

## Spark: UAL Creative Teaching and Learning Journal

### Editorial

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*Spark: UAL's Creative Teaching and Learning Journal* is a space for sharing best practice, innovation and opinion. Another important space for sharing is UAL's annual Learning and Teaching Day, held in 2017 at Central Saint Martins, bringing together those with a shared passion for supporting student learning. This year's theme 'Cultivating Curiosity' was a timely and significant one for the creative industries and creative education; when the impact of national and international policies appear to be reducing the opportunities for experimentation, risk-taking and cross-cultural collaboration, all integral components of creativity.

A theme running through this edition is the fostering of inclusive learning spaces as safe places for enquiry-based learning, collaboration and curiosity. Many of the contributions open up new spaces for the reader; disciplinary and theoretical spaces that we might not usually be privy to; spaces inhabited by creative students, teachers, educational developers, physical and online spaces, and this is its great strength. Readers are treated to new perspectives on curriculum design, the use of the physical and the digital and strategies for harnessing curiosity.

One of the most prominent questions for teachers at any level of education is the debate around use of personal devices in academic spaces; there is divided opinion in the sector about how education should respond to the preponderance of the always-on learner. Zoe Hinton is a lecturer in London College of Fashion's Fashion Business School who has analyzed students' self-perceptions of the impact on their concentration of their use of mobile devices in lectures. Zoe's research paper on digital pedagogies provides a scholarly addition to the discussion, as she shares her own experience and research engaging the 'distracted generation' (Levy, 2014). Widening the discussion from education to industry, Zoe reflects on how we can support students' use of both social media and standard workplace software to enhance employability and collaborative learning. For any readers worried about being replaced by robots it is reassuring to find that above all students still value interesting and engaging lecturers.

David Perkins' concept of mindware comprises strategies, attitudes and habits that facilitate critical and creative thinking and stresses the links between the practice of meta-thinking and transformative learning (Perkins, 2002). Self-reflection is a key facet of creative arts education and so the investigation of our own learning practices can be seen as a natural extension of this. Richie Manu is a Lecturer on the MA Applied Imagination in the Creative Industries course at CSM who has applied a psychological perspective to his work on student engagement. Richie's research paper combines a theoretical exposition with a review of pedagogic interventions and teaching practice designed to increase students' 'curiosity bandwidth' that took place as part of the UAL Learning and Teaching Day. Richie describes how wider sensory engagement is an effective strategy to foster curiosity as a means to make new connections. The focus on curiosity raises important questions, highlighting the 'complexities and challenges' of aligning learning outcomes and assessment with institutional pedagogic strategy which highlights curiosity as a key attribute but currently precludes it from the assessment framework.

Having been invited to contribute to the UAL Language Centre's pre-session programme I know the excellent work done by the team preparing international students to join UAL. Drawing on their expertise in teaching Academic English, the Language Centre is also delivering research-informed guidance to course teams on how to support students on course where 'words may not be considered the artists' tools of the trade'. David King and Helen Hickey from the Language Centre provide some fascinating insights into the challenges of delivering a curriculum for the 'language of creativity'. In their research paper they share the results of adopting a corpus approach for analyzing key course texts and partnering with academics to develop resources for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) with a specific art and design focus.

The Teaching and Learning Exchange at UAL supports student attainment through several key initiatives. One of these, the Making a Difference programme, brings students, teachers and support staff together to collaborate on course enhancement. Sarah Wooley's work at the Exchange as part of her Ambitious Futures graduate traineeship allowed her to reflect upon her own recent student experiences to form the basis for a case study of curriculum design as creative practice using a crit format to visualize and analyse the student experience through a student journey mapping exercise. Her position, having recently 'crossed the gap' between MA student and UAL employee, adds to the discussion.

Reviewing the state of digital technologies in art and design education almost ten years ago I noted the creative potential of computer mediated communications but observed the lack of critical research into its application (Radclyffe-Thomas, 2008). Lee Campbell is a Lecturer in Academic Support and Fine Art whose research paper on his 'Technoparticipation' project takes the reader through several teaching interventions applying digital realia into a fine art context. He provides practical examples and conceptual analysis of the potential for inclusivity, collaboration, reflective practice and personalised learning experiences. Along with multiple examples of practice what is particularly novel in Lee's approach is the appropriation of technological mishaps or 'communicative fragmentation' as 'realia'.

Moving from the digital to the analogue the collaboration between UAL's Academic Support and the Museum & Study Collection at CSM demonstrates the multiplier effect of cross-service collaborative projects. Judy Willcocks is Head of Museum and Contemporary Collections whose work with Graham Barton, Academic Support Coordinator, has resulted in an immersive experiential workshop model. Combining the Academic Support department remit to foster the integration of learning with students' creative practice, with objects from an extensive archive of artefacts, they have designed a model of object-based self-enquiry that uses museum objects to mediate insights into 'personal learning habits, attitudes and preferences'. The insights gained and shared through this case study remind the reader of the liberating effect of challenging frames of reference and thought patterns bound by subject discipline and habit.

One of the joys of the UAL Learning and Teaching Day is the forum it provides for purposefully exploring colleagues' lived experiences. Often the focus is on learners, but there is equal value in investigating teacher identity. Diana Donaldson is Course Leader on the Graduate Diploma in Fashion Media Styling at LCF, whose case study 'A Different Hue of Blue' gives a personal account of the challenges experienced 'embedding authentic, informative and enduring change within the curriculum'. Diana's case study takes the reader through the inspiration and implementation of a classroom intervention designed to challenge cultural stereotypes and promote critical thinking and inclusivity through an autobiographical classroom intervention called 'Tribute'. The case study was presented at the Learning and Teaching Day and the insights from the session are shared here.

Arts SU the Students Union at UAL provide student-led activities that support students across the university. One such activity is the TEDxUAL event first held at UAL in 2015. It may surprise the reader that TEDx events are rarely hosted by art and design institutions yet student contributor Eleanor Armstrong who was Lead Organiser for TEDxUAL 2016 shows how the aims of the TEDxUAL align with the UAL Learning Teaching and Enhancement Strategy by providing opportunities for partnership, collaboration, practical experience and employability. The piece articulates the process and practicalities of running TEDxUAL as well as highlighting lessons learnt by the team organizing the event. On a personal note I was happy to see my Doctoral Supervisor Professor Mike Fleming's work on creative pedagogies cited.

It has been enormously edifying to be involved in this edition, to see the quality and quantity of pedagogic practice and critical engagement from students and staff across UAL. I hope you enjoy reading the contributions and that they will *Spark* your own creative curiosity!

### References

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Radclyffe-Thomas, N. (2008) 'White heat or blue screen? Digital technologies in art and design education', *International Journal of Art and Design Education*, 27(2), pp.158-167.

### Biography

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