

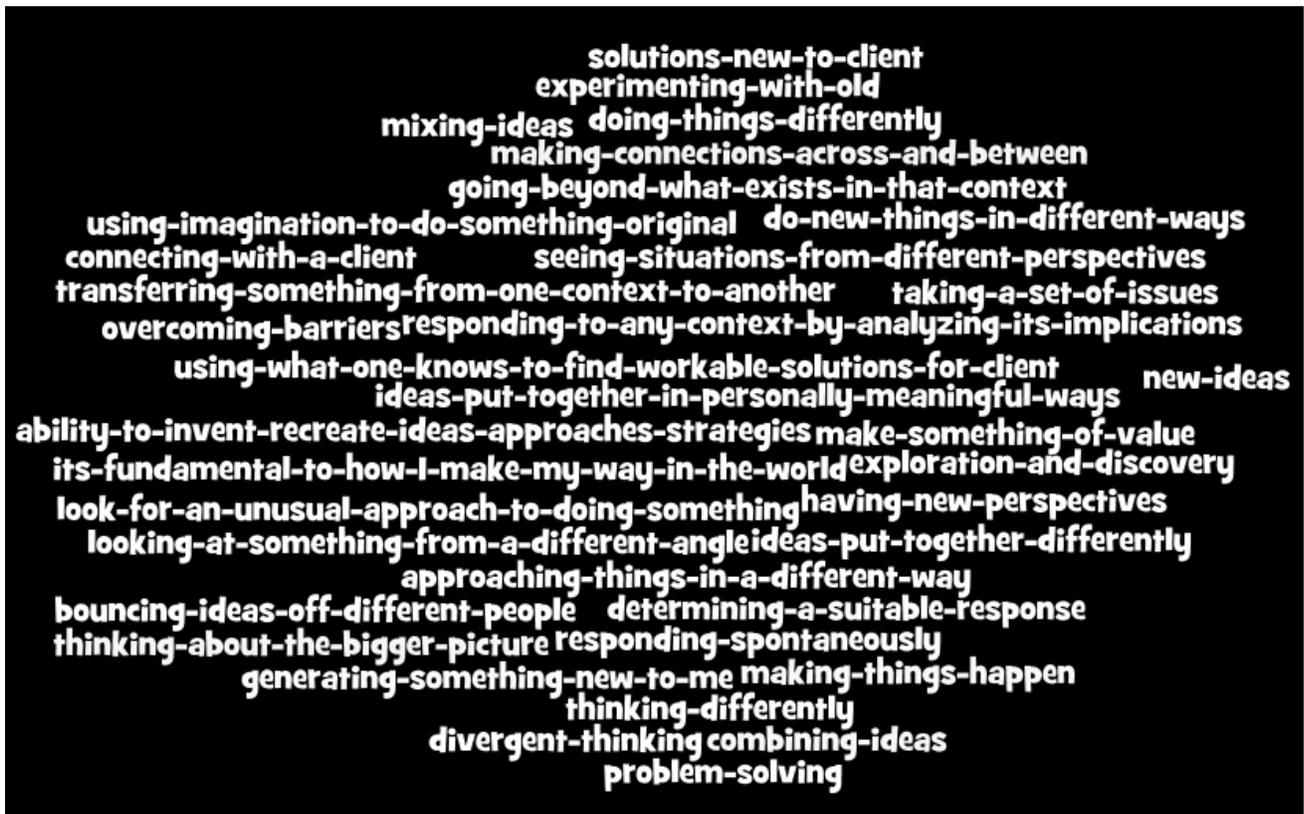
WORKING PAPER version 11/10/13

Educational Developers' Perspectives on Creativity in Educational Development

NORMAN JACKSON

<http://www.normanjackson.co.uk/>

Some of the ways educational developers view their creativity



INTRODUCTION

This working paper was produced in collaboration with eighteen educational developers. Its purpose is to help promote a professional conversation about the role of creativity in educational development work and it was produced as a background paper for keynote presentation at SEDA's 2013 conference on Creativity in Educational Development. It builds on, and connects to, a series of working papers I produced for the Higher Education Academy's Imaginative Curriculum project between 2003-5¹ which were based on a series of email surveys of perceptions of creativity amongst

¹ <http://www.normanjackson.co.uk/creativity.html>

academics and professional practitioners in eight disciplines. A similar approach was adopted in the current study.

Thirty three individuals working in the broad field of educational development (educational, curriculum, learning, e-learning/technology enhanced learning) were identified through personal knowledge, JISC mail lists, Linked-in and internet searches. A personalised invitation to join the survey was sent by email. Twenty one people responded (see acknowledgements) and their responses were anonymised, collated, analysed and organised with minimal commentary to form a draft report. The draft report was provided back to contributors with an invitation to develop further the perspectives offered and to identify any aspect of creativity and educational development they thought was missing or under-represented. The report continued to be developed and refined in the light of feedback and as further contributions were received.

In addition to the email survey a small number of developers were interviewed using skype/oovoo video chat.

What's the point?

We live in a very busy world and few individuals are able to devote the time and effort required to comprehensively examine and elaborate an aspect of themselves like their own creativity. Pooling multiple perspectives in this way facilitates the construction of a more comprehensive picture of this phenomenon across a practice field. There are at least five reasons for this exercise.

Firstly, the compiled responses allow people working in the field of educational development to see how other developers perceive their creativity. Knowing how other people in your field of practice see something has the potential to be reassuring, enlightening and reaffirming.

Secondly, gaining insights into what other practitioners think may also help us recognise aspects of ourselves and of our own practice.

Thirdly, if we hold different perceptions and perspectives, the document enables us to understand better our differences compared to other developers.

Fourthly, revealing beliefs and perspectives that are often hidden provides a starting point for building the conceptual vocabulary necessary for professional conversations about the role of creativity in developmental practices within the educational field.

Fifthly, it highlights to colleagues working in other higher education fields, especially institutional managers, the important and distinctive way in which personal creativity is applied in educational development work together with the factors that encourage or discourage its presence.

Finally, it provides a starting point for more detailed enquiry into the role of creativity in educational development - perhaps through detailed narratives of educational developer work processes in specific contexts and situations. As with any aspect of human achievement the devil is always in the detail.

SURVEY RESULTS

PERCEPTIONS OF CREATIVITY

1) What does being creative mean to you in any context and in the context of your work as a developer. *Are they the same/different?*

For the educational developer the essence of their creativity lies in certain ways of *thinking* (thinking freshly/out of the box/combining ideas) and *applying such thinking* often in relation to changing or challenging what currently exists in order to *create something new or to make something or make something happen*. It involves going beyond what currently exists in the contexts in which the developer is working.

Being creative for me is about having new perspectives, doing things differently and about making things happen. E

[It's about] seeing situations from different perspectives K

Creativity means going beyond what has been done before I

being able to look at new concepts and ideas and put them together in different but personally meaningful ways.. N

It is not just being able to dream up ideas but implement them. I think the action and being able to act is a vital part of what we do as developers. L

I see creativity as something like using one's imagination to do something original. M

I think creativity can manifest in many contexts, in mine it means thinking differently and approaching things in a different way - ie not always following the trodden path or even "approved" path eg to project management if you think it will not work for you area. P

In life in general, I associate the notion of being creative, primarily, as having an aesthetic dimension and involving the creation of some kind of art or communications artefact - a piece of music or theatre, a visual display (in any form), dance, creative narratives... In the context of our academic development work, it is more specifically associated in my mind (tacitly, rather than explicitly) with divergent thinking and the ability to invent and re-create ideas, approaches and strategies. I think I need to make better connections! Q

For being a developer, it means I always look for an unusual approach to doing something, but preferably something that will be fun for those doing the developing with me and not something that will make them feel awkward or that the approach is trivial. R

Designing or developing something new, or a new combination or approach T

In the general I think of creativity as being something that I would relate to a concept of being imaginative, something that is not ordinary, that is different, making something interesting out of something that is ordinary.... I suppose I would also think of creativity as "making" in general whether that is food, clothes, home, in the sense of putting things together so they are attractive, arty, eye catching etc. With regard to my work as a developer, creativity again means doing

something different, making an activity or an event attractive to encourage people to want to engage with an idea or message I want to get across with regard to teaching and learning, in a way that inspires them to think creatively about engaging with their own students U

A number of respondents mentioned that creativity was a source of pleasure and joy and one respondent considered that it helped her engage people at an emotional level.

I espouse David Gauntlett's view that being creative involves doing something in a new way, but also with joy involved...

I kind of think of creativity as also making something more interesting to others by virtue of being fun, inspirational, something that has the ability to affect others at an emotional as well as an intellectual level.

But the drive for creativity can also be triggered by being uncomfortable or dissatisfied with something.

Being creative to me means that you are unsettled in your mind. You look to do things differently with an overall aim to create something that is better from what you already have. V

For the developer these thoughts and actions are not random they are motivated and guided by concerns for the educational needs of others, and interests and concerns that matter to them. Creativity is focused on problem solving, overcoming barriers and communicating with people to enrich their perspectives in the contexts they are working.

Probably creativity generally is about generating something new to me which brings me some satisfaction because I've done something innovative. As a developer, it's in accordance with that - but in response to an educational need or aspiration which matters to me H

At work being creative is also about problem solving and overcoming barriers and providing feedback so that my clientshave a different perception to consider B

responding spontaneously to things needed by the people with whom I'm working I

As a developer, I think that creativity is about taking a set of issues perceived as a problem and using what one knows from both experience and the literature to find workable solutions that are acceptable and practical to the 'client'. The result may not be original in the wider scheme of things, but it is for the 'client'. M

One respondent drew attention to the influence of context on individuals' creativity utilisation in specific situations.

Being creative is simply a human characteristic of responding to any context by analyzing its implications and determining a suitable response. We accuse ourselves of being uncreative, because instead of making music or entertainment ourselves, we switch on music and entertainment created by others; but that's really just a question of degree. There is an inevitable element of contextualization; 'situated creativity', perhaps, which makes creativity more or less explicit depending on context, with the associated assumption that those who work in that context are more creative than those who don't. S

Many developers apply their creative thoughts and actions at different levels in their organisation and this requires the ability to think and act at different scales and in the contexts of those scales - perhaps this is the essential difference between a developer with a cross-contextual role and a teacher who is focused on a single context.

It involves thinking about the bigger picture, the smaller elements and making connections across and between C

A key focus for the developers' creativity is their relationship and work with their clients - how they relate, understand, empathise with, engage, enthuse, change perceptions and co-create meaning. Enabling other people to be creative is part of the creative work of the developer.

In my development work, creativity is often required in order to connect with a given 'client' in order to 'bring alive' relevant personal meaning for them of the values and actions that I am wishing to foster. F

providing feedback so that my clients...have a different perception to consider

As a developer, being creative means that you try to find ways to enthuse other people to be creative V

I think the limits of good teaching are the limits of the teacher's imagination so whether or not we are that creative I think a fundamental part of our work as developers is to help faculty to be imaginative about what they do, and I think we probably do that best by giving them the reasons why they might/should want to do things in a different or particular way and then being able to support that with good case-study examples to illustrate what is possible. M

Being creative involves having certain *conditions* in the context within which creativity is being enacted, like having time, space and flexibility to engage in certain *processes* or work in certain ways and having the permission, freedom and autonomy to do things in the way that they believe is necessary.

having the freedom to do new things in different ways ...I think in our department we have a mandate to be creative... N

It involves an element of exploration (e.g. researching good practice or theories) and bouncing ideas off different people. It involves thinking about the bigger picture, the smaller elements and making connections across and between, and finding analogies

Creative for me means to experiment with old and new ideas, mix them up and make something of value that enhances something, an experience, a relationship, a programme, anything really. L

Being creative also requires a level of knowledge, expertise and mastery in the developmental role.

in order to take risks, you need to know your job, you need to have the confidence and the competence. L

[to perform creatively] requires a broad understanding / knowledge of different ways of doing things, and key issues and initiatives both locally and across the sector

Judgements of personal creativity in a particular domain (like work) can be relative to individuals' perceptions of their own creativity in other domains (like a domain in which artistic expression is realised).

I'm fairly creative in dance (I think), I like to interpret the music & create shapes as fits the music, but I don't think I'm so good at being creative in my work. T

Judgements of personal creativity can also be made in respect of perceptions of other individuals' creativity in the same domain.

although I do not consider myself to be creative I know others are. Have you contacted the LDHEN list? There are some wonderfully creative developers who participate in the discussions on there.

Being creative engenders certain feelings that contribute to a sense of wellbeing - like excitement, joy, contentment and fulfillment.

There's a fairly big element of risk-taking - trying new things - but this is what's fun about it, being a bit of a maverick. It's energetic and exciting and a really enjoyable aspect of my role. C

Being creative outside work to me means creating joyful and life affirming activities that they want to engage in - it is similar at work A

being creative gives me wings. It is amazing how time flies when creative powers take over. L

In some responses there is a sense of combining things that already exist for example 'bringing unlikely 'elements' together'. Perhaps a willingness to try to see situations from different or multiple perspectives and of transferring ideas cross contexts. The idea of contextual translators and transformers would seem to be significant for some developers.

[It's] a mix of looking at something from a different angle, combining ideas, and transferring something from one context to a different context - perhaps a combination of some or all of these E

Some responses touch on what motivates people to be creative for example interest, challenge, the experience of doing something that is new and the avoidance of boredom.

New challenges and novel problems to be tackled prompt me to be creative in my work. I think that also I may choose to be creative when asked to do something that has been done many times before, in order to stave off boredom. E

The view that creativity in development work was similar to the developers use of creativity in other contexts was suggested in a number of responses.

In essence, creativity for me is similar in all work and non-work contexts, including my work as an educational developer, staff developer and leader and manager. E

I spend a lot of time being creative when I am gardening - working out flower beds, trying new plants and new ways of growing things, getting ideas from others and adapting them for my plot. This is not too different from being creative as an ed developer K

outside of the classroom it is in homey stuff - this year my big creative project was my garden! R

Cooking: I love the combination of flavours from middle east and Asia with Greek herbs and olive oil for example V

The environment in which a developer works may cause them to reflect on and develop new perspectives on what creativity means. These reflections illustrate this process very well.

One of the reasons I decided to work at a School of Art and Design, having no background in those disciplines myself, was to test the transferability of the mechanisms and ideas I was starting to use in a different developmental context. The short answer to my implicit question was that most important ideas are completely transferable. Educational development is arguably a tautology; development is education, and vice versa. My purpose is to help people become whatever it is that they feel drawn or destined to become, so almost by definition an educational intent which is not transferable is not very educational. Now, one of the phrases that soon began to annoy me at Art School was "we creatives...". "Creative" was new to me as a noun, and I found it implicitly discriminatory - ironic in an environment where the value of diversity is naturally very strong. When my colleagues begin a sentence with "we creatives..." the unintentional subtext is "I'm now going to explain something to you which I assume you and certain others don't yet understand, because you're not a 'creative'"! Actually, this presents developmental opportunities in itself, especially in a context where it's safe to unpick this idea with the folk concerned. What is it that leads them to assume that the word "creative" is a useful categorization for talking about the difference between me and them? This may sound as if I pick arguments with 'arrogant' artists who have piqued my sense of inferiority! It's not like that at all; the 'arguments' are usually warm discussions based around testing an assumption that lies at the heart of the professional identity of these colleagues. Because they are artists or designers, their identity is imbued with a notion of creativity that is so taken for granted that it becomes like the colour of their skin - something they don't think about, except in contrast with those who don't appear to share it. Eventually they may come to consider that their creativity, like the colour of their skin, is not a comparator between themselves and others that has any value as such. Its value lies in how it connects people instead.

The value to me as a developer has been to test my own assumptions about creativity. I actually thought I wasn't very creative until I started here and discovered that creativity was fundamental to how I make my way in the world. I am very clumsy when it comes to designing or making artefacts which serve a specific purpose or capture a specific visual message, but when one of those creative colleagues (who is very good at that sort of thing) comes to me with a dilemma about their own or their students' education, I have to be intensely creative in terms of my definition of creativity: analyzing the context and determining a response. S

CREATIVITY IN DEVELOPMENT WORK

2) What sort of things do you do in your development work that requires you to be creative?

Educational development is rich in affordances for creativity. Creativity has the potential to emerge from every aspect of development work, for example in the *imagination* seeing the possibility in the ideas and practices of others, in the *design process* which transfers and turns ideas into rough plans for practice in new contexts, in implementing the plan - *in playing and experimenting* with ideas and in the *performance and improvisations of the collaborative transaction* that will surely emerge.. or in the *outcomes of learning and development and the evaluation of the effects of development work*.

The potential for creativity is everywhere.

Approaches ie to organisation of resources, structures; strategic - creating strategy, new approaches; presentations - keynotes, presenting my research and experiences; teaching. Pretty much everything. P

There is a sense that this potential is liberated through the imagination, willfulness, capability and performance of the developer engaging in a purposeful and meaningful way with the people they work with.

Imagination seeing the possibility in the ideas and practices of others

Picking up an educational idea by someone else which is new to me and my students or transforming something which is not directly related to education, and relating it usefully to education H

Imagining myself looking back at the blockage I have to overcome, and working out how I could have overcome it H

Finding ways to persuade students to do something which is new for them as well as me, and which they did not generate (as I did). H

My creativity radar is tuned into how imagination functions, how synchronic and diachronic media experiences shape learning expectations in society. For example: Why does the iPad signal 'better learning' even before it is physically available, and why are certain technologies such as the iPad exempt from empirical scrutiny while others, such as Xbox are almost automatically excluded. I guess it boils down to a belief that educational developers, once employed for their technological skill and knowledge need to have a deep understanding of how hyper-reality can become reality for people with a shallow history of embodied experience. G

I do a lot of imagining! An idea that has intrigued me since I have been here is that of the ethical imagination; that we cannot understand the perspective of other people as if it is our own - we have to imagine it. Empathy therefore depends on the imagination, and there is an ethical requirement to reach for the understandings of others through the imagination. It's perhaps different from ways of imagining a fantastic new world where horses have two heads and bizarre adventures happen which get published in a series of best-selling novels, but imagining why a colleague feels strongly about a particular issue, or how they might be experiencing a particular event, has become a pre-requisite for me to function effectively as a teacher, mentor and colleague. S

communicating effectively and relationship making are crucial to involving others and overcoming the challenges that inevitably arise in complex organisational environments. Both provide affordances for developers' creativity as they seek to engage others be they managers, teaching colleagues or student learners.

I have put funding proposals together with new ideas, written papers, done presentations and built and e-portfolio community. We spent a lot of time getting to the point where the university would accept a central e-portfolio system. Over the last two years I've written three business cases to move the project forward. We pulled in and created work around our external projects in new ways. It involved working with individuals who themselves want to do something new. In your writing business cases to senior managers you need to use a certain form of language to show you are meeting their strategic objectives. M

The provision of information and support for staff U

[in] building relationships C

Engage with colleagues within and beyond my team, to explore fresh approaches to all dimensions of education. Also research in the field. Q

For some developers communication through their writing is an important source and outlet for their creativity.

Much of my own published work is conceptual prior to becoming practical and that involves creativity of thought processes to bring together different elements into something tangible and applicable. D

I write academically and use creative techniques within that and occasionally do creative writing. J

[producing] blogs and leaflets to enthuse people K

I actually think that I have probably been most creative in some of my writing and some of the research findings and thinking that our group has produced around assessment M

Another perspective on the role of creativity in communication is provided through the act of interpreting and mediating.

"Interpreting" would cover a lot of it. Writing and/or interpreting policy documents, for instance, so that academic colleagues see them as mechanisms for educational enhancement, rather than instruments of centralizing obfuscation and repression! Finding ways of explaining things which don't distort them, but which make the ideas in them more accessible to others. S

playing and experimenting was an essential process highlighted by some developers.

Another aspect of creative activity for me is about playing with a medium and seeing what it can do for any given purpose - which is why writing is a creative act, even when you are writing essays. It's also about transferability - taking an approach from one context and seeing how it fits in another, or taking your learning lessons from one field and seeing what they tell you about how you are operating in another. R

Creativity is required to overcome the barriers and conditions in an institution that inhibit achievement of the developer's and institution's goals. Perhaps this is another area where the institutional developer differs from the teacher in the way their creativity is deployed. Creativity is demanded because of the scale and complexity of the challenge to work with an ever changing world and to bring about change of a particular type within and across a turbulent institutional world.

Increasingly, it seems, doing successful development work in institutions of so-called higher learning seems to require creative approaches in dealing with or rendering inert so many institutional obstacles/processes that nowadays seem to be placed in the way. F

Devising tactics to keep the system off my back while I innovate and (I hope) demonstrate the worth of that H

Sometimes it might be about how I try and get round something. B

As the obstacles are getting bigger... creativity is required to overcome these. L

everything around us changes so rapidly and so dramatically, One day your University is all about inclusivity and community engagement, the other is all about employ ability and marketisation! We need to be creative to work in such complex HE landscape! V

conducting research to inform development work is another environment in which developers can use their creativity.

Researching: I try to combine methodologies from diverse disciplines to see how they could be creatively adopted to answer questions in my field. e.g. Using tools from the business world to find out if they can tell anything about universities, students etc. V

performing and improvising

Developers know that work plans can only be at best a framework for improvisation as the realities and uncertainties of the work environment and responses of individuals shape the work. New and better ideas emerge as work is being undertaken. Furthermore, developers have to be sensitive and adapt to individuals' needs and interests within and across the different disciplinary and practice contexts in which they work. The complexity of this work environment requires creativity.

Working with academic staff from across all disciplines means that we need to dance between teaching and learning all the time and I think this makes us quite creative as developers. Academic staff in general are seeking new ideas, new knowledge. We draw on our experiences across faculties and disciplines and create new ways of being within classrooms. D

provid[ing] consultancy M

teaching and facilitating learning - one of the key foci for developers creativity is the design and facilitation of processes to enable people to learn and develop themselves.

[I] create activities for them to learn through, problem solve and find new ways of exploring their work in the light of my work A

Writ[ing] keynote presentations and devis[ing] workshops M

Teaching. I use a lot of metaphors in teaching, which I suppose is the equivalent in my word-based world of the visual languages that my colleagues use so much. S

taking risks - Universities are generally risk averse and organisational stability is considered to depend on cultural conformity and compliance. But developers are expected to take risks in order to fulfil their role and this requires courage. Involvement of developers in risk taking as part of their creative enterprise was illuminated in a number of responses.

Creativity requires courage because by its very nature you are going against the grain. By creating something new you could well be pushing against the tide. It requires a lot of courage to stick with it.

To do this I have also needed to enthuse others to take risks and to own the concept. E

I took enormous risks, and was watched closely. Sidelining the usual protocol in favour of engendering trust amongst my staff and trust within management, letting them see for themselves that there were better ways to lead, to manage a restructure that ran much less risk of losing the potential of highly creative staff. It all worked out! D

Not to be afraid and take risks. It can be a lonely path! As many will say don't do it! But I always say "only dead fish swim with the stream" Policies and regulations get in the way, too often. Innovation is disruptive. Developers are or should be risk takers. L

Perseverance and resilience in the face of obstacles seem to be important qualities needed for developers to achieve their creative outcomes.

Finding another way to overcome a "difficulty/lack of success" for me or my students, and getting it to the stage it can deliver for us H

For developers in leadership and management roles part of their creativity is directed towards listening to and engaging their staff and enabling them to be creative.

part of my creativity is about hearing ideas from teams and individuals, thinking about them and asking the question, how can these ideas be put together with what we currently know about pedagogy, and applied to classroom practice? D

Above and beyond the specific focus for development work there is also a sense that developers are drawing on their creativity to 'mak[e] the most of limited time and resources' Indeed diminishing resources have been a driver for creativity amongst some developers.

In recent years, in particular, creativity has become a necessity as resources of all kinds continue to be constrained and reduced. The puzzle of marrying organisational needs to meet the criteria for external or internal funding for projects and initiatives has been a regular spark for a creative response. E

Creative developers take risks, experiment with old and new pedagogical models (create their own models and in collaboration with colleagues and students), have the curiosity and be more playful. We are called by many change agents. We can influence change if we are creative! Creative with ideas, creative with people. We need to be creative negotiators and motivators, I think. An open mind is essential too, I feel. We need to model learning, be reflective and reflexive and carry out research on our practice to provide evidence if and how our innovations work/or not. We can learn a lot from our own mistakes and these of others. Actually many discoveries are made thanks to mistakes. L

Emerging from these responses is a sense that creativity is embedded in the ways and means developers have for accomplishing what they value and what their institution or clients need them to do. Creativity would seem to be an embodied and enacted process rather than a momentary act as it is so often portrayed.

Managing attention, using resources, getting grim messages across, dealing with dilemmas, putting things into a palatable form so that people who are turned off by text can engage with ideas at a higher level R

FORMS OF CREATIVITY

3) What forms does your creativity take?

Developers recognise that creativity takes many forms from bright ideas and states of mind to novel actions and processes that lead to new designs, events, physical or virtual objects and or

performances. Ultimately, much creativity is devoted to creating the knowledge that enables new ideas to be implanted and grown in the particular contexts with the particular people of the institution.

Ideation, conceptualising and orientations

At its best, it's about having a bright idea, being sure it will work, yet not knowing where it came from and not caring H

more open to ideas and less crippled by fear and anxiety B

new approaches to generating ideas: developing new ideas themselves to enhance pedagogic practice ... adapting ideas from elsewhere K

Much of my own published work is conceptual prior to becoming practical and that involves creativity of thought processes to bring together different elements into something tangible and applicable. D

Doing things differently. Doing the unexpected I

development of documents Q

Planning, designing, conceptualising

Developers recognise their creativity within their thinking processes that lead to new designs and plans for new projects.

Developing creative plans and projects from design to delivery E

In designing projects, its about reading around the topic, seeing what other people have done and where the gaps might be, identifying needs (local and national; different stakeholders) etc., then putting all these ideas together to formulate objectives and a plan where I really enjoy being creative [is] in developing new projects (usually I'll be thrown a topic and asked to come up with something, so have the freedom of responsibility to design a project) C

[I'm] more creative in designing activities than I ever could be with doing the annual accounts and tax return I

How I design events to provide a variety of different ways of engaging with aspects of LTA. I usually try hard to think of a way to make things fun, lively, interactive. U

Playing and using different media to express ideas

I think it is generally a form of playfulness in how I approach some things, like in my use of Lego Serious Play for teaching and learning. Also approaching writing- having written my second book with an American co author we communicated using movies I made of my Lego models of where we had got to with our book etc. I've also attended a drawing factory to try and reignite my ability to draw and paint which was a real out of comfort zone experience. I don't sew very well but got a thrill out of a collaborative knitting activity at a creative research methods event. Working in the creative arts I also love being inspired by my practitioner colleagues and how they do things. R

Communicating in interesting and engaging ways

I write academically and use creative techniques within that and occasionally do creative writing. J

As a team we also try and make things like our newsletter attractive and creative through our use of photography, also on our web pages and our use of our own produced videos U

Performing / facilitating in engaging ways

Some developers recognised their creativity in the ways they performed their role. For example

Running workshops, giving keynotes, and writing educational texts and articles I

In workshops I often improvise processes for participation and use visuals as well as text J

I am a very keen storyteller and my children's stories are legendary! J

I had an interesting role to play in taking my own team through a restructure that had been imposed by senior management D

[producing] blogs and leaflets to enthuse people K

I really enjoy being creative in 1-2-1 conversations with teachers. C

It is usually about the spontaneous juxtaposition of ideas that have not previously come together. I will follow a question from a participant to see what we can do with it. A

I never send my slides or materials in advance, because I dip and dive into thousands of possibilities all there on my laptop, responding to issues and questions where they arise. I then make the slides of what I actually did in a keynote or workshop available within a few hours on my website. I

Trying to find ways to engage the participants in keynotes and workshops, coupled with the use of appropriate research literature and practical case-studies and consultancy, M

in the form of actual approaches ie games in keynotes, creative representation of ideas. Problem solving - taking a different path. P

Running seminars: there is always scope for creative presentation of ideas, creative organisation of group work etc. I often use Dr Robert's Epstein's/book of creativity games to run a workshop. V

Leading and selling ideas

All developers are leaders - of thinking and ideas, of people and practices. For developers who are also managerial leaders of other developers creativity is embedded in the thinking and actions of leading their colleagues - particularly in the context of change.

Being creative conceptually and practically is to my mind a significant aspect of being a leader and leading deliberately and consciously to develop and maintain creative momentum - especially in what is essentially still a contested area. D

In my management role I am often been given lots of new things for my team to address, I have to consider how to do these and all the other stuff we still have to do; so again I need to see where there might be connections, parallels, places where things overlap and link these together to provide a coherent programme of activities. C

there was a lot of leading, persuading, negotiating, influencing. That does not all just happen, it requires a lot of creative thought processes. I saw it as part of leadership, in the context of being a developer D

in a "crisis" situation a leader has to be creative, encourage creativity and nurture it - then 'promulgate' the outcomes of that creativity D

For developers whose role is primarily to work with and lead academic colleagues creativity is involved in the ways and means that they engage and facilitate their learning and development.

In conversations with people it's about making connections between their work and others' or with the literature, helping them to think differently about what they are doing, adding different colours to their ideas - but at the same time, ensuring I start with where they are rather than simply imposing my way of seeing things, so that together we build something (an idea, project, teaching innovation) that they have ownership of. C

being very sensitive to participant's reactions so that I can find new ways of engaging them. A

finding ways to inspire and engage others. E

helping people see things differently K

Empowering others

[It's pretty much everywhere] but [more specifically its in] trying to empower others to think differently [and] take risks. P

The integration and embodiment of many things

While categorisation of what different aspects of being a creative developer means it atomises a complex, integrated and embodied role. This response captures very well the way in which individuals' creativity suffuses their functional role and way of being as a developer.

Creative developers take risks, experiment with old and new pedagogical models (create their own models and in collaboration with colleagues and students), have the curiosity and be more playful. We are called by many change agents. We can influence change if we are creative! Creative with ideas, creative with people. We need to be creative negotiators and motivators, I think. An open mind is essential too, I feel. We need to model learning, be reflective and reflexive and carry out research on our practice to provide evidence if and how our innovations work/or not. We can learn a lot from our own mistakes and these of others. Actually many discoveries are made thanks to mistakes. L

SCOPE OF INDIVIDUALS' CREATIVITY

4) Are you creative in all aspects of your work or some aspects more likely to hold the potential for creativity than others?

Almost without exception developers must see themselves as creative and development as involving their creativity. No one who completed the survey challenged the very premise on which it was based and every respondent was able to provide responses to all or most of the questions. Several developers felt that creativity suffused all aspects of their work.

I think developers may be very creative people, we have always been at the margins when we should be central to higher education. Surviving and flourishing from the margins requires creativity. On balance I think most aspects of my work require creativity, creative thought. D

In terms of problem finding, solution finding, changing my perceptions etc that is pretty much all of my work. I think that reflecting and reviewing and everything PDP related is entirely creative. B

By my definition I think I have to involve creativity to some extent in all aspects of my work. I could just do things the same old way all the time, or just answer the specific question people ask - but in order to be transformative in my role I like to go the extra mile; to add a bit more helpful info, make that connection, nurture that relationship. C

I think I'm just about always creative I

there is most potential when running CPD sessions but there is actual potential in almost every aspect of my work K

I would like to think my creativity leaks over into many aspects of my work J

Mildly, perhaps?! M

I think that realizing the importance of imagination, even in the small things, has meant that I have come to tend to avoid a routine perspective of work more than I used to. Put it another way - being creative in my work is perhaps a way of saying that I try to avoid starting with assumptions, more than I used to. S

A number of respondents felt that some aspects of their role provided more affordances and / or less constraints than others. One respondent made the distinction between those parts of her professional life over which she had control and other aspects that were controlled through institutional practice. Another highlighted the physical constraints of the environment on her ability to be creative in the spaces she worked.

I can't really be that creative in committees but in those areas over which I have control I try to be as creative as possible. P

Particular scope for creativity is in teaching, in conference organisation, in trying to get people involved in projects..I would probably like to be more creative than I dare in some roles - when you dealing with paperwork for validation you might want to be highly fanciful, but err on the side of caution and protocol....R

I try to be creative in how I organise workshops - small gp discussions, pair work, etc. but that's pretty standard I think. It's probably easier to be creative in creating the presentations & online resources rather than within the restrictions of the classroom given the time limits, immovable room set-ups, etc. T

Some aspects of my work have more potential than others. Events, professional development activities and resources are the main area where being creative is possible. We have a CPD framework and I have tried really hard to be creative in the way we have approached that by providing a route to fellowship that does not require writing a submission. Applicants use professional dialogue and portfolios and I feel that not only is that creative it encourages other to be so too. I am chair of the University appeals panel and there is certainly little opportunity there for being creative! U

One respondent made the distinction between aspects of their role between situations that provided opportunity for challenging the status quo versus those situations that demanded compliance.

When it comes to challenge a long standing process or policy, I tend to be creative and come up with new and better ways to do things. However, if I am asked to do a very standard job within a given framework, then I tend to follow it. An example of the former point would be when I asked my students to work with me to design their final exams and then bring their notes, laptops etc to take the exam. It worked well and the students felt empowered that they had a choice in the assessment process. An example of the latter point, when I was asked to edit a booklet for new academics within three days,,,,I just followed the structure that already existed. V

As well as affordances there is also a subjective judgement to be made on the level or quality of creativity involved.

If you could measure 'creativity in work' on a scale of 1 - 10, then some things would be a 3 and some a 7, but I'm not sure that's a relevant notion. If you want an example of one of my metaphors, think of creativity as breathing. When you're running hard, you breathe harder, you're more aware of breathing. That doesn't actually mean that breathing is intrinsically more important when you're running than when you're standing still! S

We create new powerpoints for our workshops & lectures - I try to make them engaging using images & Smart Art but I don't think that's really creative. I have been involved in making interactive online resources which does require a little creativity but not much. We do use video & audio within them but that's just recording, editing it & uploading. I've tried using Prezi, Twitter & Polleverywhere but this is probably not 'creative' either. T

Two respondents offered a co-creative perspective on their own creativity.

I absolutely rely on the creativity of others to shape and implement work related to, contributing to, and/or dependent on mine. E

But this was not just about my creativity, it was collective creativity of thought and action. Creativity is not a lone ranger pursuit a lot of the time, it takes sharing, reworking, reflection, questioning and positive morale D

Creative tenacity!

One respondent felt that he was not creative, preferring to be respected for his tenacity sticking at the task until they he got his ideas to work.

I would not describe myself as creative. I'd rather be seen as persistent to try to get an idea to work. Maybe over-persistent. I'm not good at pillaging front-running practice and catching on to their coat tails. I'm better at being a trail blazer myself. H

Many developers would recognise that without this dogged determination and the willingness to try and try again, often with multiple strategies - creative ideas would never be converted into new and novel practices. Incidentally, I know this developer well and he is both tenacious and creative!

EXAMPLES OF CREATIVITY IN ED. DEV. WORK

5) Can you provide one or two illustrative examples of development work you have undertaken where you feel you were particularly creative?

Most developers were able to offer examples of their work where they thought they had been creative with only one respondent reporting '*Sadly not really!*' Examples offered reflect a range of contexts for example working with students, academic colleagues, colleagues in their own team, managers.

Working with students

I switched my online tutoring to Taiwan to become entirely affective in its focus. I suppose I did it partly out of bloody-mindedness, to assert to the course leader that I didn't believe in the pussyfooting Taiwanese cognitive style which she had herself provided, and I supposed wanted from me. I believed in the importance of affective needs, but I suppose I went OTT in concentrating on them. I decided I had to develop a style which was personal, focused on needs, and followed Rogers especially with regard to empathy and congruence. I confess I was surprised by how effective it was. I thought it was creative because I haven't encountered anything in current or recent online literature which matches what I was doing, and I took a risk in faith. H

I got students who were supposed to be keeping records to support reflection, to almost scribble personal notes in an A4 diary as a day book, rather than keying or writing detailed records. I argued that the notes would remind them of what they had done or reflected; and that this method would retain the main points for review. I suggested this because the intermediate plan to keep odds and ends as aide-memoires wasn't really working. And my own keeping of a day book, started about ten years ago when working on a project where students had to keep a day book, had been fruitful for me. It was creative because we hadn't done this before, and it worked. H

Working with professional colleagues

Asking participants in the career management day workshops to create a poster of their vision of their lives five years hence. I provide the time / space / prompts and the magazines and glue and stickers. It is very powerful. It enables a very personal expression that does not have to be articulated. B

In my own team meetings, we start each Agenda with a 'Creative Moment' as a standing item. Colleagues in the team take it in turns to do something creative for a few minutes - sing a song, play music, read a poem, read a bit of philosophy, lead some meditation, anything... The rationale I give for this is to remind us all (myself included) why education matters - because people matter, and life, and everything we can make of it. It's a great antidote to the ends-maximising approach we end up taking to much of our work. Q

I had completed some research into reciprocal peer coaching and in presenting the ideas at a conference and in house I have used the following approach a number of times. I introduce the topic and then in groups, participants have to learn how to make origami cranes. One person in the group is then subsequently asked to produce a crane for the group. The group that completes the

best crane wins a prize. This is creative as it encourages staff to work together to do something new and through this activity work with others to ensure everyone knows how to do it. I suppose it's a sneaky way of getting people to invest in each other's learning. In reality the students would be working on something related to their programme and for staff development the origami crane was something that potentially no one could do in the group but would be fun. There is usually a lot of laughter involved! U

Designing and organising conferences and events

Designing a one day University conference on learning, teaching and research: I had an initial planning group to throw in ideas, I then drew on my knowledge and experience (of local and national practice and agendas) to draw together a programme with speakers, posters, opportunities to hear the student voice, and lots of time for networking etc. I took a risk by having a fun panel session (QI: Quite Interesting) based on a number of panel games (Just a Minute, QI, I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue etc.) in order to share expert perspectives on learning, teaching and research in a different way (included the librarian, Dean of the School of Management, Associate Dean Research in Science, an NTF holder and two external speakers). I did it because I had to, but I chose to do it in this way because I wanted to use lots of different approaches to get people to talk with each other and share ideas. It was a huge amount of work but well worth it, the buzz on the day was fantastic. C

I do detailed pre-workshop surveys to find out what people are wanting and where they are coming from. This was an idea that arose from a chance conversation at a conference. A

Occasionally I have organized particular staff development events, educational development activities and resources, which have, in their design, challenged the normal model for such events/activities/resources. To do this I have also needed to enthuse others to take risks and to own the concept. I have felt the need to be creative in order to achieve multiple objectives simultaneously (e.g. disseminating practice of distributed/e-learning and at the same time modelling distributed/e-learning. I have found these to be exciting and creative periods of my working life. I felt these instances to be creative because to me they were novel practice, challenging, exciting, risky and rewarding. E

My workshop practices are regarded as creative and I use intuition when choosing how to run things. I use creative problem solving techniques a lot. J

I organised a conference on motivating teaching and learning, and instead of talking about it got creative practitioners from our university to teach us what they do - so we made 18th century pockets, did a psychology class on motivation, learned about kitsch by analysing objects etc. Part of the creativity was self evident - we were making stuff-but we also tried to get people thinking about the theme of the conference in different ways; so I did a Lego serious play workshop getting people to explore how good learning is motivated and at the conference itself we ran an all day activity where people decorated and contributed a quilt square so by the end of the day we had made an instant patchwork quilt to show off at our plenary, which had a really energising and bonding effect. R

I run an annual LTA conference and the first year I did it 2010 we went back to the drawing board with how the day would be as a means to try and encourage a wider audience to come as the numbers had declined. It was risky but I felt it was worth doing. We renamed it 'Talking about Teaching' and provided an open space for things to happen in and a place where people could come and go rather than staying and listening to lots of presentations etc. Creativity included: We

had an artist produce a picture of the day. We came up with a number of ideas that would spark talk including the creation of large professionally printed cards that had statements on about teaching and a big egg timer for the discussions. People were invited to bring statements about their views of teaching to put on a wall to draw on, low chairs to sit on and chat etc. I felt it was creative because it was different, new more interactive way of doing this type of event. I wanted it to be like a party and to provide opportunities for people to network and have fun! U

Devising and implementing learning and development processes

I devised and implemented what I think of as an open-ended but scaffolded approach to negotiated learning for those newly minted academics wishing to pursue a portfolio application for HEA Fellow. Various feedback from the HEA suggest this was seen as highly novel and innovative. However, it is not clear to me that various powers that be at [the university] understood what made this approach tick, and I suspect it has quietly been 'buried' now that I have left. F

I wanted my colleagues to experience how it feels as a student NOT to receive communication from the tutor..... For example - not communicating where the next session would be, no communication in between sessions, no replies to messages asking about the room. Then half the class couldn't find the room, some contacted each other and loads accused me of this....I thought my approach to make this point was very strong and creative but I might have been the only one who saw it that was... instead I was blamed! L

I inherited a new staff development course (a PG Cert Learning and Teaching), tailored for the 'creative practices', except that as a course in the subject of 'education', its pedagogic paradigms were typical of some of the educational/social sciences, and did not reflected the disciplines of Art, Design and Architecture at all. The 'students' (mostly professional artist-teachers, designer-teachers, or architect-teachers) were required to write essays to demonstrate their capability as teachers of their visually based disciplines. I have always enjoyed writing essays, but it was abundantly clear that these colleagues felt disadvantaged and dis-empowered by the assessment mechanisms by which their very professional identity was to be judged. So, finding pragmatic ways of encouraging alternative forms or modes of assessment which still meet the quality assurance criteria of the course validation requirements has required a deal of creativity; this is an important example to me I suppose. S

As part of my role of the Chair of a Distance Learning Working Group, I was asked to run a seminar on learning design. I decided to run the session using one of Epstein's games, where all participants had to warm up their brains with some activities, like daydreaming, walk around the room and ask each other one question that they would like to know about them etc. They all liked the style and it ended up that in the end of the day we produced many more ideas that the particular group had achieved in three previous L&T sessions! It was a simple activity that involved all being creative in the way they communicate with each other. Sometime 'overwriting' the protocol and the 'business as usual' and 'tick the box' (so typical in the British way of doing things, I am afraid) processes liberates people's behaviour. V

The involvement of people with different cultural backgrounds increases the complexity of the teaching and learning situation and demands greater creative inputs. In new and unfamiliar situations learning from experience is an essential ingredient in being able to utilise creativity in comparable situations in future.

I've just done a workshop on internationalisation in higher education for new academic staff on a PG CAP course at a research intensive university. The group concerned were themselves from many different countries, adding a layer of complexity to something that I think is an inherently

complex issue. Devising a short workshop based on presenting some core ideas as fuel for a set of reflective discussions was the 'creative task' I set myself; the nature of the creativity was to try to imagine how this group of psychologists from Nottingham, chemists from Brazil, engineers from Poland and so on and so on, might actually engage with those core ideas. I don't think I was very successful in that task of the imagination - but it helped me understand why some things seemed to be more productive in our discussions than others, and to plan differently for next time. S

Designing projects

Designing is an important context for individuals' creativity. Designing is the process where people make extensive use of their imaginations, when they spend time and effort researching and finding ideas that are new to them. When they play with, connect and combine ideas to come up with new combinations and adapt ideas to particular and local contexts.

I'm currently thinking about a project proposal around disciplinary ways of thinking and practising. This draws on my professional experience and personal interests, and also connects into what I'm trying to achieve in my current role. In order to put together the proposal I need to do lots of background reading, to make connections between different ideas and to identify where the gap / niche is for my idea to sit. Once I've got the broad ideas mind-mapped, I then need to focus it in order to design a feasible project with achievable outcomes. For me, this is creative as it involves (metaphorically and literally!) cutting, pasting, drawing lines between ideas, circling key points, refining and coming up with a clear picture of the final product. C

Working as a manager in a developmental mode

Most recently, finding a way to be in handling a controversial restructure sandwiched between my ethical responsibilities to staff to deliver the best outcomes for as many of them as possible and my professional responsibilities to my line manager in senior management and delivering the best outcomes in accordance with their agenda which was poorly understood. Taking over sixty staff to a place they didn't want to go, and getting them to a place or places they were excited to be required team spirit, creativity of thought and action, and creative and authentic approaches to a difficult situation. D

Working at the strategic level

My approach to the strategic learning environment - different approach to engagement and project management. [Being] creative in terms of setting a framework, empowering others. P

Changing the orientation of a development process

During the time of the Reinvention Centre CETL, a joint project with Warwick, I became the lead Brookes representative after it had been going 9 months and inherited the concept of Reinvention Fellowships which gave money to staff who bid with ideas on developing research-based learning in their teaching. During my first year I became increasingly concerned that most of this funding was leading to very localised small-scale innovations and/or innovations that would not be sustainable when the funding ended. In discussion with Brookes colleagues, I decided that we would change the remit for these Fellowships so for the last two years we offered funding for one Fellow per Faculty to carry out the Faculty-wide development of research-based learning. I'm not sure how creative this was, but I think it was to an extent in that it certainly succeeded and more sustainable development was achieved and the same funding achieved a much bigger impact M

Involvement in significant organisational change

Following a recent whole-of-Faculty 2-day retreat (where I elected to contribute nothing, as it eventuated, on the grounds that I was listening so hard, and trying to hear what was really being said in so many moments of frustration and venting) I then wrote myself a one-page précis of what I thought I had learned (brought about by much cycling and walking). Then, after another day of cycling, determined that I had to table these notes of mine with those vested with the power to 'do something', namely the senior executive team (of four professors). This I did, by email, noting that, in my opinion, there were many tried and proven educational frameworks and models that could be used or implemented in order to alleviate so much of the angst and frustration that was being voiced. This had the desired effect, and, in the first instance, secured an invitation to 'coffee' with the Deputy Dean. I have now started sketching a 5 year educational development plan for the Faculty, and have been actively coaching the entire four-professor strong academic leadership team in aspects of it, including priorities for implementation. This is very much an ongoing project as I write. F

DISTINCTIVENESS ABOUT THE USE OF CREATIVITY IN DEVELOPMENT WORK

6 What is particular and distinctive about the way an educational developer utilises his/her creativity compared to say a university teacher?

One of the enquiry themes in the survey was around the question of 'distinctiveness'. What distinguishes the creativity of a developer who works across an institution from a teacher whose development might focus on a particular aspect of their teaching or part of the curriculum that they are involved in.

A number of respondents suggest that there is little or no difference. That both the teacher and the educational developer are in the business of promoting and supporting the learning and development of others. Both must understand the contexts and needs of their clients be they students studying a subject or teachers trying to develop new skills or insights into helping their students learn. As such, their focus for creativity is on building relationships, on communicating and engaging, on enabling others to see and understand different perspectives as facilitating their development. One respondent observed that the developers have more freedom to work with the strengths of learners and are less constrained by such matters as assessment compared to a teacher.

Perhaps the most significant difference between the contexts for creative thinking and action is in the extent to which educational developers are working across contexts with problems that are more open ended and contested. Where the teacher is essentially working with a single context with her students the educational developer might be working with lots of contexts and different problems simultaneously each one requiring a bespoke relationship, engagement process and solution.

S No [there is no difference]. As an educational developer I am a teacher in higher education, so I think this is a false dichotomy (for me, anyway). I think there is more difference between individuals than between categories of individuals. That's why I'm a 'graduate attributes' sceptic (although I understand the drivers and the concept): the idea that all graduates from St. Andrews and all graduates from Huddersfield, and all graduates from somewhere else can be accurately categorized on the basis of some institutional list is specious. But having said all that, educational developers have to take a different position in one sense: we work with all disciplines, so we can't take a disciplinary line on teaching and educational development, so to speak. On the other hand,

educational or academic development is developing a disciplinary ethic and stance of its own, so in that respect we are behaving increasingly like teachers 'in the disciplines'. Re-reading that paragraph it seems rather confused - I think that's probably about right!

D. The question you pose is a tricky one: I think that a teacher deals with a known and understood context, the discipline being such a strong force in an academic teachers life. A teacher may well be creative in how he or she manages the class and classroom learning experience. The room for manoeuvre though may be limited by faculty/departmental norms. The scope for creativity may be less than that for a developer. For the developer on the other hand, s/he is working across many different paradigms of curriculum design and development. For everything the developer does, a creative response, idea etc is required. Nobody call on a developer or development unit to come along and applaud and advise the status quo. We have or should be developing a broad range of understandings of disciplinary terrains, we have or should have a deep understanding of pedagogy, a knowledge of different models of curriculum design, development and delivery, certainly in a research led university, a credibility as a researcher. A teacher probably has a good idea of how they will approach their class, a developer is justified in feeling slightly edgy about the issues to be addressed and how we might respond to them. In a workshop situation, you need to be responsive to your [group], you need to role model what we preach, be participant-centred. Our role is to lift people up, to inspire new approaches.

J Educational developers work across disciplines and therefore our approach involves synthesis of a great deal of diverse thoughts. We use Boyer's scholarship of integration and act like museum curators: selecting examples from a vast range, highlighting, showcasing, labelling, naming, explaining and illuminating what teaching looks like in various contexts

H I have often volunteered for consideration radical ideas which have been successful for me and others elsewhere, and encouraged a teacher, with or without discussion in a supportive team of peers, to consider (without obligation or pressure) where that might take them. The creativity on my part as a developer is to empathise with the teacher's concerns and priorities, and find ideas which can perhaps be utilised or adapted. To be an effective educational developer I need to empathise with the teachers with whom I work, volunteering congruence if that can be directly helpful, but especially setting aside my own experiences and getting inside their skin and trying to jump around like them, as Kelly said in the context of the teacher/student relationship.

M Not sure there is a significant difference. Maybe it's just a matter of degree. University teachers need to be creative to meet the varying individual needs of an increasingly diverse student body. Developers need to be creative in recognising the very diverse needs and cultures of the various disciplines, etc. What might work in Business won't necessarily work in Fine Art, for example.

L For me it would be that content and context overlap or are the same thing? For example, we can't just talk about the importance of formative feedback but we need to model how to do this effectively while being resourceful and creative. Our creative thinking needs to be translated into practice.

I think what is different re Ed Dev is that our audience is almost always mixed. Very occasionally I will be working with a programme team ie all teaching the same subject; but most of the time my participants are so varied the only thing they have in common is my workshop / course - not even HE as we also have participants from NHS / MOD etc - so it is all about introducing a subject and then providing the opportunity / time / resources for the participant to work it out in the way that is best for them. Requires being creative in thinking about how to do it without fore feeding, how to encourage real discussion , thinking, engagement, peer discussion and review etc etc so that we

are generating the melting pot and feedback that makes our work so fantastic (and scary). So a simple structure - very Driscoll reflection model: What, So what, Now what - with them doing most of the work. It is a model that works in coaching and also could work in 'university teaching' partic at post grad level - but I don't see it in action very much (other than in our ex-students of course! Perhaps because we have such diverse participants we have had to develop much more creative and facilitative techniques than 'university teachers' have to and they don't have the time / motivation / opportunities that we do, so - in some cases - continue to teach in a more didactic 'this-is-the-way-I-was-taught-so-I-will-do-it-too' way B

I feel that a developer has the freedom to 'work' with people's strengths, to offer a personalized experience and to stimulate them without the external factors that a teacher often worries about (that is assessment and other time related boundaries). V

FACTORS/CONDITIONS THAT ENCOURAGE CREATIVITY

7) In the context of your development work, what factors encourage you to be creative?

The factors mentioned by developers can be categorized into internal, process or external..

Internal factors reflect the orientations, inclinations, needs and ambitions of individuals and their willingness to get involved even when its risky and scary. Internal drivers might be inspired or triggered by feelings of boredom and staleness. Internal factors include the things that inspire and motivate developers to not only get involved but to try something different.

Just a blue flash H

My desire to be as good as I possibly can be. If there is a better way of doing something I would be very poor if I didn't try it even if it scares me B

Staleness, and a wish to be fresh and original! H

an expectation that I will be creative K

I really enjoy it and am told I am good at it J

My inner drive and curiosity. L

seeing things that capture my attention, even in very unusual places, or mundane ones. Other peoples creativity. Writers that inspire, like Bill Bryson, who could make examining a bus ticket gripping R

See my comments on the ethical imagination: it's axiomatic that I should try to understand the perspectives of others and that requires me to project myself and my work in ways which are sympathetic to those perspectives. S

Because I don't want things to be ordinary and to me being creative means there is less risk of being ordinary. Because I feel that this is a better way of getting your message across if you are creative about your approach. U

Process factors reflect the dynamics of engagement and interaction. The things that happen as a result of working and working with other people that then stimulate the developer to be creative.

people, humour, quirky things, ways of doing things differently R

Talking with academics about how they do their work A

New topics which mean one can't just repeat/amend things done before. And pressure to find an answer for an expectant 'client' M

Feedback that demonstrates that I need to improve A

When I see what I do has a positive impact on my colleagues/students and changes attitudes and behaviours. Of course, it is also nice when you find out that people appreciate what you are trying to achieve and value your contribution L

Organisational / cultural / environmental

Factors that encourage creativity in development include a managerial regime that trusts and empowers developers and appreciates and values their efforts. Understanding the big picture, and being part of a productive team. Having limited resources does not necessarily stifle creativity as it can be an incentive for resourcefulness.

An environment and a culture that thrives on creativity D

Creativity flourishes when it is valued D

a team of staff who value the space to be creative, bringing disparate groups of academic staff together and listening to their narratives; a dynamic environment D

Colleagues who also care about being creative as part of caring about people and communities. Q

*Time pressures AL some element of time and resource pressure E
[and having] space and time K*

When there's not enough time to 'create' a behaviour. When we respond on auto-pilot because the response is needed NOW. S

Being resourceful is part of this..... Especially when we have limited resources. Actually I think the most creative things are done when resources are limited and when we have limited time. L

being trusted and allowed to take responsibility/not micro-managed D

[having] responsibility to run with a project or lead something K

being empowered to get on with things in the way I want to do them but having support and guidance when you need it N

I had to think very clearly about how to manage management in allowing innovation and allowing creativity to occur. It required a lot of trust between us [me and my manager] the idea of trust must be around creativity because one has to trust that if you are creative and it doesn't work you won't get stabbed in the back. D

having clarity regarding the big picture of what is to be achieved and "being on the same page" as

senior managers D

[getting] ideas from others K

being part of a great team [and having] the trust of the people I am working with K

working with students K

we are quite lucky in our team we have the flexibility to design projects quite autonomously.... I think in our department we are encouraged to be creative... the managers are giving us the responsibility to use our creativity on behalf of the institution. I have a manager who is creative herself who is open to new ideas and ways of thinking. N

To be empowered to take initiative. I have been 'told off' in the past for being pro-active... not good I think... L

Freedom, time to think, appropriate resources P

Space (physical; temporal; virtual) to think and breathe. Q

Space and time R

Support & encouragement from management - allowing time to be able to really think about whatever it is you're trying to do & to do some trial & error practice. Does not happen in practice & I think that's probably par for the course for everyone. T

The interplay and relationships between developer and his or her environment. One developer felt that the conditions that stimulated his creativity lay in his physical, emotional and intellectual relationship with his whole working environment.

My working environment is No 1: my office, my space, the view of my window....then music! Then my colleagues. If they are creative, then I tend to open up myself. V

The critical nature of my way of thinking: I simply cannot accept nonsense and business as usual! Especially when everything around us changes so rapidly and so dramatically, One day your University is all about inclusivity and community engagement, the other is all about employ ability and marketisation! We need to be creative to work in such complex HE landscape! V

Employment conditions or situations that provide the developer with the freedom/ autonomy/flexibility/independence they need to fulfil their role.

I have enjoyed amazing success in the last decade or so in negotiating flexible conditions of employment that have enabled me to persist with my style and approach to development work.Importantly, thisnow affords me the sort of academic freedom (and hence room for ongoing creativity) that I had become accustomed to previouslyThe academics I work with, however, are under increasingly narrow-minded and strict performance and publication expectations F

I think personally if I hadn't been in a role where I have been able to be creative I would have moved on.. N

FACTORS/CONDITIONS THAT INHIBIT CREATIVITY

8) What factors discourage you from being creative?

Not surprisingly there are a wealth of factors that discourage developers from being creative. These might be divided into *personal factors* (attitudes and capabilities of individuals and situations in their personal lives), interpersonal factors (relating to relationships with the people they work with), and more general organisational/environmental factors.

Personal factors - included perceived shortcomings like lacking certain knowledge or skill, physical feelings of weariness, or states of mind that affect the will of individuals such as the impact of negative responses and not feeling that their efforts are valued

[My lack of] technical know-how and my own (lack of) self confidence B

Rejection (although that can spur me on as well - see above) A

Tiredness H less creative when tired over stressed J

Excessively involved in trivial tasks J

Frustration E

Lack of time/laziness and lack of sufficient imagination M

Stress, being against the clock R

Lack of autonomy T

Depends on how I feel at the time. Time constraints. Sometimes it might seem too risky U

Interpersonal factors

other people with different priorities... N

apathy R

Student resistance H

Having to persuade a whole team before we start H

Having the credit for my idea hijacked (when someone asks me for a suggestion, adopts it with my help, and then takes the credit). H

Myopic/ instrumental/ intransigent senior staff. F

the awareness that academics might respond with 'oh no here is another hippy staff developer with strange ideas' K

other developers who are extremely conservative and dismissive of anything that is different and challenges the status-quo. (this is indeed the worst!!!)L

staff on PgCerts, other programmes, workshops etc who are negative when we do things differently and do different things and make bold statements that these more creative approaches are not academic and in-appropriate for HE! L

managers/head of academic development/line managers/senior managers/academics who don't understand what academic development is and don't value or encourage more risky and creative approaches. L

Colleagues who disregard the human element of the people around us (staff and students) and focus only on metrics. Q

Sometimes people don't get it.

Simply sitting down and listening to people without being given the opportunity to express my creativity either verbally or in action V

Organisational/managerial/cultural/environmental factors

Factors that inhibit creativity in development include cultures that are conservative, risk averse and performance managed in a way that requires everything to be planned and accounted for in advance.

Academic bureaucracy H

Sometimes things just have to be done in a certain way; but this isn't discouraging as such, I just learn where to channel my creative energies. C

I'm not easily discouraged, but a major issue in the past few years has been the KPIs applied to development. A regime of KPIs will for sure stifle creativity and turn development units into sausage factories. The interesting thing about this though is that we as developers have not succeeded in providing a coherent narrative about our work and about what development actually means. Ironically we have failed in our creative endeavours to achieve this. D

Accountability regimes stifle creativity and learning environments such as universities become risk averse D

My experience of intimidating management styles, and working within a risk averse culture appeared to lead to reduced opportunity to be creative and as a result I felt very frustrated. A lack of clarity and agreement on "the big picture" - organizational plans and strategies etc. - also served to inhibit my creativity. E

Senior Management and their oppressive bureaucratic nature of their agendas! V

Meetings without meaning!! Have a meeting to discuss other meetings, for example V

a request for something to be done in a certain way with no space for C..often have to be pragmatic and get on with things quickly - no space or time for [creativity] K

[a] client who wants 'exactly what was on the tin' rather than that and some more. I

The programme is innovative and I have been instrumental in this. I was constantly pushing and did overcome many barriers that were put in my way. L

In my role now it's all about the barriers upwards...N

The opposite of the above! Formality L? my desk!! P

bureaucracy and excessive protocol, dull, dreary and boring environments, long meetings (except I am great at writing to do lists in these), endless administration, apathy R

lack of support T

One respondent highlighted the need for creative developers and also criticised developer colleagues who were too conservative.

Creative developer: We need more of those. Too many colleagues are conservative, too conservative and just replicate traditional practices. They don't practice what they preach (and we shouldn't really be preaching...) and while they talk about co-constructivism and other 'cool' theories, they are actually stuck in transmission mode!!! I don't think this is healthy for our profession!!! L

FAVOURABILITY OF WORK ENVIRONMENT

9) Is the environment in which you work generally favourable to you being able to utilise your creativity in the ways you would like to?

Most respondents to this question considered that the environment in which they worked was generally favourable to their ability to be creative : a nuance would be that they themselves help create and nurture a favourable environment.

Yes; but I think I also nurture that environment for myself by being reliable and delivering on those creative projects, so that colleagues have confidence in me to do these things. C

Yes I would say there are people around me who would encourage this. U

Generally [yes] although my desk isn't despite my attempts to improve it! P

Several developers felt that there are both yes and no responses to this question.

Yes and no. Yes in that I am free to do whatever I like unless it costs money and even then I might be given it. No in that there is no support and I sometimes don't do what I really want to do because I am frightened of getting it wrong, being humiliated, [or] hindering students B

6 out of 10... My work environment is allowing me to think about these questions, for example, (although I'm rushing them a little because I'm supposed to be re-drafting a policy paper!), but all too often I'm forced into the auto-pilot mode. S

Many times yes, but it depends a lot on my line management and my colleagues V

Another developer felt that the university sent mixed messages about the value of creativity.

We make spaces, behind the scenes. The university gives mixed messages, in reality, about whether creativity matters - it invests in art, for example, but closes meeting spaces. Q

A number of respondents felt that the environment they worked in was generally risk averse and this affected their ability to be creative or encourage their staff to be creative.

To support people in being creative and encouraging creativity requires quite a lot of risk taking in an era when universities are becoming more risk averse and adopting a tick box mentality. D

No. I would suggest that my most creative ideas are by and large also my most radical and the natural conservatism/inertia of both colleagues and institutions are a huge block M

Other developers drew attention to varying degrees of favourability in different environments they had worked in - even perhaps within the same institution.

Some parts of my career more than others have provided a good climate for my creativity E

Another developer commented on the trend in her environment was increasing busyness with less time and space for creative approaches.

[it is favourable but] although we often feel we are working to tighter time limits, work -loads are heavier and space for C can get crowded out. K

Developers who operate as freelance workers are in the fortunate position of being able to pick and choose those environments they want to work in.

As an independent consultant, I don't go to places where people aren't looking forward to something quite creative. I

Now I am semi retired and choose what work to accept the environment is very favourable J

One developer felt that the environment she worked in was not favourable but revealed that this did not stop her from trying.

No! But I keep going. I have started doing research and this has helped me get some recognition for the work I do. I wouldn't be able to do development if the creative bit was missing. I have stopped asking question like 'can I do this?' I just do it and if things go wrong I take full responsibility. But I have also seen when things go right and are very successful others are quick in claiming that it was their idea and/or that they were supportive of my idea/intervention... L

Another developer believed that while they and their team were creative and their success depended on them being creative, the language of creativity was not used in day to day conversation with academic colleagues.

The job is actually one of creativity but if we called it that we would be laughed out of court. Because it's not easily contained language in a way that everyone can understand and be comfortable with. D

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CREATIVITY, WORK AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

10) What is the relationship between your creativity, your development work and your own development as a professional developer?

This question really gets to the heart of how a developer views their creativity, its role in their work and the effects such work has on their continued development as a professional developer. Responses overwhelmingly felt that the relationship was integral to them as a developer.

I see them as co-existing within me, but I don't see relationships. H

They are irrevocably bound together. I believe that CPD/PDP is creativity and vice versa. B

I think they are closely intertwined and interlinked. My development comes about in many ways: conceptualising the creative thoughts of my team; theorising; actively facilitating development opportunities eg my work in a hugely different culture (Saudi Arabia) is a two way process that leads me to creative thought. I see myself as teacher, learner, reflector, creator or facilitator of new ways of being. D

It's all part of who I am; I develop myself through the development work I do, and I do this development work in a way that aligns with my values and ways of thinking (which includes creativity and a fair amount of stoicism / tenacity, which I think is needed to keep up a creative energy in a busy work environment). C

I see all three of these as interlinked. I have been surprised to note how little creativity some colleagues apply to their own development, and this realisation has informed my own development work - I try to encourage others to see development opportunities in a range of forms. I find it natural for me to seek and find my own professional development from multiple and unexpected sources. E

For me the relationship is tight. I need and want my role to be creative. In fact I think it's critical.Like some performance art I think educational development can be seen as the 'creative orchestration of collaborative encounters and conversations'. I have found this incredibly helpful in my work as an educational developer and used a SEDA small grant to explore it further. Doing this well is hard but can be powerful. K

Creativity is my lifeblood after all these years. I particularly like it when I try to bring the experience I've gained being creative into things I'm writing to help the next generation of teachers in higher education. I

I think they are integrated and synthetic. Different areas of my life feed into each other. I love telling stories within my work as much as to my grandchildren J

I see creativity as an integral part of my personal and professional identity. I love learning, and I love supporting others develop and be creative. I wouldn't be able to separate creativity from learning and teaching. This might sound strange? Learning is change and change means learning.

If we are creative in our approach it can be more rewarding and motivational, for us but also for our students and colleagues. L

If there is no room for creativity then the spark dies. F

I think the main relationship is that where one is creative, or one gets new ideas/ approaches from seeing the work of others' creativity, this adds to your repertoire/tool box and hence your own development as a developer. M

They are all linked, it is related to who I am, part of the reason I work where I do and it is the thing that motivates me to keep going. I think development is linked [to creativity] but is different, it may not always be creative although generally it leads to creativity. P

the relationship is tacit Q

It's integral. When I undertake a development task I ask myself three questions simultaneously - what is needed and possible within the timeframe, and how can I make it fun R

Very close. I have created my role and my identity as an educational developer by a constant reflection on the relationship between 'me' and the work I do as a developer. What, for example, [does it] mean that I am appropriately placed to advise a colleague on their own development as a teacher? Or a programme team on its approach to new course design? What is it about me, or the 'me' that I want/need to become, that fits better with those roles? My answer broadly is that it's not about what you know, but about how you know: reflecting on what is, and imagining alternatives, strengthened with a developing knowledge of possibilities for action, is a mode of professional action that is inherently creative - even if it's not very visible to others, nor very exciting for them to watch when it is! S

I think you have to be creative to see connections, whether that is through connecting others research or ideas to your own thoughts whether that be personal or the things you have to do for the institution. It's by seeing those connections, sometimes thinking outside the box that I have developed as a developer. U

It's a clear connection. I am not publishing often, for example, because I don't just want to say the obvious. I like answering the so what and now what question of my work.. I often do the same with the way I give feedback and feedforward to people and colleagues. V

Another perspective afforded by one developer who also felt that they lacked the autonomy and support to be as creative as they would like to be, clearly valued creativity as being integral to their work but the implication was that she was not able to be as creative as she would like to be.

Sadly not as much as there should be but we all endeavour to be as creative as possible both for ourselves & the students. T

A lot of the developer's creativity is focused on bringing about change. Developers often work at the interface between the directions for change required by senior management and the practicalities of bringing about change on the ground. In this sense they are both mediators and facilitators. While senior managers appreciate the need for particular change they sometimes don't see the complexity in the detail of implementing that change. This is where developers apply much of their creativity in making change happen. The experience of making change happen and the way the developer uses their creativity in this process is likely to be an important way in which professional development occurs in the everyday world of the developer.

If we are trying to really effect meaningful transformation.. turning a university upside down ... you have to have creativity coming from all angles..Whereas if you trying to effect an incremental small change..it can still be very challenging because you have to bring a disparate group of people around to a similar way of thinking. But it can constrained and may not require much creativity. D

OTHER QUESTIONS

11) What other questions are worth asking?

- *How on earth are you going to make something useful out of a clutch of responses like this? A serious question. If you're collecting data, you should have an idea what you'll do with it. H*
- *What more can SEDA do to support creativity in its members? [nothing I can think of to be honest] what can I do to remove the barrier of my fears about technology / new techniques / new ways of thinking and working and allow myself more joy and less worry in the creative process? I need to put time into the learning of new ways and then in practising them till I feel they are acceptable to be unleashed on my students / clients. I need to make this more of a priority and put resource (time) into it. B*
- *These are big questions. How might people respond to them say in 12 months time. Are our thoughts on creativity fluid, depending on circumstances or is creativity a fixed entity? D*
- *Maybe ask how being creative is different / the same in work and non-work contexts (though perhaps this is encapsulated in the first question)? C*
- *What fosters a creative organisational culture? Does austerity foster creativity? E*
- *Why put up with the status quo? What else can we do? I*
- *What makes a person creative? Is creativity innate or can it be developed? Do courses that offer to foster creativity actually do so? How can you assess creativity? J*
- *We talk about creativity as out-of-the box thinking and doing. What about creativity in-the-box. There are always constraints! How to work with these and be resourceful is, I think the true value of creativity. I might be wrong ;) I have been many times... L*
- *Philosophical questions about what (higher education) is really for, in an economy-driven society, and about how creativity relates to that. Q*
- *Is explicitly looking for, or requiring, creativity always a good thing? What are the down sides of using creative approaches to development? R*
- *What are the pitfalls we need to be aware of when using creative approaches? R*
- *What am I hoping to gain by using a creative approach as opposed to a more familiar/traditional one R*
- *What does anti-creativity look like? If we could describe such a thing then would the idea of creativity become clearer in contrast? S*

- *If creativity encourages professional development , how do we encourage others to be creative? U*
- *What in your views is the difference or similarity (if any) between being creative and being innovative? V*

It is clear from the responses of developers that they are overwhelmingly positively oriented towards creativity rather than sceptical or cynical about its presence in themselves and their developmental work. However, one respondent drew attention to the fact that not all academics share this positivity and they can feel threatened when approaches used by developers make them feel uncomfortable. Enabling people to overcome such fears is perhaps another stimulus for creativity in educational development.

I've answered these with a positive hat on, as creativity is hugely important to me, even if I don't always feel I am as creative as I would like to be. However creativity can be a problematic or scary term for some, or in some situations- people can be scared of participating if they are not confident in their own creativity or scared that they might be measured in some way and found wanting. I have had people be very nervous in Lego workshops at first because they fear that the main benchmark will be an aesthetic one, and they are usually very relieved when they realise that is not the most important aspect. Similarly, people can be really put off doing drawing or game activities because they feel uncomfortable R

Acknowledgements

This working paper is formed from the contributions of twenty people who are involved in educational development who generously shared their personal perspectives on their creativity and the way they utilise their creativity in their development work in institutions of higher education. I am very grateful to you all.

Contributors

Mandy Asghar, Sally Brown, Kirstie Coolin, John Cowan, Dilly Fung, Dean Groom, Julia Hall, Alison James, Helen King, Ruth Lawton, Anne Lee, Charles Neame, Chrissi Nerantz, Amanda Pocklington, Susannah Quinsee, Phil Race, Chris Rust, Melissa Shaw, Lorraine Stefanie, Chris Tevitt, Panos Vlachopoulos

version 8 11/10/13