



Editorial

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The Learning and Teaching Academy and the Centre for Living Sustainability at the University of the Highlands and Islands hosted an online Festival of Creativity, 'Creativity in the Classroom', in April 2024. Participants were invited to consider how creative pedagogies and practice can enhance student engagement through curriculum and activity design; how creative pedagogies impact on learners' creative thinking; and how creative community learning approaches can inform pedagogies. Some of those presentations formed the basis for the articles included in this special issue of JPAAP, with others submitted in response to a call for papers following the festival.

At the time of writing major international publishers are suing big tech companies over breach of copyright incurred through using creative literature to train artificial intelligence models to 'write creatively', making questions about the nature of creativity, the conditions for it, and how we experience it more urgent than ever. In this special issue focusing on creativity, Bissell, Doolittle and Gonzalez remind us of Joseph Beuys' declaration, "Everyone is an artist": a call to arms reminding us that creativity is at the heart of what it is to be human.

From the festival papers and discussion, it was clear that creativity is not limited to recognised creative subjects such as visual art or drama; rather, it decentralises thinking across disciplines to empower learners. Digger Nutter's case study of paired walking with interior design students at Glasgow School of Art shows how going outside the studio fosters "relevant and timely real world observations" which unfold over time, reminding us that learning is a longitudinal, multimodal process. Patrick Boxall considers creative learning in outdoor settings, viewed as inherently creative places for making, and the connections with social and environmental activism. In addition to decentred locations, other contributors reposition established pedagogical approaches, viewing them through a new lens: Pirie and Keenan draw on Bloom's taxonomy in a case study of strategies used to embed breadth and depth in a digital marketing curriculum; Sutton deploys Kolb's experiential learning cycle in research into applied arts learning; and White, Swiark, Cronin and McNaul offer a case study of curriculum design drawing on Freirean emancipatory pedagogy, involving creative processes which they integrated into sociology studies undertaken by student groups combining undergraduates and learners in prison.

Decentring established locations, practices and perspectives for learning entails reflection on pedagogical processes. Pauline Bremner and Josie Steed reflect on their experience of bringing students from different disciplinary backgrounds together, drawing on non-linear design thinking to foster high level metacognitive skills in the context of sustainable development. Massera and Jack

also spotlight design thinking as supportive of ethical decision making on the part of international fashion marketing students planning an online event.

Collaboration and multidisciplinary are common threads running through many of these articles. Dencer-Brown reflects on blogging as a learning tool to support creativity, while McQueen, Jawad, Cullinane and Darmon, look at creativity in the context of STEAM, with the deliberate introduction of creative approaches into disciplines where this is not usual. Both articles foreground creativity as a skill that can be learned and as essential for effective problem solving. Biology students baking cakes and blogging students of IT have, “less room for the regurgitation of ideas and knowledge” as they apply, evaluate and consolidate knowledge and skills in unexpected ways. Interdisciplinary project-based learning is the focus for Flynn and Taylor, showing how creative problem solving grows collaboration across disciplines and institutions, and many articles in this issue posit creative collaboration between staff and students as essential for ensuring that learning is relevant and meaningful. Rawlinson and Murray contribute a case study charting collaborations between students, academics and support staff to create an online course supporting students transitioning to university study, showing how engagement is fostered through creative and playful approaches. Kanayama, Wagner, Blake and Haggith also evidence the importance of humour and creative playfulness to foster intergenerational collaboration and learning about traditional culture and history in the Japanese Amami islands and northwest Scotland. The value of international, interdisciplinary, online, collaborative learning is demonstrated by Pirie, Crawford, Pirie, Richardson and Spadafora, with reference to creative thinking and practice in the context of entrepreneurship.

Creativity is a foundation for inclusivity in the classroom and authors address how it functions explicitly and implicitly in this context. Purvis notes that while general awareness of neurodiversity is greater than ever, many learners are unaware of personal neurodivergent characteristics, and that creative pedagogies provide an inclusive and equitable basis for all learners. Boyle shows how introducing creative activities into counselling sessions with students can encourage engagement and reduce pressure on support structures. Hill offers insight into how podcasts can be used to enhance compassion and agency in the teaching staff listening to them, to reduce ‘ethnicity awarding differentials’ in the classroom, promoting equity for students. Zines as a platform for creative learning is a starting point for Terrell, who considers how to reconcile standardisation, accessibility and creativity in this context. “Gentle participation” is advocated by Peter Noble, who describes his methods to engage music students in online settings through simple but effective methods for audience participation.

The articles in this special creativity issue of JPAAP attest to the multiple ways that creative practices and pedagogies provide points of access, engagement, understanding and skills development for teachers and learners alike. For human beings it is the spark that connects us to our deepest selves, our shared experiences, and the world around us. Joseph Beuys was right, “Everyone is an artist”.

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