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Working Together Collaboratively and in Partnership to Explore 'I ♥ Learning' Creative Approaches to Motivate and Inspire Students

Marcin Wozniak, Susan Cobb, Helena Kettleborough, David Leathlean

Abstract

This paper reports the outcomes of the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT)¹ funded Scholarship of Teaching and Learning project 'I Love Learning'. Our project focused on encouraging creativity in our learning support and teaching to motivate and encourage students. In this paper, we examine how we worked together collaboratively and across different disciplines. We each contribute in our different voices, so that the contrasting facets of our joint journey can be explored. We explore our methodology, joint working to improve teaching, active learning, storytelling and use of social media. We demonstrate through practice that collaborative working is an important part of developing creativity in learning.

Keywords: Creativity, Action Research, Co-operative Inquiry, Story, Metaphor, Environment, Collaboration, Inspiration, Social Media

Creativity and Learning:

Changes in education and society, the uncertain nature of the future and the fast changing nature of the economic challenges are driving the need to be more creative in our learning and teaching (Jackson 2012). Sharples et al (2014) explored how universities can be more creative from learning through making, developing approaches such as citizen inquiry and using social media.

We found that the following exploration of the idea of creativity helped clarify our thinking:

"Beghetto and Kaufman (2007) argued that in addition to the study of 'Big C' (eminent creativity) and 'little c' (everyday creativity), it is also essential to explore what might be termed 'mini c' creativity, or the creative processes involved in the construction of personal knowledge and

¹ Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching at Manchester Metropolitan University (CELT)- <http://www.celt.mmu.ac.uk>.

understanding." (Hennessey and Amabile, 2010: 572)

We sought to explore creativity both as a 'little c' and a 'mini c' and sought to understand how students can be more creative in their approach to learning and how we as staff, could enable creativity in the course of our teaching and student learning support processes.

Setting the Scene for Our Journey

Our project consisted of four participants, who have co-authored this paper: Susan Cobb, Student Experience Support Tutor at the Cheshire Campus (until spring 2017); Helena Kettleborough, Associate Lecturer, Business School; David Leathlean, Foundation Year Programme Leader in the Manchester Fashion Institute (MFI); and Marcin Wozniak, Student Experience Support Tutor (SEST) at the Manchester Met Business School (previously SEST at Cheshire campus)



We met on the 'Creativity for Learning' continuing professional development course provided by CELT, which helped us to wake our creativity and develop innovative creative approaches in our practices.² During the CELT 2015 Conference, we presented our creative innovations developed on the course and ran our first '*I Love Learning*' workshops, which invited other staff across Manchester Met to explore what it means to be creative in teaching and learning. The keynote speaker at the conference, Manchester Met's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Malcom Press, spoke of developing creativity in learning. In addressing the audience of staff, he raised a number of questions, which were very pertinent to the questions we had identified in applying for the CELT Scholarship in Teaching and Learning 2015/2016.³ These questions we paraphrased from our notes as follows:

2 Our experiences on the 'Creativity for Learning' Unit and on creativity in our practice are recorded on a CELT MMU video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKVcqzkrCD8>

3 CELT Scholarship in Teaching and Learning Research Scholarship 2015/16: '*I ♥ learning*': What gives life to *student and staff learning*? - *Explorations in creative approaches to motivate and inspire students*.

- How can we motivate students to help them be successful in their studies?
- How can we build on the advantages of MMU?
- How can we be an innovative and creative university?
- How can we create space for students to be creative?
- How can we deliver a curriculum for students in a particular subject, which enables them to be successful for life?
- How can we support learning in creative and imaginative ways?
- How can we deliver the value of education which is not just about money, i.e. how can we inspire our students?
- How can we provide learning, which can help transform our student's lives?

We felt, therefore, that the questions we were exploring in our 'I Love Learning' project had a wider resonance to the University as a whole. In this paper, we each examine an aspect of our teaching and learning support: how we developed creativity in our work through collaborative and inter-disciplinary working.

Story: our means of travel

In sharing what we did together, we have decided to use the medium of story. This was both from practical experience and as a way of sharing our learning. The use of story as an educational tool, was introduced during 'Creativity for Learning'⁴ course and further developed by Sue in her practice (see below). Helena had used story as part of action research, both the creation of stories as explored by Mead (2013) and the understanding that stories help bring the reader into another place and experience (Reason and Bradbury, 2006 and Sikes and Gale, 2006 cited in Bold, 2012). In *Stories of the Great Turning* (Reason and Newman, 2013), story was used to illustrate change, a practice we sought in this project. In this paper, we create a number of stories (Table 1).

Once upon a time

The theme of story was explored in the first of three co-operative inquiry groups run in 2016 (see below: 'What is action research anyway'). As a group of four, we decided to use story to explain how we learnt to work together collaboratively and across different disciplines: "*there is a great potential for the uses of story in higher education*" (Moon, 2010:10). This approach was informed by Sue's use of story in the innovative workshop she developed, to encourage

4 CELT, Creativity for Learning <http://tinyurl.com/zavk7qb>

Table 1: Stories created to illustrate practice

Author	Story	Purpose served by the story
Sue Cobb	Once upon a time	The use of story to help us learn from each other
David Leathlean	The Royal Exchange session	To unleash sideways thinking by removing learners from their habitual areas of work
	Out of our comfort zones...	To pull learners together across disciplines by providing the necessary structure
Helena Kettleborough	What is action re-search anyway?	To achieve joint and collaborative working across disciplines through a shared methodology
	You do it first and I'll imitate	To improve classroom teaching through collaboration and learning across disciplines
Marcin Wozniak	If you go down to the woods today	To enhance creativity through collaboration and trust
	Reflections on practice	To enhance student involvement in creative projects, through the use of metaphor and social media

students' to be more critical in their thinking: the 'Critical Thinking Murder Mystery'⁵. This creative take on the study skills workshop, turned a rather dull topic (as often perceived by students) and tackled it from a different point of view (Cobb, 2015). James and Brookfield (2014:9) suggested that 'nothing wakes up attention to learning more than being asked to do something unfamiliar'. In the workshop, students drew together witnesses, facts and images into a story, which used the evidence to explain how a murder took place and the reasons behind it. The creative and fun aspect of the development of the stories acted as a means to get the students more engaged

5 'Critical Thinking Murder Mystery' https://www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/good_practice/gpentry.php?id=80

with the process of developing critical thinking and writing skills. Moon and Fowler (2008:232) suggest that *"Stories can work in the mind of students in the way that traditional lectures do not"*. Fisher (2008:72) pointed out that *"stories have long been seen as a natural stimulus for discussion, investigation and problem-solving in schools"*. Working collaboratively as a team, writing a story or building a case, the students were encouraged to consider their case from all angles and, while developing their arguments, to critically analyse the evidence and consider how to support it to make a strong case. Before running the workshop, Sue had concerns about the reaction of the students to using pretence and storytelling. These proved to be unfounded, as the students launched themselves into the activities enthusiastically. They enjoyed the storytelling aspect: actively discussing the scenario, writing surprisingly detailed stories and using the evidence in inventive ways; changing a dull topic into an enjoyable and engaging activity.

Students presenting their case.



Sue also used student stories in a different way, to help new mature students to settle into university. Using two existing mature students as Peer Mentors, Sue encouraged communication with new mature students via a closed Facebook group prior to the start of the academic year. Moon and Fowler (2008:234) refer to this as 'known' stories, where *"...stories are about events or experiences that relate to the common in terests of the tellers or those who listen"*. The Peer Mentors answered questions and shared their experiences, including the highs and lows, and their own insights into life as a mature student. Shared stories offered incoming students the opportunity to find out about the reality of student life from the perspective of someone who had experienced it. It also encouraged them to discuss their concerns and ask questions that they considered 'silly', which

they were unlikely to ask a member of staff (for example, concerns about relating to the younger students).

Sue encouraged our I love Learning group to use stories at all points of the project, in feeding back to each other on a weekly basis, in the co-operative inquiry sessions and when reporting on our project to others. The use of story gave a richness to how we visualised our work together and how we worked together creatively.

Alternative Learning Environment of the Royal Exchange: How Manchester Met staff (across varied job roles and disciplines) worked collaboratively to develop new and exciting learning and teaching strategies

Whilst teaching at Manchester Met it has always been a priority for David to consider the importance of promoting the use of creativity and innovation, within the students' learning, in both the content and delivery of teaching material to enrich the student experience. CELT's 'Creativity for Learning' continuing professional development unit for staff was a perfect fit with the university's progressive strategy to nurture and develop creativity and innovation within the student curriculum. Activities from the first week of the course challenged our perceptions of how we could further develop our learning and teaching strategies. These activities gave us the confidence to be brave and to try something new. As students, we quickly developed a new vision of how exciting and thought-provoking learning could be. Within dynamic learning sets, we proactively discussed our perceptions of what develops good student learning. Over subsequent weeks, this manifested itself into our small breakaway group of Manchester Met staff from varied job roles and disciplines, allowing us to plant the seeds of the 'I Love Learning' research group.

The key driver for the shaping of the group was undoubtedly the environment of the Creativity for Learning session, which took place in the city centre, where we played the 'Sell your bargains' game (Nerantzi, 2013). Prior to the session, we were asked to think about a concept, which we struggle to explain to students, or a problem that we face in our teaching practice. During the session in groups, we collaboratively explored ways of solving the problem and were given a budget of £1 - £3 to find items which could offer a solution. We were also encouraged to consider the surrounding environment, to stimulate our thinking process and to find free items or ideas that would offer a solution. Nerantzi (2013:133) suggests that:

"Learning in the game happens through collaboration and having fun but also on creating novel and immersive learning experiences in multiple locations."

We chose the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester for a space for discussion and as a cohort of learners. We quickly identified that this magnificent venue was a wonderful environment to be inspired in, which created an energy that would not have been achieved on the University campus. According to Warger and Dobbin (2009:4), education has changed dramatically with a need to take *"a fresh focus on what constitutes effectiveness and efficiency in learning"*. Supporting this notion of change, Clark (2002:9), comments on *"the positive impact [on learning] of changing the environment"*. This simple change in offering students a different location has quite simply revolutionised our teaching. With the use of new and varied environments, student engagement has increased and given further value to the 'Joy of Learning'.

Subsequent developments within David's MFI Foundation Year Programme have enthused and engaged the students. With the introduction of 'Active Learning Weeks', students are encouraged to participate in their learning outside of the classroom. Visits to Styal Mill (National Trust), The Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester City Centre's retail district and a study trip to London ⁶, have created experiences perceived by the student cohort to be fun, interesting and exciting. Such an understanding of the value of environment in learning came to the group as students on the 'Creativity for Learning' Unit through direct experience.

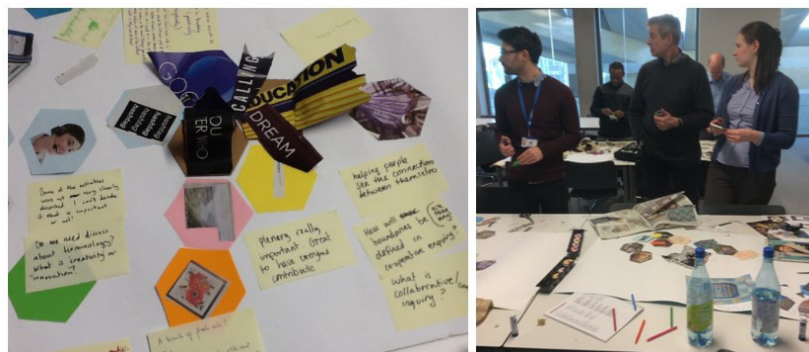
Out of Our Comfort Zones....

The experience of playing the game in the city centre gave us an opportunity to consider how we might develop new and exciting learning activities from a small investment of up to £3. With differing approaches from different learning sets, a variety of purchases made from a diverse mix of locations, including some free items, clarified that either with a low or non-existent budget, working creatively, anything is possible to use, to make learning more interesting. The purchased, or collected resources, such as chalkboards and chalk, plant seeds, maps, postcards and post-it notes, have contributed to our students participating in innovative learning activities, (such as

⁶ Manchester Met News & Events: Fashion students meet designer Sir Paul Smith <http://www.mmu.ac.uk/news/news-items/5475/>

Growing Social Enterprise Ideas workshop ⁷ run by Marcin, where planted seeds acted as a metaphor of growing skills, see below). Such approaches made learning more playful and fun, increasing student engagement and enhancing the student experience. David used this approach to enhance engagement and interaction during the Foundation Year induction, to encourage students out of their comfort zones. Resources such as free museum, music and theatre flyers were used to discuss the cohort's individual interests, and maps highlighting the student's home locations encouraged conversation and bonding during the session. Further on, in the year similar resources were used to engage student learning, outside of their everyday study. Exhibitions, presentations, theatre productions and all things cultural were promoted via the use of flyers, to highlight the importance of finding extra-curricular activities to engage with and to extend students' 'Joy of Learning'.

'Creative Patchwork' Project, Co-operative Inquiry 1



The 'Creative Patchwork' project, first used within the I Love Learning co-operative inquiry, provided an opportunity for further development when working with Foundation Year students. It enabled them to visualize their thoughts of creativity and innovation in the form of a group artwork. With the use of coloured crayons, an inexpensive resource (£1) purchased during the Manchester city centre activity, students communicated their thoughts brilliantly through this underused medium. The use of artefacts found in the everyday environment and the use of simple creative techniques to engage students in expressing their ideas and thoughts creation, was informed by Papert's Constructionism theory explored by (Ackerman, 2001). Here, knowledge is actively constructed by people's interaction with the world, hands on exploration, expressing ideas through making them physical and allowing, them to become tangible

⁷ Marcin Wozniak (2015) 'Creative Innovation - Growing Social Enterprise Ideas' <https://cpdmarcinwozniak.files.wordpress.com/2015/01/marcin-wozniak-creative-innovation-growing-social-enterprise-ideas.pdf>

and sharable which further inform them. Self-directed learning is encouraged by a conversation based around created artefacts, imagining new environments and bringing new tools, media and technologies into learning. At the end of the academic year, David created an interactive exhibition, which included the work of the students created during the academic year, displayed at the CELT 2016 Learning Festival.

What Is Action Research Anyway?

Our first collaborative task was to agree our methodology of working together. Helena was keen to use action research in our joint project together, as she had used it (particularly first person action research) in her PhD focusing on ecology, cosmology and sustainability. In the PhD, the many values of action research with its forms of first, second and third person inquiry emerged. As a group, we debated whether we should use the action research methodology or not. In the end, we agreed to explore together. From the 'big tent' of action research, we choose to use the definition offered by Reason and Bradbury:

"A participatory, democratic process, concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview... it seeks to bring tougher action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally to the flourishing of individual persons and their communities." (Reason and Bradbury, 2006:1)

Together, we engaged with some of the characteristics of action research, particularly extended ways of knowing (Heron, 1996) and cycles of action and reflection (Bradbury, 2015). Extended ways of knowing allows for different types of knowing to work together. For Heron (1996), there was the *experiential* knowing of living; the *presentational* knowing of story, art and creativity; the *propositional* knowing of academic research and policy; and finally *practical* knowing in the world, which was the culmination of all three types of knowing (1996: 56).

Structuring the CELT 'I Love Learning' Teaching and Learning Project

We decided to have a number of small, regular project meetings, where we would explore our practice together as co-researchers, and three wider meetings in which we would include others. We

decided to use elements of a 'co-operative inquiry' methodology from action research as the framework for our project and wider meetings. Following elements of 'co-operative inquiry' (Heron and Reason, 2008) method we saw ourselves as first, identifying the inquiry question together, then exploring through regular cycles of action in our teaching and student support roles, and finally coming back together and reflecting on what we had done. We also saw ourselves as each inquiring individually (*first person inquiry*), followed by inquiring together in a participative way (*second person inquiry*); as co-researchers and not as subject and object (Torbert, 2001). Participants in the co-operative inquiry group were recruited through CELT Greenhouse⁸ and staff recruited by SESTs at Cheshire campus.

In the end, using action research proved fruitful for us in a number of different ways. Sue reflected on how using this methodology worked for us; she observed that we managed to reflect individually and together in our project group, also in our larger co-operative inquiry meetings. Such an understanding was important, as it showed that the action research methodology had real benefits when exploring how creativity can be introduced into teaching. Helena explained the action research methodology in both the project and co-operative meetings. We found continuing cycles of action and reflection beneficial to the development of our teaching and learning styles (Marshall, 2016:54). Moreover, the opportunity to inquire into our daily practice in teaching and supporting students through regular cycles, in a supportive and reflective atmosphere, proved to be a fruitful source of ongoing creativity.

You Do It First and I'll Imitate

As an Associate Lecturer, Helena's meetings with the team were punctuated with the reality of teaching on a weekly basis. Helena found it extremely beneficial to work together to collaborate on the small steps to improve her practice; she illustrates this through the following two examples.

Helena wished to support the active engagement of students who attended tutorials and encourage students to maintain attendance. A potential solution to this issue and an early improvement to her teaching was suggested by Marcin, who suggested that Helena start each session with a piece of music. As a Student Experience Support

⁸ The Greenhouse is a regular monthly session open to all staff at MMU, which explores creativity. Contact Chrissi Nerantzi at CELT to get involved.

Tutor Marcin often worked with small groups in large rooms and that the students could feel intimidated by the space or overwhelmed and inclined not to talk. To get round this he regularly used music in his sessions, to provide an atmosphere, help students to relax and get involved with the tasks in the session. He found this worked very well, it also helped with 'breaking down the ice' when meeting new group of students. This seemed a good idea and the project team reflected on how similar approach could be incorporated in their practice. Helena started with pieces of music with a space theme. As Helena has a keen interest in space this was a topic she felt she could talk about with the students. Later, Marcin suggested going on to ask the students for their favourite piece of music, which Helena did. The point was not to relate the theme of the music to the tutorial, rather to enhance the atmosphere in the room. Helena then started the tutorial with the students' choice of music as they were coming into the tutorial, ending when all students were present and the tutorial started. The idea was favourably received.

Another improvement, which came out of collaborative working, was in 'making' as part of learning. In the first co-operative inquiry sessions, David facilitated a session where he asked participants to 'make' a response to the idea of creativity in learning. For this exercise, David provided old newspapers, hexagon shapes (which he had cut out), and scissors, pens and glue. David also provided water and a few nibbles. In working with colleagues on this exercise, the making proved great fun. It inspired Helena to take the risk to ask her students in the next tutorial to work together to describe a sustainable supply chain: cutting things up and drawing as well as using words on their poster. Through the use of creative approaches in her sessions Helena aimed to generate a light bulb moment in her students, to engage students with the topic explored, not just as something they learn about, but something they will potentially take away from the sessions and embed in future practice and lives. The students responded well resulting in a more creative response from them to the challenging theoretical question of how we make a supply chain sustainable from the beginning (the 'resources' or animals and plants) to the end, when we eat, consume, or use the food or product:

"When I drew a poster I managed to visualise the idea."
(Student feedback, 2015/16)

"Drawing the posters and interacting with one another has helped us become a learning community." (Student feedback 2015/16)

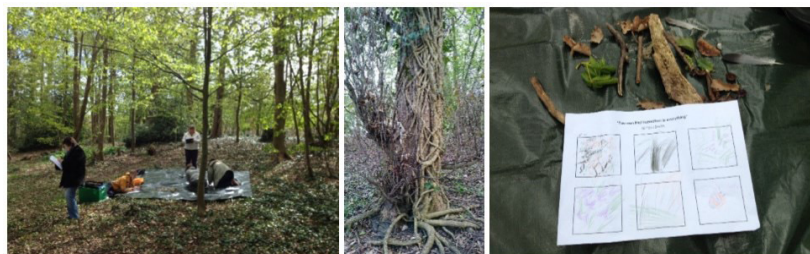
The making process used in both instances engaged participants with a creative act, use of metaphorical language, visual expression of thoughts and making them alive and sharable with others (Nerantzi, 2015). Such making process can be equated with the use of metaphor in Education, to expand the mind, develop critical thinking, encourage problem finding and aid categorisation and memorisation (Low, 2008).

If You Go Down to the Woods Today: 3rd Co-operative Inquiry at Cheshire campus

Building on the experience of 'new environments for learning', experienced by the I Love Learning collective at the Royal Exchange Theatre, the third co-operative inquiry, run at Cheshire campus, invited staff and students to experience the ancient woodland located on the campus. The purpose was to introduce participants to a new inspiring environment, use creative activities to generate energy and connection to the surrounding environment and to gather feedback on the use of such environments in enhancing engagement, motivation and curiosity within the learning process. Jackson (2005:17) suggests that:

"learning processes to foster creativity must develop self-efficacy, encourage risk-taking in safe environments and help students to engage with messy/complex and unpredictable situations, where there are no right and wrong answers."

3rd Co-operative Inquiry at Cheshire



So, off we went to the woods... everyone was set for an adventure, in the exciting location full of textures and sounds - especially in spring time - with flowers blooming and birds tweeting and lots of room for interaction.

Helena started the session with a talk on the importance of the protection of the natural world and invited participants to listen to the sounds of the woodlands. This allowed the facilitators to check how the participants reacted to the new environment. At first, participants found it difficult to relate how such experience could be linked to their practice. To resolve this, David encouraged everyone to find inspiration in their surroundings: to notice elements of the environment and express those elements through saying aloud what we see. This interactive activity helped participants to relax and encouraged a creative attitude. We continued to observe and find elements of nature that fascinated or grabbed our attention; we took pictures and later repeated the exercise, but this time focused on one chosen element of the environment and recorded that element with simple drawing techniques. Participants' feedback suggested that active observation and encouragement to produce their own creative output, through recording of the surrounding and switching between different media, helped them connect with the environment, creating their own meanings and interpretations of the environment and prompting discussion of those with others during the session. According to Papert's Constructionist view (Ackermann,2001:4):

"projecting out our inner feelings and ideas is key to learning. Expressing ideas make them tangible and shareable, which in turn, informs, shapes and sharpens these ideas, and helps us communicate with others through our expressions."

Greenhouse at Cheshire campus, creative space for collaboration, growing seeds of ideas and skills



Participants suggested that that the use of creative tasks to record and interpret the environment helped them to realise that we often fail to use effectively the vast amount of data and information which surrounds us, and that creative approaches such as visualisation and sharing ideas with others can help us analyse such information more effectively. Dewulf and Baillie (1999) define creativity as "*shared imaginations*", which involves awaking our own imagination, sharing it with others through action, creation and encouraging others to use their own imagination.

Reflections on Involving Students in Creativity

Within his role as Student Experience Tutor, Marcin has seen the importance of sharing ideas, and collaborating on projects with staff and students: working together across different disciplines to share skills and to work alongside students on projects, to enhance the student experience. To this end, he has used creative approaches and Action Research methodology to engage students in projects at the Cheshire campus. His aim was to give the students involved an opportunity to collaborate with other students and staff and to develop new transferable skills. During the 'Creativity for Learning' course, he developed *the metaphor of a growing plant* as an innovation to enhance his teaching. The innovation was used to engage a number of students in extracurricular social enterprise projects, or collaborating with students and staff on the development of the Greenhouse on campus. *The metaphor of a growing plant*, nurturing and cultivating its roots was used in a 'Social Enterprise Ideas Workshop' to help students understand the importance of the active development of their skills: the regular nurturing and attention required for a growing plant, links to active engagement with opportunities, development of skills and creation of their own opportunities. Owen (2001:xvi) suggests that metaphor can help to "*externalise abstract thinking and translate it into a sensory-based tangible representation*". Such creative approaches are effective tools for enhancing students motivation, empowerment and engagement. The use of metaphor was supported by the making process to enhance the memorisation (Low, 2008) of this activity, which involved not just educational aspect but also enhanced students' motivation for self-development. Students' planted a seed of a selected plant representing their developed idea, which they took away with them to nurture their growing plant/idea and document the process and share with others via social media. Students' who participated in the 'ideas workshops' and engaged with metaphor have since been actively involved with the campus life. Collaboration with other students' and staff, encouraged by the I Love Learning group and

the use of creative approaches to learning, has led to the formation of the learning communities at the Cheshire campus, such as the *Enterprise Society*, *The Sustainability and Growth Society* and the *Student Academic Innovation Journal*⁹ and has contributed to extracurricular activities offered at the campus. Beachboard et al. (2011) argue that student-learning communities allow for the development of belonging and relatedness, which leads to student motivation, confidence and interest in learning. The use of interactive spaces such as the Woodland, full of bright colours, noises and textures, or other locations, which offer a new and stimulating environment to students, can enhance interaction between students and staff, create energy in the class room and campus to motivate and involve students. Places such as the Greenhouse restored and developed by students and staff at Cheshire Campus in collaboration with Manchester Met's Environment Team - Big Impact project¹⁰, can serve as an example of how creative spaces, can be created within an educational setting. Engaging students in not-straight forward learning, experimentation, play, rest, work, reflection and encouraging a co-operative process helps to develop brighter ideas, mutual support, sharing of skills and the development of wider perspectives.

Technology Can Help Us in Being Creative

It could be argued that creativity can only happen when we have a room full of resources. Our answer is to embrace every day technology in simple ways. During the trip to the Woodland, we recorded a video of the environment and played it at the beginning of a following co-operative inquiry session involving participants who did not attend. Participants were welcomed by the tweeting of birds and a 'window to the woodland' via projection using standard class room technology, similar to Helena's use of music during tutorials, making the room more exciting and bringing participants' attention to the everyday environment. This creative approach aimed to stimulate participants' engagement and creativity, to encourage them to think about the nature of the ideal learning experience and to discuss creative ways of enhancing the student experience.

The use of new technologies and social media within teaching can expand the possibilities for creativity in supporting student engagement and the development of independent research skills and transferable skills. Such approach was highlighted by David's use of

9 Student Academic Innovation Journal www.saijournal.co.uk

10 Manchester Met, Big Impact <http://www2.mmu.ac.uk/bigimpact/>

social media platform Instagram on The MFI Foundation course: where students, alongside academic staff, participated in learning outside of the classroom and collecting research that links to fashion. The use of social media, fun and new way of communication familiar to most students, allowed an easy way to share information between staff and students, to have fun while working on the research task and to create a link between the studied subject and the professional environment. Scales (2008) suggests that students need to see their skills developed within the context that they find interesting or that they are passionate about. The sharing of different creative approaches within 'I Love Learning' has helped Marcin to enhance his practice with the use of Social Media and the use of social media hashtags - a word or phrase preceded by a hash sign (#). During the new student Induction he has introduced an activity 'The Cheshire campus Selfie Game'. Students took 'selfie' pictures with other new students in different locations on the campus and uploaded images using the hashtag #mmucwelcome allowing them to find images, which were taken on the day. This helped students to get to know the campus and each other and gave an opportunity for students to exchange contact details and to follow each other on social media and further support their social integration to the university.

The idea of the use of hashtag as a sharing platform was first used in the 'ideas workshop', where hashtag #mmusocialenterprise was used by students and staff to upload the images of a growing plant, which was planted during the workshop and which acted as a metaphor for a growing idea. This simple, creative approach was designed to motivate students to act on their ideas but also offer a space or platform that connects staff and other students involved in the workshop, to offer each other support with developing projects and to encourage collaboration. Here the hashtag offered a space that can be easily accessed from various locations and social media platforms. Marcin offered support for students and staff who are not familiar with the use of such technologies. The uploaded growing images also helped to create digital stories, that were easily accessible and that could be shared with other students and staff, to showcase students' contribution and engage others in taking part in similar activities. Use of social media can generate interest, attention and motivation for the 'digital generation' of students. The creation of a digital story, through the use of social media, can enhance students' communication skills by helping them learn how to organise ideas, ask questions, express opinions, and construct narratives (Digital Storytelling, no date: online).

Table 2 - Outputs of collaborative and partnership working

Outputs	Collaboration and partnership	Outcomes
Regular project sessions on a 3 weekly basis	Discuss practice through ongoing cycles of action and reflection	Worked out joint ways of working together to deliver outputs; delivered practice and then reflected on it again
Collaborating with others	Jointly delivered 3 sessions of co-operative inquiry	Around 20+ participants (2 sessions on Manchester campus, 1 on Cheshire campus)
	Delivered one Greenhouse session on creativity and social media (Autumn 2015)	Eight staff participants reflected on creativity in learning together
Delivered stall at CELT Learning festival June 2016	1 Interactive Exhibition	We estimate that we talked to upwards of 50 staff members on our project, demonstrating ideas through the creative posters and interactive Exhibition.
	Collection of creative posters made by students	The posters were made during teaching sessions on Responsible Enterprise during 2015/16.
Publishing:	Learning how to jointly reflect on practice and co-author papers	Creative Academic Magazine Cobb et al (2016) CELT Learning and Teaching in Action Journal (forthcoming).
Influenced teaching	Helena awarded Outstanding Teacher in sustainability from MMU Students Award (May 2016) https://www.theunionmmu.org/your-voice/teachingawards/2016-winners/	
Presentation at national conference	David	The Foundation Year Network Conference 2016, Southampton Solent University
Presentation to Dept. of Management team meeting	Helena (September 2016) Participative session to over twenty full time staff members. Personal feedback includes staff using creative ideas in practice.	

Outputs

One of the challenges of working collectively can be achieving the outputs and outcomes together. We felt that we demonstrated a number of outputs out of collaborative and partnership working across disciplines. These are set out in Table2: (page 171).

Conclusion

In this paper, we have tried to draw out how we worked collaboratively and across disciplines to develop creativity in our teaching. We feel that the lessons learned from this project can be used to explore how creativity can be easily adapted in teaching and support practice. Although it is not common to work across faculties and disciplines there is no reason why this should not take place to a greater extent than is currently the case. More collaborative and inter-disciplinary working would help develop a more creative learning environment at Manchester Met. How did we feel that we responded to the Vice-Chancellor's questions on creativity and learning? We feel that we addressed several of these. In particular we sought, through the CELT 'I Love Learning' Project, to see how we could support learning in creative and imaginative ways as demonstrated through our stories. In our initiatives, such as going to the Royal Exchange and the Ancient Woodland, we were learning to think about learning, as a creative experience, which might transform students' lives. We explored practical approaches to creating the space in which to be creative. We believe that we contributed in a positive and direct way to the discussion about how to be an innovative and creative university through collaboration and partnership.

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