Review for ADCHE 15.1

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Welcome to 15.1. The authors in this edition offer a thoughtful and in depth study of creative pedagogy from a complementary range of research perspectives. At its simplest this is an edition that explores how educators do the teaching of practice (see Paquette et al, Guler and Lahti et al) and how they do the teaching of theory (Bennett and McDougall). These articles are complemented by an article by Fieldsend-Danks which explores student engagement in relation to a fine art case study at Norwich University of the Arts.

As one would expect, any analysis of creative pedagogy does not offer simple solutions or tool kits (nor would we want it to). Instead we are presented with

Pedagogic conundrums that you will be thinking about long after you have read each paper.

The papers focusing on creative practice education offer carefully constructed research designs that yield rich data. The methodological frameworks adopted surface the importance of research design aligning to research question.

Art, design and media educators have always had a troubled relationship with the idea of expertise. An idealised picture of student and lecturer artists working together as equals is a commonly espoused but highly romanticised view of the studio. In Myth Today and Together, Bennett and McDougall select

Barthes’ collections of Mythologies (1973, 1979) and they explore ways that academics, teachers and students can reimagine this work. The authors play with the idea of expertise drawing on Rancierre’s work. The key conundrum to consider is this- when we are working with students who is leading and who is following? Innovative pedagogies that place the student centre stage destabilise traditional conceptions of expertise. When students are active in shaping learning and knowledge they share the expertise with their lecturers. In some cases they may lead the lecturers’ learning as well as their own learning.

In many pedagogic research studies the students are the objects of the research and their voices are confined to the analysis. What happens if the students become the subjects of the research. Bennett and McDougall play with the authorial voice. The named authors ‘book end’ a text that incorporates anonymous students’ words- from a student authored wiki site. The naming of the researchers and the anonymity of the students poses challenging questions. Are the students empowered by their anonymity? Does this offer permission and possibility? Is their authorial voice strengthened or diminished by this approach? This article unsettles our expectations in relation to our journal guidelines. We accept anonymous student text when it is in the ‘findings’ but we would be unlikely to accept- or even consider - an anonymous research submission. Usefully the presentation of this article pushes against the conventions of the journal format to stretch ideas about how knowledge is communicated.

Fieldsend- Danks also reconfigures staff and student relations in his article entitled *The Dialogues Project: students as partners in developing research-engaged learning.* This author reports on an event series at Norwich University of the Arts called Dialogues that offers undergraduate and post graduate students and staff an event that creates bridging dialogues between artists, educators and students. Fieldsend-Danks folds the practice of the event series into the educational theory that situates this work. This iteration of theory and practice draws out, in a very explicit way, the rich learning afforded by the annual event. Within the reconfigured studio students become members of the steering group and delegates which subverts typical staff/student expectations. Expertise is distributed across the staff and student body. This case study offers an insightful overview of a project that promotes student engagement in a highly theorized but ultimately very practical way.

Creative education defies simple explanation and in this edition we have two articles that that appear to study cognate territory but they arrive at different conclusions. In *Race Cars and the Hellbox: understanding the development of proficiency among digital arts students*, Paquette, Reedy and Hatzipanagos work with students on a digital arts first year undergraduate modelling course to explore the ways that precise pedagogic interventions can allow students to make rapid progress towards professional proficiency. Paquette et al challenge the idea that instilling a true appreciation of professional standards is the exit point and culmination of study. They report on a study where students START with a direct engagement with professional standards and then they work from this position. The findings suggest that early engagement with professional standards offers a learning environment that supports students’ development of the threshold concepts needed to progress in digital art. Interestingly the authors note that students with prior experience in this area did less well than those students who were new to the subject. Paquette et al speculate that the students with prior experience had to unlearn skills that were not serviceable in this new learning environment and that this put them at a disadvantage in comparison to other students who started as novice learners in this area.

In sharp contrast Guler, in Assessing Visual Skill Development in Basic Skill Education, found that students who had been selected on their strength of their visual abilities were graded more highly (after an educational intervention) than students who were selected on the basis of their overall educational attainment level. In this article the students’ previous knowledge served to advantage them. There was no ‘unlearning’ needed in this instance. In this example, professional practice was the culmination of the course of study- not the starting point. Guler reports on the development of a visual aptitude survey tool that measures students’ visual capabilities. In the context of a higher education policy environment that is seeking to measure learning gain and value added this survey may offer a tool that suits our creative education context.

In *Textile Teacher Students’ Collaborative Design Processes in a Design Studio Setting* Lahti, Seitamaa-Hakkarainen, Kangas, Härkki and Hakkarainen address the needs of creative education students. The authors work with students who are learning to be textile teachers. The student teachers were asked to work together in small groups to design a 3D puzzle for visually impaired students. The researchers observed the students in order to find out about their design process. In this instance the practice is both creative and educational. These students use Problem Based Learning approaches to develop their design thinking approaches. Like many projects deployed with student teachers this work can be read on two levels. The project in itself offers design learning opportunities for the students - but it also models a teaching approach that they can - in future - deploy with their own students or pupils. This reminds us how important it is for student teachers to experience the kinds of learning they will be developing in their role as teachers.

There is an increasing interest in creative education approaches beyond the art school and the ideas explored in this article in relation to studio based learning and enquiry based learning have applicability beyond the art school. There are parallels to be made with the deployment of Problem Based Learning in medical schools where - like art schools - there is a focus on the development of theorized practice.

The edition concludes with two book reviews. Dr Saranne Weller reviews *Method Meets Art: Arts-Based Research Practice* by Patricia Leavy and James Corazzo *Communication Design: Insights from the Creative Industries* by Derek Yates and Jessie Price.

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