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University of the Arts London
HEIF Funded Project 2007 – 2008
Professional Development and Enterprise in the Curriculum

'Bold resourcefulness:'

re-defining employability and entrepreneurial learning

Stage 1 Report – Overview and Executive Summary

An investigation into the provision of professional development and entrepreneurial learning in UAL's curriculum

What the graduates say:

'I feel I wasn't at all prepared for the professional world. Most of the time, I feel that I am lacking the skills to do the work that is expected of me.'

'Being in education is easy because you can put off the real world for so long and then finally we're at the point now where it's... OK, what are you going to do? I feel anxiety about the whole thing....'

'It was that moment.....in my third year, when I realised: we are the next generation.'

Prepared by: Linda Ball, Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Learning and Teaching in Art and Design (CLTAD), May 2008.

'Bold resourcefulness:' re-defining employability and entrepreneurial learning

Stage 1 Report – Overview

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This two-year investigation into the provision and quality of professional development, **employability and enterprise (e&e)** learning in UAL's curriculum aims to stimulate debate about how students are prepared for the workplace, the wider benefits of a creative education and the key issues for emerging graduates in a changing world. The findings will lead to improvements in the key areas of: **student satisfaction** and **graduate employment** and contribute to a University-wide **employability strategy**.
- Whilst the University produces many high-achieving graduates in the arts and creative industries, **overall its graduate destinations profile is weaker than for comparable institutions.**¹ There is more work to be done to **prepare students for a successful and confident transition from their courses**.
- An extensive mapping exercise of the provision of **e&e** learning at UAL was undertaken during 2007-8, together with a literature survey, and provides the underpinning rationale, a review of pedagogic models and exemplars of practice to inform priorities and recommendations. These are presented in a series of Papers, signposted in downloadable format from CLTAD website.
- **Broader definitions for entrepreneurial learning in society – 'bold resourcefulness'** extend beyond a business model, to embrace attributes required to engage with the complexities and demands of life in an uncertain world.
- UAL's vibrant curriculum offers well-established opportunities and support for venture creation and the development of **e&e** learning, yet there are problems relating to **student confidence and articulation of achievement**.
- The **pedagogies of art and design** higher education provide a rich experience for students with **experiential learning at the heart of the curriculum**, and UAL presents many exemplars of good practice, but valuable opportunities can be missed through shared critical reflection, to articulate and make connections between learning and its impact on students' career development and aspirations.
- The study identified key areas for development and consultation:
 - building on and celebrating the strengths of the curriculum and exemplars of practice
 - involving staff and students in developing a common language for **e&e** and PPD, debating its importance in relation to subject specific creative practice, where it occurs, what learning underpins it and how it might be clearly valued
 - improving information about graduate career paths and wider opportunities to feed into courses
 - research into **e&e** learning to explore student experiences of creative practice in relation to aspirations and career patterns.
- Preliminary recommendations include a UAL **e&e** award at the point of graduation, in recognition for specific accumulated learning from work placements, live projects, commissions, external projects and work-related learning of all kinds, in which students reflect on and articulate the value of achievements and experiences in relation to career aspirations.

¹ Dodd K (2007) Destination data of graduates from University of the Arts London, Creative Careers.

1 AIMS AND RATIONALE

1.1 This two-year investigation into the provision and quality of **professional development, employability and enterprise learning** in UAL's curriculum aims to stimulate debate about how students are prepared for the workplace, the wider benefits of a creative education and the key issues for emerging graduates in a changing world. The findings will contribute to **UAL's employability strategy** and improvements in the student experience, to prepare graduates for their working lives. The work is being undertaken by Linda Ball, Senior Research Fellow in CLTAD on a 0.6 contract.

1.2 Reasons for the study

Among UAL's graduate successes, many creative professionals have achieved international standing and recognition in the arts and creative industries, but the University's profile in relation to graduate destinations overall is weaker than for comparable institutions.² Further emphasis is needed on the development and success of the majority of graduates.

The University believes that all its graduates should have the opportunity to reach their potential and realises that there is more work to be done to strengthen the curriculum and the impact of Personal and Professional Development (PPD) to improve students' capacity for successful employment and self-employment.

1.3 What's the problem – why aren't they successful?

Research into creative graduates' early career experiences reveals a number of inhibiting factors:

- ❑ 'Slow to get started' in their careers, and tendency for an erratic transition into work – for a variety of reasons, not the least being the fragmented nature of the creative industries³
- ❑ The prevalence of freelance and portfolio working patterns makes it hard for new graduates to see entry points
- ❑ Graduate debt, leading to deferral of 'professional' career decisions, hinders the transformation from student to professional mindset
- ❑ The less successful have a tendency to measure themselves against those who quickly achieve recognition in their subject related fields
- ❑ Students lack confidence in identifying and explaining their strengths and achievements, and making a connection between what they have learned and where they might fit in, in the world of work
- ❑ Students are not always aware of the wider opportunities open to them, which means that they may limit themselves in their job search.⁴

² HESA (2007) 'Destinations of Leavers in Higher Education'.

³ Harvey & Blackwell (1999) 'Destinations and Reflections: careers of British art, craft and design graduates', CRQ, UCE.

⁴ Findings relating to graduate working patterns are summarised from sources in Stage 1 literature review and preliminary work (see Bibliography).

1.4 The current context

The foreground for this study is an examination of definitions and exemplars of practice for **entrepreneurial and employability (e&e)** learning and teaching in the curriculum,⁵ in relation to the current context for higher education, the creative industries and wider economy, and the career patterns and aspirations for graduates in creative subjects.

A literature review and preliminary research reveals common ground between the concepts of professional development, **enterprise and employability learning (e&e)**.

Employability *'is having the skills and abilities to practice professionally. Life skills which include: emotional intelligence, self-efficacy; confidence, team-working, communication; being enterprising – a way of doing that enables students to act in the world.'*⁶ **Enterprise** involves the additional assets of being able to spot and act on opportunities, being resourceful, proactive, having a vision; project management, networking and financial acumen.

A broader definition for **entrepreneurial learning in society – 'bold resourcefulness'** - extends beyond a 'business' model, providing *'an opportunity for individuals and organisations of all kinds and in all walks of life to cope with, provoke, and perhaps enjoy, an increasingly complex and uncertain world.'*⁷ - something that every one of us might subscribe to and benefit from.

2 KEY FINDINGS

For Stage 1, an extensive mapping exercise was undertaken during 2007-8, and provides the underpinning rationale, informed by a literature survey, a review of pedagogic models and exemplars of practice at UAL to inform priorities and recommendations. These are presented in a series of Papers, signposted in downloadable format from CLTAD website.

2.1 Strengths of the University's provision

Creativity and its transfer are key for the growth of the creative industries, and UAL has well-established models for collaborative working to create a bridge between higher education and the creative and cultural sectors, and in the wider community.

The University's vibrant curriculum⁸ offers a mixed economy of opportunities for **e&e** learning and professional development, many involving industry partners in **key areas**:

- The attributes and behaviours of **e&e** learning are found to be naturally located in **creative practice, in well-established pedagogic models, with experiential learning at the core**. An evolving curriculum allows for updating and new initiatives in response to changing needs of industry, students and academic priorities, with a wealth of live projects, competitions, commissions and 'entrepreneurial' experiences.

⁵ Presented in 5 Working Papers for those who wish to gain a fuller understanding of theoretical and contextual issues in these areas, downloadable from the CLTAD website.

⁶ UAL Professional Development network

⁷ Gibb A (2005) *'Towards the Entrepreneurial University: Entrepreneurship Education as the Level for Change'*, NGCE Policy Paper 3, NGCE Birmingham.

⁸ The key contributors to entrepreneurial learning in the University, the range of models of practice, and specific examples of learning activities and opportunities within the University's courses are presented in some detail in a series of 4 Working Papers, p 00..

- ❑ **Personal and Professional Development (PPD)** is articulated and integrated into course design and delivery and ranges from embedded and core units of study in all courses to ad-hoc events and activities, both accredited and non-accredited. Courses re-interpret PPD outcomes for their own subject disciplines and often with specific reference to employer sector requirements. **Personal Development Planning** is represented in a range of models across the Colleges and courses.
- ❑ **Venture creation, knowledge transfer and graduate enterprise** are areas in which considerable progress has been made through **creative collaborations** of all kinds, directly involving students and industry professionals, within courses and in extra-curricular activity and consultancy relationships; and seed funding for staff and students to develop creative ventures. These initiatives are highly valued by students.
- ❑ **Committed academic staff and teacher-practitioners** provide the most powerful contribution to **e&e** learning, and take every opportunity to enhance the curriculum, often supported by the **CLIP-CETL** project funds and **CLTAD** professional development programmes.
- ❑ **Industrial placements and work-related learning** provide a professional context for students to apply their learning, with a well-developed programme of opportunities across all Colleges, Professional Development Diplomas and related activities, including peer mentoring and volunteering.
- ❑ **Dedicated Centres such as ECCA and CSM Innovation** support enterprise, industry collaborations and provide training and events before and after graduation. Student and graduate support via **Creative Careers** provides career guidance, resources and on-line employability tools.
- ❑ Well-established provision for **postgraduate study** and **Continuing Professional Development**; networking opportunities, alumni association, web-based resources, recruitment services and portals.

2.2 Exemplars of practice

The findings of Stage 1 include case studies drawn from the University's courses, all with common features that exemplify **good practice in experiential learning**. They provide:

- ❑ **Progressive learning activities** that help develop the foundations for effective learning: self-management, research and investigative skills, evaluation of self and practice, presentation and promotion.
- ❑ Opportunities for the development of **e&e skills and attributes through creative practice**
- ❑ **Contexts and sites for learning** that involve **peer and multi-disciplinary learning**, and **collaborations with professionals**, to encourage 'creative transfer.'

An example is The Young Design Programme, a collaboration between UAL and The Sorrell Foundation:

The Young Design Programme

An HE and Schools collaborative project, that brings a design team of undergraduate students together with a client team of school pupils to address a design brief connected with the school environment. Each student design team is mentored by a dedicated professional practitioner.

The programme is available to all students in the University and focuses on building 'transferable skills' such as communication, presentation, problem solving, negotiation and team working, in addition to their design skills.

Students spend around half the academic year on the programme, which is formally assessed. It was developed collaboratively by University of the Arts, London and The Sorrell Foundation's 'joinedupdesignforschools'. Over two terms, students receive training and support from the Sorrell Foundation, and are supported by their university course tutors. The students' learning on the projects is assessed by course tutors through existing course guidelines, in most cases using a 40 credit, second stage professional practice unit.

Link: <http://www.thesorrellfoundation.com>

What they learned...

'...the language of design and translating it out again...'
'...how to present simple things to others...'

Features...

complex
challenging
creative practice development
transfer creative process
collaborative design

adding value
understanding client needs
working towards a goal
teamwork
multi-disciplinary

communication
critical thinking
interpretation
negotiation
analysis

evaluation
celebration

2.3 Barriers and pedagogic issues

Considering the strengths and the good practice identified, why are our graduates not more employable or successful? The findings recognize that there are difficulties in offering consistent student experience across a large and complex institution, and barriers of a structural and linguistic nature are identified that can inhibit students' ability to make connections between different elements of their courses:

- ❑ Lack of a shared language for **(e&e)** learning and opportunity for reflection between staff, staff and students, student and student
- ❑ Academic language and bureaucratization of learning
- ❑ Segregation and separation of PPD and subject specific teaching

The **pedagogies of art and design higher education** provide a rich experience for students with **experiential learning** at the heart of the curriculum, and UAL presents many exemplars of good practice, but valuable opportunities can be missed to make connections between learning and its impact on students' career development and aspirations.

*'The UK's powerful art and design school tradition needs to be celebrated, nurtured and developed.'*⁹

⁹ Hutton, W (2007) *Staying ahead: the economic performance of the UK's Creative Industries: Overview*, The Work Foundation, p.23.)

Sometimes, the crowded curriculum allows little time for reflection on **e&e learning**, or it may not be done in a way that indicates to students that it is valued. For example, a review of competences, in which students are required to list skills and PPD attributes removes **e&e learning** from the creative process and reduces it to a checklist audit.

A more holistic and expansive expression of learning on a range of dimensions through creative practice: 'What has been learned as a result of the course activity?' 'How might this relate to students' aspirations (for their practice, or for their careers)?' addresses **creative practice development in relation to personal goals and ideas**. In this way, the **creative practice itself provides the context** for enhancing students' intellectual capabilities and **encouraging confidence**.

Student confidence and articulation of achievement can be further enhanced by **shared critical reflection** between all of those involved in course activities – staff, students, peers and professionals. It is this last shared articulation, as an important part of the experiential learning cycle, that is not always valued or planned for in relation to the demands of the teaching and assessment timetable, yet it would contribute to **increased student satisfaction with feedback**, one of the University's current concerns, and give added value to the rich learning experiences course activities already provide.

2.4 Areas for development

Change in these areas is difficult to manage because of initiative overload for staff, added to which centralised initiatives can be at odds with the fact that **the most innovative aspects of the curriculum are developed at course and College level**. The challenge is how to create more space for improving articulation of learning without making added demands on staff and students and the learning, teaching and assessment timetables.

Any proposed **recommendations need to be realistic**, involve staff at course level, and be a natural part of a progressive cycle of course development, validation and quality assurance timetables.

Clearly there is more work to be done to **prepare students for a successful and confident transition from their courses**. Inter-related priorities for further development and research fall into two groups:

The creative curriculum

- ❑ Celebrate the strengths of the curriculum and exemplars of good practice
- ❑ Encourage greater articulation of learning through creative practice
- ❑ Develop staff to facilitate a more holistic expression of learning linked to students' career aspirations
- ❑ Foster independent learning and articulation of achievement through Personal Development Planning and e-portfolios
- ❑ Value work-related learning and extra-curricular activity

Improved information about graduate career paths and opportunities

- ❑ Prepare students for the transition with improved information about opportunities and career possibilities
- ❑ Research the destinations of UAL graduates and their career patterns to inform both students and staff
- ❑ Improve co-ordination of enterprise support for all and initiate new entry possibilities

The truly 'entrepreneurial curriculum' will be one that creates learning opportunities for students (and staff) to take the creative process into different contexts and reflect on the result.

These and other priorities are discussed in more detail in *Paper 9: Emerging issues and priorities* and *10: Recommendations*. A progressive strategy for addressing these priorities will contribute towards **enhancing students' potential and raise the profile and importance of employability**.

3 CONSULTATION AND ACTION

From Autumn 2008, a transitional period of **consultation**, planned activities and further research will inform the **Stage 2 Report to be presented early in 2009**. The resulting reflections and responses from UAL staff at all levels will contribute to future strategies for both Employability and Enterprise.

3.1 Consultation

For the academic year 2008 – 2009, the first step is for **dissemination of the findings of this study and wider consultation** within the University to promote a common language for **e&e** and PPD, debate its importance in relation to subject specific creative practice, where it occurs, and what learning underpins it.

This will be achieved in two specific ways:

- a. **The University Learning and Teaching Conference** in January 2009 will focus on employability. This presents an opportunity for a great debate involving all stakeholders staff, students, graduates and industry professionals; the celebration and sharing of good practice in **e&e**, particularly the **wealth of case studies and projects** supported by the **CLIP/CETL**; and for consultation around the findings of this study.
- b. **The University-wide PPD network** in its meetings for 2008-9 will act as a 'think-tank' to debate key issues and make recommendations.

This work will also inform the **University's Employability Strategy**.

3.2 Improved gathering and use of information about graduate destinations

- Academic Development and Quality Pro-Rectorate have already initiated discussions about how **First Destination data (DLHE)** is gathered by the University, how it is resourced, how the data is classified (related and unrelated work), how it is used to inform courses. New ways of improving the response rate might involve more persistent and personalised gathering of information, such as employing alumni or students to follow up recent graduates by phone or email.
- **'Creative Graduates – Creative Futures'** In 2008 – 2009 the University is leading a UK-wide longitudinal study of graduate career patterns (project funding: £260,000) involving collaboration between 26 HEIs and a sample of more than 25,000 graduates up to six years after graduation. The research is being undertaken by the Institute for Employment Studies, and the results will provide evidence of the enduring contribution of art, design and media education to creative and cultural capital and to all walks of life. The resulting report will inform staff, students, graduates and employers about the differentiated career progression and satisfactions of creative graduates. The results will be collated with other studies, e.g. study of fine artists' professional development and contribution to innovation, NESTA/CSM Innovation, 2008.

3.3 Research into (e&e) learning (autumn 2008 – spring 2010)

Further case studies, projects and investigations into valuing **e&e** learning will inform the Stage 2 Report and final Recommendations.

These include forthcoming papers:

- Case Studies that illustrate (a) **Aspirations and student learning through creative practice**; (b) **'real' careers exploring graduate aspirations and career paths**,

how they are articulating their learning, strengths of courses and perceived gaps in learning. (Autumn 2008)

- A Pilot Inquiry to investigate key **issues for valuing extra-curricular and student-led activities'** such as volunteering and mentoring (Autumn 2008).

Externally funded project:

- **Creative interventions: valuing and assessing creativity in student work-related learning in the public and not-for-profit sectors** (successful bid for £200,000 from HEA National Teaching Fellow Project Fund). This is a direct off-shoot of the HEIF Project. This research will investigate the value of a creative education in developing entrepreneurial learning; and examine the student experience of creative learning in work-related activity in educational, cultural, community and not-for-profit settings. It will explore how such activities contribute to students' employability skills, how these are identified by students and how they are currently assessed. Partners include: HEA National Teaching Fellowship Scheme; Arts Institute at Bournemouth and the Surrey Centre for Excellence in Professional Training and Education (SCEPTRE).

3.4 An employability-enterprise (e&e) award

A University **e&e** Award for each student is something that UAL may want to consider as a common element for all UAL courses, awarded on graduation. This will provide specific recognition for specific accumulated learning from work placements, live projects, commissions, external projects, and work related learning, drawing on course-based and extra-curricular experiences. It will provide a vehicle for students to articulate their learning, and important material to draw on or refer to when approaching employers. The award will make our graduates more attractive to employers, as graduates' **e&e** learning will be clearly presented.

How this may be put in place and resourced, building on existing practice in learning, teaching and assessment and how it may be supported are important areas for debate. Reflection on the value of experiences in relation to **e&e** and career aspirations may be evidenced in the context of creative practice in students' **Personal Development Plans** (visual/text-based/other formats) and/or archived in their **e-portfolio** as part of their Higher Education Academic Record.

'it is more about using PDP to somehow structure or objectify the creative process. If we assume that all art and design practices position creativity – as innovation, invention, imaginative flair or even dreaming – as something that is quintessential to all activities, then PDP allows for a kind of detached reflective position to be established that should not restrict the dynamic of the creative act but assists in the making of judgments about the level and direction of the process'¹⁰

The professional development of academic staff and teacher-practitioners is key to preparing students for their working lives, together with improved understanding that creative graduates take time to establish themselves and require support for the transition into the work-place. As part of this process, the value of a creative education in its broadest sense needs to be re-affirmed.

Linda Ball, Senior Research Fellow and Project Manager
HEIF Project: Professional Development and Enterprise in the Curriculum

¹⁰ Jackson N (2006) *PDP and the development of students' creative potential: Summary of a Survey of Practitioner Views, Centre for Recording Achievement.*)

'Bold Resourcefulness'
– redefining employability and entrepreneurial learning

The Stage 1 Report – Overview is available to download from the CLTAD website.

Introduction and aims of the project

A THE CONTEXT FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE

Paper 1: The context: new models for creative higher education and work

Paper 2: 'Bold resourcefulness' – re-defining entrepreneurship

Paper 3: Entrepreneurship through creative practice

Paper 4: Research into professional development needs

Paper 5: Models of practice

B PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS, LONDON

Paper 6: University of the Arts London – an enterprising university

Paper 7: The creative curriculum at UAL

Paper 8: The student and graduate voice

Paper 9: Emerging issues and priorities

Paper 10: Recommendations

Paper 11: Bibliography and references

Appendix 1

A Framework for Entrepreneurship Education

Appendix 2

National Employability Profiles for creative subjects

Appendix 3

Examples of models of practice for Personal and Professional Development in the University's courses at each College

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