



**A GUIDE TO CREATIVITY IN STUDENTS' LEARNING AT
THE UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH**

**A Cross-Disciplinary Conversation
About Creativity In Higher Education**

January 6th 2005

Norman Jackson and André van der Westhuizen

Content

A cross-disciplinary conversation about creativity In Higher Education

Introduction	3
Participants' conceptions of creativity (any context)	3
What does creativity mean? post-it exercise	3
Creativity in Higher Education	4
Some issues relating to creativity in HE	5
Possible solutions to some of these issues	5
Disciplinary perspectives on creativity	6
What does being creative mean in disciplinary context?	6
What does being creative mean in your disciplinary context?	7
And another way of asking the question: What sorts of things do chemists, lawyers, geographers etc do that is creative?	7
What is it about your subject that stimulates people to be creative?	8
Teaching for creativity	9
What creative capacities, behaviours, attitudes are teachers trying to promote?	9
Can creativity be taught?	9
What forms of teaching / approaches to learning encourage/enable students to be creative?	10
Contexts/conditions for learning that encourage/enable students to be creative	11
Things that inhibit students' creativity	12
Assessing students' creativity	12
How do you recognise / assess creativity?	12
What criteria do we use to evaluate creativity?	13
Concluding comments	13
Appendix 1	14

A Cross-Disciplinary Conversation About Creativity In Higher Education

Norman Jackson and André van der Westhuizen

Introduction

These notes represent the products of cross-disciplinary conversations about creativity at the University of Portsmouth in December 2004 – January 2005. The conversation was initiated through an email survey of participants who were invited to reflect on some questions that relate to their own disciplinary teaching contexts. The responses of participants were compiled and integrated with the January 6th workshop notes. About 30 people participated in a workshop that facilitated cross-disciplinary conversation. This is a working paper and participants are invited to endorse, challenge, develop and offer additional or alternative perspectives.

- **Participants' conceptions of creativity (any context)**

If creativity is socially, culturally and contextually constructed then we need to share our conceptions and perceptions of what creativity is in order to understand what it might mean.

For participants creativity and being creative involves doing things like:

- **Thinking in particular ways** – imagining/visualising, being insightful, generating ideas, thinking in non-linear/out of the box sorts of ways, coming up with new/original ideas, ideas that are not normally encountered in own environment, growing new ideas/things through synthesis, connecting things in unusual ways, thinking the unthinkable, thinking whole – pragmatic; systematic; functional; contextual; technological; social; psychological →
- **Behaving in particular ways** – being receptive/inspired, disciplined, willing to explore, perhaps irrational, willing to take risks, obsessive, trying things out / experimenting, exploring, playing having fun.
- **Making new things** - new theory, methods, techniques, products or performance (self-expression)
- **Changing** – things that already exist or being different. Significant change.
- **Authenticity**

- **What does creativity mean? post-it exercise**

- New ideas
- New ways of thinking
- Ability to imagine (imagination)
- Originality – in process and solution
- Bright ideas
- Step change
- Interesting
- Challenging
- Spontaneous
- Generation of possibilities/alternatives
- Generation of novelty
- Self-expression
- Thinking outside of convention/unconventional.
- Thinking out of the box/around the edges of a topic/defining the fuzzy
- Trying out things
- New ideas, theory, methods, techniques, products
- Performing something
- Able to think the unthinkable
- Adding to modifying what is already known
- Fresh insights
- Making new combinations and connections
- Doing things imaginatively

- Having fun
- Playing with ideas
- Exploration
- Being colourful
- Using variety
- Being different
- Seeing new connections
- Connecting things in unusual ways
- Insight
- Non-linear thinking
- Away from the norm
- Standing out – something exceptional
- Taking risks
- Surprise
- Being receptive
- Non-conformity
- Inspiration
- Irrational
- Disciplined
- Obsessive behaviour
- Insanity
- A different solution to the conventional i.e. understanding where to ‘break the rules’
- Conceptualisation
- Innovation – something that was not
- Problem solving – letting go
- Connectivity – bringing into existence and synthesis
- Insight discourse
- To make something out of nothing/produce different versions of the same thing
- The ability to see beyond social/disciplinary constraints in order to find effective solutions with enthusiasm and drive. This allows the freedom to explore potential in self and others
- Find your inner child/free the child in you.
- Deviate from old forms

Creativity in Higher Education

We cannot understand what creativity means without understanding context. In the case of higher education there are many contexts for example (revealed in discussion).

- **Individual learners** – Recognising their individuality, the cultures within which they have grown, their unique histories and lives, their personal beliefs, attitudes, motivations, interests and preferred styles of learning.
- **Individual teachers** – the cultures within which they have grown, their personal histories and psychologies, attitudes and interests, the cultures and structures within which they work (disciplines and institutions); their beliefs and conceptions of teaching and pedagogic stances. Their capacity for helping students to be creative.
- **Disciplines** with their norms of behaviour, value systems, traditions, rules for knowledge production and validation. There is a strong perception that disciplines both shape notions of creativity and exert a strong influence on the extent to which creativity and the behaviours associated with being creative are permitted.
- **The institutional climate and structures.** There is a strong perception that institutional procedural structures eg relating to curriculum design and learning outcomes exert a strong influence on what teachers can do to encourage creativity.

The things that participants associate with creativity in any context are also relevant to the higher education context. But, in the views of one participant, ‘the idea that higher education will help people to think creatively is but a dream.’ While we are a long way from realizing this dream participants’ recognize that there are many opportunities for making higher education a more creative place. Given that assessment seems to stifle creativity one participant felt the need to ‘create a meta-curriculum that allows and encourages people to participate in creative enterprises that are not formally assessed.’ Another participant felt that ‘if students study an academic subject they do not view themselves to be creative – there is a divide between academic and creative subjects’.

- **Some issues relating to creativity in HE**

- Higher Education is a space/place to explore ideas, challenge and synthesize. Do not 'put a lid on it'.
- There is little understanding of creativity as a concept in academia.
- Helping students to develop the skills and attitudes necessary for creativity
- Teachers don't like letting go or losing control. Creativity requires students to behave independently and make decisions about their learning for themselves.
- There are considerable issues around measuring creativity: HE is not comfortable with explicit measurement.
- The focus on assessing product can conflict with purpose.
- The current emphasis on explicit outcomes/criteria for predictive performance makes it difficult to assess the outcomes of creative processes which are often unpredictable and may conflict with what teachers anticipate. Learning Outcomes have to be designed to accommodate the unexpected.
- There is a belief that if creativity is not assessed students won't engage.
- In general, higher education teachers want students to comply/conform while creativity may/will encourage students to rebel against compliance notions of education.
- Mass education makes it harder to create conditions where individual student's creativity can be supported and valued.
- The structures set up to cope with mass HE eg timetabling makes it difficult to create the time and space for creativity.
- There is a belief that teaching for creativity with its emphasis on facilitative and interactive models of teaching, is more resource intensive than transmission forms of teaching. ie teaching for creativity is more expensive than teaching for knowledge transfer.
- Some students are reluctant to engage properly with opportunities to be creative.
- Do we want student to be creative or practical
- There are fears that creative processes permit (sometimes) encourage plagiarism. Piggy backing on the ideas of others (positively encouraged in creative enterprises) is considered to be cheating by many academics. Fear of plagiarism stunts creativity.
- Creativity is a fuzzy concept. It becomes illusive and is not auditable.
- Question: What is the difference between inspiration and creativity.
- Being conventional is the accepted norm. Pre-conceived ideas are sacred.

- **Possible solutions to some of these issues**

- Creating opportunities for students to engage in creative processes (space) that are not impeded by assessment eg play on the history of psychology
- Peer assessment / group project work
- Trusting the learner to be able to do it and permitting them to make mistakes
- Express clear expectations
- Align actions to expectations and reinforce
- Adopt student centered approaches to learning
- Tutors and lecturers to lead by example and model their own creativity
- Making lectures/tutorials interesting to students
- Teachers making environments for learning creatively
- Offering alternative assessment tasks.
- Encouraging creativity as the highest order thinking.
- Allow students to contribute to design of experiments at an early stage.
- Create an environment to facilitate a (creative) process
- Make the box so small that they rebel
- Having confidence to consider alternative forms of teaching
- Encourage students not to place limits on themselves
- Allow freedom to experiment and excepting all results
- Exploring the notion that students take responsibility for their own learning.
- Exposure to uncertainty
- Outcomes should be unpredictable
- Promote reflection.

Disciplinary perspectives on creativity

- **What does being creative mean in disciplinary context?**

Creative arts

- Play – tension between deadlines and relaxed improvisation
- Unselfconsciousness
- Setting sparks off one another
- Logic and structure of fantasy
- Always seeing possibilities and the positive

Politics

- Making connections between ideas, issues – history
- Imaginative solutions to problems

Languages

- The ability to express a thought in a correct way.

Philosophy

- There are no boundaries.
- The discipline is irrelevant.
- Everything is connected
- All possible worlds are interesting.

Psychology

The ability to experience a range of assessment methods

Human Geography

- Exploring new methodologies
- Searching for evidence in new places.

Engineering

- Creating artifacts that are fit for purpose under constraints (physical, economic environmental)

Information technology

- Take declarative skills and tools and construct not just artifacts but tools for communication.

Child Care

- Everything needs to be creative – creativity is in relationships and partnerships
- Subject offers diversity, flexibility, variety, choice, individuality,

Management

- Creative accounting – challenge rules and policies; exploiting opportunities
- Knowledge innovation and management
- Proactive strategies, USB, competitive advantage

Criminology

- Individuality
- Independent thinking
- Creative analysis
- Creating solutions
- Challenging professional cultures
- New ways of doing things

Law

- Encouraging an interest in all areas not just crime.
- Need to understand personal needs in civil law
- Understanding how law is used to win an argument

Creative Technology

- Continuum of notions
- It's about personal perspective and cultural influence
- Developing Interesting creative technology
- Interpreting the boundaries of a client and come up with novel ideas
- Recognize when you have been creative. Express your creativity and then only be able to reflect on it.
- Be good at selling technology.

• What does being creative mean in your disciplinary context?

- In designing new learning formats/objects
- In finding out how to manage/moderate peer-2-peer learning.
- An English teacher writes poetry. She plays with words. Someone in IT develops creative ways of communicating. Someone who can do both can combine and synthesize their skills and knowledge, to develop ever-new, creative, amusing, moving....ways of communicating
2U. ;-)=0}
- Compilation of questionnaires for research dissertations. The creativity needed here is that required to cause effective delivery of the questionnaires into the hands of the subjects, and MAKE THEM WISH TO COMPLETE THEM. Layout, rewards, targeting and delivery all need a creative input.
- Creativity is needed to implement learned ideas and use them to contribute to class discussion.
- Creativity is needed to design effective theoretical schemes which anticipate real problems from genuine sites, for the course project.
- Anyone who has studied and obtained a qualification in an academic subject has I believe displayed a level of creativity. However there is a tension here. In order to obtain a qualification any student has to conform to the 'academic system' that is in place, at the time. That includes course prerequisites, curricula issues, evaluation and assessment, examinations, tutor review, peer review, external examiner review, and so on. In order to publish in an academic journal of repute further 'system' requirements have to be met. And academics that want to advance in their chosen discipline have to publish. This in a way seems to me to at the very least have the potential to suppress creativity. But most successful academics have to some extent overcome the restrictions of 'academic system requirements' and been creative anyway. Do we want to encourage students to be creative, or do we want them first to take on board academic system requirements and master that, and then and only then start being creative? That might be too late for some...
- My field is computer games. All aspects are creative, including programming, graphics, design and so on. Even managing the process requires creativity. Everything is cutting edge and requires novel solutions. The industry reinvents itself every few years!
- A software engineer must be creative by definition as his main job is to create software programs.
- In language teaching we can be creative by presenting the subjects we teach in a different light, by looking at subjects from a different angle, for instance by organising teaching materials in a way that is not usually done. In my case, I occasionally use games to facilitate language acquisition. In other words, a less formal academic method but a highly involved (student-oriented) activity. However, we are still very "conservative" where language teaching methodology and evaluation are concerned.
- Teaching and how everybody else teaches linked to assessment and how you approach it.
- Be creative to allow the students to be creative
- Attending conferences in the creative technology field and analyzing case studies to be stimulated.
- Drawing out of students their own experiences.
- 'Original' research

• And another way of asking the question *What sorts of things do chemists, lawyers, geographers etc do that is creative?*

- Chemists = The way in which they use chemicals can be very creative. For instance, what would happen if I mix this chemical with cotton/ silk/ leather? What sort of fabric would I get? Would this product be useful and fashionable?
Lawyers = The way in which they may resolve situations can be very creative, such as "how do I get my client to carry out his/her own defense in court?"
- Lawyers are creative in that they have to think of solutions to new problems using the law. They have to persuade using argument which is creative

- Research design - I think creative people are more resourceful in terms of independent study and career searching, professional development (but this is just a hunch)
- Education is essentially a reflective discipline and can encourage students to think creatively about their own practice in the workplace, particularly perceptions of learning and teaching for themselves and also for their students.

One way we approach this within early years is through looking at Gardner's multiple intelligences and also consideration of learning styles both personally and through application in practice.

- Need to think creatively about systems, construct meaning from client requirements, design and present human computer interfaces (e.g. web sites) and the underlying structures that make them work. Process of analysis and design is creative, especially modern methodologies, which make use of brainstorming, modelling, developing prototypes. "something from nothing"
- I feel that language teachers are generally quite creative, the real issue is how to be creative within the framework of the curriculum. I personally devote some brief sessions to singing, reading non sensical poetry, watching funny adverts or playing games. I find that these help students to bond and this is ultimately the key to a successful class.
- *What is creative about being a Specialist ICT Tutor?* - I work with and teach assistive technology enabling students who would otherwise find it difficult to access the curriculum. You have to be creative to find solutions to their problems.
- What sorts of things do Specialist ICT Tutors do that is creative? A lot of students have struggled because they have not found or have been unable to use their personal learning style eg if they are dyslexic or have suffered personal damage in an accident which has restricted them mentally and or physically.

- **What is it about your subject that stimulates people to be creative?**

- Constant new developments in ways of teaching.
- Let's start with language. Noam Chomsky proved that humans can create new utterances and basically mess around creatively with language. Knowing language can be played with encourages many people to experiment with it. Language and Literature are often combined - leading to drama, intrigue and madness. And....now technology has started to creep in. I have recently been to two live theatre events that have included film. One had the characters stepping in and out of the film. Seeing this type of performance (which I notice some of our students did) could encourage students and staff to work on complex sets for drama.
- I strongly believe that the 'teacher' should be able to transmit the enthusiasm and excitement of his or her subject to his or her students. What are the really interesting and challenging issues of X? What are we trying to do with X. And whether it is Architecture or Zoology, we should be able to answer those sort of questions and communicate why they are interesting and important questions!
- Not a problem when you're trying to get them to think up new ideas for games! However, I am trying some creative approaches to teaching the subject, in particular using problem solving and role playing to teach the skills required by game producers (a management role).
- The fact that there is a lot of room for creativity in the software development process.
 - 1) How I am going to teach this subject to motivate students? I am sufficiently motivated to teach it? (Intrinsic motivation) = Enthusiasm.
 - 2) Which new materials can I include in my classes that may be of interest to them and yet will enable them to learn the subject we need to cover? By asking them what they would like, chances are they'll pay more attention/ they will be more interested = Inclusion.
 - 3) Do I have time to prepare the materials, etc? (Extrinsic) = External constraints tend to do the opposite, to de-motivate.

Technology can be both a hindrance to learning (teachers and students may fear it, or may have to undergo long training time to learn how to use it) but it may also be a learning tool for creativity, in terms of how to prepare teaching material as well as how students can practice, learn and demonstrate how they are progressing, etc.

- We are dealing with constantly changing law – this stimulates creativity
Changing professional practice and changing work environments ie use of ICT also stimulates creativity
- Thinking of research ideas and paradigms but also thinking through the implications of research - practical and theoretic. Presentation of material is often in poster presentations.
- Practitioners in early years have to be creative individuals because they work with a demanding client group of 0-8 year olds, so on a daily basis they are creating ideas, problem solving, juggling demands of care and education, working with adults and children and therefore operating on a number of communication levels simultaneously. Creativity in the work place is also about use of resources, about facilitating children in play (learning), about helping children resolve conflicts, about providing a challenging and stimulating

environment. There are also lots of traditionally “creative “ aspects going on in teaching young children involving form, shape, model making , paint etc.

It is important therefore that the approach to the subject recognises and values the skills and creativity students bring (balance between academic expectations and need for colour and pictures in initial stages of course?).

- Subject matter of several aspects of IT, e.g. web design, HCI design. Also in computer science - search for new paradigms, exploring the implications of others. In all areas, chance to develop practical skills and use development tools - encourages creative thinking.
- The process of learning a second language is not dissimilar to that of learning your first one. This is why I am able to use a few ‘tricks’ I learned while volunteering in primary schools.
- Finding solutions that enable students to succeed. Adapting ICT programs and hardware in a way that suits the students learning style and subject.
- Teaching a boring topic without getting bored.
- The ability to model our own behaviour of creativity towards the student.
- Story telling – entertainment and enjoyment. The sequence of story telling should not necessarily be in the expected right order.
- Flow (Socratic) → being original with the knowledge base and experience.

Teaching for creativity

• What creative capacities, behaviours, attitudes are teachers trying to promote?

- **Certain ways / habits of thinking** – imaginative, non-linear, generative lots of ideas / new ideas, ideas that are not normally encountered in own environment, synthesized, flexible solutions that would allow changing circumstances.
- **Approaches to learning** that are discovery or enquiry led and involve exploration, play and fun. Journeys that cannot be predicted in advance.
- **Approaches to learning that are reflective and self-critical.** Students have to know themselves and to be able to recognise their own creativity – requires development of metacognitive skills.
- **Involvement of students in shaping the learning process and assessment through discussion and negotiation.**
- **Able to invent and produce new ideas, theories, practice, products**
- **Willingness to take risks** and to cope with not succeeding. To be comfortable with the unknown and with anxiety.
- **Experience feelings of discomfort and panic (freedom to panic).**
- **Resilience, persistence and resourcefulness** – to stick at it and overcome obstacles and setbacks
- **Freedom and playfulness (free spirit)**

• Can creativity be taught?

The concept of teaching is critical to any consideration of the promotion of students’ creativity. Negative views of the idea that creativity can be taught are based on transmission models of teaching where teachers’ attempt to transfer their own knowledge and sense making to students through lecture dominated teaching, where students’ engagements in learning are predominantly based on information transfer, and are heavily prescribed and controlled by the teacher, and where summative assessment drives the learning process. Such conditions are less likely to foster students’ creativity than models of the teacher as a stimulator, facilitator, resource provider, guide or coach, and where students are given the space and freedom to make decisions about their own learning process and outcomes.

Discussion revealed that teachers believe that through their actions and behaviours as teachers they can empower students’ in ways that help them recognise and develop their own creativity. Although it is recognised that some students will not respond positively to these forms of teaching. The passion, enthusiasm and role modelling of the teacher provides the energy to enthuse students with a desire to learn in creative ways.

Discussion revealed a paradox between the desire for teachers and the teaching process to secure compliance and conformity to encourage students to learn the sorts of things that they believe are essential and where creativity is concerned – the encouragement to behave in a non-compliant / original way. Promoting creativity could be seen as a threat to the status quo as teachers needed to encourage students to unlearn their compliant

habits. One participant argued that one sure way of forcing creativity was to totally suppress students so that the rebelled – creativity through suppression!

- **What forms of teaching / approaches to learning encourage/enable students to be creative?**

- Open, peer-based learning.
- Independent learning
- In this order: fun, trust, and emotionally safe spaces to innovate and experiment and engage with ideas.
- I can't answer this about HE as I am not a faculty lecturer. However, I used to teach A level Literature, among others. For all my A level teaching I would get students to develop interactive group work for each other. (how I experienced seminars in my B.Ed.) The best responses came from a Literature group, whilst we were studying Chaucer's Prologue. I told them that as a lot of them wanted to be teachers, I didn't want them to just stand up at the front of the room holding a poster. These are the activities they devised (all videoed):
 - contemporary sock puppet performance of a scene by the religious characters >
 - 'What's my line' - using the characters - some rather strange west-country accents emerged here!
 - a quiz, with questions in rhyme - prizes awarded
- All of these students got an A or a B for the Chaucer question in the final exam. This was not an assessed piece due to the nature of the course, but could have been a formative assignment. Now I am getting more into using new IT where this is appropriate for my current post. My latest adventure is learning how to programme and use handsets for interactivity in lectures. This was inspired by a cosmology lecture I went to at the City museum.
- I think this is a very difficult question. A 'teacher' has always got to be open to what students have to say. 'Teachers' have to be interested in what students think and write and do. 'Teachers' have to be ready to be surprised and delighted and challenged with what a student might produce... It is a state of mind and an approach to new insights... And maybe 'teachers' have to somehow encourage students to 'think outside the box', but still stay on board as far as the system requirements of the course are concerned.
- Give them opportunities to explore new ideas.
- Ditto! Encourage the students to bring their own experiences to the melting pot and then build on them in conjunction with new 'taught' material
- Freedom to think without censure from peers or teachers. Set up a situation in which they are free to think creatively. Walt Disney's brainstorming model comes in handy too:
Dreamer
Critic
Realist
When preparing for this workshop I had a quick trawl on the Internet and found:
<http://www.becker-associates.com/creativi.htm>
Just wanted to check that I had correctly remembered the Walt Disney technique!
Is it being creative if I reinvent it every time I use it?
- Creativity in students is stimulated by giving them more flexibility for their assignments.
- One-to-One or small group teaching covering study skills, mind mapping, note taking in a way that boosts confidence and provide strategies to work and succeed on their own.
- I personally would like lots of things:
 - 1) To involve students more actively in the material preparation of the very subjects (grammar structures, etc) that we teach. For instance, I have been organising (very slowly) a WebCT page for my year one, post A Level Spanish students. I would very much like to include in this site works that have been wholly written and prepared by them, crediting the students who have produced it. This would enable a lot of things:
 - They would select the subject of interest (freedom of choice)
 - They would learn the relevant vocabulary related to it, probably in a better and deeper way than through other activities.
 - They could prepare the grammar associated with it, and with our help and guidance they could both produce materials for others to use and, through it, learn the very structures they are working with.
 - They could produce written, video/visual and audio works for all to see and enjoy.
 - 2) To organize multi-disciplinary collaboration between students of different courses/faculties, so that each one will benefit from each other's experiences and learning. For instance, I would like to organize an activity where a group of language students write a short play in a foreign language, which is then dramatized by the students of drama of our sister School of Creative Arts, Film and Media. This would be the perfect ground for knowledge transfer: the language students must teach/coach the actors on how to deliver the lines in the

foreign language, and the acting students will teach the language students how important, effective and relevant acting styles can be to deliver the very message they want to put across to the viewer. Both groups will gain an extraordinary view on language, acting, etc, and very importantly, will never forget the experience.

- Games
- Talk about things they are good at and finding novel ways of doing things.
- Pushing students into areas where they are uncomfortable/out of their comfort zone.
- Use real life projects to encourage focus to meet the expectations and to develop the ability to withstand the brutality of the real world – standing up in front of real people and network/communicate.
- Instill the ability to play.
- Giving confidence to explore – strength of character to be flexible to respond to change.
- We facilitate creativity through encouragement, nurturing and motivation. We provide the environment to achieve confidence in 'individual' potential

• **Contexts/conditions for learning that encourage/enable students to be creative**

- When students take full command/control of how they want to learn. By offering them exciting opportunities to demonstrate what they have learnt, other than via an examination. By establishing/ setting certain parameters, but leave these open enough for them to complete the task as they see fit. By then recognizing the value of the task they have completed, why it makes sense, how it can be applied to a real-life situation context, and very importantly, by making the whole activity relevant to their learning.
- Tutors being creative from the lecture hall to field trips creativity should not just come from the student.
- Clinical legal education – we have started pro bono work and also mootings.
- Students need more time to be creative or some extra motivation such as a competition or increased chance of employability
- Don't know but would like to explore (I suspect conditions that promote independence and motivation would foster creativity)
- Part of the tutor's role is to help the students acknowledge and recognise the talents and skills they already employ and then help refine them and perhaps help them become more strategic or planned in their use. Practitioners often work instinctively in the above ways and need to see that they are employing a range of approaches to their jobs. We use case study, discussion, and work-based activities to help promote these sorts of activities.
- Students in this field are by (nature of the course/ area of work) arriving with low self-esteem. The learning environment must be positive and affirming a trust has to be built between the group and the tutors as a pre-requisite to getting high quality / creative contributions.
- Give context, then set tasks/courseworks requiring students to produce artefacts. Provide reading/fact finding materials and encourage discussion, hold plenary sessions. Encourage team work alongside individual work.
- Teachers must try to bring out the 'inner child' in their students, so that they can lose their inhibitions when learning a new language.
- I believe that, aside from constraints like lack of time – some of our courses are very intensive – language teachers should encourage students to engage in pretend games and role plays. I like to give my students Italian names, so that they acquire a different Italian persona when they are in class. It is often underestimate how much people like to perform, they are just waiting for the teachers to give them an excuse. For example, last year two male students gave a presentation where one was playing Berlusconi and the other his wife. The latter put on a female voice and moved like a woman. In this case the learning experience became a thoroughly enjoyable one for the whole class.
- Creating confusion without being unfair. On settling them – tricky questions, no right and wrong answers.
- Using what if questions – to help students think out of the box.
- Changing conditions – putting students in new situations enables them to change and take risks.
- Helping students to inhabit a different location (examples given in different disciplines)
- Encouraging students to take risks and not punishing them for not being successful.
- Giving students choices.
- Finding out what motivates students.
- Stimulating students.
- Borrowing from other disciplines. 'Inter and multidisciplinary thinking is essential for creative thinking.'
- Engaging in dialogue with students so that they can negotiate with me.
- Letting students do things that I don't think are right – letting them make and learn from mistakes.
- Teaching Law through a mootings competition.

- We contrast and we reflect
- Scenario setting.
- Be flexible enough that you enthuse students in the way you assess and evaluate them. Understand the multiple perspectives.
- Every person is an individual. Focus on individuality, individual strengths and extend towards the strength of the group.
- Allow the student to take the lead.
- Behaviour must follow the need (Force the behaviour)
- Create questions in people's minds.
- Focus on individual creative abilities.
- 'Celebrating' their results.
- Students should 'own' the outcomes/

• Things that inhibit students' creativity

- Timetables. Lack of space (the right sorts of spaces) or time in the curriculum
- Constraining curriculum structures (modules/unit sizes)
- Lack of preparation and willingness to prepare (examples of using discussion boards to encourage students to prepare).
- Students not wanting to engage (need to develop strategies that keep students engaged).
- Mismatches between what students want to learn and what is educationally desirable – increasingly the world is driven by students' interests.
- Difficulty of persuading students of the benefits of developing their own creativity (examples of using people from industry to explain the value).
- Not doing well with students who do not fit the mode

Assessing students' creativity

• How do you recognise / assess creativity?

- When people find a new link/fit/relationship which sparks new thinking and perspectives and ways of learning.
- Look for originality that works! I like responses that are like the BBC: ones that inform, educate and entertain.
- Does creativity by definition defy 'categorisation'? I would be very interested to hear what others think about this. As I have suggested above creativity is a way of thinking and behaving - it is a way of looking at the world and what happens... I am teaching IT Skills (that's what I do in ASK) and if a student makes a comment about what we are doing and it hits me in the eye that this a really good way of looking at this issue that could be significant, I will take it away and maybe rethink this topic: that is an example of creativity, isn't it? I am sure there are many other possibilities...
- Is it possible to objectively assess creativity?
- Maybe we need to separate novelty from creativity? / Application from creativity?
- We need to work out a context and perspective?
- Maybe think about purpose.
- Perhaps we can only create a score for the products of creativity?
- Is being creative a subjective activity?
Creative activities are usually recognised and assessed by the type and the level of originality that they have.
- **Recognising and assessing creativity is not part of our language teaching and assessment syllabus.** However, many students have produced creative works in foreign languages because they have both the gift and the interest to do it. For this reason, we initiated a project two years ago called "*Prize for Creative Writing in a Foreign Language*" in order to recognize, encourage, praise and show-off foreign language learning and talent. This is a voluntary activity that students enter into and we support it by running creative writing workshops at key points during the academic year.

- **What criteria do we use to evaluate creativity?**

- For the above Prize/competition, we have very clear judging criteria regarding the creative use of the language (*). However, in normal language learning activities, we only praise the creative work students produce in an informal way, for instance by making a comment on how good/ creative an oral presentation was prepared and delivered.

- (*) **Please see attached marking criteria paper (appendix 1)**

- We look for an new application of the law or a new interpretation of it
- I use several psychometric tests - some question based , some drawing based - but this is for research rather than pedagogic practice.
- Novelty, utility, commercial use?
- Challenged by this question of how do we recognise and assess creativity as not sure that we do assess it. We would expect our students to possess it in order to do their jobs , but it is not inherently given assessment opportunities.
- We do have a group project that is part of a unit on teamwork that produces some very creative material. (leaflets for parents and practitioners on a specific aspect of early years)The material itself is not marked but we do hope to make it available for distribution as a resource for other practitioners.
- Ideas raised in classroom and discussed with other students. Evidence from in-class tasks, coursework.
- I am not sure.
- I work a lot with mind mapping so finding the right program that matches the persons own creativity and learning style is very important. Does this make information easier to understand and recall.
- Assess process and outcome and relevance

Concluding comments

The creative enterprise in higher education encounters many barriers and some teachers feel inhibited by the environment in which they work. But there is also considerable optimism and a significant number of teachers (judging by the level of participation and engagement) who are committed to helping students develop and demonstrate their creativity.

Having begun a conversation what happens next is very important. For some teachers just reflecting on their own contexts, understandings and practices is sufficient to inspire themselves to do new things. Others may feel the need to engage their departmental colleagues in discussion. But given the pressures on all higher education teachers it is hard to sustain interest and action without the support of colleagues. The development of a UoP network or community of interest around the idea of nurturing students' creativity might help teachers share and develop their understandings and practice and help other teachers to overcome the barriers to creativity in their own environment.

**CREATIVE WRITING IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
JUDGING/MARKING CRITERIA.**

The written works will be judge under the following criteria:

- **Originality**
The content of the written work and the way in which it is told. The ideas and images behind it. The ability to make the reader look at something in a different way.
- **Imagination**
The power behind the images and visual pictures it creates. The strength of the images. How the story is brought about and the way it is tackled.
- **Style**
The way in which the written work is presented. The effective and convincing way in which the language is used. The work shows command of the language.
- **Vocabulary**
Range of words and expressions.
- **Grammatical accuracy**
Use and command of grammatical structures.
- **Register**
Appropriate register. Formal/Informal registers used in the right context.
- **The X-Factor**
The special and worthy qualities that go beyond originality, imagination and style. The way in which feelings are evoked. The way in which it moves the reader. The way or form in which the work/piece is put together.

Marking/ judging scale:

Each of the above headings will be marked/judged under a scale from 1 to 5 as follows:

- 1 = Excellent. Quite special. Works in every aspect.
- 2 = Good. Noticeable. With interesting qualities.
- 3 = Satisfactory. With some good elements.
- 4 = Acceptable. Shows some effort.
- 5 = Mediocre. Poor. Not worthy of publication.

Work that obtain grades predominantly on the scale 1 to 3 will be published. Work judged mainly at grade 4 and 5 will not.

EMU/04/2004

University of Portsmouth
School of Languages and Area Studies

**CREATIVE WRITING IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
JUDGING FORM.**

Student Hemis No: _____

Title of work submitted (if any): _____

Language: English / French / German / Italian / Portuguese/ Russian / Spanish

Judge's initials: _____

Please circle the mark you think this work deserves.

	Scale				
	Really Good	Really Poor
1) Originality	1	2	3	4	5
2) Imagination	1	2	3	4	5
3) Style	1	2	3	4	5
4) Vocabulary	1	2	3	4	5
5) Grammatical accuracy	1	2	3	4	5
6) Register	1	2	3	4	5
7) The X-Factor	1	2	3	4	5

The work submitted deserves:	Yes	No
1st Prize	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2nd Prize	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3rd Prize	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commendation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worth publishing (no Award) <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does not fulfil the criteria	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments: