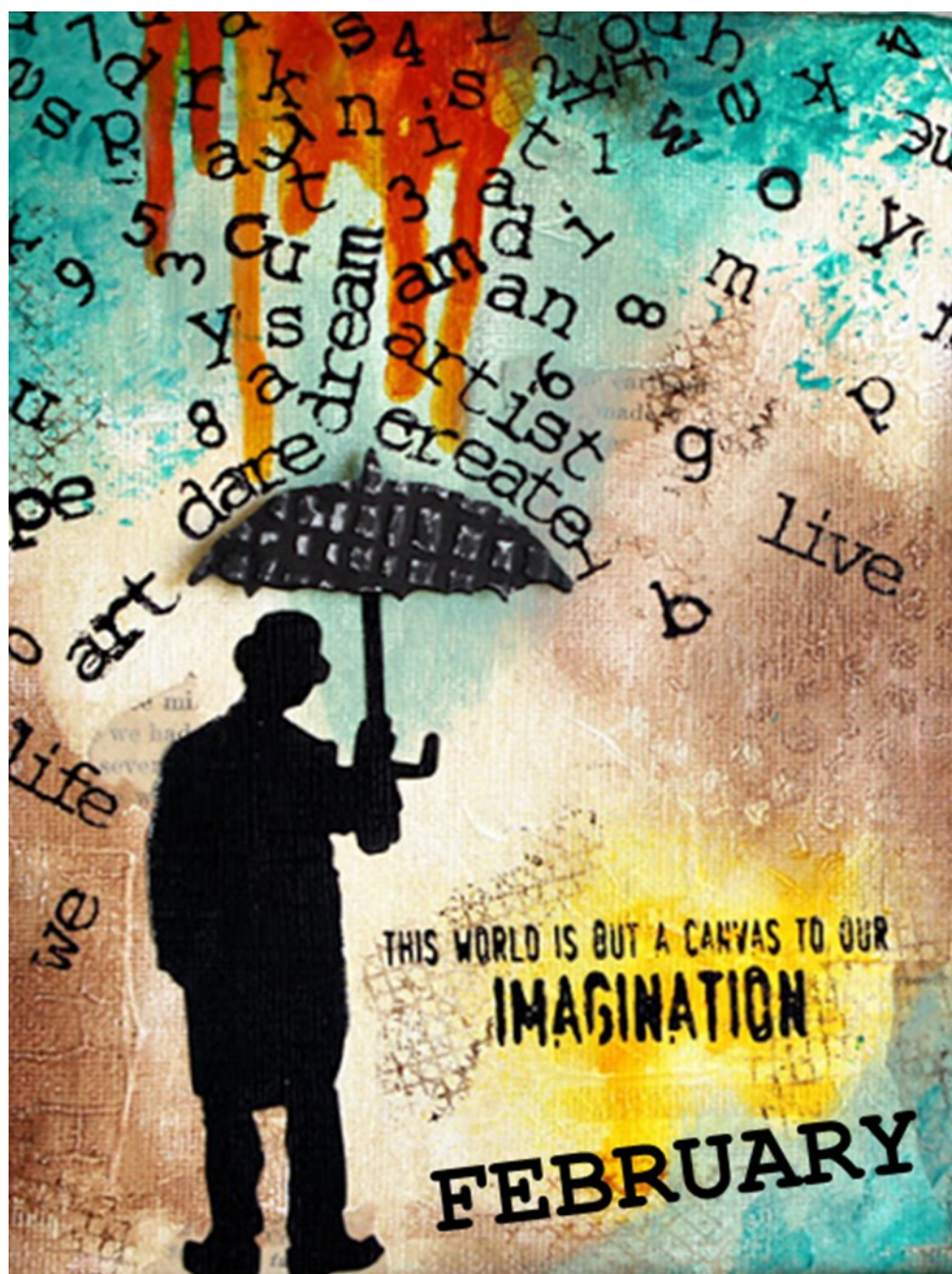
FEBRUARY

**February cover by Ronda Palazzari.**
*Ronda is a mixed media artist, author, licensed designer, instructor and avid memory keeper who enjoys all kinds of mediums, documenting stories, taking photographs, and compiling it all together into cohesive art pieces. You can find out more about her work at* http://www.rondapalazzari.com/
*Thank you Ronda*

# TEACHING CREATIVITY TO 44,000 PEOPLE THROUGH A MOOC
## Tina Seelig

*Tina Seelig is Professor of the Practice in Stanford University's Department of Management Science and Engineering, and is a faculty director of the Stanford Technology Ventures Program. She teaches courses in the Hasso Plattner Institute of Design (d.school) and leads three fellowship programs in the School of Engineering that are focused on creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Dr. Seelig earned her PhD in Neuroscience at Stanford Medical School, and has been a management consultant, entrepreneur, and author of 17 books, including Insight Out(2016), inGenius (2012), and What I Wish I Knew When I Was 20 (2009). She is the recipient of the Gordon Prize from the National Academy of Engineering, the Olympus Innovation Award, and the Silicon Valley Visionary Award.*

In this transcript of a YouTube talk Tina describes her experience of facilitating A Crash Course on Creativity a MOOC with over 44,000 participants. The techniques she uses provide useful insights how a teacher can facilitate learning relating to creativity both on- and off-line.

## Can you teach creativity online to 44,000 people?

Can you teach creativity? And if you can, can you teach it online to 44,000 people? Well, I was crazy enough to try this.

To begin the process of engaging participants I asked them to design the cover of their own autobiography as a way to introduce themselves to the class. The reason I did this, is that it encouraged them to stretch their imaginations, even in the first assignment, so they could share a little bit about themselves with other people, but also for them to see that everything in the world is ripe for innovation and creativity.

> **everything in the world is ripe for innovation and creativity**

So how did this class work? It's actually pretty simple, each class (online session), starts with a short lecture, a short lecture about five minutes long. But guess what? To make that five minute lecture, it takes about five days. The videos are really well thought out. The lecture might be on reframing problems or challenging assumptions or connecting and combining ideas, or how to work in creative teams. There are readings to support each lecture and discussion groups online, but most importantly, there's a challenge every week. Sometimes it's a challenge for an individual and sometimes for a team. Students upload the results of their work and most importantly everybody evaluates everybody else. It's essentially 'crowd sourced grading'.

I created a rubric, essentially a guideline on how to evaluate the assignments, and I do several of them so people can see some examples, and guess what? The more you evaluate, the more feedback you get. The most interesting and most valuable part about this approach is you get to see thousands of examples of solutions to the same problem. In a class at Stanford where I might have 40 students, there are teams of four so they're 10 projects, you get to see ten solutions, here you get to see hundreds, if not thousands, of solutions to the same problem.

## Who participated?

We attracted a diverse group of people. Their ages ranged from under 18 to over 80. They originated from over 150 different countries, about half of them women, half of them men, but most of them had college degrees. In fact quite a lot had advanced degrees. So these are people who want to keep learning: people who participate in these online classes are hungry to find ways to continue their education.

But there are also interesting challenges, there's a huge range of technical literacy. Some people are digital natives who have grown up with the technologies we are using and they exactly know what to do, they know how to make videos, they know how to collaborate online. But there are those people who are coming to this for the first time. In fact, one of the most interesting things I found is that learning to use these technologies and online tools is actually one of the most important things that people learn in the class.

In addition, people are motivated to take this class for lots of different reasons. Some people spend 20 or 30 hours a week working on this. It becomes a key part of their life during the course. They're really interested in finding out about this new world of online education.

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**SOME IDEAS FOR PROMOTING STUDENTS'**

**CREATIVITY USED BY TINA SEELIG**

**Stretch imaginations and show students that everything is ripe for creativity and innovation**

**Start with short 5 min lecture** - each lecture takes 5 days to produce could be on topics like - challenging assumptions, reframing problems, creativity in teams

**Readings to support the lecture** theme to enable students to develop their knowledge

**Every week set a challenge** (assignment) - sometimes individuals, sometimes teams. Break assignments down to small parts to avoid confusion - eg design a cover for your own biography to stretch imaginations.

**Everyone uploads their assignment** so everyone can see everyone else's work

**Everyone evaluates everyone else** - guidance provided 'Crowd Source Grading'

**Teacher provides rubric to guide evaluation** and examples to show how rubric is used

**Encourage feedback -** feedback generates more ideas helps people chose innovative ideas

**Self-organising / self-regulating community** - people take on supportive roles

**Amazing on-line community. High level of commitment from people hungry for learning.** But not everyone motivated to same degree.

**Teacher's role is CHIEF INSTIGATOR** - I get things going then let them happen. Teacher reacts to problems and reflects to learn from experience. Assumes that others know more than she does.

**Driven by problems and problem solving** - you can problematize anything. Every problem is an opportunity

**Problem solving pattern example**

1) Take anything common eg PETS and **imagine a problem** associated with Pets

2) Brainstorm lots of ideas **at least 100 possible solutions** then pick one

4) Pick favourite **and develop idea**

5) **Prototype the solution** - show how it will work

6) **Tell a story to explain solution**

**Lots of room for experimentation**

## Example of what happened

In the last class, as final team project I chose the theme of 'pets'. Participants were invited to pick a problem related to pets. Any problem they wanted. They had to frame the problem, they had to brainstorm as a group, come up with at least 100 solutions, they needed to pick their favourite solution, they needed to prototype it, they needed to test it, and then they needed to create a creative story to communicate what they had done. One of the things about this course is to have fun and try things out: there is so much room for experimentation here. This is just one example of the many solutions offered for this challenge.
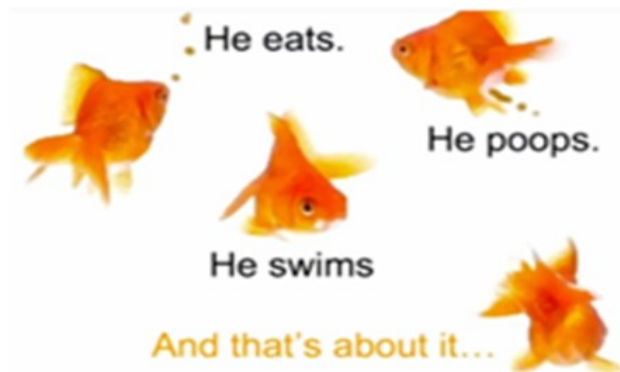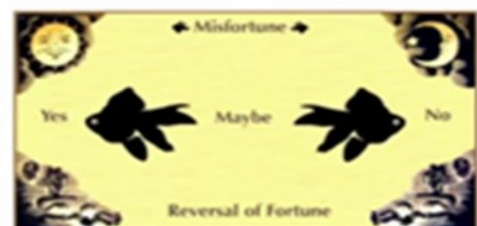
# What have I learned through teaching this on-line class?

What I've learned is that teaching an online class is quite different to teaching at Stanford. When I'm at Stanford teaching, I'm on a surfboard and I'm pretty experienced at teaching, so those waves come in and I can ride them. When things happen that are surprising, I can usually figure out how to deal with it. But when you're teaching in an online class, you know what happens? You're on a cruise ship, and when you see an iceberg, you will hit it. I got really used to hitting a lot of icebergs, and there are surprises every single time I've done it. For example, in the last version of this class, I had the students form their own teams. Great, in my mind a team is three to seven people, well, some people in the class thought that was 300 to 700 people. I suddenly realised that some people had invited everybody in the class to join their team and so we ended up with towns as opposed to teams. So it became very difficult to manage and now I know that I have to put this in as a guideline the next time I teach the class.

I also learned that I need to give individual assignments first. This is critical because the first time I talked to the class, I did what I would do at Stanford and I instantly threw folks on teams, but guess what? Because people have different levels of commitment and some people are just observing, you don't know who's there. So you need to do an individual assignment first to see who's actively involved in a fully engaged way. And in fact, in my last online course, 50% of those people who did the first assignment actually finished the course, but there were quite a number of people who didn't even do any of the work, even if they signed up.

I also learned that you need to break the assignments into smaller pieces, because it helps to reduce the ambiguity and the places where people can have misunderstanding, but most importantly, I need to deputise the entire class, because I can't possibly, as one person, answer all the questions that are emerging through the process. So I essentially say, 'Listen, collectively all of you know much, much more than I do about a lot of different things, so if you see a question that has been posed and you know the answer, please answer it.' And what happens is a number of people bubble up in all my class and assume the role of teaching assistants and so you end up with a whole collection of people who are helping each other, and it becomes an amazing, amazing online learning community. So I find that my role, and the way I think of myself as chief instigator in this class, I get things going and then see what things happen.

The things I've learned teaching in this very extreme example of an online class have definitely affected the way I think about teaching my class at Stanford. The wonderful thing is that students say that this is an incredible, meaningful learning experience. They say that this has brought meaning into their lives, they've gotten inspiration from working with other people all over the world. Its changed the way that they think about education in general and some people feel that this is one of the most powerful learning experiences they've ever had.

"It was more than amazing. Actually, it brought more meaning to my everyday life."

"I loved the energy and inspiration I got from my teammates all over the world."

"It feels like were all in a classroom despite the distance between us. It changed my concept of education."

# COOCs - Supporting Communities for Social Learning
## Peter Shukie

*Peter is a lecturer and programme leader of education studies at University Centre, Blackburn College, and a doctoral student on the technology enhanced learning programme at Lancaster University.*

*'I am interested in the potential for changing practices in education, the development of learning for all, the transformation of the role of student and teacher and the search for openness and collaboration in learning outside, as well as inside, the institutions. I am currently working on a project around community learning online, COOCS (Community Open Online Courses). The goals of the project are to create a space in which everyone can teach, everyone can learn, and knowledge becomes what we decide.'*

## Not another acronym! What's a COOC?

Community Open Online Courses - COOCs, replace the Massive with the Community, but more than that they replace the insistence of tradition, on hierarchy and on establishment with a re-energising of those long excluded, marginalised and (frankly) bored by the narrowing economic and cultural imperatives of educational institutions.

COOC's are seeking to invert not only the what, and the how of learning, but the '*who*'. The development of ideas comes from the feverish passions of all the individuals in a COOC community, coming together in collectives, that determined their own learning pathways which are not mediated by the institution.

## A story of creation

From a DIY promotional video we started with a launch at a conference room in a local charity building and found our technology to share by borrowing and begging from others. Later we moved to the back room of a pub for the excellent Ragged University collaboration event.

The concept of technology enabled online space inhabited by a community, was there from the very start. So our first priority was to build a platform with the functionality that fulfilled our vision of supporting and enabling open learning that was inspired, led and co-created by the community of users. What was not anticipated was the risks of entering the commercial realm to have the technology platform developed. The paid for, commissioned, website was difficult to create it seemed, but most significantly the difficulty came from a lack of communication - a very real and immediate understanding that the developers, once they had received the commission, lost all interest and the 'signing off' of the project was their only goal. Now, we are working with Ragged University friends, volunteers and support networks within this group to help us generate a new website, on the old model, but using Moodle as the teaching and learning platform. It is a weekend/ evening labour of love, it takes place between email conferences and our group needs for library/ third space internet access. Detached from institutional support, apart from the structures of 'education' as they are recognised, we find ourselves reliant on a very patchy (but incredibly supportive) group of enthusiasts.

## Fundamental design principle

We look to a fundamental change in *who* by designing the principles of 'everyone can teach, everyone can learn'. The emphasis is on allowing and enabling anyone to share what they know, in ways that represent their knowledge, their creativity and their experiences. The subjects that are chosen and the knowledge that is developed comes from the members of the community themselves. The community is formed by the people who are willing to get involved, with the desire to learn, and interest in the subject. Rather than institutionalised expertise, learning emerges from personal interest. Learning is not the passing of the ball of knowledge, nor even an attempt at defining what that ball should be. In this model the central concern is on recognising that participation and engagement will lead to personal development. No matter what level of entry or the ultimate goal, the process of sharing, creating and building knowledge lends itself to learning across the spectrum.

Academics often ridicule the notion that people can pick and choose what they study but we say they can, and we always do, in every sphere except the expert-driven institutionally controlled model of learning. It is not institutionally defined transmission models of learning that form in COOCs, but community generated approaches to learning and teaching that evolve outside the prescriptive concerns of the school, the college, the university.

**MOOC-COOC**

## Becoming an educator with COOCs

As the COOCs platform developed we witnessed frustration as technology failed and commercial disinterest threatened continued enthusiasm and positivity. The introduction of the Ragged University volunteer web developers reinvigorated the platform and led to a burst of creativity from course creators.

Once the crack appeared and the light came through, courses emerged from community workers, individuals as well as lecturers and students seeking autonomy and the opportunity to build learning not defined by discipline or institutional ideology.

An art course "Making the Invisible Visible' came via an Art Lecturer. This course was based on looking at the process of being creative, spending time to slow learn where inspiration comes from, using almanacs and abstract and wide-open influences to generate design. The course creator introduced head-cams to show how they developed a piece of art, what they looked at, the distinction between creation and looking at other sources. The importance was on establishing a space not immediately defined by having to create a presentation, a piece, an artefact that could be assessed. The course developed around being able to move into a slower reflective space, outside timed sessions and that allowed deeper reflection over what the creative process might include. Although a professional educator dedicated to her courses, the creator used the freedom of the COOC space to play with ideas and experiment with process and forms of learning (see here for more direct from the course creator).

Elsewhere, professional lecturers found a space to create a "Guerrilla Guide to Philosophy' that challenged the usual approach to how philosophy might be encountered. Others designed addendums to the learning on professional courses and shared work with prospective students and others with a general interest in professional courses in Human Resources and Management. The COOC meant they could design this in their own image, not rigid adherence to a set course.

Exciting courses were generated in well being, a course developed for families supporting schizophrenia sought a community not defined by medical models or categorised as social support, that schizophrenia was necessarily a weakness. They wanted somewhere to talk and reflect on lives that they lived and which lay within their conceptions of their experiences, not mediated by expert discourse that medicalised or problematized their lives. *Hearing Voices and Unusual Beliefs* emerged as a category that they would shape themselves. Ultimately, much of this led to real-world communities and the COOC was a catalyst but not the final destination. The opportunity to revisit what community might be and where they could come together was all that was needed.

Individuals created courses on perhaps random subjects: Crown Green Bowling from a teenage course creator that wanted to promote his interest in a sport he felt was often left to older people; Thoughts on Anarchy; Using Moodle; Urdu for beginners; Sustainable gardening; A parents' guide to phonics; Learning to Sing.

The range of content is matched by a range of approaches. Traditional instructional models, other courses that are a single forum and question, lists of images with descriptions and requests to contribute. Multiple conceptions of teacher and student have emerged and the freedom of choice has led to often surprising approaches. A course for volunteers considering roles at a Tanzanian orphanage appeared, created by the young people living in the orphanage. The creativity came not only in the development of technologies but often more through learning being shared by voices often unheard and marginal. Institutional spaces, public libraries, schools and

colleges have created courses, often with a twist. *Hack the Library* developed through a south east library consortia seeking spaces that library users could create and develop on their own, making productions of their own lives after some initial training in the library. Tests and revision courses were developed for secondary children, nothing surprising there, except the courses were created by and for other pupils.

We had been explicit in never giving guides on how to make courses. This was a risk, and we were often finding requests for such courses. We hoped that the lack of 'how to…' would spark 'how can I..'. This took time to develop, lecturers often came first, though others soon found their feet and continue to surprise and inspire with courses emerging from all walks of life, many types of outlook and diverse approaches to creation.

The development of COOCs continues and we are open for anyone, anywhere to create on anything, to share and develop ideas. You can find out more by visiting our website at COOCs.org. Help, advice and support are welcome and we encourage you to get involved if you think it works for you.

## FACEBOOK PEDAGOGY: making space for a more creative education in apprenticeships

## Simon Reddy

*Simon is a Master Plumber and Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering. He teaches plumbing in the Further Education sector and environmental building science to professional construction students (HE in an FE context).*

This article describes how social media pedagogies can create a more relevant and meaningful curriculum and an opportunity space for the emergence of 'apprentice as subject' and sharing creative solutions to plumbing problems.

In the course of an apprenticeship, a worker needs to be creative in order to solve novel problems, which they have not yet fully experienced. An apprentice can problem-solve by drawing upon similar experiences of meaningful events in the past, to synthesise knowledge, know-how and ideas, to act and unravel the problem at hand. This article is an extended version of one published by the Association of Learning Technology[1]. It describes the use of social media to help plumbing apprentices respond creatively to their own occupational curriculum, rather than being subject to an imposed curriculum in college which erroneously claims to be about work.

Many teachers in the Further Education milieu are tasked with 'delivering' an abstract curriculum (in the sense that the theoretical subject matter is dislocated from work and may not necessarily relate in a practical way to the everyday world). The heavily prescribed curriculum gives little space for students to follow their personal creative spirit and learn about their own occupational interests. According to Rogers[2] personal creativity is "the emergence in action of a novel relational product growing out of the uniqueness of the individual on the one hand, and the materials, events, people, or circumstances of his life". In other words, the products of our creativity grow from existing things, relationships, contexts and circumstances that have meaning to us in our life. I have discovered that this concept has real meaning for my students now I have created, through using social media, new pedagogical spaces in which students can collaborate, use their creative skills to solve novel work place problems, and share the products of their creativity through photo artefacts. This has been difficult to replicate in college contexts in the past. The article discusses a social media pedagogy, which is a new type of educational practice that uses learning technology to bring greater meaning and relevance to classroom teaching and connects to the problem solving experiences of plumbers in their real world of practice. The pedagogical approach creates an opportunity space for the emergence of the creative human subject, as opposed the imposition of a curriculum upon an object student[3].

In my doctoral study[4] of full-time courses and apprenticeships in plumbing I discovered that the college curriculum was not very meaningful for the majority of apprentices. The lack of coherence between plumbing subject matter (theory) and the practical skills training (practice) in the plumbing curriculum had consequences for the students' understanding and their development of plumbing knowledge, and this seemed to impact on their levels of motivation and engagement in the classroom. Bruner[5] was an advocate of meaningful curriculum. He asserted that if prior learning was going to make subsequent learning easier, then it had to provide students with a general picture of the ways in which different subject matter related to one another. He cautioned that "unless detail is placed into a structured pattern, it is rapidly forgotten". However, my study found that classroom plumbing teaching rarely related to what students did in their practical experiences at work, which meant it was less meaningful for many of them. I also found that apprentices were far more attentive, engaged and productive in the workplace than they appeared to be in college, suggesting that the plumbing curriculum was more meaningful to apprentices when at work, where knowledge was 'presented' and 'experienced' first-hand. Despite the fact that I observed some outstanding vocational teaching in the FE colleges, many apprentices reported being bored during the classroom sessions. Most of them looked on the theory lessons as just being a means of passing the test, and few, if any, saw classroom theory as being important to their job performance or productivity at work[1].

When I returned to plumbing teaching after a long period away from the profession (undertaking research), I found that nearly all of my apprentices were being distracted by their smart phones during lessons. I saw an opportunity to turn this distraction into an advantage and developed Facebook Pedagogy. Following a college training session on using social media, I established my own corporate Facebook account and set up closed Facebook plumbing groups so that the students were safeguarded in their participation. I noticed that nearly all of the students I taught had a presence on social media platforms such as 'Facebook'. Because most of the apprentices were already familiar and active on Facebook, it allowed me to implement the pedagogical strategy much more easily. A network of apprentices and college staff, including training-provider officers, assessors, plumbing tutors, managers and college directors, have joined these closed groups, which effectively became professional communities of practice[6]. An ongoing safeguarding protocol is currently being developed, which includes rules such as 'no friend contacts between staff and students'.

Facebook Pedagogy relates apprentices' work experiences to the classroom, and it is compatible with e-portfolios. The apprentices have responded to the initiative with enthusiasm, posting their work-related pictures and experiences of plumbing work, often in their own time. These include photos of poorly installed plumbing systems which they find highly amusing. It is clear they enjoy this experience of peer-to-peer learning.

Some pictures have revealed plumbing events that are often impossible to replicate in the college context (see below):



*Left: unpredictable boiler fault (Rob Davis)  Right: pipe damaged by vermin (Mark Cokayne)*

The growing library of real-life plumbing scenarios helps to contextualise the taught curriculum, providing real case studies that assist students in identifying and understanding the technical plumbing components, systems and occupational processes and principles involved. Some of the systems shown by apprentices are old-fashioned and corroded, and these are often very different to the new types of systems that they are taught about in college. Some of their photos have shown unpredictable boiler problems, which give rise to discussions amongst apprentices in class and exchanges of technical knowledge and know-how, leading to problem-solving solutions.

While simple faults can be simulated in college, it is *impossible* to predict particular types of boiler faults and plumbing problems in the uncertain context of the workplace. It can be contended that this creates the conditions for an 'emergentist' epistemology [7,8]. According to Osberg [8: vii] "when emergence takes place, we enter the space of the impossible".

When a boiler fault that is difficult to diagnose occurs, and the apprentice investigates, takes pictures and shares with the Facebook group, the space of the possible is enlarged. Facebook Pedagogy arguably creates a type of knowledge in real time, which is 'emergentist' and different to the prescribed 'represented epistemology' found in most types of college schooling. Anecdotally, it appears that Facebook Pedagogy boosts apprentices' motivation to respond and participate in technical discussions and helps them to be creative in presenting ongoing elements of their own work, which might not necessarily be covered in the college curriculum.

Facebook pedagogy as a methodology for social learning may be associated with creativity and *Educational Freedom* in its location at the centre of Biesta's three functions of education[3a]. The Venn diagram below shows how Facebook can help explain the socialising of an apprentice (object) into a professional identity of plumber, while distinguishing this from educating an apprentice by making a space for their emergence as a creative human subject.

*Figure 1* Facebook Pedagogy located in Biesta's Three Functions of Education [3a,3b,7,4]
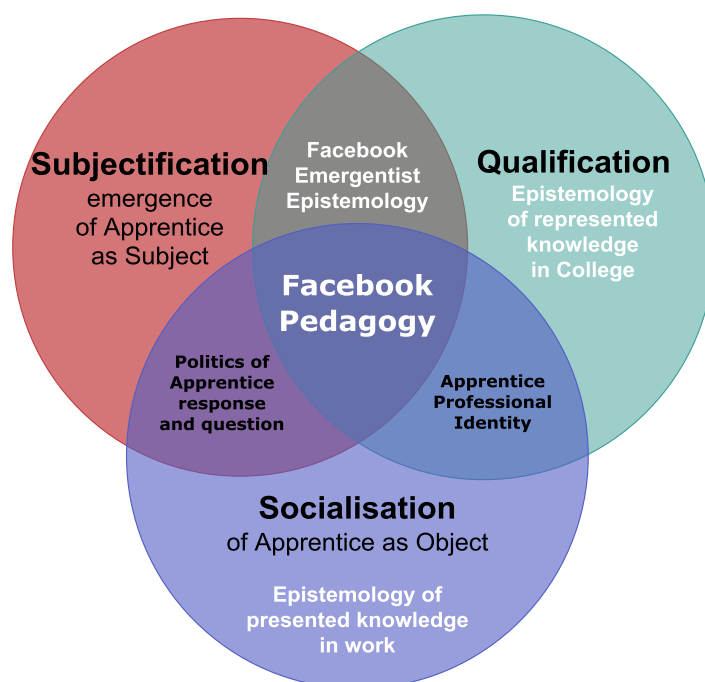
Biesta's[3a] first function of education is 'qualification', which is about the complex and rich experience of becoming qualified to do things that involve knowledge, action (skills and attitude) and judgement (values). However, some of the skills and knowledge taught in the college context may simply be 'representative' of the real world as compared with the type of knowledge 'presented' first-hand at work[7].

The second function of education is described by Biesta[3a] as 'socialisation', or the way in which 'object' individuals are socialised into existing ways of being. Apprentices are legitimised on the peripheries of practice by other workers, and their apprenticeship journeys are centripetal and directed towards the centre of practice. Thus, apprentices are being socialised as 'objects' into a 'professional identity', or an existing way of being [6,3a,3b]. Although socialisation is certainly an appropriate aim of technical education, which in this case is to help produce a competent plumbing professional, education is not just about producing unquestioning 'objects' or robots. Indeed, socialisation leaves little space for creativity. Therefore, Biesta [3a:356] argues that education must mean something other than socialisation:

> It is **not** about the insertion of 'newcomers' into existing orders, but about ways of being that hint at independence from such orders

Biesta[3a:358] writes that if we are committed to freedom in education, "then it becomes important to think again about ways in which we might be able to distinguish education from socialisation".

Finally, subjectification involves the emergence of the 'subject' apprentice, who has the space to respond creatively by taking pictures at work, posting pictures on Facebook with their explanations that reflect the sense they have made of the situation, and enabling their experiences and challenges to be brought into the classroom through questions and discussion, while 'being with people', working and learning in the plumbing industry. In this instance, subjectification is an ethical action because a question is asked, and it is also political because it involves the apprentice being with people, working and learning with some space for experiments with creativity.

Facebook Pedagogy is a simple concept that is easy to implement. It provides affordance for a different kind of educational practice in college contexts from a students' perspective, a more meaningful combination of knowing, acting and thinking creatively, and the sharing of real world problem solving, than has previously existed. It has turned teacher dominated learning process into a more social learning process. In this way the apprentices' creativity becomes integral to the process of how they are coming to know through the situations they

encounter. The completed job is the artefact containing the results of their creative thinking and when this is posted in the Facebook Group it becomes part of the stock of practice-based knowledge of this community of practitioners, educators and trainers. At the same time, it promotes student motivation and sense of achievement because their practical work and problem-solving skills are being made more visible in the class-room. The strategy facilitates collaboration in the sense of contributing artefacts (the photos of situations they have encountered) to a common database. The pictures evoke response which encourages social interaction and learning as cases are used and discussed in class. Finally, Facebook Pedagogy leads to a greater sense of community involving students and teachers, increasing the potential for life long partnerships between alumni and educational institutions.

**References**
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3b Biesta, G.J.J. (2009b) '*The weakness of education: For a pedagogy of the event*', A paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, 13-17 April 2009, The Stirling In-stitute of Education, University of Stirling, UK.
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6 Lave, J. and Wenger, E. (1991) *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*, Cambridge: Cam-bridge University Press.
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Image below: http://weclipart.com/gimg/D7CA3B45BF62C1D1/Clipart-Of-A-Radiator-Of-Heating-System-Water-Faucet-And-Water-Meter-Toilet-Adjustable-Wrench-Pipes-System-With-Leak-Spanners-Plunger-And-Plumber-Man-On-Blue-Royalty-Free-Vector-Illustration-10241376292.jpg
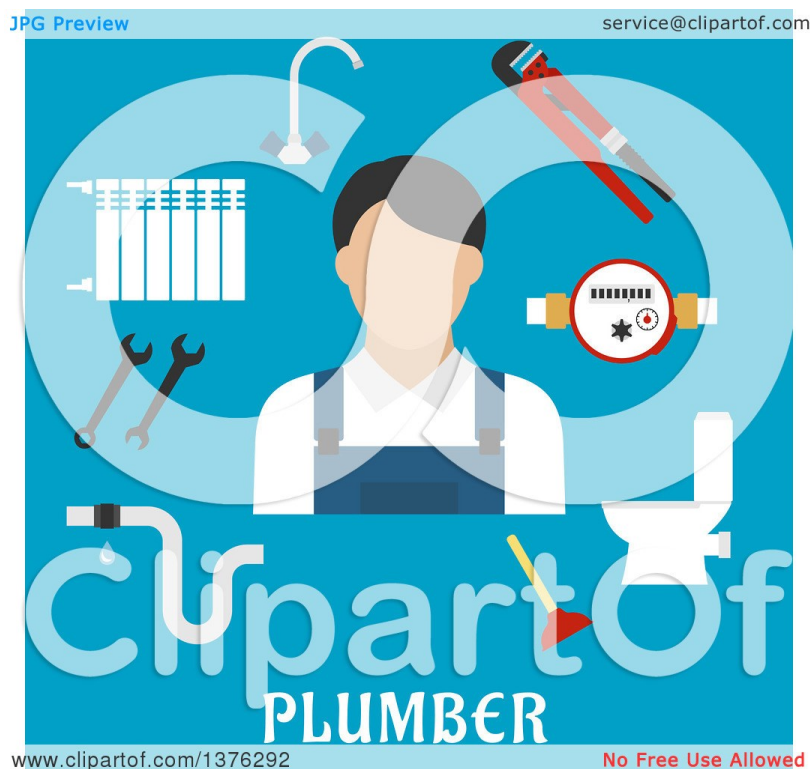
# Commissioning Editor introduction to #creativeHE articles

*#creativeHE is a Gooogle+ platform for individuals to participate in social learning around explorations of creativity and its manifestations in higher education teaching and learning. In January founder of the platform, Chrissi Nerantzi, designed, led and facilitated, with the help of others, a 'course' on the theme of creativity in higher education learning. The course provided an opportunity to study the pedagogic practices associated with it. There follow four articles that provide insights into the pedagogical practices that encouraged participants to use their creativity, and a flavour of the experience written by two of the participants*

## PEDAGOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE #CREATIVEHE 'COURSE': An open ecology for personal and social learning, creativity and the making of meaning

### Norman Jackson

*Norman is Founder of Creative Academic and Commissioning Editor for the magazine. Creativity in Higher Education has been an important focus of his educational work over the last 17 years. He is currently developing the idea of learning ecologies and exploring how creativity features in a learning ecology. This article is linked to the research and development project he is leading 'Exploring Creative Pedagogies and Learning Ecologies'* http://www.creativeacademic.uk/2016-17-programme.html

### Introduction

In this article I want to explore the pedagogical thinking and practices employed in the January 2017 #creativeHE on-line course[1] which provided participants with opportunities to think and express themselves creatively and share their understandings of creativity through the openly licensed Google+ forum https://plus.google.com/communities/110898703741307769041 . I was involved as a member of the facilitation team so the article is written as a sense making piece from my personal perspective.

### What is #creativeHE?

#creative HE is an open networked learning 'course' and related discursive spaces and processes designed, organised and facilitated by Chrissi Nerantzi (CN) at Manchester Metropolitan University, assisted by a small band of volunteer facilitators from different institutions. There are currently over 420 subscribers to the community but active (visible) participation is between 20-40 people during any discursive event or course. The online course has been linked by the organiser to CPD modules at her institution (Manchester Metropolitan University) so some participants on the online course are working towards academic credits at postgraduate level and some may be involved in additional face to face activity in the institution.

The January 2017 course was the fourth time the online course has been offered and the second in a week long format. It was organised around a series of daily topics and challenge-based activities supported by appropriate resources that were intended to encourage participants to think about a particular idea and reflect on their own beliefs and practices and help them consider new pedagogical ideas.

Just prior to the start of the course the course leader (CN) made a post that provided participants with an over-view of the topics and set out the expectations and opportunities for learning, including opportunities for recognition of achievement. It also provided links to supporting resources.

### POST 1 COURSE OUTLINE & PREPARATION
### Chrissi Nerantzi

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 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: Reflection & Action Planning

**Suggested readings**
1. Jackson, N. & Willis, J. (eds) (2016) Exploring creativity in development, achievement and innovation, Creative Academic, Issue 4, April 2016, available 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

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?

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.

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*

## Daily challenges & activities

Key to encouraging participants to use their creativity is the daily challenge which involved them in some form of activity through which creative thoughts could flourish and ideas could be turned into a tangible artefact. The five challenges/activities are listed below.

CHALLENGE #1 *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.

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**Recognition of Achievement**

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?

**CHALLENGE #2 - Play! Play! Play! create a playful induction activity**

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

**CHALLENGE #3 Make & tell a 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 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

**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?

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

**CHALLENGE #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

## Participants' responses
The responses of participants to the daily challenges together with participants reactions to what was shared, are preserved in the Google+ forum[1]
https://plus.google.com/communities/110898703741307769041 In addition, the posts have been collated and curated in Creative Academic Magazine CAM6.[2]

## Pedagogical interpretations
Julian Stodd[3] provides a model (Figure 1) for understanding the type of learning enterprise that #creativeHE represents. He says that scaffolded social learning is built around two types of components: formal elements ('*boxes*') and informal social elements (*bubbles*). At the boundary between each, there is a gateway. In this way formal and informal ways of learning can be brought together. The bubbles are co-creative, community spaces, places where we can share our experiences or resources, feed in questions, and responses to opinions or in the case of #creativeHE, the artefactual products of creative thinking and action. The boxes are formally defined learning e.g. classroom [or other prescribed activities] or the use of defined resources. The overall arrangement is defined by an overarching narrative with a defined outcome in terms of skills [knowledge] and capability.

**Figure 1** *Julian Stodd's model of scaffolded social learning*[3]
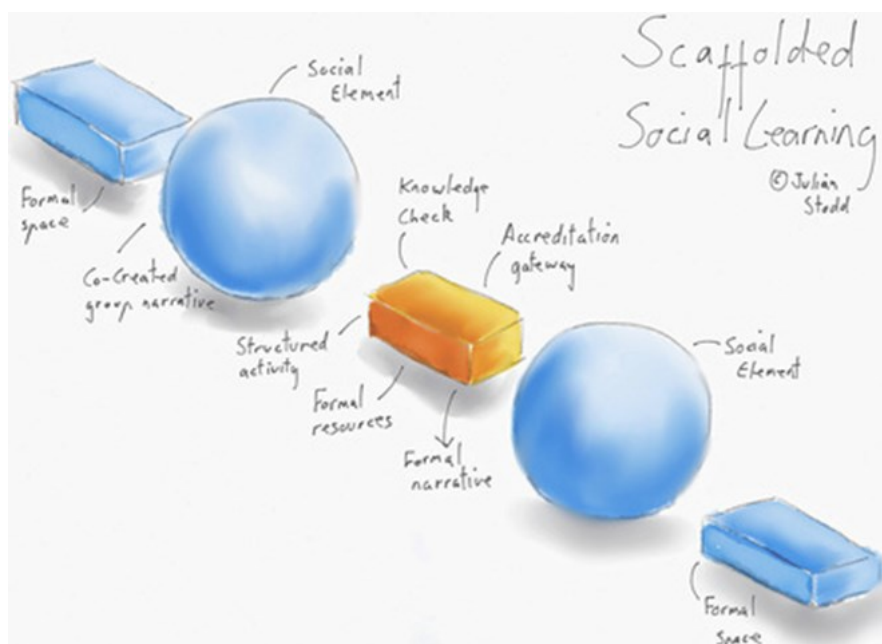


The *overarching narrative* for #creativeHE is defined by the organiser and leader (CN) but the narrative is developed and adapted by all the participants, including facilitators. The overarching narrative is formed around the daily themes, challenges and activities. It is formed around fundamental questions like 'what does creativity mean?' and 'how can we apply it in educational settings?' The emerging narrative is created by all the participants as they share their responses to the activities or open discussion around what interests them. The learning process #creativeHE involves individuals participating in open-ended activities that encourage exploration, play and experimentation (the rectangular boxes) and the sharing of responses to those activities in community spaces through unfolding interactions and conversation that relate directly or indirectly to the inquiry themes being explored. One of the advantages of this approach is that participants are sometimes surprised by posts that open up entirely new ways of thinking and offer new perspectives.

## Playground pedagogy

Underlying the #creativeHE organiser's thinking is the idea that she is facilitating what she has termed a playground pedagogy[4] an educational philosophy that is captured well in the passage contained in the adjacent box.

## An appropriate concept of 'teacher'

Pedagogy is associated with the act of teaching, and teaching can mean many things. A teacher is usually situated within a context - formal education or training, and an institutional ecosystem whose essential characteristics are to encourage, support and recognise learning and achievements. In the case of #creativeHE 'course', CN might be thought of as 'a teacher', in the sense that she created the platform (using freely available Google+ tools), convened the course, organised facilitators, designed a process - 5 days each with a different theme, challenge and suggested activity, provided supporting resources, orchestrated and facilitated the process - through a daily post, encouraged participants and showed them that their contributions were valued - through comments on their posts. She also provided opportunities for recognition of achievement through digital badges. These are the sorts of activities we associate with being a teacher.

But this style of pedagogic engagement is not one of being a teacher in an instructional mode, rather it's consistent with being a teacher working in a predominantly facilitative mode and, perhaps at times, in a disruptive mode through comments that cause individuals to think again. Erica McWilliam[5] captures a sense of these three different pedagogic orientations using the metaphors of sage, guide and meddler (Figure 2).

> **PLAYGROUND PEDAGOGY[4]**
> *'Throughout the process we engaged in playful experimentation and thinking with our head, hands and hearts which are all important for professional development using a scaffold approach in the spirit of the playground. The key features of the approach, brought in progressively are:*
>
> *Community Spaces – Connecting people*
> *Open Spaces - Expansive minds*
> *Story Spaces - Connecting hearts*
> *Making Spaces - Connecting hands*
> *Thinking Spaces – Connecting minds*
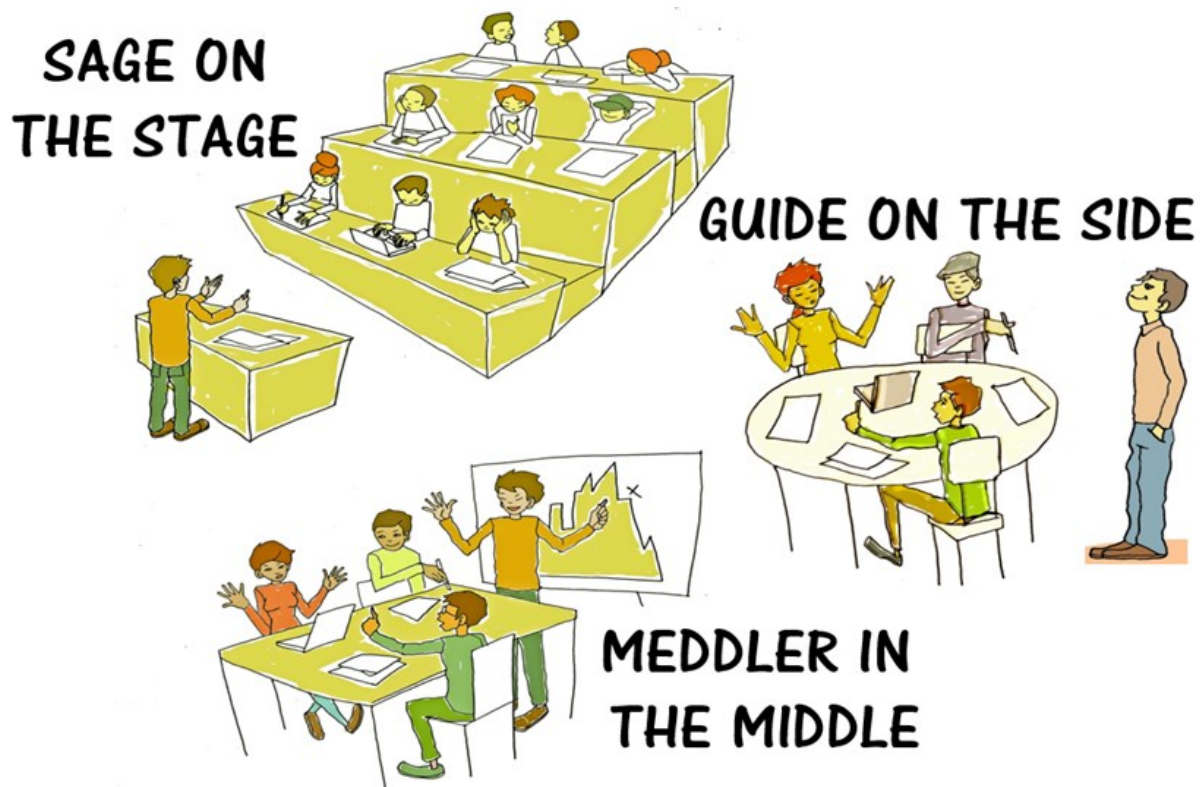


*Figure 2 Erica McWilliam's typology of pedagogic practices[5] based on the metaphors of sage, guide and meddler. Sage on the stage is essentially an instructional mode of teaching where the teacher gives or provides learners with information and knowledge evaluating through questions and discussion what has been understood. Guide on the side characterises situations where the essential role of the teacher is to facilitate learning by encouraging learners to discuss and share their understandings and to find things out, do and make things for themselves. Meddler in the middle represents a mode of teaching where the teacher is an active participant in the learning, doing making process - a co-learner working alongside other participants and modelling their practice in problem solving and making.*

An essential element of pedagogic approaches that encourage students to do things for themselves, including using and expressing themselves creatively, is for teachers to *'get-out-of-the way'*. So while they might create affordance or possibilities for participants to act in ways that are more likely to encourage certain thinking, behaviours and outcomes, at some point they must withdraw from being actively involved, at least for a time, to enable such things to happen. Which is exactly what happened in #creativeHE because *'letting go is an essential part of the scaffold'* (CN pers. comm).

Clearly, the #creativeHE course leader does not practise an instructional pedagogic mode (sage). neither is she 'meddling in the middle' in the sense of working alongside participants sharing her own ideas and modeling her own practices. Perhaps *guide on the side* is the pedagogic category containing the characteristics that are most relevant to this pedagogical context. Or perhaps none of these categories are a good fit for the 'playground' pedagogical philosophy of the course organiser, perhaps we need another metaphor. Seelig[5] provides a helpful suggestion in her uses the term *Chief Instigator (CI)* to characterise her role as designer and lead actor/facilitator of her MOOC. *'I get things going then let them happen'* which is an apt description of CN's role in set-ting up the infrastructure and design, encouraging the formation of a climate or culture of action and triggering activity through the daily challenge, and letting go to see what emerges, then commenting on what is shared to encourage further learning and also show that contributions are valued.

All aspects of the pedagogy are important but without the instigation nothing would happen. To me this is the critical element of this form of educational practice when operated within a culture that supports and values social learning. Synonyms for instigate[17] include to: start, initiate, cause, encourage, influence, stimulate, stir up, incite and ferment all of which are pertinent to the #creativeHE pedagogic situation. Once, initiated the CI gets out of the way and lets stuff happen and 'watches' in anticipation that something valuable will emerge as participants engage with the challenge and share their understandings and the products they have made. A pedagogy for creativity is also a pedagogy for emergence. Figure 3 attempts to capture the dynamics of the #creativeHE instigator model of pedagogic practice.



*Figure 3* an instigator pedagogic model operating within a playground pedagogical philosophy[4]

This description might imply that the instigator is an expert in control of the pedagogic situation. Far from it, the expert has the vision for the overall social learning experience and the agency and will to try to make it happen through their thoughtful interventions, but a social learning enterprise has a dynamic all of its own. Social interaction leads to unexpected and surprising contributions that cause people to think, and check their own assumptions and perhaps change their perspective. In this type of learning environment everyone is a learner including the instigator.

Tina Seelig used the term Chief Instigator which implies that other instigators are involved. This again is a fair representation of the #creativeHE pedagogic situation where a number of invited facilitators, and participants who assumed this role, provided encouragement through their feedback and also acted as initiators or disrupters in the process. *'#creativeHE never quite goes in the direction you might have envisaged, - which is a positively productive, disruptive and good thing. That unexpected movement is definitely supported by the comments, thoughts, questions and ideas of other participants and the facilitators'[7]*

Instigator activity does not end when the course ends. There is a wealth of information that can be curated, mined, analysed and reflected upon, and possibilities of further engagement of course participants. This and other articles relating to #creativeHE in this magazine and CAM6, which curates the content of the course are examples of instigator-led activities. In fact these post-course curatorial and sense making activities are very important in a social learning process which sets out to create knowledge resources for distribution and use beyond participants in the course.

A *teacher's* pedagogic practices result in an ecology for learning[8,9], by that I mean practice is a means of *relating* ideas, actions and practices, people, resources and contexts to achieve particular learning goals. In the case of #creativeHE, CN, as the lead instigator and facilitator, is concerned with: relationships with and between learners they are accompanying and caring for, their subject *(e.g. education and learning, professional development/creativity),* which she cares passionately about, with the curriculum *(for creative thinking and action),* with the resources prepared and selected to help participants learn, with the activities for learning, with the means of assessing and recognising achievement, with the technologies used and with the intellectual spaces *(e.g. open, creative, play, exploration, make)* created for participants to inhabit. Affordance for learning and creativity is in all these things and the teacher's role is to help and enable learners to recognize and act on these affordances and ultimately to gather information on their learning and judge what has been learnt. This broad ecological view of pedagogy, is similar to that adopted by Thomson et al[10:10]

> Pedagogy is more than teaching method, more than curriculum, more than assessment practice. It is all these things, but it is also how they are made into patterns of actions, activities and interactions by a particular teacher, with a particular group of students. The concept of pedagogy encompasses relationships, conversations, learning environments, rules, norms and culture within the wider social context.........

In social learning environments such as #creativeHE the affordance in the situation permits everyone involved to adopt the role, from time to time, of a teacher, in the sense of leading or instigating thinking and discussion through their own interventions and contributions. The extent to which this achieved is an indicator of how successful the overarching leader is in creating the climate or culture for social learning.

## Creating a climate/culture for social learning

One of the most important aspects of facilitation where creativity is concerned is to encourage a climate or culture within which individuals' creativity can flourish.

The importance of building a climate or culture of trust and respect as a dimension of pedagogy for encouraging learning in any social group, should not be underestimated. We can appreciate what this might mean from Amabile and Kramer's study[11] of the socio-cultural work environment. Amabile and Kramer[11:131-33] identified four factors that *nourish* a culture in which people feel supported and positively influenced their motivation, productivity and creativity namely:

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

The insights gained by Amabile and Kramer[11] are likely to be true of educational environments where learners' efforts are directed/facilitated/managed by the teacher. A teacher's pedagogic practices and behaviours shape the climate or culture in the environment they create for learning. This climate can encourage or inhibit certain thinking and behaviours in

> **Cultural conditions for creative learning in #creativeHE**
> 1 Respect *(eg valued contributions)*
> 2 Encouragement *(eg to play & make)*
> 3 Emotional support *(eg empathy)*
> 4 Affiliation *(sense of belonging to a community)*

learners, especially their creativity which requires courage to engage and disclose. In particular, the organiser (chief instigator of the #creativeHE course) wanted to encourage participants to engage in playful activity within the spaces afforded by the course. The idea of playground pedagogy is examined in more detail by Willis[12] but the affordance of play in the #creativeHE environment was expressed by one participant in these terms - *The message I heard was clear and short: let's be ourselves, let's play and see what will come from this process*[13]

All four nourishers were involved in the #creativeHE course. They were manifest in the posts and comments of all participants - in the way invitations were made to participate, in the thoughtful and encouraging comments that were made by facilitators and participants, in the way participants took risks in participating in tasks that were personally revealing, shared their ideas, experiences and practices, the way participants expressed their feelings and in some cases disclosed significant aspects of their own lives or empathised with each other. It takes courage to be so open in sharing yourself and these ways of learning are not for everyone. Those that do clearly believe in the learning power and value of such disclosures and feel able to do so within this on-line environment.

It's one possible explanation for why perhaps only 10% of the community of subscribers in #creativeHE visibly participate.

Creating a climate in which people feel free to express themselves creatively, and openly share and discuss the artefacts that are the products of their creativity, and are willing to comment on and question the artefacts of other participants, enables participants to contribute directly to the pedagogical process. They are as much facilitators in the social learning process as those who have been given the responsibility of facilitating by the course leader.

## Learning ecology perspectives

Julian Stodd's model of scaffolded social learning does not take account of what participants are doing in the rest of their lives or how what they are doing connects to their own learning projects. Those who design learning environments tend to see the world as a space that they have created. The reality is that that the world is created by people who create their own ecologies for learning and achieving and sometimes these ecologies incorporate an organised and structured space that has been designed by someone else[6].

*Figure 4 Representation of how individuals engage with the #creativeHE social learning experience and connect the challenges and activities to other parts of their life*[15]
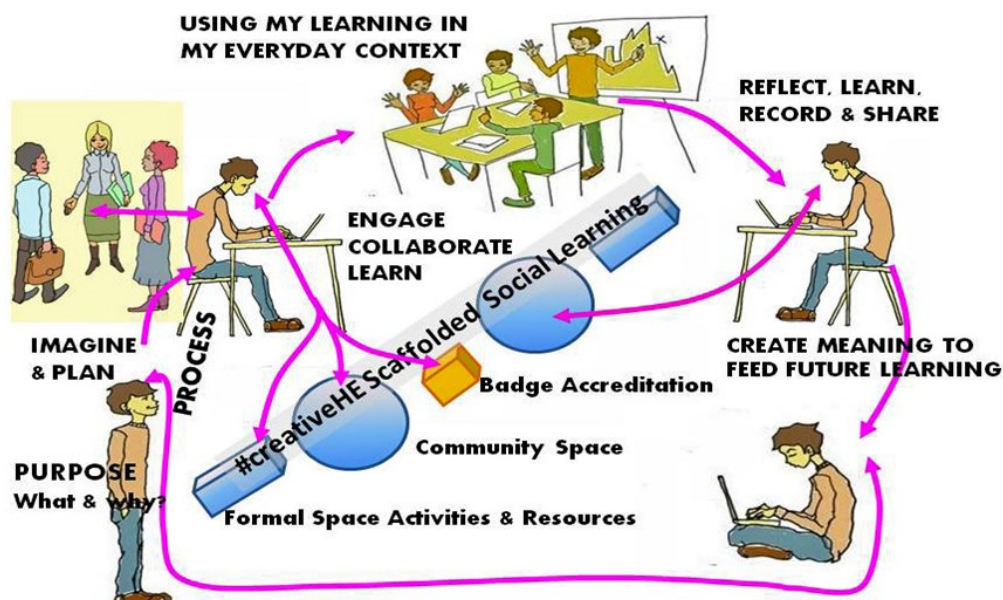


Every participant had a life outside #creativeHE, furthermore, it's usually a very busy life in which participation in #creativeHE course is accommodated via the interstitial spaces of the participants' life, rather than the major spaces occupied by work, family and other social activity. What the designers of scaffolded learning environments create is new affordance for learning that a learner can incorporate into their own ecologies for learning. We see this vividly expressed in the reflective accounts of three participants in the #creativeHE course[7,13, 14]. Figure 4 attempts to represent the idea of participants inhabiting the #creativeHE course environment and other spaces in their life.

## Further explorations

The #creativeHE course provides a valuable exploration site for evaluating pedagogic practices in online social learning environments that set out to encourage participants to use their creativity and share insights they gain about creativity in the process.

The pedagogical practices that underlie #creativeHE provide affordance through an infrastructure and a process for personal and social learning and they invite participants to engage in playful activity containing affordance for their creativity. It is up to individuals to perceive the opportunities for action and act on these opportunities in the way that only they can and then share the products of their creativity and insights through a reflective process. *This mix of scope and support opens up creative possibilities in our thinking and practice as partici-pants*[7] It is the uniqueness of each individual engaging with an activity that is shared by all that leads to the generation of multiple perspectives and personal making of meanings that is the essence of the creativity that emerges in this social learning context.

Individuals choose to be involved: their involvement is driven not by extrinsic forces but by inner forces that seek insights, enjoyable experiences and social interactions (relatedness) with others who want to be involved.

*Being welcomed by the community, both by new and established members, created a collaborative learning environment where I could connect with others, play and share ideas in a supportive but stimulating space*.[7]

*I am very relational and this space allowed me to recognise and ACT on the values I hold*[13]

*I wanted to: 1) illustrate to my students that at every stage of one's career the act of reflection is important and 2) emphasise the significance of reflective thinking/writing as an essential tool for their future develop-ment as learners. Therefore, what could be better than showing my students that I often struggle, as they do, that reflecting is very important and that reflection is not something they can master within days. [These] reasons could be described as a source of intrinsic motivation, something that, I believe, is necessary in order to be successful whilst participating in this challenging and demanding course, and something that researchers consider to be important for engaging with our creativity.*[14]

The power of the #creativeHE social learning experience is in the way a culture has been developed (historically) and continues to unfold (in the present) that respects, encourages, facilitates and values contributors and their contributions, and engenders a sense of belonging and validation within the active community. The latter is important as it helps develop a sense of affirmation in the people who receive such recognition.

Most people journey through life with little in the way of recognition for their creative efforts. One of the forces at work in #creativeHE is that people can use and demonstrate their creativity in a community that is interested in and appreciative of such things. Such feelings of acceptance, validation and recognition are an important part of the meaning making process and they feed into the intrinsic motivational forces that encourage individuals to participate and keep on participating. These feelings of being part of something bigger than yourself may also reach into the invisible community - participants who are part of the community but who are invisible, but there is no way of evaluating this idea as we are not able to see who is reading and acting upon the posts.

Another aspect of the #creativeHE pedagogy is the way it encourages unpredictability.

*I love how the learning in #creativeHE never quite goes in the direction you might have envisaged, - which is a positively productive, disruptive and good thing*[7]

We like being surprised and #creativeHE provides plenty of affordance for surprise.

*I was surprised that the experience had such an impact on me....It provoked me to think deeper about my ethical responsibility as a teacher, to provide the space for my students to grow in their own unique creative ways and not control or constrict their process. In the time since #creativeHE finished, I have been inspired to take the risk and try things out with my students. I feel, through this process I am embodying my inner child curiosity.*[13]

## Making meaning

In *Man's Search for Meaning*[16] psychiatrist and neurologist Victor Frankl argued that the main drive or motivation in life is meaning. One way of looking at #creativeHE is that it provides affordance for individuals' search for meaning associated with creativity and more particularly, creativity in higher education learning and teaching practices. #creativeHE attracts other people who are also searching for and making meaning which makes it a powerful site for meaning making.

Every activity involves creating and sharing an artefact, which has meaning to the individual and is generally something that did not exist before the individual's involvement in the activity.

In any situation we have choice: a space between our perception of the need to act in a situation and the affordance to act and our response to these perceptions - our action to perceived affordance. In that choice lies our freedom to choose a particular action with the potential it holds for creativity. According to Rogers[17] personal creativity is 'the emergence in action of a novel relational product growing out of the uniqueness of the individual on the one hand, and the materials, events, people, or circumstances of his life'. In other words, the products of our creativity grow from existing things, relationships, contexts and circumstances that have meaning to us in our life.

The #creativeHE course provided affordance for creativity in the challenges and in the community which gave participants a personal and a social reason to engage in creative work. The individuals interpreted the challenges in ways that made sense to them in the contexts of their own working and wider social life (including their historical past). In this way #creativeHE engages people in ways that they find meaningful: an ideal situation in which people can engage their own deeply held values and other intrinsic motivations that encourage creativity to flourish (see the examples of creativity and the making of meaning provided by three of the participants Ruth Proctor[7], Maria Kefalogianni[13] and Sebastian Kozbial[14]).

One way of understanding the way the #creativeHE course works is to see it as a process for individuals to create and co-create meaning and to engage in and contribute to a social meaning making process. The pedagogical acts of creating a challenge and inviting participants to take it on, involved individuals making their own sense of the challenge using whatever stimulus or resource was provided (object 1) and connecting and integrating it through play, experimentation, imagination and reasoning to something in their life that made sense to them (object 2), to produce an artefact that is new to them (a product of their creativity). Maria Kefalogianni provides an excellent account of how this occurred for her[16] and reveals the ecological nature of her creativity in a manner that is consistent to Rogers' concept of creativity described above[15].

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**SUMMARY OF KEY PEDAGOGICAL FEATURES THAT ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO USE THEIR CREATIVITY IN THE #CREATIVEHE SOCIAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE**

Start with an overview of the process, expectations, hopes and ideals.

Purpose is explicit- to explore and develop understanding through the sharing of experiences, artefacts and insights rather than teaching existing content.

Each day provide a CHALLENGE that invites people to involve themselves in a activity which is likely to require them to use their creativity to create something that has meaning to them

Identify readings to support the different themes - provide as links

Provide lots of encouragement to share the products that have been developed by participants through the activities. Establish a culture of sharing.

Provide encouragement and feedback that shows participants who share their ideas, feelings, experiences and artefacts that their contributions are valued and try to connect to them.

Learning (insights) and creativity emerge in unpredictable ways. The individual and pedagogic task is to recognise, respond to and encourage this phenomenon.

There is 'no public judgement' of worth only appreciation of contribution and recognition that someone's meaning has significance to someone else. This does not prohibit comments and questions aimed at provoking further thinking.

Course leader is CHIEF INSTIGATOR. The role of the CI is to get things going then let things happen and watch and respond as stuff emerges then keep encouraging emergence. CI works with other instigators. Anyone can taking on the role of an instigator!!!

Encourage self-organising / self-regulating community - people take on supportive roles and may become instigators through their own interventions

The process is driven by finding personal solutions and meaning to interesting challenges. There is lots of scope for play and experimentation.

CI encourages reflection and planning to put into action what has been learnt.

Instigators curate, process and disseminate resources through a magazine after the course has finished.

By sharing the creative artifact with the community the creator is able to gain feedback on whether others find it valuable and meaningful. If the artefact also has meaning to others then the meaning is not only validated but distributed through at least part of the #creativeHE community. In this way the #creativeHE site disseminates meanings that are created and co-created within the social learning enterprise. So the pedagogic practices associated with #creativeHE might also be viewed as a pedagogy that is underlain by a philosophy of play, for the purpose of making and remaking of meanings associated with creativity and creativity associated with higher education learning and teaching practices.

## Acknowledgements

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# PLAY AS A TRIGGER FOR CREATIVITY IN #creativeHE: Playground Pedagogy in Action

## Jenny Willis

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## Introduction

This is one of a series of articles written for Creative Academic Magazine[1] in the wake of the January 2017 #creativeHE course, whose purpose is to consider the pedagogical dimensions of the course and the ways in which it encouraged participants to use their creativity. The content of the on-line course is curated in CAM6[2] and a pedagogical overview is provided above by Jackson[3].

According to the creator of the #creativeHE platform, one of the founding principles is that it provides a space for play.

Underlying the pedagogical thinking of the #creativeHE founder is the idea of 'playground pedagogy' an educational philosophy that is captured well in this passage[4]:

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



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

Participants in the January 2017 #creativeHE 'course' were invited to structure each day's activity and discussion around a specific theme, stimulated by a challenge and facilitated by supporting resources in the form of links to texts, audio, video and online tools. The culture developed in the #creativeHE community is an important pedagogical condition that encourages participants to approach each challenge in a playful, explorative and experimental way[3].

This article focuses on one of the daily challenges in order to consider two separate but related issues: (1) I seek to synthesise and evaluate participants' views on the pedagogical value of play in higher education, and (2) to gain a sense of how #creativeHE encouraged them to play around with ideas, materials and other resources. The latter emerges through individuals' own narratives and is also illustrated in developed articles below by Maria Kefalogianni[5,] Sebastian Kozbial[6] and Ruth Proctor[7].

## #creativeHE Day 2: Challenge & Activity

The theme for day 2 was 'the role and nature of play and games in higher education'. The challenge, its purpose and the supporting resources are set out below, in an edited copy of the day's instructions.

**Chrissi Nerantzi, Day 2** (Tuesday 17 January 2017) #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

## Participants' Responses

There was a lively response to this activity. The collated contributions for the day run to 30 A4 pages, including participants' illustrations, and comprise 35 conversations. These can be read in full in CAM6[8].

To facilitate future analysis, I separated out each conversation, numbered and labelled them. There were 32 that focused on a specific game or activity, and 3 that were theoretical, formed around a pedagogical issue.

My impression as I worked on the conversations was that respondents were generous in their praise of one another and in sharing their own ideas. Their empathy was a significant contributor to the richness of the learning experience. In some cases, it was clear that participants had existing relationships with each other as postgraduate students and teachers, whereas others had never before 'met'. The following string of comments made in conversation 29 illustrates these points.

**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.

We read in other articles in this issue of CAM that this social dimension is fundamental to the notion of 'playground pedagogy' embraced by Chrissi Nerantzi. Ruth Proctor[7] and Sebastian Kozbial[6] write explicitly of their pre-existing professional bonds, which can be both reassuring and a source of anxiety when exposing one's learning experiences in a very public arena.

Certain activities proposed for Day 2's task were instant favourites, and superficially common elements began to emerge: sitting in a circle was a popular device, as was incorporating competition, but this was all impression-istic, not evidential. Furthermore, whilst there was little doubt that participants were highly enthusiastic about play and its pedagogical value in HE, I was left wondering how, precisely, play related to creativity. **Whose** creativity was involved in these games and what were the designers aiming to achieve? Was it just the explicit **objective** of building a team, or were there more factors involved?

## Towards an analysis of creativity through play

I was coming to these issues as a novice to 'playground pedagogy', so my analysis was not informed by existing theory, and I acknowledge that others may come to different conclusions on these exchanges. In order to answer my questions, I read and re-read the conversations repeatedly until I began to find some clarity and commonality on the two issues of **why** and **who** related to creativity through play.

### A. What was the creative aim of the game/activity?

Ostensibly, the game was intended to be an ice-breaker which would encourage participants to form relation-ships with each other so that they can work more effectively to achieve something, (i.e. they become a sort of team) though occasionally it was used with pre-existing groups. However, there was more below the explicit surface: participants began to talk about their expectation that the activity would be **creative**, allowing for **imagination** and that elusive element of **magic**:

*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!!!

*Anastasia Michali* And it can foster creative thinking, due to the unexpected stories that come up. Have fun!!

Creativity is sometimes associated with movement or performance, as illustrated here:

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

Another recurrent element is that of laughter as a sign of relaxation, e.g.

*Mar Kri* The aim is to bring laughter and feel more connected with each other by learning stuff about each other.

But this is also linked to another objective: individual **empowerment through feeling free to be creative**. The following comments express this:

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

*Sebastian Kozbial* Let them experiment with what they know J without the fear of doing something 'wrong' or being judged.

*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?

A third emergent objective is **reflective learning**, supported in one example through the collection of artefacts on which to work later:

*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!

*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! :)

The final objective found is for the game to be directly related to a specific skill or discipline. For instance, Alexandra Gkouzou's game is aimed at teaching factual information about nutrition, whilst my Magic Dice is designed to support creative writing skills.

To summarise, there appear to be 5 objectives underpinning the games/activities proposed. They are:

- Relationship/team building
- Creativity/imagination
- Creativity for empowerment
- Creativity as a tool for reflective learning
- Creative strategies for factual learning

To test these, I analysed each story and identified where the objective occurred. I have shown this in figure 1 by shading relevant cells. Blank cells mean that the objective was not identified in that game.

As noted above, conversations 1-32 relate to an activity, 33-35 are discussions of pedagogy.

Only one of the 32 activities did not address the icebreaking element of creating a team, and a total of 88.6% of the conversations include team-building. But in addition to responding to this aspect of the task, analysis shows that the aims of allowing creativity of imagination and thought was an objective in 71.4% of the conversations; the use of creative

| Game | Team building | Creativity, imagining | Freedom, empower | Reflective learning | Factual learning |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 Categories or similarities | ■ | ■ | ■ | | |
| 2 Game of possibilities | ■ | ■ | ■ | | |
| 3 Writing a collective story | ■ | ■ | | | |
| 4 Lost on a desert island | ■ | | ■ | | |
| 5 Crosby hunt | ■ | | | ■ | ■ |
| 6 Magic dice story | | ■ | | | ■ |
| 7 Nutrition board game | ■ | | | | ■ |
| 8 Picture pieces game | ■ | | | ■ | |
| 9 Guess who's who | ■ | | | | |
| 10 Matching pairs | ■ | | | | |
| 11 Creating a web of responses | ■ | | | | |
| 12 Creating questions | ■ | | | | |
| 13 Pasta towers | ■ | | | | |
| 14 Optimist/pessimist | ■ | | | ■ | |
| 15 Bouncy ball game | ■ | | | | |
| 16 Personalised T-shirts | ■ | | | ■ | |
| 17 Play Doh and Lego models of oneself | ■ | | | ■ | ■ |
| 18 5 words Play Doh | ■ | | | | |
| 19 Food as aspects of learning | ■ | | ■ | | |
| 20 Scavenger hunt | ■ | | | | |
| 21 Fabulous flags | ■ | | | ■ | |
| 22 Carton box games | ■ | | | | |
| 23 Blind draw | ■ | | | | |
| 24  2 truths and 1 lie | ■ | | | | |
| 25 Create oral story | ■ | | | | |
| 26 Creating a new team | ■ | | | | |
| 27 Guess who's who | ■ | | | | |
| 28 Uncommon characteristics | ■ | | | | |
| 29 Escape the classroom | ■ | | ■ | | |
| 30 Cobweb game | ■ | | | | |
| 31 Creating a water feature | ■ | | | | |
| 32 Someone I admire | ■ | | | | |
| 33 Cultural values and expectations | | | ■ | ■ | |
| 34 Putting magic into teaching | | ■ | | | |
| 35 Thinking outside the box | | ■ | | | |
| % of total having this objective | 88.6 | 71.4 | 71.4 | 28.6 | 14.3 |

*Figure 1: The games' objectives*

activities as a stimulus for reflective learning was present in 28.6%, and creative activities were used as a means of teaching discipline-related content or skills in 14.3%.

Looked at laterally, the figure shows us which objectives are present in each activity. On this basis, 2 appear to address all five, games 5 and 17. How do these compare with my impressionistic response to the games? My favourites correspond exactly with these two, suggesting that we may instinctively recognise the wide appeal of a given game, even if we cannot explain why it appeals.

So let as make a more detailed examination of the two activities concerned, and their ensuing conversations.

Paul Kleiman reminisced about a past teaching experience, and illustrated it with a photograph of one student's work deriving from the treasure hunt he devised. He posted:

## 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.

Paul's activity prompted five responses, with inter-respondent comments, as follow:

**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 technological ly 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 partici-

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.

The responses show how Paul's example has sparked an association with others' own experience, which is then shared and in turn taken forward with extensions by another respondent, allowing for a snowballing of creativity. Each is co-creating a novel game.

The second activity that included all five objectives was Ruth Proctor's use of resources more usually associated with children (Play Dough and Lego) to get postgraduate students to engage in the sorts of activities that they, as teachers, might set their early year pupils. Her accompanying images summarise the creative products.

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**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 constructionism, 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.]

Two people responded to Ruth's post. As before, they congratulate her on her activity then one person goes on to offer an activity of their own, which can be adapted to incorporate ideas from Ruth; the second response includes questions which invite Ruth to give further pedagogical suggestions.



> **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 transforming 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 ;)

In this issue of CAM[7], Ruth charts her own experience both of creating a response to each day's task, and of her emotional journey as she balanced other needs with participating in #creativeHE. On reading her account, I was struck by how different her highs of her experience were from those that I personally found to be her most interesting contributions. For instance, she sums up day 3's story in one paragraph, whereas for me, her story was a significant creation and deserving of greater description. This discrepancy reinforces what Norman[3] says about the multiple, individual, 'take aways' achieved by participants.

## B. Whose creativity was involved in the game/activity?

The second question I examined as I reread the conversations was **who** was engaged in creating something though the game process?

I identified 5 different creative processes, involving different people:

- Teacher's physical design of resources
- Participant/student's design in response to the task
- Teacher's creativity in the pedagogical process
- Participants' creative input into additional uses of the game/activity
- Respondent prompts to the author to add to the creative discussion or activity

As with question (a), I analysed each conversation to see how these elements were distributed across the activities. Figure 2 shows the results of my analysis. As before, shaded cells indicate the presence of this form of creativity.

The shading does not attempt to quantify or rank whose creativity was greater or lesser in a game, but this could be a future degree of analysis. At present, figure 2 indicates that every activity involved creativity on the part of more than one party, each in its unique combination if quantification were included.

| Game | Teacher design | Participant design | Teacher delivery | Adding to design | Prompt questions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 Categories or similarities | ■ | ■ | | | |
| 2 Game of possibilities | ■ | ■ | | | |
| 3 Writing a collective story | | ■ | | ■ | |
| 4 Lost on a desert island | | ■ | | | ■ |
| 5 Crosby hunt | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 6 Magic dice story | ■ | ■ | | | |
| 7 Nutrition board game | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 8 Picture pieces game | ■ | ■ | | | |
| 9 Guess who's who | ■ | ■ | | | |
| 10 Matching pairs | | ■ | | | |
| 11 Creating a web of responses | | ■ | | | |
| 12 Creating questions | | ■ | | | |
| 13 Pasta towers | | ■ | | | |
| 14 Optimist/pessimist | | ■ | | ■ | |
| 15 Bouncy ball game | | ■ | | | |
| 16 Personalised T-shirts | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 17 Play Doh and Lego models of oneself | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 18 5 words Play Doh | | ■ | | | |
| 19 Food as aspects of learning | | ■ | | ■ | |
| 20 Scavenger hunt | ■ | | | | ■ |
| 21 Fabulous flags | ■ | ■ | | ■ | |
| 22 Carton box games | | ■ | | | |
| 23 Blind draw | ■ | ■ | | | |
| 24  2 truths and 1 lie | | ■ | | | |
| 25 Create oral story | | ■ | | ■ | |
| 26 Creating a new team | | ■ | | ■ | |
| 27 Guess who's who | | ■ | | ■ | |
| 28 Uncommon characteristics | | ■ | | | ■ |
| 29 Escape the classroom | ■ | ■ | | ■ | |
| 30 Cobweb game | | ■ | | | ■ |
| 31 Creating a water feature | ■ | ■ | | ■ | ■ |
| 32 Someone I admire | | ■ | | ■ | |
| 33 Cultural values and expectations | | | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 34 Putting magic into teaching | | ■ | ■ | | ■ |
| 35 Thinking outside the box | | ■ | | | ■ |
| % of total activities including this process | 45.7% | 91.4% | 25.7% | 57.1% | 57.1% |

*Figure 2: Who is engaged in active creativity through the game/activity?*

45.7% of the activities called for physical acts of creativity by the teacher prior to or during the game. Typical action would be in choosing and making the resources necessary for the game.

The most widely evident creative input was that of the student/participant, at 91.4% of all. Their creativity ranged from making an item using provided resources to developing creative ideas and stories. Some were of a problem solving nature.

Creativity in the way in which teachers rolled out the game were found in just over a quarter (25.7%). Examples of this are how the room is set out or how the activity is sequenced with another.

57.1% of conversations included suggestions for adapting the original activity e.g. in using computer technology rather than craft-making resources. This creativity derived from other participants, including moderators.

The same proportion of conversations (57.1%) posed questions which required the originator of the game to think about other dimensions of contexts for the game, drawing on the originator's creativity and questioner's foresight of an opportunity to be creative.

This time, four activities were found to include creativity in each of the domains. They were:
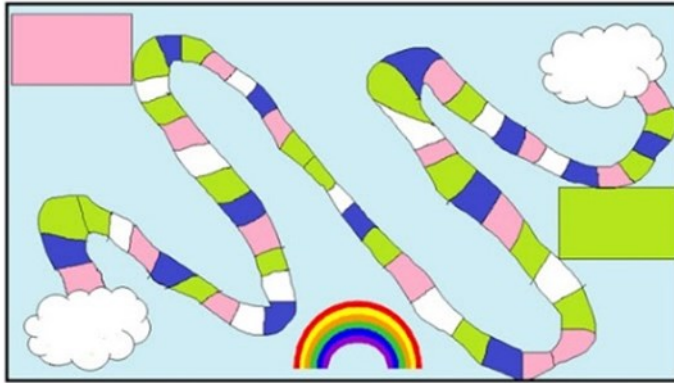
    5 Crosby hunt
    7 Nutrition board game
    16 Personalised T-shirts
    17 Play Doh and Lego models of oneself

Interestingly, two of these were also the most significant activities in response to question (a), aims of the creativity. This would suggest that the highly successful games were those which had the potential to involve the widest number of people and meet diverse objectives. Furthermore, these were the activities which appealed most to me intrinsically. Perhaps our instincts are trustworthy in this respect?
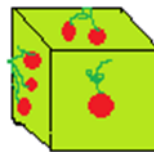
## 7 Alexandra Gkouzou
## Nutrition board game

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.

Alexandra has been creative first in coming up with the concept of the game, then in manufacturing it herself. We see her in the dynamic process of creating it, tweaking things as she goes along. The suggestion made by Sandra for an alternative approach has already occurred to Alexandra, but been rejected due to the practicalities of her teaching context. In terms of the pedagogy of play model, we might see this game as an example of employing heart, hands and head.

The second activity which involves creativity across all parties is Karen Tuzylak's task of creating personalised t-shirts.

> 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.

## 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.
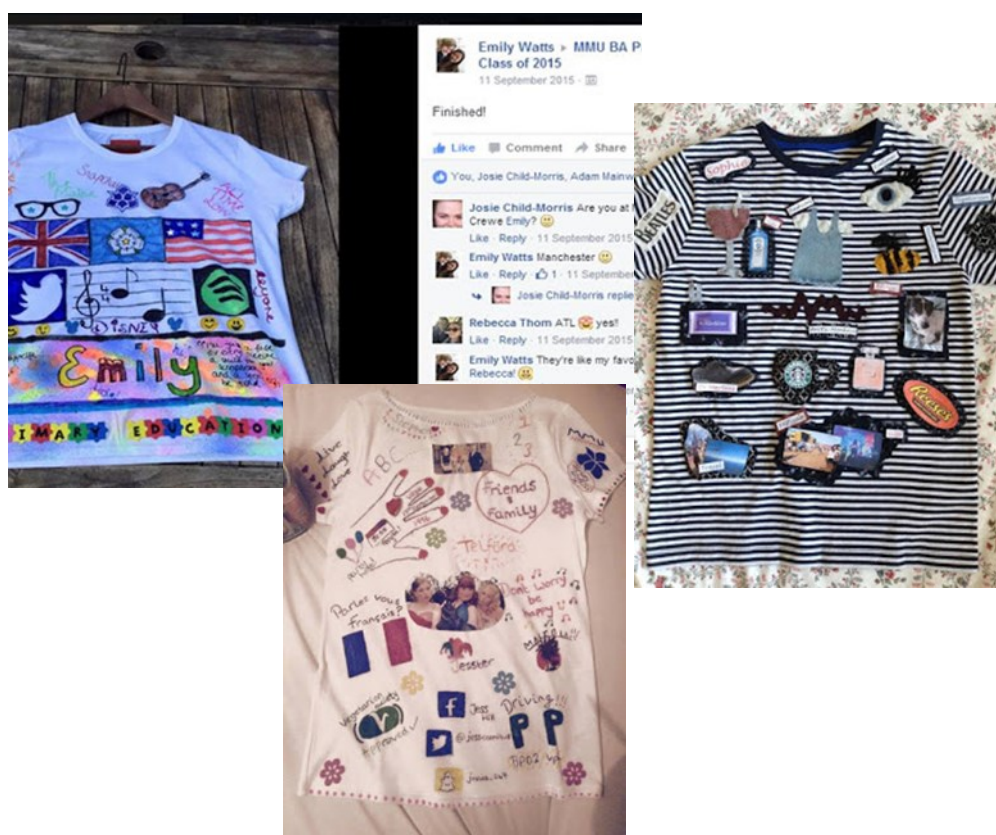


There are three responses to this activity. Once again, these are complimentary; they pull out significant factors such as the importance of making students feel they are known individually to the teacher. This creative task feeds into the future, providing a quick point of reference for students' recognition by their teacher.

**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.

## So what have we learnt about creativity and games in HE?

### *A. The perceived pedagogical value of games and play*

It will be clear from this short account that the community involved in this discussion shares a belief in the pedagogical efficacy of play, even amongst adults. The issue is discussed explicitly in some of the conversations but is implicit in all.

My analysis attempted to identify what it was about specific activities that attracted others. I have proposed that we can explain their effectiveness in terms of **who** is involved in the creative process and **what** the activity aims to achieve, beyond the overt objective of breaking the ice. I found that creativity can lie in the domain of the teacher, participant/student, management of the activity by the teacher, the additional uses triggered in other readers and in guided questioning designed to make the teacher reflect further and maybe develop new uses. As regards the aims of a game, these have been found to include bringing the 'magic' and enjoyment of creativity to life, empowering students through removing boundaries to their creativity, stimulating reflective learning, and teaching a skill or theme through the game process.

There were other dimensions of the day's conversations that might also have been addressed, e.g. the roles of intrinsic motivation as opposed to the need for extrinsic rewards for winning a game, or the different types of creativity harnessed at different stages of an activity. We have not had space here to consider the question of constraints on creativity. These discussions must be for another article.

To summarise,

- Play is found to be pedagogically effective and valued by learners and teachers
- Play facilitates creativity in different actors: students, teachers, mentors, peers
- Play is associated with both overt and covert objectives/expectations: enjoyment, individual empower-ment, reflective learning, skill- or discipline-related learning
- Play may entail intrinsic or extrinsic rewards for players/learners/participants
- Collaboration through play builds supportive relationships which allow risk-taking in the creative endeavour
- Play has to be managed within the constraints of the teaching situation

Before turning to the effectiveness of #creativeHE specifically, I return to the concept of 'playground pedagogy' proposed by Chrissi Nerantzi in CAM2A. Figure 3, below, reproduces her summary of 3 theories of teaching that can be applied to the playground model.

*Figure 3 Copy of Playground Pedagogy, Neranzi 2015*

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

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

The emphasis of participants' reference to risk-taking and empowerment within the learning community locates my findings within the zones of playgrounds 2 and 3. Here, the teacher is able to set the ball rolling then stand back, stepping in as and when required, while the participants create and interact. This leads to the second question I posed at the start of this article:

### B. To what extent did #creativeHE encourage and enable participants to play with ideas, materials and resources?

We should recall that underpinning her playground pedagogy, Chrissi identifies 5 spaces in which creativity can take place:

Community spaces: connecting people
Open spaces: expansive minds
Story spaces: connecting hearts
Making spaces: connecting hands
Thinking spaces: connecting minds

We have seen that the structure of the 5 days, and within this, that of Day 2, Play, was carefully designed to connect people through the Google+ community; the tasks set entailed opening minds and thinking; the empathetic personal relationships developed were conducive to sharing and pushing forward with new ideas or creations, in some cases, the games literally required connecting hands. We can safely conclude, therefore, that #creativeHE was built around these 5 spaces. But were they effective means of enabling play with ideas and resources?

We have already read many participants' words of enthusiasm during completion of Day 2's activity. Here are a few more which we can now relate to the spaces that were engaged by the game in question.

*Game 2 (spaces 1, 4 and 5)*
**AIKATERINI ROUSOU:** Very creative game! It activates thinking, imagination and performing skills!

*Game 4 (spaces 1, 3 and 5)*
**Sandra Sinfield**  Hi +Dora Koutsou - a lovely, creative and engaging induction activity that draws everybody into the process.

*Game 16 (spaces 1, 3 and 4)*
**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.

*Game 20 (spaces 1, 2 and 3)*
**Sandra Sinfield** I love the idea of a scavenger hunt, +Katerina Doupha. One thing that intrigued me (when play-ing 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.

*Game 26 (spaces 1 and 3)*
**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.

*Game 27 (spaces 1, 2 and 3)*
**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.

*Game 31 (spaces 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5)*
**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.

The three conceptual conversations all revolve around open minds. Once trusted relationships have been established, interaction surrounds personal experience of pedagogical practices. So, in conversation 33, I launched a discussion about cultural expectations of education and different pedagogical styles. There was a long conversation, but the following extract illustrates how we began to open new spaces:

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.

In answer to my second question, we can conclude that #creativeHE has applied the principles of learning spaces to encourage participants to share their ideas and creations and to collaborate in using play as an effective learning device.

To end this review of just one day of #creativeHE, let us recall the words of Sophia Poultidou, who remembers the magic of secrets hidden in a box during her childhood, and makes an impassioned plea to us as teachers or learners:

> *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!!!*

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# THE EMERGENCE OF MY CREATIVITY THROUGH #CREATIVEHE

## Maria Kefalogianni



*Maria is a Lecturer in Counselling & Psychotherapy at the University of Salford. She teaches across MSc and BSc programmes and is a module leader of Bereavement & Loss ;one of her special areas of interest. Her current research interests are on autoethnographic methods of research enquiry and creativity in HE. Besides Salford Maria holds a small private practice where she offers therapy and consultancy supervision for counsellors but also other professionals (i.e. In social work, mental health etc). Amidst all this she is also a mother to a 20 month toddler, a wife, dog owner and a curious not grown up child!*

Through this article I will share the artefact - an illustrated story, that I created while participating in the 'make and tell a story challenge' in the #creativeHE conversation, together with the unfolding conversation with other participants that encouraged and enabled me to reveal something about the way this artefact was brought into existence. I also offer my reflections on the pedagogical process used in the #creativeHE course that encourages participants to use their creativity.

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### CHALLENGE #3 Make & tell a story

Find one of the five chapters in Piaget's book 'To Understand is to Invent'.. 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.

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?.

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

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**Mar Kri (Maria Kefalogianni)**

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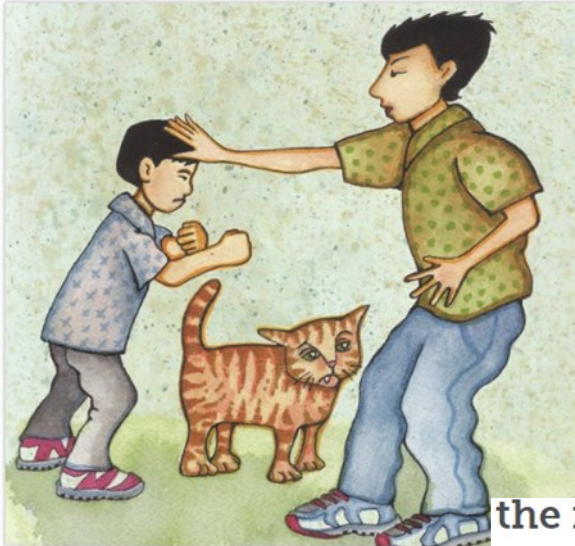
# the fish of wisdom...



...In order to achieve this, son, you first need to learn the important lessons in life. School teaches you obedience, discipline.. How to learn to keep quiet so that your teachers can teach you...do you understand? they hold the moral and intellectual knowledge that you need...

Boy (angrily): But sometimes i don't like them Dad, i feel bored..

# the fish of wisdom...



Remember son Dad said: they are always willing to go the extra mile to give you AAALLL they know, and have learned.. to pass you on ALL their cooking skills even...

after some pause...

Dad: mmm...I heard there is a new teacher in the neighbourhood. We ll go meet him tomorrow; he is holding a class in the local forest ( how weird and unprofessional, Dad thought , yet he was also willing to hear his son's calling for help)...DONT tell anybody I got you there..

The boy s ears perked...as if a glimpse of hope lit in his tiny heart...
..

# the fish of wisdom...



# the fish of wisdom...



Welcome, boy...A figure appeared in the distance...
Grab a seat on any branch you want...together we ll think ,and learn what school is all about...

# the fish of wisdom...

"It is not a black and white matter...its not like maths..."

Boy was so surprised to hear those words...until this time he thought that maths is all the truth that exists out there...

"tell me what you remember from maths..."

Boy " ....errmmm , nothing really..."

and with soft hesitant voice he said

" I never really liked them.."

# the fish of wisdom...

"Good", teacher said, well here s what you need to know about me:
"I am not your guru, your master or your teacher..I don't have all the answers..."

"so your task from today is ...to travel...as far as you can...collect many experiences..Then you will come back to share them "...

# the fish of wisdom...

Teacher continued "You can ride one of the lovely birds in the forest...and see where they take you..."

## the fish of wisdom...



"But I am warning you. This journey may feel a bit scary to start with...you may feel like you are in the dark...and the wolves are out to get you..."

## the fish of wisdom...



"you ll visit places that you havent visited before..."

"what? the boy thought, is there no technique? no guidance? "
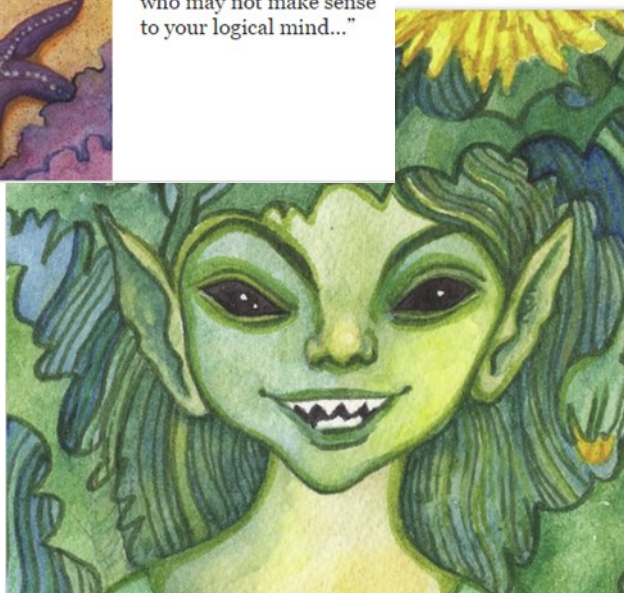
## the fish of wisdom...



"No", the man said, "but i will always be here if you need any help...come back to find me..." and he continued with the task...

" you ll meet creatures who may not make sense to your logical mind..."



"all your daemons may surface to convince you that it is not "REAL SCHOOLING"...

# the fish of wisdom...



He made real friends , different friends but with who he also had strong debates about real issues affecting his life and learning...

he was finding solutions to mathematical equations in DIFFERENT ways...

# the fish of wisdom...



occasionally he was taking a rest , to think and let all that he was learning on the way to sink in...
how much was he enjoying those moments...

# the fish of wisdom...

He realised how lucky he was and how many gifts he had acquired all this time whilst "riding" into the unknown..

## the fish of wisdom...

he was remembering all those ackward moments ...which now finally made sense...

## the fish of wisdom...

He remembered the time he transformed into a mermaid in order to tell the fish that they swim in the wrong place, because that s all they ever known...

## the fish of wisdom...

The old fish man, said to the boy... "I remember this moment, son, when all this exciting new learning takes over your mind, and makes you unable to look outside of yourself...

# the fish of wisdom...



"Don't ignore the person that you are...all your experiences as a child will be there with you, in your learning process, be prepared to carry them.."

( The Boy at this stage was thinking of his terrible aunties with the cookie trays..)

BUT...

# the fish of wisdom...



DO NOT let them ..COLOUR your vision...

(phew! the boy thought! I have choice!)

# the fish of wisdom...



"your world may feel upside down..but at least you will smile once you meet your fellow travelers looking at their upside down world.. make sure you enjoy the view together...each view will have its own coloured lens... no single one is better than the other"
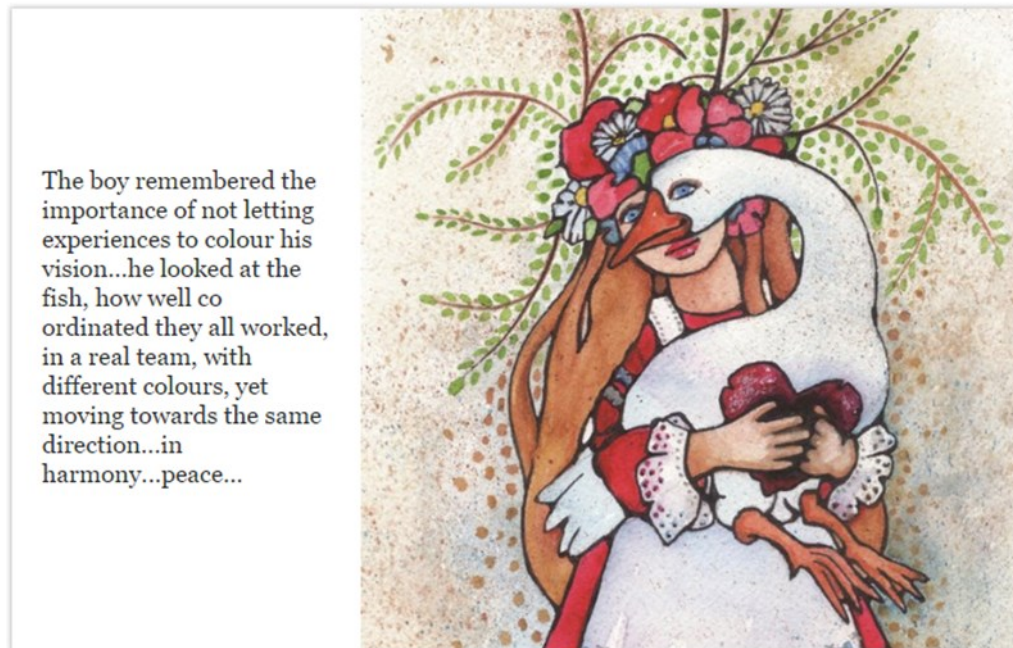
# the fish of wisdom...

"So the boy, chose to ride his CAT!

(..because he always secretly desired the idea of not following rigid rules...) ..he put his biggest smile on..and OFF he flew..."

# the fish of wisdom...

The boy remembered the importance of not letting experiences to colour his vision...he looked at the fish, how well co ordinated they all worked, in a real team, with different colours, yet moving towards the same direction...in harmony...peace...

*The story continues with the boy taking risks to try things **HIS** way..finding HIS voice... dialoguing with a diverse group of friends and creatures he met...He quickly got so caught up and immersed in his own world...that the purpose in learning what "real schooling is" got a bit diluted...He believed so much his truth that he once transformed into a mermaid so that he can tell the fish to " wake up" and see that there is land out there not just water... Then he met a wise ancient fish man who reminded him that it's important to have that passion and vision, but that sometimes we need to let that aside...so that we truly see the other person and enter their world...so that we can be there with them .. to discover their own creative knowing...their own truth..*
*So, one day as the boy sat under the wise tree...remembering his long journey...he let that knowing sink deep in his heart...and it never left him ever again...*

[Chrissi Nerantzi](#)
I was pleased you found this activity useful and are considering this also to use with your students. Please share with us your ideas around this. I have read the story and can see that you have put a lot of work into this. I m wondering in what way this was useful for you. Please share with us.

[Mar Kri](#) I find it hard to put it into words, so thanks for inviting me to sharpen my "paedagogical " reflective thinking...i ll try and identify...

I thoroughly enjoyed the whole process of engaging with the story, I really enjoyed the playfulness of the medium ( story ) ..I found it engaged me in a different way..as if I was re-connecting with my child-like curiosity... through metaphor and symbolic language which felt it had an emotional impact on me ( so hopefully will be more memorable).

At first I wasn't sure if I should write the story first and then choose the right pictures, I found my logical head being challenged in wanting to follow a sequence which was "set" in advance. I guess there is no right way of going about it, is there ?

I decided to approach it by looking at the pictures and allowing the pictures to speak to me ( if that makes sense), but I had first thought which were some of the themes of that chapter. During the process, I was aware that it was perhaps taking me a bit out of what the task was asking ( but I still continued to follow the unfolding of the story; it felt so good and so addictive!! I would spend all night if I was to represent all aspects of the chapter).

In the process of writing the story I was observing the bits of the chapter that stood out for me and reflected why that s the case. It quickly became clear that the elements of the chapter I was choosing to shift my attention to (the person of the teacher, the environment in which the student learned through a "deep approach" as

opposed to a surface approach; the passion to transfer knowledge, the lesson of learning through collaboration and by engaging with people with different views/opinions and respecting them as such, yet still looking for the autonomy in the person etc) reflected aspects of my current continuous developmental stage and interests. For example: I know sometimes, in my aspiration to be there for my students and create an empowering environment for them to learn, I have the tendency to over-focus on my performance or try too-hard (which is linked partly to my own lack of confidence at times, but which also is influenced by my past I know my story to some extent is one sided, I wish I had more time to write more.

I wasn't planning to engage with it as I was REALLY tired. However, as I was putting my little one to bed, and looking at him and remembering all the play we had done during the day; I felt deeply within me the ethical challenge and responsibility that i hold as a parent but also as a facilitator, to empower him and my students in their own learning journey.. I also realized how boring the usual assessments can be or perhaps how they are one way of measuring learning....as people are SO different. in brief, I felt challenged and continue to feel that way, through reading all the posts and seeing how much fantastic creativity exists out there. Besides challenged, I feel grateful for the opportunity to be part of such community... so much learning ahead!!! "As you set out for Ithaka hope the voyage is a long one, full of adventure, full of discovery"

As for how I'd use it with my students (I haven't fully formulated it yet), but here are some thoughts. Because of the nature of what I teach which has tremendous focus on self-reflection: I think sometimes the students finish the course and maybe are unclear of their trajectory, or they know it but on a very abstract level. One activity could be to present a story of their own personal development during the course with 3 main areas:
a) How have they changed
b) What do they still wish to change/
c) What steps will they take to help themselves towards that change.

I could then ask them to share this with the group and receive feedback. Does it still sound very abstract ? I welcome everybody's feedback and challenge! :)

### Norman

I have only just read your story MarKri while I was curating all the stories. It shows great use of imagination and resources and is a nice illustration of your unique creativity.. combining and gaining imaginary inspiration from the writings of Piaget, the imagery of storybird and your own imagination and reasoning to create something that is novel, interesting and meaningful to you and others (including me).

I also found your response to Chrissi's questions very revealing about the unfolding nature of our response to the world we inhabit and how creativity emerges in the service of the deepest meanings that give significance to our lives. I think your story captures well Carl Rogers concept of personal creativity as 'the emergence in action of a novel relational product growing out of the uniqueness of the individual on the one hand, and the materials, events, people, or circumstances of his life'. In other words, the products of our creativity grow from existing things, relationships, contexts and circumstances that give meaning to our life. In your case your participation in #creativeHE and your decision to engage with the activity and how your engagement was shaped by the deeply held views you hold about such things as what being a parent and a teacher means to you. You are answering the question WHY? How I came to create something that is significant and meaningful to me in my life and these circumstances..

So perhaps you might also add the WHY to how you might use this approach with your students. WHY did you change? What was it about these particular circumstances that caused change.. this might then open up the idea that the circumstances of our lives are part of an ecology that connects who we are to who we want to be and become... and to our deepest purposes and values.

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

### Mar Kri

Hi Norman, thank you so much for your comments and for inviting me to deepen my thinking more..!!:) If I understood you right, you mean to add the qs WHY into my own reflections on how I came about to write up these reflections into the form of a story ? or did you mean add the question WHY in the exercise I thought of using with the students? ( or perhaps the one will lead to the other ?)

My first instinct is that it is both...and I feel its this WHY perhaps that I need to grow deeper...and inform my decision in what I choose to write/ do. I find that we know these quite intuitively...and like a parallel process in psychotherapy where the aim is to often articulate and make explicit the implicit...I find the similar purpose creativity holds in HE ? i ll get back to you on further reflections on this one.. :) thank you!

Norman Jackson
YES the why is all these things +Mar Kri WHY DO WE DO ANYTHING? especially when it's difficult, messy, uncomfortable, stressful, inconvenient, putting us into the unknown or unfamiliar - which is often the case where creativity is needed..... and a million other reasons..

the idea that stuff feels right begs the question - what has gone before that conditions us so that it does feel right? Perhaps here we are creeping into embodiment?? and YES why is a question to add to the learning process with students..

## Reflections on my experience of the #creativeHE course

*So, who am I ?*
I am a believer that we tend not see the world as it is but as we are. For this reason, in order to present the usefulness of this experience and synthesize the meanings I created I feel it would be useful to share a bit about me. This belief in itself stems from my deeply held worldview that knowledge and learning is situated in context and is continually co-constructed. I (and my students) are in a continuous process of becoming[1] and in a fluid state of continuous synthesis of new knowledge and learning and meaning making.

I find it impossible to separate my learning from the person that I am and the experiences which have shaped me to be who I am today: my Greek upbringing, my educational autobiographies and schooling years which have influenced the beliefs I hold for learning and teaching, my experience of play as a child ;my role as a mother, therapist and of course my curious inner child open to explorations, that I carry everywhere.

One could argue, we could not separate the fact of we are/think/relate to how we teach. In Palmer's terms[1], we teach who we are. I am not entering a classroom by leaving outside that sense of "I" outside, so why do it here ? I am an advocate of experiential learning. This is the form of learning that is more memorable for me because it involves emotions which are often neglected in the face of learning; despite evidence that reason and emotion operate harmoniously together in learning and memory[2].

How could I expect myself to be creative in my teaching if I have not immersed myself in the chaos and uncertainty that being creative and play embodies and experience all the elements which make creative engagement and play significant?

One could argue that this type of narrative is self-absorbed and self-indulgent. Knowing one's motives is the answer for me. Being able to interrogate and question myself , dialogue and allow my authentic self to show ensuring that I am supporting my learner's learning; it helps me to crystallise my pedagogical position and as a result am learning to be more in tune to my student's needs. Narrating such learning in a personal manner, is taking that crystallisation process a step further, due to its "analytic and pedagogic power" [3:61]

## What was it about HE creative which proved significant for me ?

Below I will attempt to break down the elements of Creative HE which allowed me to feel motivated , connected, inspired and contributed to a sense of empowerment. The message I heard was clear and short: *let's be ourselves, let's play and see what will come from this process*. Plato has said that "You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation"

> The message I heard was clear and short: *let's be ourselves, let's play and see what will come from this process*

Besides, there was a sense of no hierarchy or order. All of us were collaborators and contributors. Being part of the community enabled me to use my time autonomously while keep being influenced and affected by posts I was reading. Play for me always has an element of uncertainty. It was this lack of rigid structure, the freedom to dip in an out in my own time (respecting learner's autonomy) which I thoroughly enjoyed and motivated me to keep my reflective space alive; whilst running a very busy life.

The pedagogic stance of the facilitators and their presence enabled me to deepen my reflections. It felt it was an empowering process and very learner led, as opposed to teacher led. Power was equally distributed. They made their presence subtly felt by inviting the audience to sharpen their reflections and pedagogical thinking. This was further cultivated by the communication of trust in this organic process; there was evidence from the facilitator's of spontaneous responses to synthesise the material produced communicating respect to all individuals included (linked with Carl Rogers' concept of respect for the individual's resources ). I even forgotten them being there – a sign for me of a great facilitator (and a personal aspiration for myself- to "disappear" in the face of my student's learning); a position that' s also echoed in Jackson's article[6]; which in my view requires an ego-less state where the facilitator is willing to put aside their wisdom/knowledge and trust student's actualising tendency to discover their meanings *for themselves!*

The fact that it was online almost "forced" myself to re-connect with my own benign authority and connect with my personal power to be my own agent of my own learning process. Maybe there is something in the fact that this learning was taking place from my own comfort zone; my home ( which may beg the question where the learning in HE is taking place and what are the optimum spaces for that learning!? ).

I would certainly argue that it kept me comfortably tuned within my "stretch zone"[4](Figure1) and reminded me of the phrase *"Tell me, I'll forget. Show me, I'll remember. Involve me, I'll understand"*

**Figure 1** *Learning zone model - Senninger[4]*



I felt inspired and challenged reading stories from people all over the world and from all levels of education. I felt grief as I was reminded that we lose touch with our innate creativity as we grow up and how perhaps current HE with the over emphasis on measurable outcomes , control through quality procedures and bureaucracy, often dilutes the real purpose on what HE stands for.

I utilised my senses to connect with this realisation: my vision by reading the stories, my heart (feelings) by allowing the stories to have an impact on me, my role as a mother when reading how colleagues in primary education work in their contexts, my experience in working in a current HE provider etc ). All this led me to feel encouraged, confident, re-assured –

"other people do it, why not me?- and with a strong sense of determination to embrace creativity further in my teaching practices. #creativeHE allowed me the space to feel that I "belong" to a community of like minded people. It is paradoxical really, I realised, as teachers we encourage dialogue for our students and but as teachers, how much effort do we put into creating these dialogues with each other? I am very relational and this space allowed me to recognise and ACT on the values I hold and form meaningful relationships with the ideas, the conversations, the people, the tools and content within the #creativeHE learning environment. It felt as if my ecology for learning was part of a larger social ecology for learning.and, in turn, the social ecology for learning was mirroring/embracing parts and elements of my personal ecology for learning.

## Integrating mind and heart… Where does my creativity originate/ what instigates it and what stagnates it ?

Being part of the #creativeHE online community was hugely emotive for me. As a therapist I use every opportunity and experience to further my personal development. It is not a conscious choice, I find it just happens. During my #creativeHE experience I felt I embodied my inner child, my re connecting with significant and poignant memories/feelings in order to enhance my learning and synthesise my new meaning out of this experience. I became aware and re connected with my sense of grief for lack of play memories with my

significant others; the sadness for receiving a "tutor-led" education for many years of my educational experiences and how that had restricted my natural curiosity ; I also remember the excitement I felt for the non-structured, endless hours of childhood play I immersed myself in.

I was surprised that the experience it had such an impact on me as I see myself as being very relational, valuing face to face conversation over online interaction. It provoked me to think deeper about my ethical responsibility as a teacher, to provide the space for my students to grow in their own unique creative ways and not control or constrict their process. In the time since #creativeHE finished, I have been inspired to take the risk and try things out with my students. I feel, through this process I am embodying my inner child curiosity .

I am amazed to see the similarities between theories of learning which advocate learner support and with a focus on facilitation rather than instruction [5] and Rogers' theory of self –actualisation[7] which I was trained in. This embodies the belief that human beings (learners/students) have within themselves the resources and knowledge to overcome their problems given the right conditions which include the consistent offering of: empathy unconditional positive regards and congruence[8]

I am in a constant process of integration of my authentic self and experiences into my consciousness. Figure 2 shows Rogers' concept of our continuous journey towards becoming a fully functioning person - the person we want to be.

*Figure 2 The journey towards becoming the person we want to be (Rogers[8])*
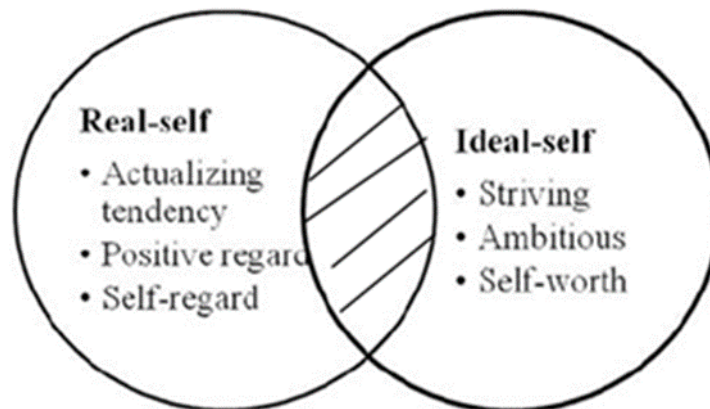


Which seems to have parallels with the relationship between our critical reasoning and our creative thinking[9] The encouragement, through the activities used in #creativeHE, to participants to use and integrate their capacities to think creatively and critically, is another feature of the pedagogical process.

*Figure 5 Integration of creative and critical thinking in problem solving*

A
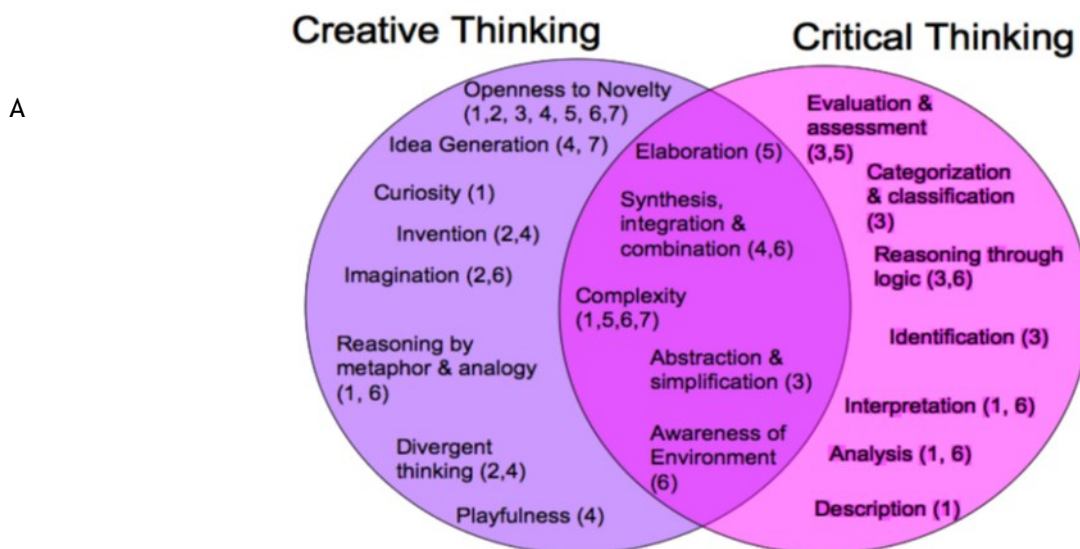
A-ha moments:

These thoughts encouraged me to create my own model for learning experiences that engage our body, mind – spirit and heart and allow and enable us to integrate the learning we gain from this whole of person in their whole of life experience (Figure 6).

*Figure 6 My holistic integrative model for optimum creative learning*
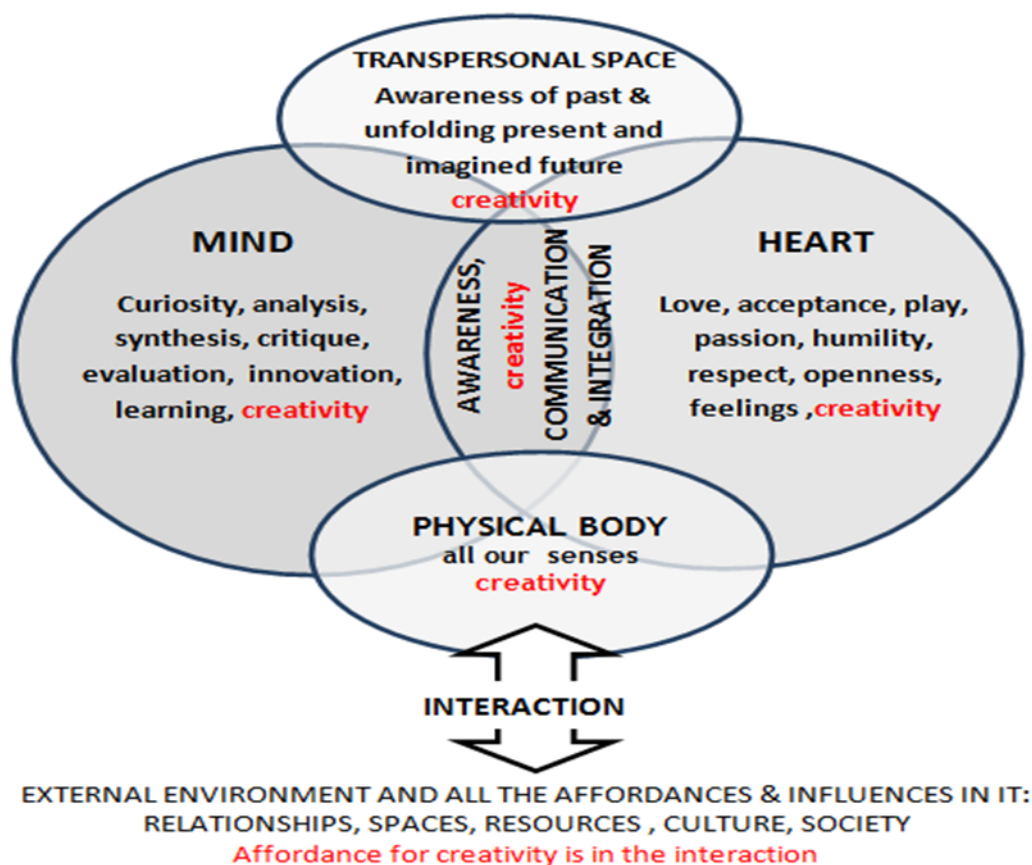


It's an ecological model in which the whole person and their thinkings, doings, sensing and feelings cannot be separated from the world they are inhabiting, yet these can be reflected upon, elaborated, and used to inform deeper reflections and our pedagogical positioning. The #creativeHE course was part of my lifewide environment and the way I participated with it enabled me to find and use affordance for my learning and creativity in the interactions. Without the community, dialogue and interactions with people, I would not have been able to "crystallize" my process and come to such significant insights. Or perhaps I would have, but It would have felt less rich and meaningful because ideas would not have been shared and tested, and a "shared language" would not have been developed which we could utilise to inform our future teaching practice! Thinking of my experience in this way ties in closely and is sympathetic with the learning ecology model being developed by Jackson[6] and which is being explored through the Creative Pedagogies for Creative Learning Ecologies project.[6]

I am now in the process of integrating these elements in my learning and self: an integration of what feels like heart and mind. The very act of engaging in this reflective writing has enabled me to crystallise and integrate my thoughts and feelings and I want to emphasize the importance of taking a step back and creating the space to synthesise our engagement with creative teaching/learning. It is our opportunity to re-claim our inner wisdom and birth right, our creative knowing; but also keep reflective practice alive and not in closed doors. As Martin Buber says: "All real living is meeting and teaching is endless meeting " (Martin Buber in Palmer[1]).

I will finish by again drawing on the seminal work of Carl Rogers. For me his most potent saying, which I aspire to embody more and more in my life and teaching is, "the most personal is the most universal". Our creativity happens when we tap into this universal space which according to him is the "emergence in action of a novel relational product growing out of the uniqueness of the individual on the one hand, and the materials, events, people, or circumstances of his life'.[7]

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the fish of wisdom...
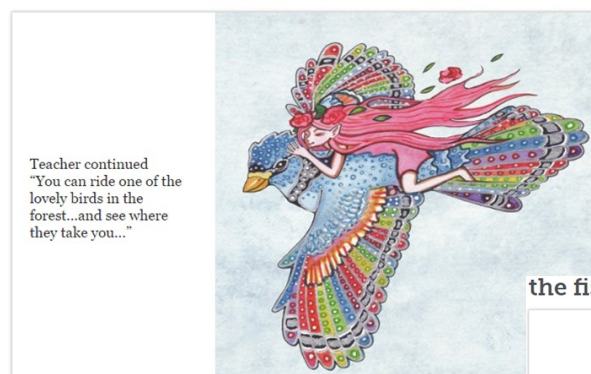
"No", the man said, "but i will always be here if you need any help...come back to find me..." and he continued with the task...

" you ll meet creatures who may not make sense to your logical mind..."



the fish of wisdom...

Teacher continued "You can ride one of the lovely birds in the forest...and see where they take you..."



the fish of wisdom...

The boy remembered the importance of not letting experiences to colour his vision...he looked at the fish, how well co ordinated they all worked, in a real team, with different colours, yet moving towards the same direction...in harmony...peace...

# MY EXPERIENCE OF BEING A LEARNER ON THE #CREATIVEHE COURSE

## Ruth Proctor

*Ruth is a Senior Lecturer in Primary Education at Manchester Metropolitan University. She is in her third year as an initial teacher educator teaching on both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Previously, she worked in schools and EYFS settings across London and the north-west of England. She is currently working towards her EdD exploring student perspectives on play in the Higher Education learning environment. Ruth has an interest in creative learning and teaching approaches and experiments with these in her own practice.*

## Introduction

In this article I will describe my own involvement in the #creativeHE course that was offered in January 2017. My challenge for the #creativeHE week course was how to fit in time to contribute, make and reflect on my own learning whilst holding on to enough energy and enthusiasm for another jam-packed week of teaching and learning with my students. I approached the week with excitement and a little trepidation. I hoped that if I threw myself into the experience I would somehow find more time and energy for everything I needed to do during the five days.

The course facilitators were warm and welcoming and set the tone for an inspiring few days. Chrissi Nerantzi reminded us, as participants, that we were learning together. We would be learning to be more creative in our learning and teaching in Higher Education and our diversity was part of our strength.

The plan was set. For five days participants would engage with the following activities:
- *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*

and share ideas and creating conversations around everyone's contributions.

What follows is my attempt to share my personal experience of the course including what it was like to be a learner in the process, what helped and hindered my ability to learn during the week and how I grappled with fitting the experience into a busy working week.

## Day 1: Creativity in HE

On Monday our challenge was to create a promotional box for a creative and inspiring teaching situation that we had experienced as learners. How had the experience engaged us and promoted our learning in a memorable way? We were encouraged to share our box designs and talk to others about them, reflecting together.



Back late from work after a full day of teaching I had a look around to see what others had been posting in the hope that inspiration would strike.

My first post was a little tentative confessing to peeping at other people's contributions,

*"...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."*
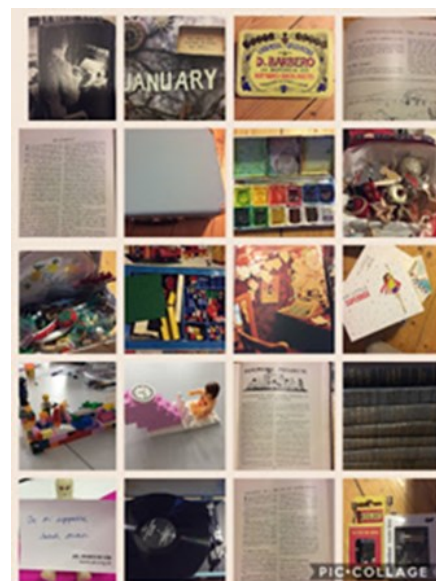
Something that struck me then and that I am finding more and more, is that although I think play can be creative, and that play can be solitary, I've shifted to see creativity as more of a social, collaborative process than the lone genius having a spark of brand new creation.

Karen Tuzylak welcomed me to the group commenting on my post, *"I'm now thinking about all the different types of boxes and what they say about learning. :)"*.

Me *"...I think there's something to learning and creating something through making, and how making through that process creates thinking, but I'm just not sure how to articulate that yet. I guess I'll just have to keep playing with stuff and trying things out and see where it takes me."*

Karen started me thinking. I realise the pictures I have shared do not really represent a memorable learning experience for me not in the same way that a simple cardboard box might.

I post again, *"I've changed my mind I think I want this box instead."*

Chrissi Nerantzi reassured me, commenting that *"the person who can't change their mind, can't change anything"*. She encouraged me to think about why such a box was special for me and how it might link with me as a learner as well as my students as learners.

Sandra Sinfield added a great idea with her description of a *"Maker Day"* she has used successfully with her students. It sounded brilliant and started me thinking about how I might be able to adapt the idea to use with some of my students.

Norman Jackson reminded me that, *"these boxes offer affordance for so many things in fact my grandsons would probably prefer these to play with than their toys"*.

Their thoughtful contributions caused me to reflect on how important it was to find time and energy to put into my own learning. How could I keep working to become a better teacher if I was not also developing as a learner? By sharing my ideas, however small, I was making connections with people and drawing on their ideas and experiences. Their guidance and encouragement prompted me to reflect again.
*"I wasn't really happy with the boxes that I'd collected together for the first activity, as I wasn't sure that they were the best representations of creativity or how I learn.*

*When I was an EYFS teacher cardboard boxes were probably my second favourite resource after Community Playthings® hollow and unit blocks, - both can do similar jobs...although maybe the cardboard box is even more powerful. In fact, when the wooden blocks first arrived in my last EYFS setting the first couple of days were taken over with putting the cardboard boxes to work as learning resources, the £3000 worth of shiny wood didn't get a look in!*

*Norman, I think you're right it's the affordance for so many things that makes the magic and the beauty of a cardboard box. & Chrissi, I have lots of jumbled happy memories of the children in my classes creating & making all sorts of things out of giant cardboard boxes - who'd have thought you can get so much learning and creation from a free resource?*

*Which reminds me, I have a play workshop with our EYFS Primary Ed specialists in a few weeks, I think I might have to try and make friends with the local B&Q and see if they will let me have some of their enormous packaging boxes for the occasion. A bit like your Maker Day, I hope Sandra! Who knows, we might end up as engrossed in our making as the boy in the picture!"*

It is only Day 1 and I have already gained new insight from this experience so far.

## Day 2 – Play and Games



*Our Tuesday challenge was to explore play. We were invited to create a playful induction activity that could be used when a new group of learners come together. The purpose would be for them to get to know each other, open up and lay the foundations of the learning community that would be formed. The activity should also enable the teacher/ facilitator to participate.*

That day I had been teaching a new subject [Primary Languages] to a new group of students on a different campus. I was nervous about getting started but inspired to try and be brave and put some #creativeHE ideas into practice. I started by introducing myself to the group and telling them a story of my own language learning experience to put them at their ease. Modelling first, I encouraged the students to use puppets and Lego® mini -figures for our first speaking and listening experience. I was hoping to create a relaxed atmosphere, where it was okay to make mistakes and where all the attention was on the puppets and mini-figures not the people doing the talking. It seemed to go quite well, much better than I feared, so by the time I got home I was feeling encouraged and keen to explore the day's #creativeHE challenge.

Seeing everyone's fantastic ideas I wondered if my own idea was playful enough.

*"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 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."*

I was inspired to try this approach having read Chrissi's article with Craig Despard on Lego® models and reflection, where I stumbled across their ideas around Papert's constructionism[1]. 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 my new students a little bit of context as to why I felt that there might be a place for play in the Higher Education learning environment. I hoped that through encountering the theory and taking part in an activity they might also potentially make some connections between their own experiences and what is going on in Early Years environments when children are playing. Also, sometimes I really miss being an Early Years teacher so I am always looking for an excuse to play.

## Day 3 – Using Story

On Wednesday we explored the use of story for learning and teaching. We were encouraged to tell our story creating a picture book based on the key messages of a Piaget chapter that spoke to us [2] Storybird was suggested as a tool https://storybird.com/.



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.



Being a teacher can be the best job in the whole world she thought. You never have to stop learning. You never have to stop playing. You never have to grow up, whispered a thought.

Half-way through the week I was feeling tired. Telling my story gave me a quiet, reflective pause in the middle of a busy week. My students had been asking me some probing questions that day, sharing their own hopes and fears. It was the perfect moment to think about what learning and education mean to me. *Why am I here? Why are we doing this? Do I enjoy it?* I wondered if today had been a breakthrough moment. I was so happy when one of my Early Years children would challenge me with a seemingly simple yet deep and challenging question like this. I wondered if my confidence was developing now that I was also confident to answer these questions openly and honestly at university too. Perhaps taking risks through #creativeHE was having a wider impact than I had realised.
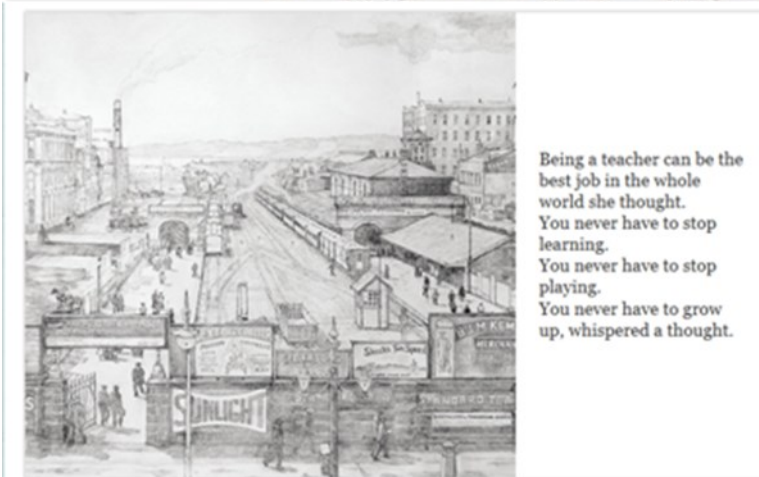
## Day 4 – Learning through making

Already Day 4! We are invited to create a model of our ideal learning space and take a picture of it to share online.

I get started on this task a day late after an unexpected dinner invitation on Thursday and falling asleep exhausted as soon as I got home. #creativeHE combined with work is inspiring but exhausting! With an extra day's thinking time I had lots of ideas I hoped to develop in my model. Drawing on Biesta's idea of the beautiful risk of education I wanted to create an environment for the beautiful risk of learning[3].

This "*hopefully shows a space which sometimes 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…*

*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.

There's floor for napping or curling up with a good book.

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 swim-suited 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...".

## Day 5 - Celebrating Creativity – Reflection and Action Plan

**Friday already and today participants have an opportunity to reflect on their learning and make plans for our future practice.**

*"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.]"*

Inspired by the course and by De Koven's reminder that there is a productive power in the brave vulnerability of play; play can connect us and enable us to create, I try to create my playful manifesto (De Koven, 2014).

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, - encouraging 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.

One thing I didn't think I would be doing was to contribute to this issue of Creative Academic Magazine, so retrospectively I will add this to my action points as a means of honouring and consolidating what I have learnt from this valuable learning experience. In the process I hope it will help others appreciate the value of participating in the #creativeHE social learning experience.

## Reflections on pedagogy

I really like the enabling pedagogic practices of #creativeHE. I think the warmth, encouragement and active participation of the facilitators encouraged me to challenge myself and take some risks as a participant both online and in my practice. Being welcomed by the community, both by new and established members, created a collaborative learning environment where I could connect with others, play and share ideas in a supportive but stimulating space. The course structure of #creativeHE provides a stimulus but not constraint allowing learning to flow in new and unexpected directions as it develops. This mix of scope and support opens up creative

possibilities in our thinking and practice as participants.

What I want to get across is that I love how the learning in #creativeHE never quite goes in the direction you might have envisaged, - which is a positively productive, disruptive and good thing. That unexpected movement is definitely supported by the comments, thoughts, questions and ideas of other participants and the facilitators. Also, it really surprises me how it seems possible to connect with people you might never meet in real life, so that you are learning together, even though you are not physically present in the same physical space. I find that so interesting. I enjoyed discovering how #creativeHE could support social learning in a way that I hadn't previously encountered online and look forward to continuing to contribute to the community.

**Sources for article**
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*Additional Supporting Resources used during the course:*
Nerantzi, C. & James, A. (Guest eds.) (2015) Exploring Play in Higher Education, Creative Academic Magazine, Issue 2a, Issue 2b, June 2015, available at http://www.creativeacademic.uk/magazine.html
CELT Storytelling resources http://www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/teaching/storytelling.php
CELT LEGO in HE resources http://www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/teaching/lego_sp.php

*Image credit:* https://thumbs.dreamstime.com/t/hope-woman-s-hands-hold-stone-word-46090449.jpg

# MY SHORT JOURNEY THROUGH THE ENCHANTED WATERS OF CREATIVITY: Why – 'A smooth sea never made a skilled mariner' aka an easy course will never encourage you to use your creativity

## Sebastian Kozbial

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## Cast off

Dear reader – if you think the following is going to be a description of an act of smooth sailing, a reflection upon a great course that is easy, helpful and one that everyone should do – please stop reading. If you are still here… prepare yourself for a storm of emotions. Hopefully you will still be on the ship at the end!



Julian Burton http://www.delta7.com/

My main motivation for joining 'MMU FLEX 30 Creativity in Learning' was the fact that I had become dissatisfied with certain aspects of my classes in terms of creativity and my personal enjoyment when delivering them. I would not go as far as to say that my classes were dull; I simply felt that whilst being creative is one thing, putting my creativity under scrutiny would be an extra step I would be willing to take, particularly when thinking about potential input from other members of the FLEX30 community – both students and mentors. Moreover, reflecting on my own classroom tasks is yet another way of ensuring that the opportunities for learning as a professional are not lost. Gibbs[1] emphasises the need for reflection after any experience. He suggests that professionals often do not fully comprehend the potential of reviewing and re-thinking past experiences, and that it is not enough just to participate as the experience can be quickly forgotten. In other words – I consciously decided to change my ways and challenge myself – a choice that I would regret many times and be grateful for even more.

An additional reason why I am so keen on the idea of reflection is that one of my classes (English for University Study) in Term 2 focuses on this type of academic process/writing. Here, I face constant questions (from my students) – '*Why do we need reflective writing?*', '*I don't like reflective writing because it's not academic*' or '*In my postgraduate course there won't be any reflections*' which needed addressing. There are not many EFL courses that include reflective writing, thus, I wanted to: 1) illustrate to my students that at every stage of one's career the act of reflection is important and 2) emphasise the significance of reflective thinking/writing as an essential tool for their future development as learners. Therefore, what could be better than showing my students that I often struggle, as they do, that reflecting is very important and that reflection is not something they can master within days

The above reasons could be described as a source of intrinsic motivation, something that, I believe, is necessary in order to be successful whilst participating in this challenging and demanding course, and something that researchers consider to be important for engaging with our creativity.

## What? – 'Eighty-four days without taking a fish'

In spite of knowing the outline of this course, I was struck by how much work I had to do in order to design creative tasks for each day of the course. As this was done online (via Google +) once posted, every task was instantly put under constructive scrutiny. This was extremely helpful but, at the beginning, frightening, as my classmates and tutors were very vocal in asking for further explanations and suggesting improvements. Nonetheless, it was surprisingly impressive how quickly this process has become a part of my routine: reading suggested sources for each day, designing an activity, trialling it (if possible) with a class, posting this online, responding to comments and commenting on other people's posts. This is a cycle that I often repeated and thought of as extremely difficult. However, insightful observations offered by 'FLEX30 community' encouraged me to look at other participants' contributions and also offer my thoughts in respect of their work. If my input had not received so much attention, I would not have become that involved. During the first day I had done this only four times, but by the end of day three I had posted 27 times – sharing, discussing challenging and supporting my classmates. At this point I need to highlight that however much time I allocated on a daily basis to participate, I never felt it was sufficient.

It was extremely frustrating, painful even to be constantly catching up with various posts. At first, I thought it might have been due to my teaching workload, then I blamed my insufficient organisation. There was even a time I blamed other participants for being too active and having too much 'free' time, knowing that all are active academics, occupied with their work. Madness? Most definitely; it happens when getting slightly closer to the perfect storm… now, I believe the entire course made me more reflectively active and regardless of the outcome, I still want to improve my tasks.

## How: 'There is hope on the horizon'

The course included five main themes;
Day 1: Creativity in HE
Day 2: Play and games
Day 3: Using story
Day 4: Learning through making
Day 5: Celebrating creativity

This could be translated into creating: 1) a box representing a course I had attended, 2) an induction task for a chosen course 3) a summary/paraphrase of the given book using *Storybird*, 4) a creative space – an ideal learning environment, and 5) a reflective story based on our experience from this course.

When constructing these, I often used words/phrases such as 'frustrating', 'not sure', 'not convinced' or 'trying'. Smooth sailing? Well, let me focus on two tasks that were particularly interesting, when my hypothetical boat needed piloting in order to be berthed.

## Day 2 – A storm is brewing

In my course induction sessions, I usually create some answers about myself and then students need to create (grammatically tolerable) questions. Then the roles change slightly and, in groups, students need to create their own answer(s) and others try to form questions. I have used spaghetti and marshmallows to build towers in groups (whoever can build the highest tower that 'survives' for 1 minute wins) and during this task they are encouraged to chat with each other; I often use technology (e.g. nearpod, kahoot, padlet or socrative) and make sure it is useful rather than disruptive.

> **Intrinsic Motivation Principle** people will be most creative when they feel motivated primarily by the interest, satisfaction, and challenge of the work itself — not by external pressures. **Teresa Amabile**[2]
> What really gets creative [people] fired up is, well, ourselves. That is, *intrinsic motivation*. If we can imagine an achievement, see ourselves progressing toward that goal, and understand that we are gaining new skills and knowledge, we will be driven to do great work. **Jocelyn K. Glei**[3]

Nonetheless, the task I proposed was slightly outside of my comfort zone (I will need a bigger boat) using Lego, an idea based on the proposed reading and video suggested for that day – an additional aspect that I must highlight as being fantastic during this course. Here, it might be worth mentioning that the idea of a 'flipped classroom' worked rather well during FLEX30, as it pushed the participants into fully preparing before they made any online submissions/posts This also meant that we were able to work and participate at different times, as it often proves difficult to work around a full-time job.

**A sample task:**
Phase 1: Each person is asked to select two characters (two personas representing themselves – an optimist and a pessimist).

In groups, participants need to explain why they have chosen each character. They should of course build up their Lego men using the parts provided.



An optimist – always thinks he is able to rob, steal and plunder more each day

A pessimist – thinks he will die soon defending others → this is just a matter of time

Phase 2: Afterwards, 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 or 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?
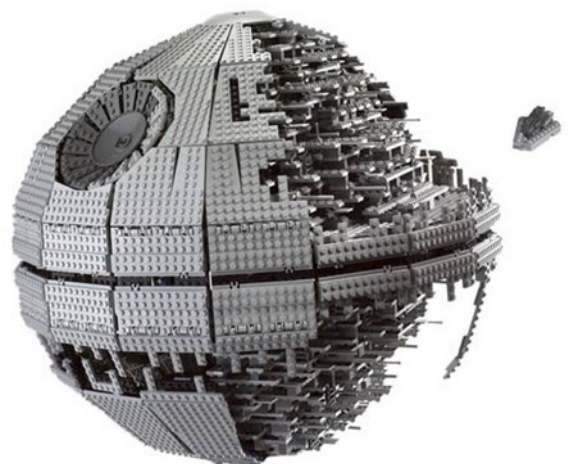
## So how did I benefit from engaging with this challenge?

Firstly, I enjoyed thinking about and designing this task more than I had anticipated. When I started, I was encouraged to consider the context of my classes and the outcome of this induction. My primary questions were a) What do I want to achieve? and b) How will I make it creative?

I decided to use LEGO, as I was inspired by a video created by Manchester Met's CELT where Stephanie Aldred (a senior lecturer) uses LEGO to aid EFL learners' ability to explain their 'English learning journey'. Comments like:



A pirate/cowboy – thinks he can die soon but knows everybody does eventually...

*I love the idea but, as a linguist, appreciate how difficult this would be for people whose first language is not English*

*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.*

encouraged me re-think the above, ensuring that I did not rest on my laurels. I felt exuberant and wanted to do more; this task will definitely become a part of my next induction. I have creative ownership of the idea and this will motivate me to implement it and turn it into new practices at the next available opportunity.

## Day 3 – Riding the storm

This was possibly the most frustrating part of the course – why? Because I had spent hours redrafting and re-writing my story based on Piaget's 'To Understand is to Invent – the Future of Education'. I began with a simple paraphrase that was more of an academic exercise than anything else but I did not like it. After this, I decided to create a narrative with one character... then with three characters representing different points of view. Finally, I wrote a poem and added illustrations using *storybird.com*. I include a selection here:



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."

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

'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...'
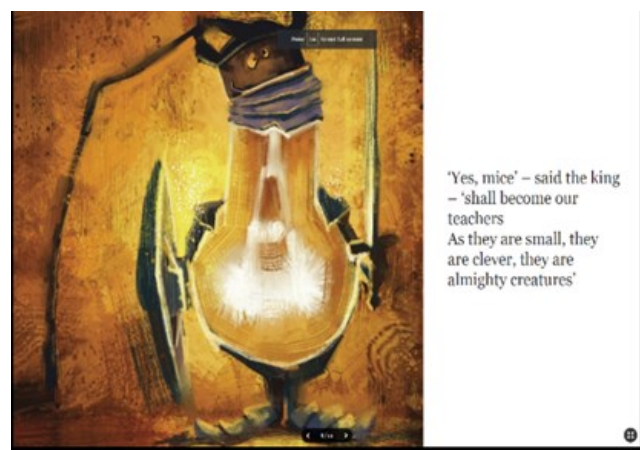
To my surprise, the comments made by participants were overwhelmingly positive:

*WOW! No wonder it took you time*

*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.*

*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*

## What next? – no longer a landlubber… more a farer on the seas of creative possibility

As I wrote in my initial reflections, I will try to be more creative (wow, how insightful). As I really like the idea of students being responsible for their own learning through stories, I want to create a small project where students find their favourite book, possibly in their first language, and then 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. Further-more, despite being a huge fan of technology, I generally thought that my students would not be interested in using Google+, Edmodo or blogs. However, after experiencing this from a learner's perspective, I am keen to try it. As mentioned before, I also realised the importance of being a part of a learning process. My next big challenge is to invite my leaners to follow my 'reflective blog' that is being used to assess FLEX30; to see my work and how it changes/improves with time when feedback is applied. By doing the above, I would like to encourage them to be more adventurous. This way I hope they realise that imperfection (occasionally failure) is only a stage, a natural and not 'so-negative' step that eventually leads to success.

## Reflections on the #creativeHE pedagogy – *fruit flies like bananas*

When I asked my students to describe their ideal learning space, the majority of answers revolved around high-tech equipment and modern spaces. One student however uttered: 'as long as we have a teacher that believes in us, we are happy'. The rest agreed. In spite of declaring this profound truth, this particular student had mentioned IPads and touchscreen smart boards first. I believe it could be used as an example of how #creatveHE has influenced me; I realised I should not stop and be satisfied with my own 'IPad' answer – I should keep search-ing and improving them. 'Kant's idea of self-reflective examination of the limits and validity of our own knowledge and understandings'[4:9] is particularly valid here.

The idea of 'critical pedagogy' was visible throughout this course. Our mentors would comment on our work on a regular basis focusing on the process, on the future reoccurrences of particular tasks rather than on the finished product. We were encouraged to redefine our ideas and recreate them, taking our context into consideration. The main stress was placed on the potential of utilising our skills and creativity in the context of developing an alternative relational pedagogy, where the personal needs and desires of students (in this case us) were 'at the centre of the struggle for a more democratic' and challenging course of study in higher education [5:644]. This of course means that we had to display rigid organisation and because of that, this course was even more difficult.

This of course might often be quite frustrating, when we realise our creative task will never be perfect or fully finished, but this, in my opinion, encourages creativity even further. Dant[6] illustrates the above using *an argument parallel* – something that can never be finalised or definitively resolved; it is 'an argument against the possibility of a final solution' (ibid. 19).

Adding the power of reflection and the notion of creativity, I realised (how reflectively splendid of me!) that without intrinsic motivation I would never be able to fully engage with the course. Moreover, I would never be as vocal, as innovative and frustratingly persistent in improving my work if it was not for my motivation and willingness to improve as a practitioner.

Perhaps five days in a row of constant work was too intense and this could have been divided into one task per week. This might have encouraged more reflection and would have given us/the students more time to complete each task. At the same time, I understand that short bursts of intensive 'organised' creativity might be more productive. The above can be linked with the emotional journey that I have been through. I often blamed various aspects of the course or my weaknesses and it recalled my experience as a learner of English – both positive and negative. Facing new tasks with a constant pressure of time, using unfamiliar platforms to display my work (Google+, Twitter – yes I know - and WordPress), putting my work under scrutiny or working on tasks that were outside my comfort zone, such as my induction task, could be given as examples of times when my anxiety was taking over. On the other hand, learning new things and realising I can be more organised than ever before, learning new skills and technology, receiving constructive criticism and designing creative tasks, were definitely examples of overwhelmingly positive moments during this course – something I would love for my students to experience.

Finally, I used this article as a possibility to reflect on my journey through the enchanted waters of creativity, and I strongly believe that this task could become an integral part of the future re-runs of #creativeHE, where students could publish their reflections. This could take the form of a separate task or be a part of the final assessment where students are asked to collaborate in order to produce an online magazine (a collection of reflective articles drawing on their experiences and the insights they have gained).
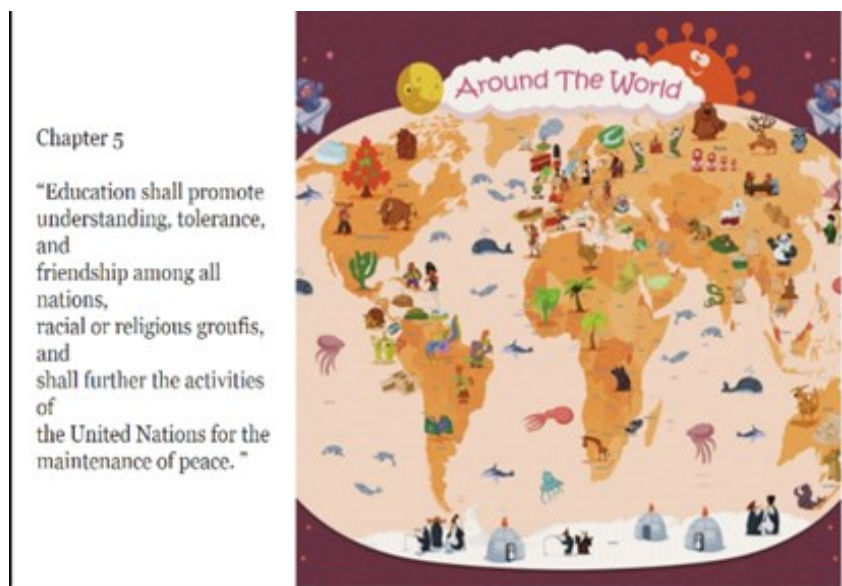
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Illustration of ship on treacherous seas by Julian Burton http://www.delta7.com/

# Open invitation

Participate in the **Pedagogic Innovators** study or short **#pin**.

This study will investigate

1) The beliefs, attitudes and values of higher education teachers as pedagogic innovators.
2) Conceptions of pedagogic innovation in the context of their practice, their curricular design and students' development.
3) Enabling and prohibiting factors of becoming pedagogic innovators for academics and other professionals who teach or support learning in HE

Check out the survey at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdHLaXOs4xW55hFktGCu225x3LvcR_e-KcHQWaKGTWYIxBwYQ/viewform for information regarding this project, to provide your consent after reading the related documentation  carefully and to complete the **#pin** survey.

The project is supported by **Barbara Thomas**, HE Consultant and **Prof. Norman Jackson**, founder of the Creative Academic Network. Outputs from this study will be openly licensed and shared with the wider academic community so that we can all benefit.

Please share this invitation with further colleagues teaching in higher education who might also be interested. Thank you very much.

Chrissi (Nerantzi) and research collaborators