

**CREATIVITY AND ARTS-BASED KNOWLEDGE CREATION
IN DIVERSE EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP PRACTICES:
LESSONS FROM TWO CASE STUDIES IN RETHINKING TRADITIONAL SPACES FOR LEARNING**

DR ANGELIKI TRIANTAFYLLAKI
UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS LONDON

DR PAMELA BURNARD
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

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ABSTRACT

This paper suggests that transforming current educational practices and learning cultures could very well depend on merging individual potential and competencies with collaborative arts practices in non-formal contexts as important sites for creativity. Arts partnership practices in secondary and higher education, located outside formal curricula, are presented as case studies that highlight the benefit for students of arts-based knowledge creation and 'situated' forms of creativity. Case study findings are grouped into three dimensions: (1) learning relationships; (2) learning engagement; and (3) 'real' spaces for learning. This paper calls for more in-depth exploration of the ways in which student engagement in artistic processes leads to new forms of knowledge and experiences.

There is now recognition that learning takes place in multiple and diverse environments, in settings that are non-formal and unregulated, as well as those that are beholden to the rigorous implementation and monitoring of statutory expectations (Eneroth 2008). On the one hand there is an intensification of attention to ever more precise outcomes, standards and standardisation (believed to be linked to economic growth, national prosperity and international competitiveness). Yet, in lively counterpoint runs the call for a deeper understanding of *how* people learn, *when* and *where* they learn and *what* motivates them to learn, thus theorising learning as a situated practice, embedded in a social and physical environment (Harris 2008).

In parallel to this debate runs a call for the remodelling of education for creativity, as an essential capacity for preparation for the complexities and challenges of the pace of change and employment (Craft 2005; Cochrane & Cockett 2007). While the arts are certainly not the only creative domain (NACCCE 1999, p.28), they most decidedly are creative arenas (Hetland 2008). It is widely argued that learning through the arts acts as a catalyst for creativity. Reports from the U.S. Arts Education Partnership (a coalition of more than one hundred national educational, arts, philanthropic and government organisations) offers evidence that schoolchildren engaged in the arts (e.g. drama, music and dance) may do a better job of mastering reading, writing and math than those who focus primarily on academic subjects (Wyman 2004).

When artists refer to the term 'creativity' they generally use it to describe a process, not a product; in other words, they are more likely to talk about 'being creative' in their approach to work, rather than as producing a 'creative output' (Oakley et al 2008, p. 6). Indeed, the knowledge artists utilise has been characterised as 'practitioner knowledge' or 'know how' (Eraut 1994) in that it is complex and experiential i.e. revealed through engaging in the art making process and effectively articulating their ideas (Pringle 2008). It is hardly surprising then that Seltzer & Bentley (1999) suggest that 'creativity is not a skill', but rather 'the application of knowledge and skills in new ways to achieve a valued goal', thereby theorising creativity as a situated practice.

It is now widely accepted (OECD 1999) that there is a need to reshape conceptions of creativity in relation to learning, to equip populations with the knowledge, skills and innovative potential required to compete in 21st century knowledge economies.

PARADIGMS OF LEARNING

This paper sets out to exemplify and analyse how knowledge is generated and used within arts partnerships practices and the benefits for learners. Drawing on conceptualisations of learning as social participation (Lave & Wenger 1991) and of knowledge as co-constructed within social networks (Harris 2008; Paavola & Hakkarainen 2005), two broad paradigms of learning and its use can be identified: situated creativity and arts-based knowledge creation.

SITUATED CREATIVITY AND LEARNING

During the last decade there has been a shift in the creativity literature from emphasising the individual as producer, to characterising creative processes as dynamic, fundamentally social and necessarily collective and collaborative (Sawyer 2006; Littleton, Rojas-Drummond & Miell 2008). As now a necessary part of our everyday social lives, creativity is considered less and less as a specialised activity to which only a small minority has

access. This social agenda involves looking at the cultural, situated and interpersonal context of creative activity, rather than conceptualising creativity as 'universalised' (Craft 2008). This is particularly evident in research on creativity as a collaborative and situated activity (Fernández-Cárdenas 2008; Eteläpelto & Lahti 2008). It is now an imperative to ensure that in identifying *where* creativity is positioned, *how* creativity is perceived to be manifest within educational contexts and in *what* forms it is carried out, that definitions of creativity are culturally and socially bound, mediated as part of a situated context in which they emerge.

Given the intellectual roots – deriving as much from social theory, sociology and anthropology as from psychology – the language and concepts employed in socio-cultural approaches to learning feature prominently such terms as 'agency' 'community' 'rules' 'roles' 'authentic tasks' 'peer learning' and 'scaffold'. As a social learning theory 'situated learning' was coined by Lave & Wenger (1991) to suggest that all learning is contextual, embedded in a social and physical environment. Drawing on a variety of case studies, these scholars exemplify the type of acquisition of knowledge that takes place within informal learning situations, whereby the newcomer (apprentice) to a community (of practice) is gradually initiated (moving from the periphery) by older members (masters) towards being a full participant in the socio-cultural practices of the community. As knowledge moves from an individual to an organisation (or community) in the form of teams, groups and networks, it can provide the social context in which the meaning of objects, events, problems and artifacts are constructed and negotiated (Harris 2008 p. 220). Within this framework, knowledge is constructed through practice and is situated, i.e. specific to the community in which it is co-constructed.

Within the vast body of research literature on 'engagement' (Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris 2004; Guthrie & Anderson 1999; Guthrie & Wigfield 2000) and the power of the arts to influence learner engagement (Csikszentmihalyi 2002; Finney et al 2005), studies have focused on linking behaviour ('on-task' 'dropping out') motivation and achievement. Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 2002) argues that when interest in a task is strong enough, one experiences a sense of being carried along, like the flow of a river. This total absorption ('flow' or 'optimal experience') can only be achieved when the task at hand is considered of value, and truly enjoyable, being both suitably challenging (but not too difficult) and attainable using skills possessed by the participant. Learning engagement is multidimensional and as an interaction between the individual and the environment promises to help us to better understand the complexity of arts experiences.

In recognising then that engagement in learning can be regarded as collaborative meaning-making and knowledge construction rather than as knowledge acquisition (Eteläpelto & Lahti 2008) and creativity can be seen as a collective process that promotes professional growth (Cremin, Burnard & Craft, 2006; Burnard, Craft, & Grainger 2006) the walls between learning and creativity begin to break down. Guilford's (1950) address to the American Psychological Association represented an early attempt to draw creativity and learning together. He stated that 'a creative act is an instance of learning... a comprehensive learning theory must take into account both insight and creative activity' (p. 446). In a more recent attempt to highlight the links between creativity, learning and the learning environment Reid & Petocz (2004) suggest that in order to obtain creative learning, a learning environment is needed where students have an understanding of where they are headed, and the freedom to explore a way through to the outcome that is unique.

In theorising the relationship between creativity and learning it is essential to distinguish between different types of learning situations and their corresponding demands of 'what is knowable'. According to Eneroth (2008, pp. 230-233) there are three types of learning situations: formal, non-formal and informal. Unlike formal learning situations, the knowledge that relates to both non-formal and informal learning situations is not separated from

the activity or practice where this knowledge comes into existence. In both non-formal and informal learning situations rather than having knowledge *about* something, one is knowing *in* an event that happens. This is akin to Scardamalia & Bereiter's (2006) distinction between knowledge *about* that can be explicitly stated or demonstrated and knowledge *of* that is implicit or intuitive and, importantly, activated when a need for it is encountered in *action*. In research on popular musicians' experiences, for example, Green (2002) concludes that knowledge is acquired by immersion in the everyday music and musical practices of their social contexts.

So far, we have argued that situated forms of creativity correspond most prominently with socio-cultural approaches to learning whereby knowledge is constructed and negotiated through situated forms of practice (i.e. differently experienced spatial settings and informal situations). Epistemological issues related to learning are becoming increasingly important, as an understanding of the various types of knowledge and how they are used and developed in society underpins our ability to understand the nature of work and activity (Paavola & Hakkarainen 2005, pp. 535-6). Hence, establishing a social and collaborative framework for creativity and learning necessitates further the re-definition of knowledge creation and arts-based knowledge creation in particular.

ARTS-BASED KNOWLEDGE CREATION

Contrary to traditional educational practice – with its emphasis on knowledge transmission – the fundamental goal now of education becomes youths' initiation into this *knowledge-creating* civilization that involves the tasks of (a) developing knowledge-building/sharing capacities and (b) coming to see themselves and their work as part of the civilization-wide effort to advance knowledge frontiers (Scardamalia & Bereiter p. 98).

With regards to the first task, Bentley (2000) suggests that education systems should strive for three ends in enhancing youths' knowledge-building capacities and, consequently, lifelong learning: autonomy, responsibility and creativity. In a definition that emphasises individual competencies and initiative Bentley (2000, p. 357) suggests that creativity involves 'the capacity to think and act creatively in forming and achieving one's goals, to solve problems, to understand the structures and disciplines which shape one's life and to apply one's knowledge in ways which extend and develop it'. Within a notion of creativity as a situated practice, knowledge is of value when it gives rise to and develops yet newer knowledge. Similarly, creativity as a collaborative practice is taken in a much broader sense as referring to the fact that thinking together not only consists of *re*-finding bodies of knowledge, competence, skills or solutions which already exist, but also of developing them (Grossen 2008). Therefore, by making a crucial link between creativity and the creation of new knowledge, emphasis is put upon the emergence of innovation, unplanned outcomes and unexpected solutions, rather than simply upon the reproduction of existing solutions (p. 247).

In the arts, calls for enhanced awareness of the uniqueness of knowledge and skills developed through the arts suggest that 'students learn to innovate and think creatively' and are provided with 'opportunities for the exploration and formation of values, the development of feeling and sensitivity and an opportunity to develop social skills that do not occur as naturally in other disciplines' (Kleiman 2003). In 2006, UNESCO reports that an arts education cultivates in each individual a sense of creativity and initiative, a fertile imagination, emotional intelligence and a moral 'compass', a capacity for critical reflection, a sense of autonomy, and freedom of thought and action (UNESCO 2006, p. 4). Other reported benefits of participating in the arts include personal enjoyment and fulfillment; a richer understanding of the social and cultural context in which we live; the development of

thinking and communication skills; improved self-esteem and personal and social development; and transferable skills (DCMS 2001. p 21).

Knowledge creation and collaborative approaches to learning examine *learning* in terms of creating social structures and collaborative processes that are directed toward developing some mediated artifacts, broadly defined as including knowledge, ideas, practices, and material or conceptual artifacts (Paavola, Lipponen & Hakkarainen, 2004, pp. 569-570). (See Platten, Harris & Kagioglou 2009).

Drawing together these threads, we would argue that arts-based knowledge and knowledge creation approaches to learning within situated forms of creativity are based on the premise that educational practices:

- Emphasise the importance of **individual** skills and creativity;
- Take place also at the **communal** (rather than just individual) level, collaboratively developing conceptual and material artefacts; and
- Are often situated in 'real' spaces (i.e. not detached from the 'real' physical landscapes of learners' past experiences) that offer learners opportunities to explore and apply their **knowledge** in ways that extend or develop it (Paavola & Hakkarainen 2005; Paavola, Lipponen & Hakkarainen 2004)

This paper uses these premises as a springboard for exploring more thoroughly the benefits of engaging in arts-based and collaborative practices situated in novel settings. It presents two case studies where such benefits for participants are evidenced; in doing so, it emphasises both the creative and learning *processes* involved in engaging in the arts and the *contexts* in which such processes are nurtured (i.e. the environment encourages play, exploration and enquiry). Both are based on the Creative Partnerships initiative – whereby children, teachers and creative professionals from the cultural sector are enabled to work together in both educational and cultural settings (DCMS 2001) – and situated in diverse secondary and higher education settings.

After a description of the case study contexts, the findings are presented across three prominent and recurring themes that emerged from the data analysis concerning two groups of young learners working in creative projects and spaces with adult professional artists: (1) Learning relations; (2) Learning engagement; and (3) 'Real' spaces for learning.

While these core categories appear separated here, they are, however, interrelated, as made clear in the close links between them in direct quotations from the interviews. Recognising the diversity of the art practices presented in this paper, we focus mostly on the experience and knowledge of the participating pupils and students as a significant source of information.

FINDINGS FROM TWO CASE STUDIES OF SITUATED CREATIVITY AND ARTS-BASED KNOWLEDGE CREATION

CASE STUDY ONE: PUPILS' EXPERIENCES OF LEARNING THROUGH CREATIVE ARTS PARTNERSHIPS

The first case study explores pupils' perceptions of their experience of learning with artists. The research – based on semi-structured interviews – took place in a mixed comprehensive community college in the county of West Sussex in the United Kingdom, which provides for the learning of some 1100 pupils between the ages of 12 and 18 years. Following a successful bid for a grant from the Specialist Schools Trust and Arts Council England: South East, and from Youth Music's 'Music Maker', co-authored by the composer and the Head of Performing Arts, the Composers' Workshop Project (CWP) began in the school year 2005-06, ran over 18 months, and comprised over 20 workshops. The project was conceived as involving 4 London-based artists (a composer and a contemporary music ensemble comprising 3 professional instrumentalists). These musicians previously completed several projects including newly commissioned works together and had some prior experience working on compositional projects with schools. The project did not seek to deliver the school curriculum in music through composition.

The workshops were conceived as a series of 'creative days' at a range of off-site spaces or settings with the artists, including two residential weekends spent composing with professional musicians, whose interactions were collaborative, playing and performing the newly composed pieces. Environments (mainly off site) such as cathedrals, churches, historic buildings, galleries and outdoor landscapes were selected as spaces where the workshops were situated where pupils could respond constantly to the feedback arising from direct interaction with specific spaces.

Increasingly the forms of individual support and tutoring developed by and between the composers, musicians and teachers, in facilitating creative work, took on a high degree of personalisation in the sense of individual pupils have greater choice, influence and control of the learning. The opportunity to interact directly with professional performers and composers who specialise in contemporary music practices meant the pupils were given the freedom and space to experiment in a similar way, to respond to, understand and develop new ways in which practices enabled pupils to explore issues of personal, social and musical identity. These sessions involved self-evaluation through video recording of performances. During the workshop the artists (i.e. the composer and professional musicians, each of whom worked closely together professionally) worked together collaboratively on composing tasks with pupils.

Over the period of 3 terms, pupils joined the project who were identified by their teachers as those who would benefit from working with artists; had shown an interest in taking music as an elective subject at the senior secondary level; and had expressed a commitment to composing. The sample represented a range of ages (between 11 and 19) and levels of attainment in composition. Some students who were exceptionally challenged by composing in school contexts were selected on account of their low grades and low expectations of their own composing abilities. They were invited to participate and to be stimulated to think and act beyond their current level of competence (in what Vygotsky (1978) calls their 'zone of proximal development'. The context and conditions for composing in the school were according to the delivery of the school curriculum in music. By the end of the year there were four groups of fifteen pupils - the original group and others from feeder primary and secondary schools.

The participating pupils were drawn from five schools serving two disadvantaged housing estates in the South East of England and were invited to participate on the grounds that they were interested in composing and/or doing GCSE music. The aim was to compose and perform compositions inspired by and composed within diverse settings. The project culminated with a public performance of newly composed pupil compositions created specifically for a cathedral concert presented by some 200 pupils in March 2006 to an audience of parents, family, friends and local school communities.

During the CWP, the artists' pedagogic practice was underpinned by assumptions about the context of composing; the ideological importance of which was based upon workshops which were situated in the community using 'place' as a focal point for inspiring and encouraging pupils to develop new skills in response to the possibilities and limits of particular places. The selected locations for workshops were environments (mainly off-site) involving cathedrals, churches, historic buildings, galleries and outdoor landscapes, that is, sites where pupils could create sophisticated work by means of a broad range of responses to the feedback arising from direct interaction within specific spaces. This was one of the particular features of contemporary arts practice explored by these artists.

The artists were said to work as both the 'expert' and an 'equal'; able to interest themselves in the pupils' compositional activity and the artistic proposals of the pupils with the same consideration he/she would give to the works of a colleague, to the extent sometimes of integrating pupils' ideas into her/his own work. The workshops were considered to be a meeting place of the artist and pupils to participate in brainstorming, experimenting, exploring, improvising, composing, and performing original pieces together. A variety of modes of representation were used including written text, sound, static visual images, and kinesthetic expression, along with reflective writing and group discussions.

The artists drew on their own experiences of contemporary arts practice. The following aspects were key:

- Environment – using the environment as a starting point and source of material;
- Experience/s – focusing on the quality of learning experience/s;
- Extension – using an ambitious plan to extend the pupils' creativity in music; and
- Ecology – a central focus on building a self-supported learning community.

Significantly, these artists were not wedded to a particular model of creative practice but rather to the situated process of creative enquiry, to expanded landscapes from which situated practices and meanings are constructed and to learners as active makers of meaning.

Learning relationships

Pupils described the artists most often as 'experts' and characterised their experiences of working *alongside* them. They saw the artists not as teachers but as collaborators with them in a similar way to which the artists would collaborate with their peers and other musicians. They seemed to enjoy the shared journey and searched to express personal and artistic ideas and to experiment as composers together.

They were experts... people that were involved in their professional worlds... they really worked alongside us individually... but they all connected to music and... they talked to us as composers, they didn't talk to us like students or children, they actually talked to us like we were adults too... they shared things they'd been learning about themselves too.

The artists were seen to encourage and facilitate collaborations and being collaborative seemed to encourage pupils to think of themselves and their peers as composers.

They gave us tips and listened to us play... and we'd listen to them play and we'd listen to each other in ways we'd not done before... They treated us as completely equal to them in a creative and personal way. So they were just giving us advice because they were more experienced technically... yet they weren't telling you what to do.

The pupils' 'authorship' over material (a term coined by Michael Fielding 1999) was emphasised. Power was not perceived as being removed from pupils but rather by not forcing acceptance of the artists' ideas (and with offers of precise but not prescriptive feedback) the pupils' ideas became theirs by commitment. Having time to think and to extend rather than change initial ideas appeared to encourage pupil independence.

They guided us like somebody helping us and saying like if it sounded good or if it needed changes, slightly, so it would sound better. They weren't telling you what to do. You were helped to understand... and they seemed to be learning along with you. You were not feeling like you're being forced to do things. Everything was optional and had time to talk and negotiate the tasks, which felt more like commissions.

Many pupils emphasised how the artists came to know them as composers and not just as 'pupils'. It was this that seemed to further strengthen their commitment to the common purposes that they expressed in composing new music together.

Learning engagement

Pupils described the project in terms of having a deeply personal experience. They were invited to take responsibility and make their own choices as composers. They expressed feelings of immersion and sharing affecting experiences together, composing music, which seemed to reflect their own feeling and ideas. The artists seemed to regard the artistic proposals of the pupils with the same consideration given to the works of a colleague, to the extent sometimes of integrating a pupil's modest attempt in his/her own work. This seemed to make the pupils feel valued and the growth of their confidence as composers was evident.

I found a lot more confidence and passion for music in myself because I used to be very sort of quiet and stay well back out of things... but now having seen that people will take me seriously... I'm much more up for learning anything... I mean just knowing that sometimes other people think, well they've got talents. And you can't think what yours is. And then you find it. And I think I've definitely found mine. You could just walk with your head up high round that cathedral.

The artists were often discussed in terms of being 'different' adults. The artist was not seen in the same light as a teacher. They were not perceived as having the same expectations of pupils as a teacher. The pupils particularly

valued the way the artists developed a collaborative way of working which emphasised both talk and participatory practices from which to guide, model, scaffold and share challenges of the unfamiliar.

I think, and the fact is, these adults were different to others. They didn't have us compose in a classroom in a way this was what was so new and different and it felt exciting. It gets really boring and you don't feel excited coming to school. But the fact you were taken to compose music together, collaboratively, and to play together in a church, for a church space and a historic space... it felt to me like I was learning how to make a new start, a new beginning in a completely new space... it was in a unfamiliar place... you're not kind of used to it... it didn't feel the same way as before.

Spaces for learning

For pupils, going to out-of-school environments seemed to give authenticity to the experience of composing. The artists engaged with the pupils in each of the various sites differently by instigating a particular activity or process, which drew on their own artistic work. There was a recurrent theme among pupils' accounts of workshop experiences and learning alongside artists in unfamiliar spaces and in a way, which offered springboards for ideas.

The sound and the stillness in one of the sites we found ourselves composing in was completely different because it was quite an old church and it was – just the way the sound works in the building was just completely different to anything I've ever heard or experienced before. It was a very personal process. And it was just so unfamiliar and unreal, and the church was a really beautiful building. It was a really amazing place to be anyway. Just even if you weren't composing it was just a nice place to be. And you just felt, I don't know, it was almost spiritual because it was kind of like, felt as if it was a really special thing to have the opportunity to do.

The pupils spoke of particularly strong links between the spaces in which they composed and the ways in which they worked. The process was open-ended and activities purposeful but an integral element of the experience involved responding and adapting to the physical space they found themselves in.

It was very quiet, in a space that was very isolated and you had to just sit and listen within the church. Just listening and hearing the birds and the wind... It was weird at the beginning and then you kind of started to think about things differently... it was inspirational.

Space was described as a catalyst to inspire. Physical spaces were described in terms of how they inspired new ways of opening up to composing.

We had to relearn how to be in a rehearsal. You know, professional rehearsals are completely different to being in a school rehearsal... And it became very different again when we were in a massive space like a cathedral with an audience... Like the church that we first went to, when we first went to the church and learned how to listen to each others' pieces... and yeah the day that we spent at the other church composing and learning everything. And then the weekend we learned to compose collaboratively with them and then they shared their composing things with us. And definitely the one that I remember learning the most is the concert in the cathedral, the last concert that we were involved.

Pupils attempted to explain their participation in these out-of-school sites as opportunities in which composing was the focus of learning and where the emphasis was on participatory arts practices. These artists were composers and performers who regarded the pupils as co-learners and through the skilled facilitation of participation in collaborative processes of dialogue and making activities, they brought to the surface pupils' learning in a collaborative exercise between artists and pupils. In our research we intended to focus on the emergent perspectives on learning with artist of the pupils themselves. We did not want to impose a particular view of learning, or champion the significance of one learning theory, unless they were relevant to the pupils themselves. We have intentionally not made comparisons with the teacher-musician's or on learning to compose in music. The focus in this article is on pupil perceptions of their own learning.

From the findings, strong evidence arises that these pupils perceive a close connection between the professional knowledge these artists shared about their own practices, and co-constructed together in this educational context, the significance of learning environments and learning relationships. Through the co-constructive experience of reflecting with artists and through participatory activities of improvising, composing and performing together, the pupils learned about opportunities for learning with a range of professionals in and beyond the school and in a range of physical spaces.

CASE STUDY TWO: UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' LEARNING EXPERIENCES IN A SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

The second case study investigated the ways in which collaborative work-related activities with school pupils during a major school design project initiative created spaces and opportunities for learning for undergraduate creative arts students. This paper draws specifically on data from focus group discussions and individual interviews with undergraduates in theorising the benefits of engaging collaboratively with young children in out-of-college arts contexts.

The case study is part of a wider project, *Creative Interventions*, an NTFS funded 2-year project (2008-2010) that explores higher education creative arts students' learning experiences specifically gained via work-related activity in public and third sector environments and is run jointly by the University of the Arts London (UAL), the Arts University College at Bournemouth and SCEPTRE, University of Surrey. One of the case studies UAL contributed to this project focused on the Young Design Programme (YDP) – a 3-6 month annually-run project (since 2005) whereby a group of school pupils act as 'clients' by commissioning a *school design project*, and their 'consultants' are students of design at university who, in turn, are mentored by professional designers and architects. The YDP is run by the London-based Sorrell Foundation – a charitable organisation that was set up in 1999 to inspire creativity in young people and improve the quality of life through design.

The schools selected by YDP organisers to participate in the Programme are engaged in planned school development projects, for example Building Schools for the Future, an ambitious school buildings investment programme, the aim of which is to rebuild or renew nearly all secondary schools in England. A group of 10-15 pupils in participating schools are selected by their teachers on the basis that these pupils would benefit from engaging on a collaborative project with undergraduates (on account of their low grades and low expectations of attending university). They are then invited to participate and are challenged to identify a problem relating to design in their school that they would like solved.

As a work-related activity encountered during creative arts higher education, the YDP is accessed by University tutors on behalf of their students and usually forms an assessed part of their course. The actual project involves groups of 4-6 creative arts students going into schools where a specific need relating to design has been identified i.e. designing a new identity for the school, new school uniforms, new social spaces. What is important is that pupils themselves commission the school design project as 'clients'. Creative arts students are set a brief that they then have to respond to within a specific time period by working together with and drawing on feedback from the pupils, the YDP organisers and a professional mentor in the industry. While it is not intended that the students' design concepts should be implemented, it is recognised by all involved that the work produced could be invaluable in influencing future developments in schools.

Importantly, each student-pupil meeting is followed by student within-group and across-group collaboration where peer assessment and feedback, reflection via journals or audio logs and group presentations are encouraged. During these meetings, a wealth of visual images provides stimulants for discussion. Similarly, a variety of modes are used by students – reflective exercises, group discussions – when working together with school pupils in order to encourage reflection and the articulation of what *pupils* view as being important to their schools. The Programme culminates in a celebratory event at students' higher education institution whereby both clients (pupils) and designers (students) present their design outcomes and receive certificates in front of their families, teachers and lecturers. Final design concepts are displayed at the Sorrell Foundation Young Design Centre (Somerset House, London).

Learning relationships

Undergraduate student groups were often multi-disciplinary with members having had little or no contact with each other prior to the Programme. What was for them a unique form of collaboration, students reported that the most valuable element of the Programme was operating outside the formal learning situations on their course much of which required little or no collaboration.

Being at Uni it was a lot about your work and your ideas. To work in a team and have such a big project and given the scope of whole school and how do you focus that down and getting working ideas in quite a lot of detail...

Compromise and the negotiation of 'control' and ownership of ideas remained at the heart of the knowledge creating process.

In a team working experience you have to work with the other and it's kind of like compromise and things like that, but you can be very creative with compromise. It means that your compromise is not lesser than others' ideas; it could be a third idea that is even more wonderful.

Acknowledging individuals' strengths and weaknesses and enabling individual voices to be heard as well as acknowledging one's own responsibility within the university group, were key ingredients of a successful collaborative process.

You always pull out the strength of individuals rather than trying to fit them into whatever the task needs doing, because if they are not fit or if they are uncomfortable with doing it they won't be able to do the best but if you give them a particular task that he or she is strong at you know the best comes out.

On the other hand, a key element of facilitating student-pupil collaborations and inspiring pupils was reported by students as being the creation of new codes of communication – a ‘skill’ that the YDP organisers encouraged students to develop from the start of the program.

To get (school) children to listen to you, you have to talk in a very exciting way about something that you have to make them believe that you feel very passionately about.

I think working with the children just helped spark creativity in you, because they were just so full of enthusiasm, and just talking to them and getting feedback from them, I think that helped me being more creative with my ideas and more sort of adventurous with my ideas... they were not afraid to tell you exactly what they thought.

All participants valued working together with pupils in order to ensure their views and ideas for their schools were fully incorporated in the final design concepts. School pupils’ enthusiasm was evidenced in their willingness to engage in a program that took place out-of-school hours and their levels of participation during the collaborative activities.

Learning engagement

Students’ engagement with the Programme provided a framework where opportunities to take initiatives and greater responsibility for their own learning abounded.

At Uni if you don’t turn up then it’s your problem. But in the YDP if you don’t turn up in a meeting, you let everyone down and yourself down included. It was a bit more like it was your problem and you had to solve it, and the responsibility factor was a bit more. If you didn’t turn up it was a big deal, because everybody else was like ‘he let us down’. You tended to be more independent about things.

The experiential element of the project seemed to be acknowledged by students when talking about the development of ‘know-how’.

There are things like that you can pick up on, but not – you can’t be taught how to communicate with someone... Those are just skills that you learn when – that’s what you learn when you go and do something in industry... (for example) working with others – I mean – even things like phone calls or emails that you have to do in a certain manner, – you know (my tutor’s) not going to teach me how to write a letter to someone – you just learn with practice, and you know, the more emails you send and the more you receive, you learn how things work.

It’s about adapting how you talk to different audiences. So you are addressing a client of 11-13 year olds and then you are addressing your professional mentors. And then you are going back and doing a presentation at Uni to your tutors. And we would tweak them according to the audience. And at Uni you had your tutors and that’s who you were talking to and they didn’t bring fresh people in, or if they did they just introduced them and it wasn’t a big deal.

With each project involving extensive negotiation with pupils, undergraduates engaged with learning new ways of communicating their ideas. They also learnt to compromise and find middle ground when pupils were enthused by certain ideas, something that strengthened both parties' commitment to the common purpose of coming up with a viable solution to particular schools' design issues. Through engaging in collaborative learning processes with their peers and school pupils, undergraduates were able to affirm their existing and develop new knowledge and ways of working.

Spaces for learning

A key outcome of the program highlighted by both students and their tutors was the development of student voice, in that it provided students with a space where their ideas would be welcomed as well as challenged.

At Uni I was protective about my work and a little secretive at times. But on the YDP it felt like an environment where you can talk about your ideas. I guess it's about being part of a team as well. You have an equal share of responsibility for the ideas. You are not putting yourself completely out there.

There was a recurrent theme in the data of the dissonance between the more protected higher education context of learning and the opportunities afforded by the YDP for working in 'real' situations.

(It was a) great experience working with a real client and having to come out with a design scheme that the client feels proud of.

(It was) closer to a real job than just a college brief.

Importantly, the Programme opened up for students' alternative pathways into employment after graduation, allowing for a wider range of identities to emerge.

It gave me much more confidence I think in some way and also it kind of made me feel that whatever course I am on, studying, doesn't have to be the final thing. I can juggle things a bit more and be in the creative industries somewhere and that course is not the label I am going to have for the rest of my days. So it was a bit like there are so many sets of skills that we have to work with and yes, we did things like spatial artefact project, but there are so many other things that you can work with. So it opened up a bigger perspective on things.

Participation in a work-related activity that comprised of settings and processes quite different to those encountered during their course encouraged students to build upon and expand their existing knowledge and skills. From these main themes that cut across the data there is strong evidence that students forged close connections between the knowledge that they co-constructed within their groups and with the school pupils, the significance of learning relationships and environments. As in the previous case study students learned about different ways of creating and learning in collaboration with diverse groups of people and in a range of physical spaces.

An overview of findings presented across the three common themes can be viewed in Table I.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING	Case Study 1 (CS1) School pupils learning with artists	Case Study 2 (CS2) Undergraduate students learning with school pupils and peers
Learning relationships	Collaborating with artist-experts Experimenting and risk-taking Ownership of learning	Collaborating with peers/ pupils New codes of communication Ownership of learning
Learning engagement	Responsibility Growth of confidence Motivation	Responsibility Communication Negotiation
Spaces for learning	Novelty of physical spaces 'Real' contexts	Novel, 'out of college' spaces 'Real'/professional settings

Table I: Dimensions of learning across case studies

DISCUSSION

These learning dimensions are now theorised by returning to the key premises of educational practices, discussed earlier (p. 5), that are informed by situated forms of creativity and knowledge creation approaches to learning (Paavola & Hakkarainen 2005; Paavola, Lipponen & Hakkarainen 2004). As exemplars of rethinking traditional notions of learning the case studies highlighted arts partnership practices that (1) happen at the *communal* (as well as the individual) level, collaboratively developing conceptual and material artefacts; (2) although fundamentally social, emphasise the importance of *individuals' engagement in learning*; and (3) by engaging in 'real' spaces, continuously strive for new and advanced ways of knowing by applying one's *knowledge* in ways that extend or develop it. Figure 1 provides a representation of the interrelation of the research themes and the key focus areas.

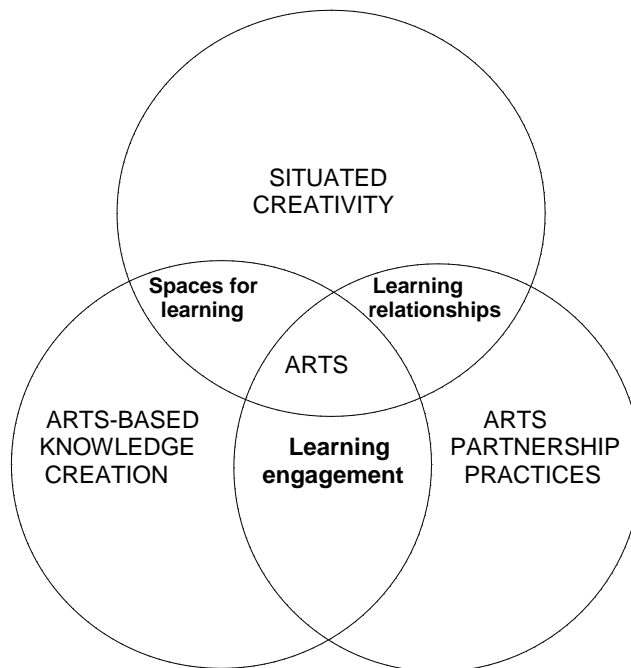


Figure 1: Interrelation of research themes and key focus areas

What is illuminated strongly by both case studies is the impact of *learning relationships* developed during collaborative and creative activities. In CS1, pupils perceived the artists as guides and facilitators who affirmed their developing identity as composers. The authentic feeling of connection with the artists and belonging to the community of composers was strong to the extent that the pupils felt they had composed pieces they themselves wanted. The impact on artists of learning relationships with pupils was an awareness of their own potential as agents of change through engaging student awareness of and participation in the arts. In CS2, the collaborative partnership between HE students (as ambassador designers), schools (as 'authentic' clients) and industry mentors (as experts) enabled HE students to learn and create, partly as apprentices, and partly as designers, in real, professional contexts (Butcher 2008). Programme facilitators i.e. university tutors and YDP organisers are working on expanding this collaboration; as the findings show, it was through interacting with schools pupils that HE students were able to affirm their existing and develop new knowledge. In both case studies participants needed and depended on each other and in so doing adopted a mutually adaptive stance to learning from which

each was able to engage in what Schön (1983) calls 'reflection-in-action' and share each others' learning concerns whilst inspiring confidence and commitment. Arts-based knowledge creation was enabled through the facilitation of relationships and conversations, as well as through the sharing of local knowledge (Harris 2008, p. 219).

Furthermore, current conceptualisations of creativity call for the combined consideration of the cognitive and affective aspects of the human experience (Craft & Wegerif 2006; Vass 2007). Both case studies encouraged learner engagement by providing greater experience of the ways in which knowledge is used in society by challenging participants to take on unfamiliar *roles and responsibilities*. CS1 revealed the value of pupils taking on roles as 'composers' and 'performers' within real-world contexts. In CS2, students' roles continuously shifted from being 'experts' in their own disciplinary field within their multidisciplinary groups; 'apprentices' within mentor-student relationships; 'designers' for schools and pupils; and 'representatives' for their University when presenting their work to other parties, such as the school or parents. Within such role-taking and continuous shifting, emotional processing constitutes an integral part in the decision-making process and works as a vector for actions and ideas, establishing reflection and judgment (UNESCO 2006, p. 2).

Finally, as viewed in Figure I, a key feature of both case studies was the creation of new knowledge within unfamiliar educational practices and contexts. In CS1, a fundamental element of the experience involved pupils responding and adapting to the physical space in which they found themselves; engaging in participatory practices; having time and space to think and extend their individual competencies and initiative; advancing ways of knowing; and reflecting on their collective and communal experience. CS2 revealed similar levels of rigorous and deep learning as creative arts students adjusted their language and practice to take into account pupils' views and ideas; responded to and reflected on the physical spaces they were called upon to (re-) design; took responsibility for their own learning and showed commitment to the task; and developed the 'know how' of processes and practices of working with others in unfamiliar conditions. As a situated process, creativity was evidenced in these case studies through the ways in which participants integrated their formal knowledge with their expectations and understandings of the diverse contexts and collaborative practices they engaged in. In so doing, further individual and communal knowledge was created in ways that inspired and motivated participants. Engaging with these 'real' spaces required a transformation of current practices that entailed re-conceptualisation, risk-taking and dealing with complexity, as well as a deepening of interpretation and understanding.

CONCLUSION

This paper set out to exemplify and analyse how knowledge was used and generated within diverse arts education partnerships. These art partnerships became an experimental arena for creative interactions and a space for critical analysis and renewal that enabled a deeper understanding of artists' work processes and practices and offered opportunities for learner engagement.

It is now widely accepted (OECD 1999) that there is a need to reshape conceptions of creativity in relation to knowledge creation and learning, to equip populations with the knowledge, skills and innovative potential required to compete in 21st century knowledge economies. The focus of attention has moved therefore from the educational debate about curricula, standards and testing towards attention to *how* people learn, *when* they learn, *what* motivates them to learn in diverse educational contexts. For example in formal arts educational

contexts, recent research is increasingly making the case that informal learning, such as that encountered in the case studies above, should be recognised as at least as significant as formal learning and should, therefore, be valued and appropriately utilised in formal processes (Green 2008; Price 2005).

Following from this, another point concerns the perceived dissonances between traditional forms of learning and the learning processes within non-formal contexts. A key question arises as to what sort of informal learning works best in practice, and what kinds of partnerships are likely to improve students' learning experiences and encourage the integration of students' conceptual or formal knowledge with their understandings and expectations of 'real' situations, contexts and spaces. This paper has shown that for informal learning to contribute to formal educational aims and agendas, it is essential that more attention is afforded to the social, cultural, and physical contexts in which it is promoted. As this paper suggests, transforming current educational practices and learning cultures could very well depend on merging individual potential and competencies with collaborative practices in non-formal contexts as important sites for creativity.

The challenge for schools, universities, teachers, artists and professional organisations is to think in terms of learning as a process of knowledge creation. So at its best is art-making. Neither learning nor knowledge creation is absent of reflection or, indeed, creativity as evidenced in the case studies above. It is essential therefore that we constantly seek out new ways in which the processes of knowledge creation can be given greater recognition and support within and beyond our institutions. Equally, for all others interested in planning and developing arts partnership practices – such as community workers, arts organisations and the like – the challenge will be to recognise and value the benefits of learning which is situated, holistic and that enables knowledge creation.

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