

New Tools for Evaluating Our Own Acts of Creativity

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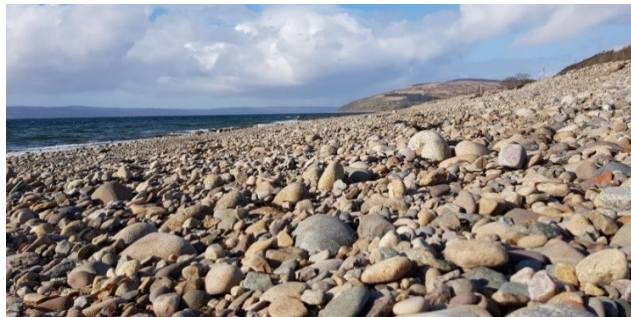
A version of this article was published in the May issue of Creative Academic Magazine

<https://www.creativeacademic.uk/magazine.html>

Contexts & circumstances

I am much taken with the idea that we are ecological beings and that our creativity is an important capacity we have for relating to, interacting with and finding new meanings, in the world. The way our creativity emerges in our interactions is an ever unfolding story and I am always on the lookout for happenings in my own life to try to understand this creative force that is an important part of me.

My story begins in early March, just before the Covid 19 lockdown in the UK. My wife was taking a short break from her demanding job as a GP and we were on holiday in northwest Scotland where the landscapes and seascapes are absolutely stunning. Not surprising for early March the weather was mixed but in wandering through the wonderful unfolding vistas I felt an impulse to do something. I had my sketchpad and paints with me but I felt that I wanted to do something more visceral. I began to look at the landscape differently, rather than 'just' taking in the spectacular vistas I searched for ways in which I could make something.



The road on the west of Arran hugs the coast and driving past one boulder strewn beach I was struck by the idea of building a tower of stones. We stopped the car and I went onto the beach with the specific intention of making a small tower. I spent time searching for stones that I could stack, and I took care in balancing the stones until I thought I had reached a point where I was happy with my tower. I wanted to photograph my tower so I spent a while finding good angles to capture images through photographs and video clips of my tower. As I composed my photograph I gained new perspectives on the landscape as I included different combinations of sea, sky and beach in my frame. The whole experience of making my tower and photographing and filming it lasted perhaps 20 minutes, but that time filled me with pleasure and a sense of wonder. More than this I felt in making the tower I had expressed the joy I felt by being in that place.



Over the next 5 days as we toured the west coast of Scotland and the Isle of Skye, I made five more towers and went through a similar set of processes and feelings each time in each location. Each location sampled the beauty and geology of a particular land/seascape. I was once a geologist so a part of my interest and curiosity when visiting any place is to try to read the landscape. It was therefore natural for me to try to identify the types of rocks I was using in my tower and to think about the geology of the landscape in which I was 'playing'. It seemed natural to give geological meaning to my structures. For example, on Arran my towers were made from granite, in Glencoe I built a tower from the Ballachulish slate, on the Isle of Skye I built three towers from quartzite, rhyolite and basalt. In each case the rocks gave the tower a distinctive appearance and character. I

decided these 'mini monuments' honoured the geology of the particular landscapes I had chosen from all the other landscapes that were available to me.



In building the towers I created physical artefacts but these were only available to me for the time I spent with them. I had the photographs but I knew I could do more with the materials so I decided to make a short movie (using windows movie maker) from the images and video clips I had collected.



I often make short movies of my garden so the technique was familiar to me. I searched for and found on YouTube some beautiful Celtic Uilleann pipe music and created a soundtrack. The atmospheric music created a deeper emotional response to the images. I then uploaded my movie to my YouTube channel and shared it with family and friends through WhatsApp. You can watch it at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yc1v8XbTVTE>. I also posted it in my 'scraps of life' blog with a short story about it.

Three weeks later we began a discussion about 'creative self-expression', on the #creativeHE platform. As facilitator I felt I needed to provide some illustrations of creative self-expression from my own life (the is something you just have to do when you invite others to share their experiences). My recent holiday was fresh in my mind so I decided to write an article and try to make sense of my unfolding experience recognising that I was now involved in a context where I was using my original act of creative self-expression to understand and illustrate processes and concepts relating to the set of ideas. This article has been written over three weeks: as ideas emerged in the discussion and I developed new insights I have added to it. As the discussion unfolded I saw the need and developed two conceptual tools to aid the self-evaluation and mapping of acts of creative self-expression which I claim are new acts of creative expression developed for a particular purpose and context.

Reflections on this example of my own creative self-expression

We often read creativity backwards – here is the product of self-expression how did it come about? We the trace the steps backwards and it all seems to make sense. The reality is rather different. When you begin to express yourself you don't know where it will lead – we experience creativity moving forwards through our life - it's an emergent phenomenon. Carl Rogers's points out, "We must face the fact that the individual creates primarily because it is satisfying to him."¹ Paul Klieman captures the idea of self-expression quite well, "*when we do something, make something, say something, write something, create something that originates in the inner core of our being and is expressed unfiltered by social conventions.*"² But I would add to "*when we do something in response to something*". The desire to do something is driven by feelings/emotions that grow out of our interactions with our social, cultural, material environment. It's the psychological environment created in response to something that provides the motivation for action and frames the search for ideas on how to act. The urge to express myself as I drove through the landscape was compelling. The idea of building a tower was simple, quick and easy and the fact it wasn't raining helped. I didn't need to think 'what medium should I use'? The medium was the materials of the beach and the

camera on my phone. My actions satisfied my desire to be amongst the rocks on the beach. And when I had built and photographed my tower, I felt satisfied: I had expressed myself. I had never built rock towers in the landscape before so the idea and act was novel to me but it did not require much effort or skill to build the tower. While the building of the tower did not feel creative in itself, photographing them and then making a movie did. Creativity for me was not so much in the individual things I did as in the whole project that involved weaving ideas, actions and experiences together to make the synthesis movie and later this narrative. These then become part of a larger body of work (e.g. the movies I have made, the articles I have written exploring creativity). Creative self-expression does not stop at the making of an artefact: the what has been done and learnt is always available to be related and connected to something bigger. One view of creative self-expression is that it is nothing more than finding affordances (opportunities for action) in an environment. Indeed, Withagen and van der Kamp offer an interesting definition of creativity as *“the discovery and creation of unconventional affordances (action possibilities) of objects and materials”*^{3 p.1}.

Once we have an idea and we decide to act upon it we read the environment in ways that allow us to find opportunities that will enable us to realise the idea. I have recently been reading an article by Eric Rietveld & Julian Kiverstein called ‘A Rich Landscape of Affordances’⁴, in which they develop a much richer concept of affordance than I have hitherto appreciated. Gibson’s classic concept of affordances⁵ is generally understood as possibilities for action provided to an animal by their environment but ER&JK argue that affordance is related to particular individuals with particular capabilities, and motivated by their concerns, who engage with their environment in particular social-cultural settings and practices and select from a wealth of possibilities for action from a small field of affordances that they act upon.

Seeing creativity as an individual’s way of perceiving, being motivated by and acting upon a specific set of affordances in their particular environment makes sense to me. In my story, my wandering through the Scottish landscape created an impulse – a desire to do something in and with the landscape. The idea of making small towers in and from the landscape came to me as I wondered how I might express myself in the amazing landscape we journeyed through. The landscape was full of rocks and they were easily accessible, so it is not surprising the idea came to use them. The towers were quick and relatively easy to make and the act of constructing and photographing them satisfied my impulse to act. Out of the massive landscape that was available to me I selected a particular place that was not always easy to access – perhaps it solicited me and I utilised the materials in the place or within perhaps 20 meters of my tower. What I did was novel to me I haven’t made stone towers in the landscape before. Neither have I seen others doing it so I guess I might claim its non-normative behaviour. The making of the towers required little skill other than finding stones that could be placed on top of each other without falling over. Perhaps there was meaning in the way I placed the towers in the local landscape, and I also tried to photograph or video them in a way that captured their presence and aesthetic meaning. If there was skill in the process of making it was in the making of the movie that wove together the scenes I had created enhancing the aesthetic meaning through the music I had chosen to accompany the scenes.

Finally, I might add that while writing this account and making explicit to myself the process I went through I realised that it created an opportunity to develop a tool or framework to evaluate it as an act of creative self-expression. This is a backwards recognition as in truth the tool evolved with the account and the process of self-evaluation – in other words new affordance emerged through the very act of creation and not after the event.

But nothing would have been brought into existence without me being moved to act by my experience of being in this landscape and being solicited by affordances in a world that meant

something to me, that enabled me to express a little of how I felt by making these small stone towers. So everything is linked and the one would not have happened without the other.

The experience has reinforced my belief in an ecological model of creativity and formed my own ecological concept of creative self-expression, *"the ways and means by which I connect, relate and interact my inner cognitive/emotional world with my environment and the situations I experience in order to share my thoughts and feelings and make or do something that is part of me and the world"*.

Aesthetic experience

Fundamentally, my experience had aesthetic value to me: it enabled me to see, appreciate and engage with the beauty in the world in which I was immersed. Landscapes do not exist without an observer. The natural world in the form of rocks, rivers, fields, woodland and sky exist but the appreciation of a landscape is something that an individual experiences as they take in the natural world through their senses and respond emotionally to what they are experiencing. *"Aesthetic experience of landscapes is not some pre-existing characteristic of the landscape that is found, but one that emerges when persons react to landscapes."*^{6 p.375} By selecting a view and attending to the features in it we frame nature and create what we call landscape. *"A landscape is thus understood here as a perspectival (one could say, partly mind-dependent and relational) entity that comes into being when an observer – a subject with a point of view and a restricted framing – perceptually interacts with a piece of nature"*.^{7 p329}

In common with works of art, landscapes contain features and properties such as symmetry, balance, harmony, as well as 'simply beautiful' shapes, colours and subtle hues, and contrasts. And, like our appreciation of and response to a work of art, the observer's taste will manifest itself in judging whether a landscape is more or less beautiful.^{7 p329} Such judgements are not absolute, but relative to other landscapes we have experienced. So experiencing a landscape that has not been experienced before is likely to have more emotional impact than a landscape with which we are already familiar.

But appreciation can have many levels. For example, it can be at the immediate visceral and entirely subjective level, or it can be at a deeper level because we have knowledge that we can use to create a more informed perspective. For example, we might have knowledge about the geology of the landscape, the rocks and structures that form it and the weathering processes that produced it, or the farming and other land use practices that shape it, or the history that it contains or the artistic works it has inspired, all of which can inform the way we perceive a landscape and gain meaning from what we perceive.^{7 p331} In this way our initial 'gut reaction' to a landscape we perceive is an entirely subjective experience while the more informed appreciations we develop contain elements of objectivity. *"The informed appreciation will (or at least, can) come to enrich and supplement the subjective one to make the overall aesthetic experience of the landscape stronger and more complete (this is similar to the way knowledge of the origins and context of creation of, say, a painting or a novel, can enrich our appreciation of it). Thus, scientific and other knowledge helps to expand our aesthetic appreciation of landscapes, rather than impoverishing it by 'objectifying' it."*^{7 p331}

This interpretation of how we respond to our perception of a landscape seems to fit my experience quite well. Although I would say that my appreciation was always informed by my geological knowledge of how and why this landscape and the materials in it formed. Putting myself into the landscape and feeling and handling the rocks of which it was made and then rearranging them into a stack and framing the landscape to give the tower I had made prominence in it, all added to my aesthetic experience as did making the movie that connected my experiences in the different landscapes together so that in the end I felt I had produced a work of art that I could continue to enjoy in years to come.

New tools for evaluating our own acts of creativity

In the interests of trying to understand the idea of creative self-expression I developed a new tool (Table 1 & 2) to evaluate my own creativity in the unfolding experience I am describing. This framework is entirely subjective and my generalised ratings are based on my perceptions, my norms – my previous experiences of what I have judged to be creative. “Self-assessments are notoriously unreliable but CSA’s [Creativity Self-Assessments] should be considered exactly what they are: self-reported activities, evaluations, and beliefs about people’s own creativity abilities, process, or the construct itself,” “but CSAs can offer information and insights beyond performance-based measures.”⁸

My belief about creativity is captured in exquisite detail in Carl Rogers concept of a creative process:

“the emergence in action of a novel relational product, growing out of the uniqueness of the individual on the one hand, and the materials, events, people, or circumstances of his life on the other.”¹ My rock towers were for me a novel relational product growing out of my uniqueness as a person (my history as a geologist being an important element) interacting with the materials that were ready to hand in the circumstances of my life. Echoing the words of another of my heroes, John Dewey – I encountered an environment engaged me emotionally, I did something to it and it did something back to me – it changed me. “When we experience something, we act upon it, we do something with it; then we suffer or undergo the consequences. We do something to the thing and then it does something to us in return.”^{9 p46} Actually, my story shows me that the thing (my environment and my situation in it), did something to me, and in response I did something to it, and that process of doing something affected me. These ecological ideas are reflected in my concept of creative self-expression.

MY CONCEPT OF CREATIVE SELF-EXPRESSION

“the ways and means by which I connect, relate and interact my inner cognitive/emotional world with my environment and the situations I experience in order to share my thoughts and feelings and make or do something that is part of me and the world”.

The self-evaluation tool (Table 1) is divided into five sections. The first describes the contexts and circumstances for creative self-expression including the environment in which it was enacted, the affordances for action and the mediums and media through which it was expressed.

The second section identifies the mix of approaches used to learning, doing and creating together with the sources of motivation and the cognitive/psychological environment in which creativity emerged.

The third section identifies the elements in the process of self-expression. In this example (Table 1) identify four elements. I try to rate each element in terms of what I felt was creative.

The fourth section contains a subjective evaluation of the context of the activities involving creativity and the norms for judging creativity based on the categories in the 4C and 5C models of creativity 10,11

The fifth section contains a subjective evaluation of the purpose of my creativity based on categories defined by Lassig 11,12 which underpins her grounded theory of adolescents’ creativity.

In the sixth section of the template I try to evaluate the value to me of the overall act of self-expression in terms of production of novelty, artefacts, and the usefulness and aesthetic value of the experience and outcomes.

Table 1 My subjective evaluation of the involvement of creativity in building and photographing the stone towers and making a movie

1. Context, circumstances, affordances, mediums & media for creative self-expression						
Context & circumstances: I was inspired/motivated to make some small stone towers by the awesome scenery while on holiday in the Scottish Highlands. I also photographed and filmed them and then made a movie and shared it with my family via YouTube						
Affordances (opportunities for action): in the landscape and the materials of the landscape, in the tools (mobile phone camera and laptop)						
Mediums & media: the materials of the landscape, photographs, video, software - moviemaker, WhatsApp, YouTube						
2. Estimated mix of contexts/approaches/motivations to learning, doing & creating						
	100/75	75/25	50/50	25/75	100/0	
Collaborative						Individual
Formal						Informal
Directed						Self-Directed
Planned - <i>following a plan or design</i>						Emergent
Motivation – <i>extrinsic</i>						Motivation – <i>intrinsic</i>
Motivated by <i>need</i>						Motivated by <i>interest/curiosity</i>
Motivated by <i>desire to achieve/make</i>						Motivated by <i>love/joy/care</i>
Problem solving or sense making						Playing or improvising
Cognitive						Emotional
Imagination – <i>use of existing ideas</i>						Imagination - <i>my own idea</i>
Something I have done before						Something I did for first time
3. Subjective evaluation of creativity judged against my own norms/experiences						
Elements of the process	1 <i>little</i>	2	3	4	5	Comment
1 The idea of making towers						
2 Locating and making the towers						
3 Photographing/videoing the towers						
4 Making the movie in movie maker						
4. Subjective evaluation of the context of the activities involving creativity and the norms for judging creativity ^{8,9}						
<i>little -c</i> creativity and associated <i>mini-c</i> in any aspect of life			This activity took place while on holiday			
<i>ed-c</i> creativity and associated <i>mini-c</i> in educational settings						
<i>Pro-c</i> creativity and associated <i>mini-c</i> in areas of expertise/work						
5. Subjective evaluation of the purpose of my creativity based on categories defined by Lässig ^{10,11} – this could be a mixture of the three forms						
1 <i>Creative Personal Expression</i> - expressing aspects of self – personality, emotions beliefs and ideas in novel ways					creation of stone towers & movie on holiday	
2 <i>Creative Task Achievement</i> - using creativity to achieve a particular task or external demand						
3 <i>Creative Boundary Pushing</i> - extending typical and expected knowledge in order to pursue new understandings and outcomes.						
6. The value of the experience & outcomes to me						
Types of Value	1 <i>small</i>	2	3	4	5	comment
Novelty - <i>new perspectives, new ideas, ways of thinking / ways of doing (new skills)</i>						
Artefacts – production of <i>new objects/tools/knowledge</i>						Memory of the towers was preserved in the photographs and movie
Usefulness – <i>fulfils a practical need</i>						
Aesthetic – <i>fulfils emotional needs</i>						The act of making and the movie artefact have aesthetic value
Affordance – <i>new opportunities to act e.g opportunities to learn / give</i>						Having the experience and the artefacts provided the foundation for future action
Transformation – <i>changes to understanding</i>						Provided me with an example of creative self- expression which I could relate to Lässig's categories
7. The audience(s) for my creativity						
Me and only me					Building the stone towers	
Me and a small number of other people (e.g. my friends and family)					The movie I made of the towers	
Me and other people e.g. making it available through an article or website						
Me and many other people e.g. posting on social media and actively promoting it						
Me and people working in my field / organisation						
Me and people in the future who might be interested						

Table 2 My subjective evaluation of the involvement of creativity in using my experience of building the towers and making a movie to describe and analyse the way my creativity was involved – in the process developing and applying new conceptual tools.

1. Context, circumstances, affordances, mediums & media for creative self-expression						
Context & circumstances: I was inspired/motivated to make some small stone towers by the awesome scenery while on holiday in the Scottish Highlands. I also photographed and filmed them and then made a movie and shared it with my family via YouTube						
Affordances (opportunities for action): in the landscape and the materials of the landscape, in the tools (mobile phone camera and laptop)						
Mediums & media: the materials of the landscape, photographs, video, software - moviemaker, WhatsApp, YouTube						
2. Estimated mix of contexts/approaches to learning, doing & creating						
	100/75	75/25	50/50	25/75	100/0	
Collaborative						Individual
Formal						Informal
Directed						Self-Directed
Planned - <i>following a plan or design</i>						Emergent
Motivation – <i>extrinsic</i>						Motivation – <i>intrinsic</i>
Motivated by <i>need</i>						Motivated by <i>interest/curiosity</i>
Motivated by <i>desire to make/achieve</i>						Motivated by <i>love/joy/care</i>
Problem solving or sense making						Playing or improvising
Cognitive						Emotional
Imagination – <i>use of existing ideas</i>						Imagination - <i>my own idea</i>
Something I have done before						Something I did for first time
3. Subjective evaluation of creativity judged against my own norms/experiences						
Elements of the process	1 little	2	3	4	5	Comment
1 Writing a narrative and using it to evaluate my creativity						While facilitating an online conversation about creative self-expression. Developed further for magazine article
2 Developing and using an existing tool (contexts & norms framework)						
3 Developing and using a new evaluation tool based on Lassig's creativity categories						
4 Developing this profiling tool						
5 Production of Creative Academic Magazine on the theme of creative self- expression						The open-access publication vehicle for this article
4. Subjective evaluation of the context of the activities involving creativity and the norms for judging creativity ^{8,9}						
<i>little -c</i> creativity and associated <i>mini-c</i> in any aspect of life						
<i>ed-c</i> creativity and associated <i>mini-c</i> in educational settings						
<i>Pro-c</i> creativity and associated <i>mini-c</i> in areas of expertise/work						
5. Subjective evaluation of the purpose of my creativity (categories defined by Lassig ^{10,11}) – this could be a mixture of the three forms						
1 <i>Creative Personal Expression</i> - expressing aspects of self – personality, emotions beliefs and ideas in novel ways					In the presentation of article, tools and magazine	
2 <i>Creative Task Achievement</i> - using creativity to achieve a particular task or external demand					Facilitation & producing magazine	
3 <i>Creative Boundary Pushing</i> - extending typical and expected knowledge in order to pursue new understandings and outcomes.					Extending my own understanding and sharing with peers through publication and conference	
6. The value of the experience & outcomes to me						
Types of Value	1 small	2	3	4	5	comment
Novelty - <i>new perspectives, new ideas, ways of thinking / ways of doing (new skills)</i>						New perspectives developed through the mapping of experiences / outcomes
Artefacts – production of <i>new objects/tools/knowledge</i>						New tools
Usefulness – <i>fulfils a practical need</i>						Tools are useful aids to description and evaluation
Aesthetic – <i>fulfils emotional needs</i>						The act of making and the movie artefact have aesthetic value
Affordance – <i>new opportunities to act e.g opportunities to learn / give</i>						Having the experience and the artefacts provided the foundation for future action
Transformation – <i>changes to understanding</i>						
7. The audience for my creativity						
Me and only me						
Me and a small number of other people (e.g. my friends and family)						
Me and other people e.g. making it available through an article or website						
Me and many other people e.g. posting on social media and actively promoting it						
Me and people working in my field / organisation						
Me and people in the future who might be interested						

The final section evaluates whether the act was entirely for myself or whether my performance and the products of the act were shared with others.

The intention is to use the structure and prompts in the tool to focus attention on the detail of sustained acts of creative self-expression. The rough profile that is created facilitates a deeper understanding of the dynamics and outcomes of a process of creative self-expression. It is of course entirely subjective, but as Carl Rogers' points out it is important for people to develop the critical faculty to evaluate themselves. *"Perhaps the most fundamental condition of creativity is that the source or locus of evaluative judgment is internal. The value of his product is, for the creative person, established not by the praise and criticism of others, but by himself. Have I created something satisfying to me?... If to the person it has the "feel" of being "me in action," of being an actualization of potentialities in himself which heretofore have not existed and are now emerging into existence, then it is satisfying and creative, and no outside evaluation can change that fundamental fact."*¹

Using the contexts & norms framework to make sense of my experience

The 4C model of creativity⁹ seeks to develop a comprehensive and inclusive concept of creativity that can accommodate individual's creativity in the lifelong and lifewide dimensions of their life from the humblest to the most significant of scales and impacts. This model is widely cited in the creativity literature and is generally accepted as being a reasonable description of the ways in which creativity phenomenon manifest. Assuming this is a fair representation of creativity then all acts of creative self-expression must be accommodated by the model

The model has four categories that relate to the manifestation of creativity but they are not uniform in character. Two of the categories might be viewed as meta-contexts within which particular contexts, situations and physical social-cultural environments are located.

- 1) *little -c* creativity can be present in any aspect of a person's life
- 2) *Pro-c* - creativity can be present in an individual's work or other area of expertise.

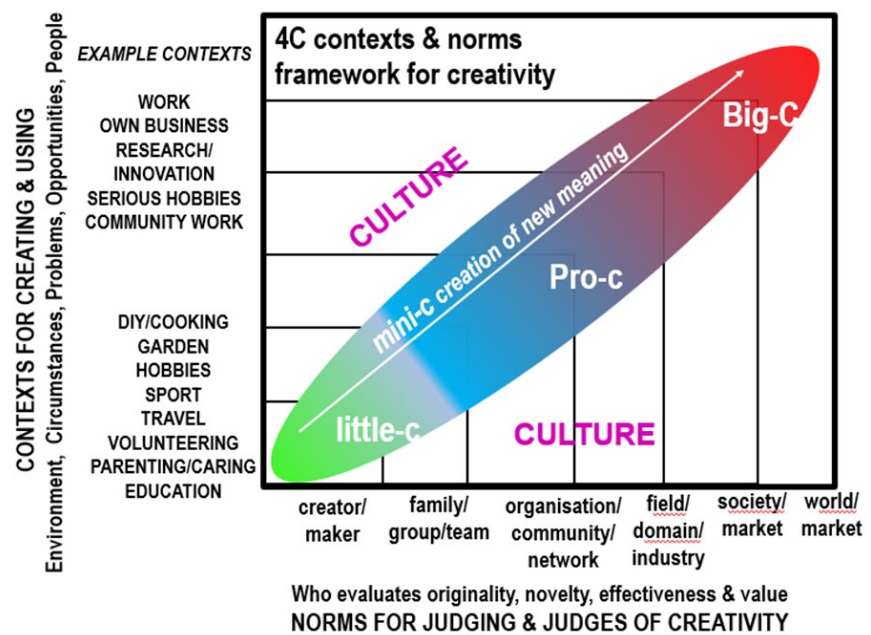
A third category of eminent creativity (*Big-C*) is not a meta-context, rather it is the recognition of exceptional achievements or performances that impact on culture in any context or domain where expertise is required.

A fourth category (*mini-c creativity*) refers to the cognitive and emotional process of constructing personal knowledge within a particular sociocultural context in order to develop/change understanding.

Viewing creativity as a phenomenon involving unique people interacting in unique ways with their unique contexts, situations and environments means that any frameworks within which creativity is considered and judged need to acknowledge the contexts, and material and social-cultural world in which creativity emerges and is judged.

In a collaboration with Carly Lassig¹¹ we incorporated the dimensions of contexts, and norms, values and subjective judges into the 4C framework to enhance its meaning and value as a cognitive tool (Figure 1).

Figure 1 4C contexts and norms framework¹¹ showing the categories of creativity in the model with example contexts and the people who create, use and judge creations. Developed from Kaufman and Beghetto's 4C model of creativity¹⁰

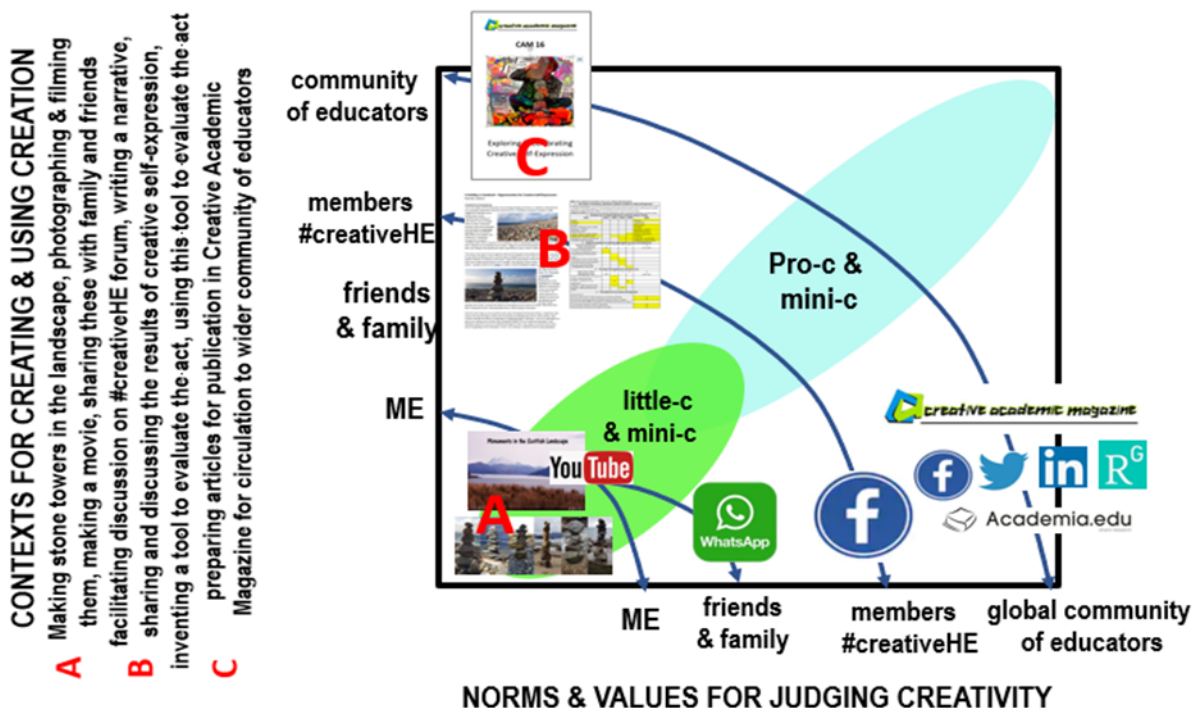


Using contexts & norms framework to evaluate my acts of creative self-expression

In the article attached to this addendum I describe making some stone towers as I journeyed through the Scottish highlands and islands. Here I will try to show how the 4C framework might be used to explain the contexts for creative self-expression and the norms and values that are brought to bear when judgements of creativity are being made.

This scenario is mapped onto the 4C contexts and norms framework in Figure 2. The story begins (Figure 2) when I am embedded in a context and environment that has particular meaning to me.

Figure 2 My experience of making stone towers and several artefacts mapped onto the 4C contexts and norms framework^{9,10}



judged against similar movies I had made before. Then I posted the movie in my YouTube channel so that I could share it via WhatsApp with my family and a few friends. (It's easy to share video once it is on YouTube). My family and friends gave me positive and encouraging feedback which told me they also valued my creation. They were judging it against their norms and values based on their experiences of these sorts of media.

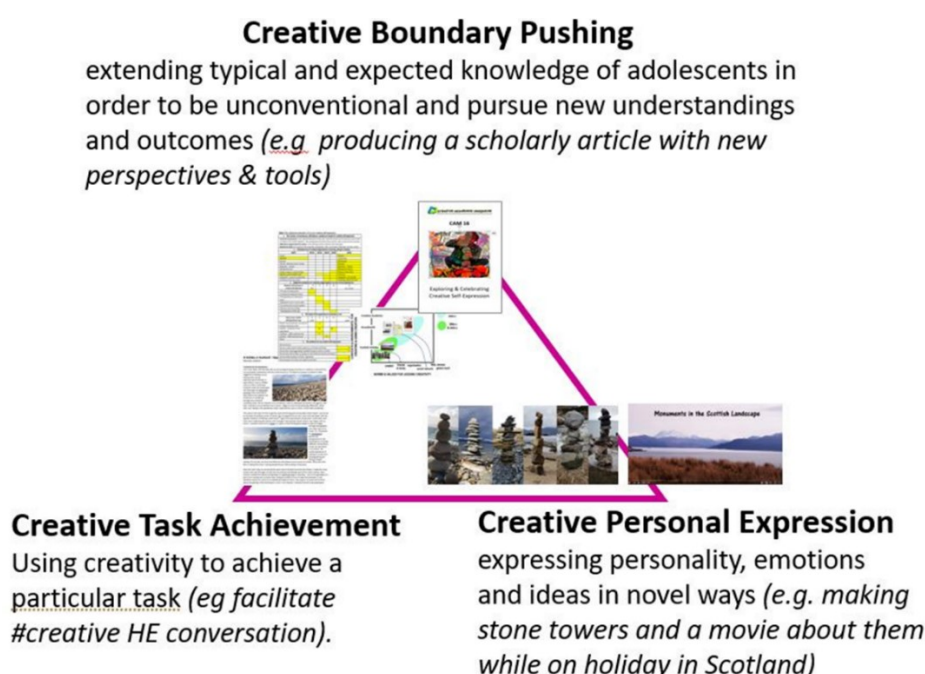
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creativity to create artefacts that are not just for me but for an audience. By sharing my ideas with the #creativeHE community as I make my posts in the forum and on my website, I am testing ideas and inviting feedback.

The next step in my unfolding process of creative self-expression (context C in Figure 2) will be to refine my ideas and share them with two or three peers whom I respect in order to get their perspectives and opinions on their value. Hopefully, they will give me the feedback I need to understand their value beyond my own judgements. My intention is to publish this article in Creative Academic Magazine. Here I will use my creativity in the production of the magazine weaving materials from different sources into what I hope will be a powerful and compelling narrative. This open access journal will reach a much wider audience through mail lists, postings in social media like twitter and linked in and two academic social media platforms – academia.edu and researchgate. In this way I will share my ideas with the global community of educators who will judge them against their norms and values.

I make one further suggestion for mapping acts of creative self-expression drawing on the research study of Carly Lassig who developed a grounded theory of adolescent's creativity^{12,13}. Her research revealed that within educational contexts (and beyond), students were manifesting three types of creativity: creative personal expression, creative boundary pushing, and creative task achievement. Creative task achievement was most common and refers to students using creativity to achieve a particular task or external demand. This was common in schools because much of students' learning is extrinsically motivated by learning tasks and assessments. Creative personal expression involved students expressing their personality, emotions and ideas in novel ways. Creative boundary pushing involved students extending the limits of typical and expected knowledge of adolescents in order to be unconventional and pursue new understandings and outcomes.

Figure 3 Mapping my creative acts onto Carly Lassig's categorisation of adolescents' creativity⁸.



I think these categories can be used in non-educational contexts and in Figure 3 I relate my acts of self-expression involving creativity to these categories. I would interpret this map to say that my

initial acts of self-expression were for my own well being, but I drew on these acts as I moved to a work/problem solving context. While working with the problem of how to facilitate the #creativeHE discussion I developed a descriptive narrative and new tools to enable me to analyse my own processes. My creativity was harnessed in trying to develop new understandings pushing at and extending my own boundaries of knowledge that I could then share with others in my domain.

Provisional conclusion written in May 2020: This is a live narrative that has yet to run its course. It is intended to show how playing on a beach in Scotland can lead to ideas that might have practical and conceptual value and aid the development of tools that can be applied in entirely different contexts. Ultimately the ideas developed through the experience and telling the story, may have value at a cultural level in a domain of knowledge and field of practice.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to everyone who contributed to the April 2020 #creativeHE discussion on creative self-expression. The conversations did much to open-up the idea of creative self-expression. I would like to thank Carly Lassig for her research-based ideas that have opened new possibilities for thinking about creativity.

Invitation

I invite you to try out the self-evaluation tool. A word version can be downloaded from my website : <http://www.normanjackson.co.uk/creative-academic> Blog post 15/04/20 Evaluating our own acts of creative self-expression. Feedback and suggestions for improvement are welcome
lifewider1@gmail.com

Sources

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VERSION 29/06/20