

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

Norman Jackson #creativeHE Facilitator

One of the interesting insights I have gained through the #creativeHE conversation this week is the amazing affordance for creative thinking in a box when it is part of a social learning process to which people want to contribute. 30 participants shared their ideas on how a 'box' might be used to represent an inspiring teaching and/or learning experience. **I compiled the posts that were made together with participants' responses to the posts and invite you to offer your own perspectives on what does this activity tell us about creativity in the context of making a contribution to #creativeHE social learning project?**



creativeacademic @academiccreator · 2h

how can something as mundane as a box be used to represent something as ineffable as creativity? #creativeHE [plus.google.com/communities/11 ...](https://plus.google.com/communities/11...)



One of my frustrations with Google+ is the way posts get jumbled up and quickly get submerged so it's hard to keep track and make sense of the conversations as a whole.

So this is my attempt to synthesise some of the contributions made to the Day 1 (Jan 16th) task and encourage participants to create their own commentary on this activity to stimulate creativity.

It's my way of curating the content of the conversation and trying to use the content to make more sense of what creativity means to participants in their particular teaching and learning contexts.

Its also a way of making more use of the affordances for learning in the set of relationships and conversations that comprise #creativeHE.

Learning involves activity - doing & thinking about something. In the case of #creativeHE creativity is stimulated by our desire to contribute something useful to the social learning process. We do this by engaging with a task or idea, sharing the results of our thinking and action, gaining & responding to participants comments and questions as they share their thoughts and emotional responses to our posts.

Chrissi Nerantzi

Day 1 (Monday 16 January): Creativity in HE

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

Sarah Ney

My box is a present. I called it "The Gift of Learning" as learning for me is like receiving a present and teaching giving one. I highlighted three take aways from a recent experience in a dance class. In addition to the more traditional teaching of the moves and a short choreography the teacher then gave us a situation and left us 10 minutes to work in groups with fellow students to bring the situation to life by using movements we knew and creating them, too. In turns we shared our routines and got cheered, then we discussed what the others thought we were representing and our choice of movements. Felt really inspired and grateful that the teacher allowed us to express our own creativity and vision. I think that this type of learning/teaching can apply to any situation, not just (performing) arts



Norman Jackson

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

Lauren McNeill

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

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

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

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

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

Sebastian Kozbial

The productive element of a class is, I believe, key. For that reason, I often go back to classes where I didn't realise how quick it went and where I was asked to produce/participate 'a lot'. Just before Christmas, I attended a CPD session organised by CELT here at Manchester Met that consisted of two separate classes - an input (not very interactive) and output (the participants were responsible for interviewing an actor, who was pretending to be a real candidate). I enjoyed it for several reasons:

firstly, although my group mates and I had prepared for the interview, the candidate was very problematic and we had to react and change our questions/the way we interviewed him; secondly, it felt like a real interview, as we had to follow the given procedure and our performance (the actual interview) was later evaluated and de-constructed; and finally, we had to think on our feet and this made me forget that this was 'only' a practice.

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

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



Norman Jackson

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

Sebastian Kozbial

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

Jennifer Willis

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

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

Sebastian Kozbial

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

Jennifer Willis

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

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

Sebastian Kozbial

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

Norman Jackson

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

Lucy Pittaway

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

So my box....wow! It would simply have to be black and white on the outside but the



most amazing bright colours on the inside, where it would contain a 'flip book' representing my happy memory with the kids!

Sandra Sinfield:

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

Jennifer Willis

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

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

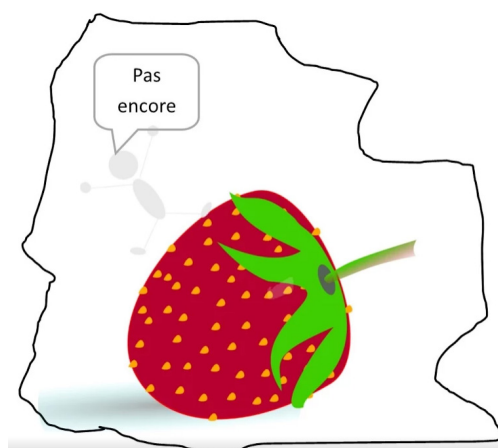
It happened about 20 years ago, when I was teaching French for the Open University. I distinctly remember the first time Ernest came into my tutorial - he was a stropky 70 year-old and I did not expect him to return. But he did, and we soon developed mutual respect and affection. One of the problems I always had with FE and HE was the boundaries between teacher and pastoral carer. So, when, in our second year together, Ernest began first to lose weight then to turn worryingly jaundiced, I was concerned and spoke to him. I was distressed to learn that he had pancreatic cancer. When he was no longer able to get into London for our tutorials, I kept in touch with him and visited him at home in an outer London borough not too far from my own home. Our meetings were a strange mix of informal teaching and practical and moral support for him as he declined. Eventually, he entered a hospice, and I continued to visit him there.

Now I come to the point of this story. The last time I saw him, he was nearing death (and died within hours) but he had not lost his thirst for learning. As he lay dying, unable to see, he wanted me to play word games with him, to give him an abstruse French word and test whether he knew its meaning. How could I not have been moved by this fiercely proud man's refusal to give in to his mortality? It brought to mind a Zen story that you may know. There are many versions of it, but here is one:

The Strawberry

A Zen Tale from Japan

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



He never before realized how sweet a strawberry could taste.

<https://www.storyarts.org/library/nutshell/stories/strawberry.html>

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

Explanation

My box refuses to take a rigid form, and changes shape like an amoeba. It blurs boundaries between teaching, learning, formal roles and personal relationships. Ernest is shown in ghostly grey as he

loses his battle with cancer, yet is defiantly clinging to the strawberry, as in the Zen parable. Even in the face of death, he is practising his French, saying 'Not yet'.

[Norman Jackson](#) Moderator

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

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

[Chrissi Nerantzi](#) Owner

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

[Tom Burns](#)

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

[Sandra Sinfield](#) Moderator

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

[Jennifer Willis](#)

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

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

[Paul Kleiman](#)

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

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

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



Creativity is hard to restrain in a box.

But we do love our boxes in higher education! So what does that say about our attitude towards creativity.

Once creativity is released, you can't put it back in box.

Once you take the lid off, you realise that others, too, are either trapped in their boxes, or like you, have taken off the lid and are ready to release their creative energies.

[Lucy Pittaway](#):

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

[Chrissi Nerantzi](#)Owner

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

[Lucy Pittaway](#)+1

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[Chrissi Nerantzi](#)Owner

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

[Sandra Sinfield](#)Moderator

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

[Norman Jackson](#)

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

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

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

the process.

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

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

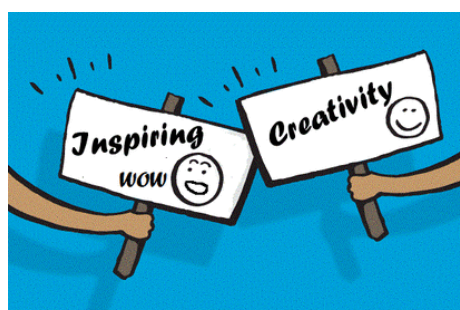
Osama invited me in to his professional world and created an ecology that enabled us to connect our interests, purposes and needs in a search for something - but none of us knew what it was. The process he facilitated simply enabled relationships to develop, values to be shared through the stories we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

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

Activity 1 invited reflections on an inspiring experience - if inspiring means to make you feel that you [want](#) to do something and believe that you can do it - then my experience achieved this goal.

On the train on the way home I formed an idea (an idea that I had not had before that had grown through this process) about how I might collaborate with Osama and his colleagues in a way that I hoped would be mutually beneficial. I put my idea in an email and sent it to them. I'm waiting to hear their response but the point is

that the experience enabled me to see new affordance in the relationships and situations and I acted on the affordance which is an indicator of an effective teaching and learning process. If my idea leads to collaboration then for sure it will result in considerable affordance for creativity. From a pedagogic viewpoint I guess it means that everyone in a learning process has to take responsibility for the creative outcomes that the situations afford.



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

My experience was not at all box like but I can use an open box as a framework to map some of the features and dimensions of a rich ecology for learning and creativity facilitated by

OK but co-created by everyone who was involved, and Carl Rogers' concept of creativity (3) as an emergent phenomenon seems to fit quite well my experience.

SOURCES

- 1 McWilliam, E. L. (2009) Teaching for creativity : from sage to guide to meddler. Asia Pacific Journal of Education, 29(3). pp. 281-293. <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/32389/1/c32389.pdf>
- 2 Giles, D.L. and McCarty, C. (2016) Creating meaningful learning spaces through phenomenological strategies. In L.S. Watts & P. Blessinger, (eds) *Creative Learning in Higher Education: International Perspectives and Approaches*. New York, United States of America: Routledge, 65-80.
- 3 Rogers, C.R., (1961) *On becoming a person*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin

Hazel Marzetti

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

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

Ruth Proctor:

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

Lucy Pittaway:

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

Sarah Easom

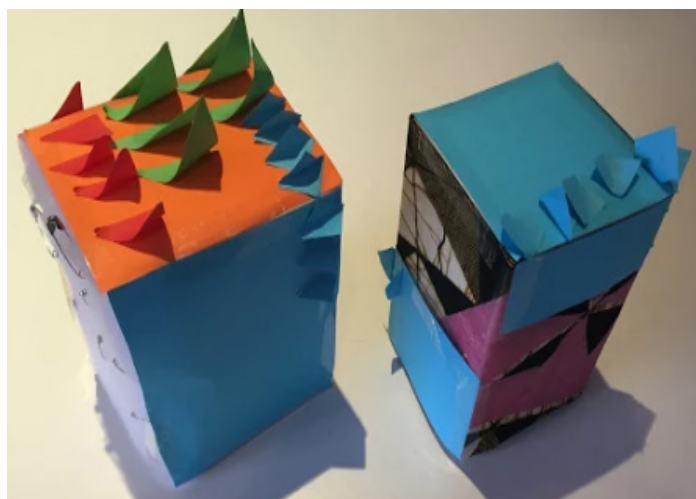
My box designs express creativity in learning in two ways.

In relation to the specific context of my learning (on a Fashion course) they communicate a development of specific knowledge in:

- 1) engineering of materials;
- 2) perception and how it changes;
- 3) colour, pattern, texture;
- 4) proportion;
- 5) illusion of shape and silhouette;

However, in terms of more general learning these boxes aim to represent creativity as:

- 1) a dialogue and varied process;
- 2) an iterative practice;
- 3) learning by doing;
- 4) a process where imagination, knowledge and insight may be applied and challenged;
- 5) working with uncertainty (a bit like today!).



Norman Jackson Moderator+1

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

Sarah Easom

Thanks Sandra and Norman, I think sometimes that creativity can be a bit like 'black box' technology where people are outside of it and it has a mysterious quality. In these designs, they are fun, playful, but open to interpretation and reflection rather than hiding anything.

But as with all creative processes, its a journey and now that I have had the day to reflect on my own design (and see it in relation to others') and ideas I can reinterpret them.

Norman Jackson

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

Karen Tuzylak

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

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



Norman Jackson Moderator

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

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

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

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

Ruth Proctor

[illegible]

Putting together the collage, as a sort of virtual photo box led me straight to my library and a real learning highlight of my year last year, the Playful Learning conference at Manchester Met. I learned a lot from the experience and not necessarily what I imagined I would learn. Something that struck me then and that I am finding more and more, is that although I think play can be creative, and that play can be solitary, I've shifted to see creativity as more of a social, collaborative process than the lone genius having a spark of brand new creation.

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

Ruth Proctor

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

Chrissi Nerantzi

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

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



Sandra Sinfield

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

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

Norman Jackson

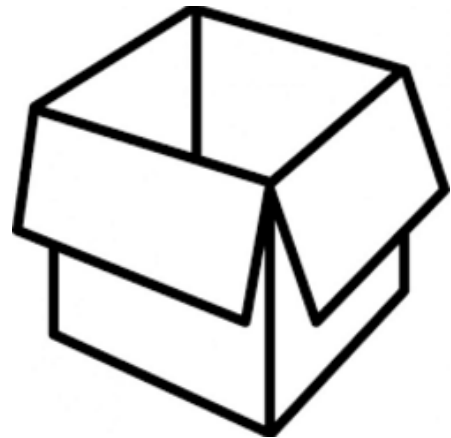
These boxes offer affordance for so many things

KONSTANTINOS KARAGIANNIDIS

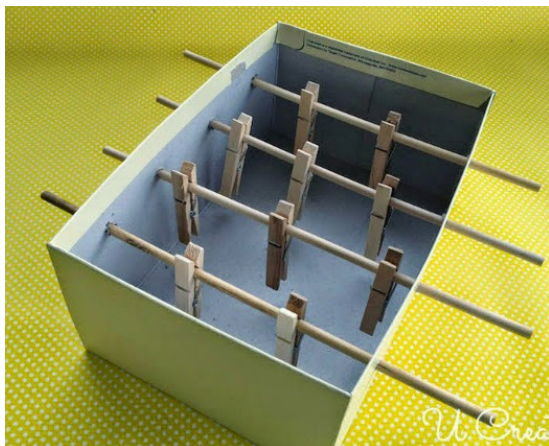
In this box, we see that we can start and conquer the Knowledge from the beginning (square 1), as it happens with a white paper in which we start writing!

VASILEIOS GKETSIOS

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



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



Sophia Poulidou

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

active and powerful, not something stable.

KONSTANTINOS KARAGIANNIDIS

Team working is a initiation in learning better!

VASILEIOS GKETSIOS

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

Sophia Moisiadou

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

elenh tsikelh

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

Dora Koutsou

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



KONSTANTINOS KARAGIANNIDIS

PROBABLY YOU ARE REFERRING TO ANOTHER COUNTRY

Alexandra Gkouzou+1

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

Froso Paschalidou+1

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

Sarah Easom

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

Zogia Manou

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

Natassa Kailari

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



Nikos Fachantidis Moderator

+[Natassa Kailari](#) I found "box in a box" an interesting representation for the inter-connectivity of the learning subjects, which we should consider in order to obtain holistic

teaching approach.

KONSTANTINOS KARAGIANNIDIS

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

VASILEIOS GKETSIOS

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

Natassa Kalari

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

Vicky-Anneta Tsoulfaidou

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

VASILEIOS GKETSIOS

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

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

Sophia Moisiadou

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



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

Christina Hesford There is no light without dark though. This suggests that there is always an unknown in learning (others what are we trying to learn). And therefore shows the potential for fear in

learning environments. Fear of not knowing. Fear of getting it wrong. Once you're in the light it's great, but getting there can be very difficult!

AIKATERINI ROUSOU

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

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



KONSTANTINOS KARAGIANNIDIS

learn and eat at the same time what a pleasant experience

[elenh tsikelh](#)

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

[AIKATERINI ROUSOU](#)+1

Thank you [+elenh tsikelh](#) ! Yes, I agree, knowledge is not always pleasant but it still can offer you wizdom..

[Alexandra Gkouzou](#)+1

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

Katerina Doupha

+[Anastasia Michali](#) (Uom)This is the box we have just created. It is a folding box. It is like a learning ecosystem which can be transferred to different classes, different environments. You can unfold it if you wish, but you can also keep it folded away and ... "think outside the box." It is all about versatility!
The box has no bottom and no top and this signifies that it is not



a container in the constrictive sense of the word. It is not closed, it is always open to ideas and interpretations. Students are free to put anything they like inside. They are also free to make things appear from inside the box, just as a magician performs a sleight of hand.

KONSTANTINOS KARAGIANNIDIS

A practical way of learning and playing as well! Use it as a toy!

VASILEIOS GKETSIOS

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

Sophia Poultidou

+Katerina Doupfa Your box is so beautiful not only because it supports openness in education but also because it is handmade. Great construction skills girls!

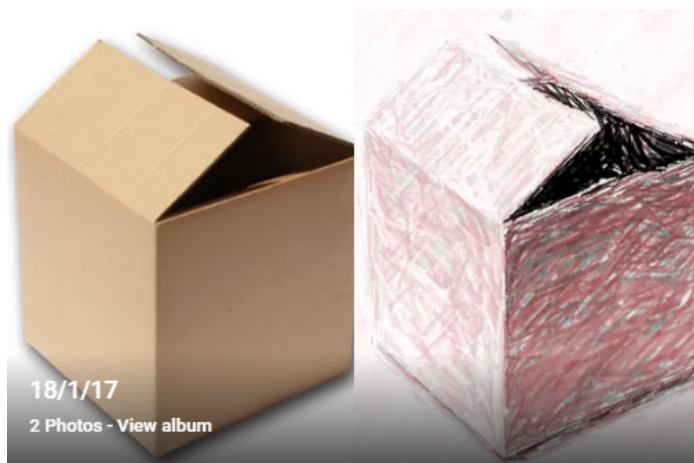
Norman Jackson

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

Vicky-Anneta Tsoulfaidou

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

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



elenh tsikelh

There are three boxes that when I saw them inspired me immediately!!! They appear different kinds of images in every side of the box. They make me think that in education every individual has a different past and view of life so we have not to forget to respect other's ideas and the way that they learn.

Knowledge is not absolute but has the unique ability to be transformed...



Alexandra Gkouzou

This was an old TV series in Greece...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EU7hS6qQIEI>

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

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

KONSTANTINOS KARAGIANNIDIS

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

Sophia Poultidou+1

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

learners!!



AIKATERINI ROUSOU+1

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

you with your storage of ideas!

Sophia Moisiadou

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

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

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

KONSTANTINOS KARAGIANNIDIS

team building!

VASILEIOS GKETSIOS

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

elenh tsikelh

+**Sophia Moisiadou** this is a very smart idea because you can practically be creative and watch your

imagination take place only with a box!!!

Froso Paschalidou

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

Jasmine Renner

So glad to be able to participate once again. For me creativity is like a "card board" of flying giant bird" Once awoken to its innate essence in you, you never go back. teaching students how to harness this innate power and to feel comfortable expressing it out in formal academic settings can be a challenge. The bird



connotes the ability to possess freedom of thought, movement, action and delivery. Students need all of this as a practice of learning and instructors need to facilitate and embed instructional practices like this into their day to day activities.

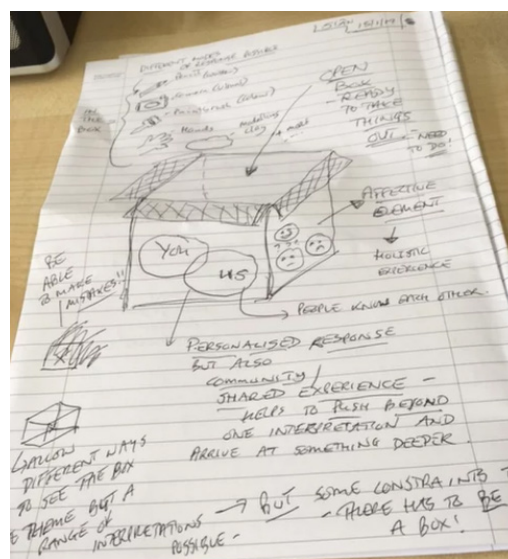
This picture I have posted in my story line captures the idea of creativity being unleashed out and the symbolic pictures of white birds with wings connotes our ongoing attempts of freeing our minds, spirits and abilities to simply become comfortable with our creative essence to the point of being "normal"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

Norman Jackson

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

Sian Etherington

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



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

Olga Broupi

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

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



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

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

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

Chrissi Nerantzi Owner

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

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

12h

Norman Jackson

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

Olympia Deligkari

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



- How the role of the educator in the light of the modern world can be defined in order lifelong learning to be promoted?
- What kind of values should be inculcated in the learners so that they can be led to an emancipatory learning?
- What skills should carry in their educational suitcase in order to use them in each learning environment?

Alexandra Gkouzou

Very interesting approach...

Norman Jackson Moderator

+[Olympia Deligkari](#) nice idea that higher education helps ideas and people travel

Froso Paschalidou

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

So contrary to the above i suggest open and connected boxes, so that the knowledge can be spreaded throughout the boxes, meaning the different subjects and improve critical thinking, via dialogue and conversations based on valid information and arguments! This way



students will feel more free and knowledge won't have to be boxed, thus improving creativity and free thinking and promoting connection between seemingly different subjects.

Zogia Manou

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

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



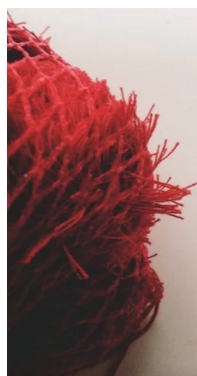
Christina Hesford

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

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



finished talking, or if I asked think too. Sometimes she own questions or challenging me. I felt like a porous being, hence the fruit bag with holes in it. My teacher was drawing the information and answers out of me, hence the fibres and strings of the pom-poms emerging from the bag.



It is actually a fruit bag full of pom-poms. The learning experience that came to mind for me as being most effective wasn't really creative. It was a one-to-one tutorial with a teacher. I was asked to talk through my current sketchbook and work. The teacher would let silence spiral once I

a question. She was thinking, but it forced me to asked a question back, forcing me to answer my

I also felt like I was absorbing information from my teacher. Hence, the holes are again important, as information can flow both ways. The empty spaces within the bag are also important as there is room to be filled. I struggled with the box because it is hard. It is a specific shape. There is no room for nebulous-ness, for organic growth. For me, the most important aspect of this model is the ability for information to be absorbed through the holes, and sent out through the holes.

So - did making a box help me to explore the learning experience I had chosen?

No, not really. I thought about the situation I had chosen, and was already thinking about cells as a metaphor for the experience. Hence why I chose the nebulous bag.

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

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

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

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

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

What are everyone else's thoughts on whether this was a creative activity?

What do you mean by 'creativity in learning'?

[Chrissi Nerantzi](#) Owner

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

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

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

[Jennifer Willis](#)

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

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

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

[Christina Hesford](#) +[Chrissi Nerantzi](#)

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

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

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

What do you think about 'absorbing' as learning?

[Christina Hesford](#) Hi +[Jennifer Willis](#) ,

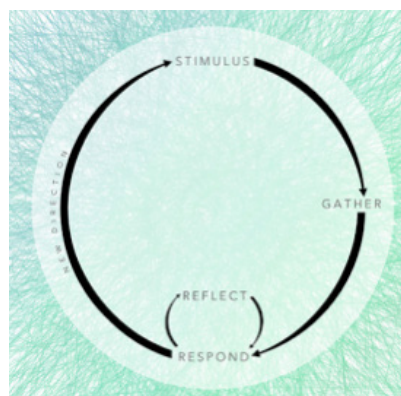
It's great that we both felt we had the freedom to work outside of the prescribed 'box'. I wonder how we can install this freedom within students? I often hear students fears about 'getting it wrong'.

So to answer your questions:

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

<http://www.textileartist.org/christina-hesford-do-we-all-have-creative-bones/>

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



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

Christina Hesford

+**Jennifer Willis**

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

Norman Jackson

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kostas Batzilis

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

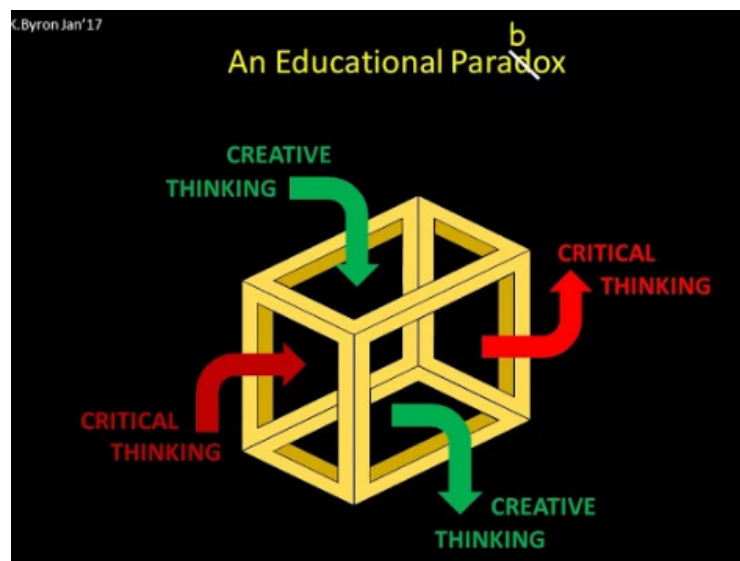


kevin byron

My contribution to the Box:

This represents a box for which the inside is the outside. It aims to show visually that creative thinking doesn't exist in isolation from critical thinking (analysis, synthesis, decision-making, assessment etc). Any activity that engages the imagination also engages our critical thinking skills at the same time to guide us to the best ideas. The notion of suspending judgment when working in groups (ie only be creative) may appear to be taking place overtly but covertly we continue to engage our critical faculties. In the classroom we aim to give precedence to creative thinking by designing open-ended challenges for which there are many solutions.

The individual then explores their own solution through a continuous interaction between their creative and critical thinking skills. When we simply wish to 'transmit' information or facts through conventional teaching the emphasis is on critical thinking but the student also engages their creative thinking in order to understand what is being taught. The teacher designs the kind of thinking that should take precedence but the learner engages both forms of thinking. All this is to say there is no 'outside of the box'!



Christina Hesford

Hi +kevin byron,

This is such a great perspective on the role of critical thinking alongside creative thinking, that I had;t thought about before. Thanks. You're right too, they are both necessary parts of the process, and at times one will have precedence over the other.

Do you have any techniques/workshops you use for developing critical thinking or creative thinking?

Can they be taught separately?

kevin byron

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

thoughts.

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

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

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

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

Norman Jackson Moderator

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

Norman Jackson Moderator

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