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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES

Southampton Education School

Creative Learning Approaches for Undergraduate Self-Development

by

Timothy McClellan

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2013

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES

SOUTHAMPTON EDUCATION SCHOOL

Doctor of Philosophy

**CREATIVE LEARNING APPROACHES FOR UNDERGRADUATE
SELF-DEVELOPMENT**

by Timothy McClellan

This thesis investigates creativity in the undergraduate curriculum and how students respond to creative approaches to learning within their studies. Specifically, the thesis considers how the use of multiple creative learning methods may enhance undergraduate learning and the role that creative visualisation and guided imagery can play in this experience.

The thesis presents the learning stories of six undergraduates in the main study who took one of these modules. Interviews were conducted and a range of other documentary data, such as learning journals and assignments, was collected and analysed in order to detail each student's journey through and experience of the module. The analysis is presented in three separate sections; firstly, as individual student case studies; secondly, as a thematic cross-case analysis; and thirdly, as a synthesis of the data with theoretical constructs and current debates surrounding creativity in higher education with conclusions and recommendations for individual and sector practice.

The thesis discusses the 'messy' nature of research, highlights the compromises and difficulties inherent in a PhD project and illustrates how these issues were overcome. The work also reflects on the researcher's own PhD learning journey and identifies a number of themes that influence the efficacy of the teaching of creative skills in undergraduate programmes. The thesis proposes a number of new models that have been integrated into the author's own teaching and that have wider implications for the teaching of transferable skills in creativity and creative thinking in higher education for practice-based and non-vocational programmes as well as consultancy opportunities for industry. New knowledge proposed within the thesis includes a refined model of student engagement and a model to plot the student journey of self-discovery. The thesis also offers a critique of and guidelines for the use of guided imagery to promote student creativity in higher education.

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Declaration of Authorship

I, TIMOTHY McCLELLAN, declare that the thesis entitled 'Creative Learning Approaches for Undergraduate Self-Development' and the work presented in the thesis are both my own, and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that:

- this work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
- where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
- where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
- where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
- I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
- where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
- none of this work has been published before submission.

Signed:

Date:

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank sincerely all the students who took the time to participate in this research and whose work and thoughts are included in this thesis. I am also extremely grateful to my two supervisors over the period of my studies, Professor Melanie Nind and Professor Helen Simons, for their guidance, knowledge and support.

Finally, thanks go to my children, Katrina and Patrick, and to my wife Karen for their never-ending encouragement and support.

Definitions and abbreviations

All Our Futures	National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education. (1999). <i>All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education</i> . London: DFEE. Report commissioned by the Government to make recommendations regarding the creative and cultural development of young people through formal and informal education. Chaired by Sir Ken Robinson, also known as <i>The Robinson Report</i> and <i>The NACCCE Report</i>
CAQDAS	Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CATS	Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme
CATS points	Credit points which are attributed to individual modules at undergraduate level. 360 CATS points are generally required for the award of an undergraduate degree; 120 at Levels Four, Five and Six, respectively (Undergraduate Years 1, 2 and 3)
Creative approaches to learning	The pedagogical approaches and strategies used in 'Creativity in Action' and 'Creative Personal Development' in pursuit of the learning outcomes of each module
'Creative Personal Development'	10 CATS module at Level Six (Year 3) of undergraduate programme involved in this research. Three of the research participants studied this module (two from main research and one from pilot)
Creative visualisation	The technique of using your imagination to create what you want in your life (Gawain 2002: 3)
'Creativity in Action'	20 CATS module at Level Four (Year 1) of undergraduate programme involved in this research. Six of the research participants studied this module

	(four from the main research and two from the pilot)
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
Experiential	Learning from experience or 'learning by doing'. This is in learning contrast to didactic learning or 'learning by rote'
Guided imagery	A story or scenario which is listened to in a quiet and calm environment (Grace 2001: 118)
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Higher Education Academy
NACCCE	National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
Teaching creatively	Using imaginative approaches to make learning more interesting, exciting and effective (<i>All Our Futures</i> : 102)
Teaching creativity	Defined as 'Teaching for Creativity' in the <i>All Our Futures</i> Report (pp.103-106). Teaching for creativity aims to encourage autonomy on the part of the teacher and student; authenticity in responses - the student making decisions based on own judgment; openness to new and unusual ideas; respect for each other and the ideas that emerge; fulfilment - a feeling of anticipation, satisfaction and enjoyment of the creative relationship (p.106)
VARK	Visual, Auditory, Reading/Writing and Kinaesthetic learning styles
Visualisation	A combination of guided and independently generated imagery with a view to generation for the individual of ideas for creative or personal development

Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction

The central focus of this research is creativity in the undergraduate curriculum, specifically the student experience of creative approaches to learning and the implications for practice and research in higher education. This thesis tells the stories and experiences of individual students who have completed an experiential module covering either Creative Thinking or Creative Personal Development as part of their undergraduate programme. In particular, this research examines the ways in which and the extent to which students engage with the experiential process in these sessions, which require both student participation and reflection for successful completion. The thesis also includes a proposal for a revised model of student engagement, a number of models detailing the student creative journey and an innovative workshop programme in creative visualisation to trigger student imagination and creative thought.

This thesis, though, is not just about the learning journey of the students; it is also the story of my own PhD research. When I started the project I had no idea where the research would take me. Over time and through the narratives of the nine students whose stories are told in this thesis, themes and threads began to emerge from the raw data that are subsequently woven together in a series of student participant case studies leading to cross-case thematic analysis and finally the proposal of new models in the concluding chapter. The ethos and delivery of the modules, being experiential, is at variance with much of the other learning undertaken by the students in their studies and this research follows the learning journeys of a number of these undergraduates, some of whom prefer a more traditional learning approach and others for whom a fresh way of learning can offer a gateway to a new perspective on their studies and their preferred methods of learning. The research is set in the context of a post-1992 university based in the south of England, where the courses are largely practice-based with a focus on employment in industry sectors associated with the specific degree programmes. The research is based in a faculty associated with the creative industries.

As a part-time, mature PhD student also employed as a full-time university lecturer, I have had to balance the demands of my paid work with those of the research with my family life. As a result, this research journey has been long, with many twists and turns. With necessary gaps from study, it has taken nine years since I enrolled on the programme for the research to be completed and presented as a thesis. Despite this, the data are not compromised by the length of time taken to submit, as I discuss in the methodology chapter. The research is original in that (based on more than one systematic library search) there is currently no published material regarding the application of guided imagery and visualisation in higher education. Similarly, there is no published qualitative work using case studies to examine the learning journeys of undergraduate students taking modules with a generic ethos of fostering creativity and personal development. The research presents new models for learning and modified models of undergraduate student engagement. It also presents an integrated short course in and a critique of the application of visualisation and guided imagery in the undergraduate curriculum.

The idea for this research has evolved over a number of years through my own interest in both creativity and creative approaches to generate active undergraduate learning. I am currently a principal lecturer at the university in which the research was conducted, but had previously been a senior radio journalist in local radio in the UK for around ten years. As a lecturer, or teacher, I use a number of what can be described as 'creative approaches to teaching' in the delivery of these and other modules. These include such approaches as using picture-dice as a means of random stimulation, drawing, colouring and collage as means of accessing and verbalising thoughts and emotions, and guided imagery to help students focus on goals and to enhance their awareness of the senses as a means of creative thought. The rationale is that students who learn creatively can transfer that creative perspective into their academic work and future workplace in their careers. It can also broaden their outlook on and participation in cultural life and inform their overall approach to life.

Creative learning as a concept, in my view, falls into two areas. The first is concerned with theoretical content and approaches to foster student creativity and

creative output, that is to say one which is subject-based. The second area relates to the methods employed to facilitate that student creativity, that is to say a creative approach to pedagogy. This is also the line taken in the influential *All Our Futures* report (National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education 1999: 102-107).

In keeping with good practice in research, anonymity of the participants is maintained throughout. To this end, pseudonyms for the participants will be used, the name of the post-1992 university where the research has been conducted will not be revealed, and the names of the modules have been changed to correctly reflect the nature of the content and learning approach but to prevent identification of the participants.

Reflecting on the content of a number of articles and conference papers as author and co-author of a book on educational communication (McClellan & Gann 2002), I became aware that my interests and published writings, over the years, had become more focused on imaginative, unusual and different approaches. These can influence the perception of others and enable others to reassess and take control of particular situations effectively. Whilst a number of these earlier writings and papers had been largely either business oriented (McClellan 1995, 1998) or approaches to pedagogy in undergraduate business courses (McClellan 1996, 1997), there was a noticeable shift in my published output towards more creative aspects of learning in higher education in recent years (McClellan 2001, 2004, 2007, 2009). In addition, I have run Continuing Professional Development (CPD) creativity workshops for the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (in 2006, 2008 and 2009), a national charity (2005), together with a series of creativity workshops for the University of Southampton (2009). The evolution of this research and the development of the thesis have continued this trend.

The approaches that are the subject of this thesis have been developed and employed in the university learning environment. They have been the subject of my reflection during the course of the research with a view to enhanced delivery, initially of my own practice, and latterly a more creative curriculum within my own Faculty.

The two modules in question also formed a central plank in a successful accreditation (2009) for my Faculty by the professional body for the media industry, Skillset.

This thesis details the rough and the smooth of this learning and teaching project. In particular, a number of compromises had to be made in the course of the research so as to make the project both manageable and academically viable. Any researcher has to set a framework of boundaries in order to complete a project which is on time, within budget and within the researcher's existing and developing knowledge base. The project also has to fulfil the needs of a publisher or, in this case the requirements for the award of a PhD. Initially, I sought data from many students but discovered that I had produced a mass of data that had limited application. In other words, I had opted for data quantity rather than data quality. In the final data gathering, I selected six students for inclusion in the main study. The compromise is that I could have chosen more to generate more data but the earlier experience convinced me that this was not a wise move. I maintain that little could have been added to the work with a wider sample base. Indeed, given the constraints on a PhD thesis length, depth of analysis would probably have had to have been sacrificed to include the data of more participants. Compromise was also part of the generation of the final research questions. Following the pilot I broadened my research questions, detailed below, to encompass a range of creative learning approaches instead of a tight focus on visualisation and guided imagery, as originally envisaged.

A number of ethical issues had to be addressed over the course of the research and data collection difficulties also had to be overcome in the journey towards completion. This PhD started out as research into the effectiveness of guided imagery and creative visualisation in higher education. Over time, I became convinced that these approaches should not be researched as discrete learning components but had to be viewed in the broader context of the learning of specific cohorts of undergraduate students. I decided that it was inappropriate to isolate the visualisation and guided imagery learning approaches from a range of others delivered in the modules that I taught. The decision to make this change in focus is explained in the methodology chapter of this thesis.

The main research question of this thesis is:

- How might the use of multiple creative learning methods enhance undergraduate education?

With a subsidiary question of:

- What is the role of creative visualisation in this process?

Thesis structure

The remainder of this chapter introduces the content of the two modules forming the basis for this thesis, and explores how I, as a researcher, academic and individual, am situated within the research. The chapter concludes with an assessment of the role of creativity in both a wider public policy context and in the broader higher education arena beyond the research classroom. The literature review in Chapter Two considers the nature of creativity, creative learning and its relevance to student engagement and output.

The methodology chapter describes and justifies the primary research process. It explains the nature of the research approaches adopted, together with the reasons for the choice of methods. The ethical questions that needed to be answered to allow the primary research to take place, both at the outset and for the duration of the work, are also addressed. Chapter Four concerns the outcomes of the pilot study and how these informed the subsequent development of the research.

The findings of the main primary research are laid out in the form of vignettes or student profiles of some of the individual learners who agreed to take part in the research in Chapter Five. Some were at the beginning of their university journeys when they participated; others were approaching the end. Each individual portrait or profile is based on interview data, artefacts and extracts from learning journals. Data were obtained with the individual students on a number of occasions through interviews and the examination of artefacts such as journals and other creative output.

The analysis develops these individual student profiles with a cross-case thematic analysis of the research findings in Chapter Six. The thesis concludes in Chapter Seven with a distillation of new knowledge generated by this work, together with observations on the implications for higher education courses of a creative curriculum and the extent to which a creative approach to learning can enhance a student's motivation to learn.

The two modules

This research is centred within the undergraduate classroom and specific consideration is given to my classroom in particular. The aim of this project is to gauge the extent to which undergraduate students can use creative learning approaches to enhance their learning experience and output, both within their individual degree programmes and, in a broader transferable context, academically, personally and professionally. It is appropriate at this stage to introduce the two modules used as the basis for this research. Below is a brief description of the content for each module and a positioning of each module in its wider degree programme.

The names of the modules have been changed from the official titles so that no search could directly identify the modules. I also believe that it is important to give a personality to the modules, as they are dynamic and are an integral part of the study and development of the students concerned, so do not think it is appropriate to name them 'Module A' and 'Module B' or other such construct. Just as pseudonyms have been given to the student participants to personalise individual accounts, I have done the same for the modules. The pseudonyms for the modules reflect the content and ethos of the learning and teaching outcomes, but are completely different to the actual module identities to assist in anonymity. An outline of each module presented here is designed merely to give a flavour of the learning carried out within each unit and to avoid a flood of detail that might hinder the communication of the research at this stage.

'Creativity in Action' module

This experiential (20 CATS points) module adopts a questioning approach to the world around us and the assumptions that underpin our thoughts and actions. This is delivered as a two-hour weekly workshop throughout the whole of the first year of the degree. Situated as a core subject in Year One of a full-time creative and industry-oriented undergraduate programme, this module seeks to help open students' minds to new possibilities of thinking and new methods to access their own creativity and that of a group. Lateral thinking strategies such as structured approaches to problem solving form a substantial part of the material delivered in the module. Collaborative and co-operative learning are used extensively within the workshop sessions, together with a range of other creative learning approaches such as mind mapping and the concept of multiple intelligences. Assessment at the time of the research was by the submission of extracts from an individual weekly compiled reflective journal plus a second-order reflective paper at the conclusion of the module. The module also encourages students to develop a reflective and reflexive approach to their studies and to integrate this with their own life perspectives and frames of reference. The content for this module is shown in Figure 1.1 and illustrates the topics and themes and how they interconnect over the course of the module. The transferable skills developed by the students through the learning are shown in Figure 1.2. The undergraduate course and the module have a strong emphasis on future student employability and so this is the focus of this diagram. The scheme of work for this module is included in Appendix 1.1.

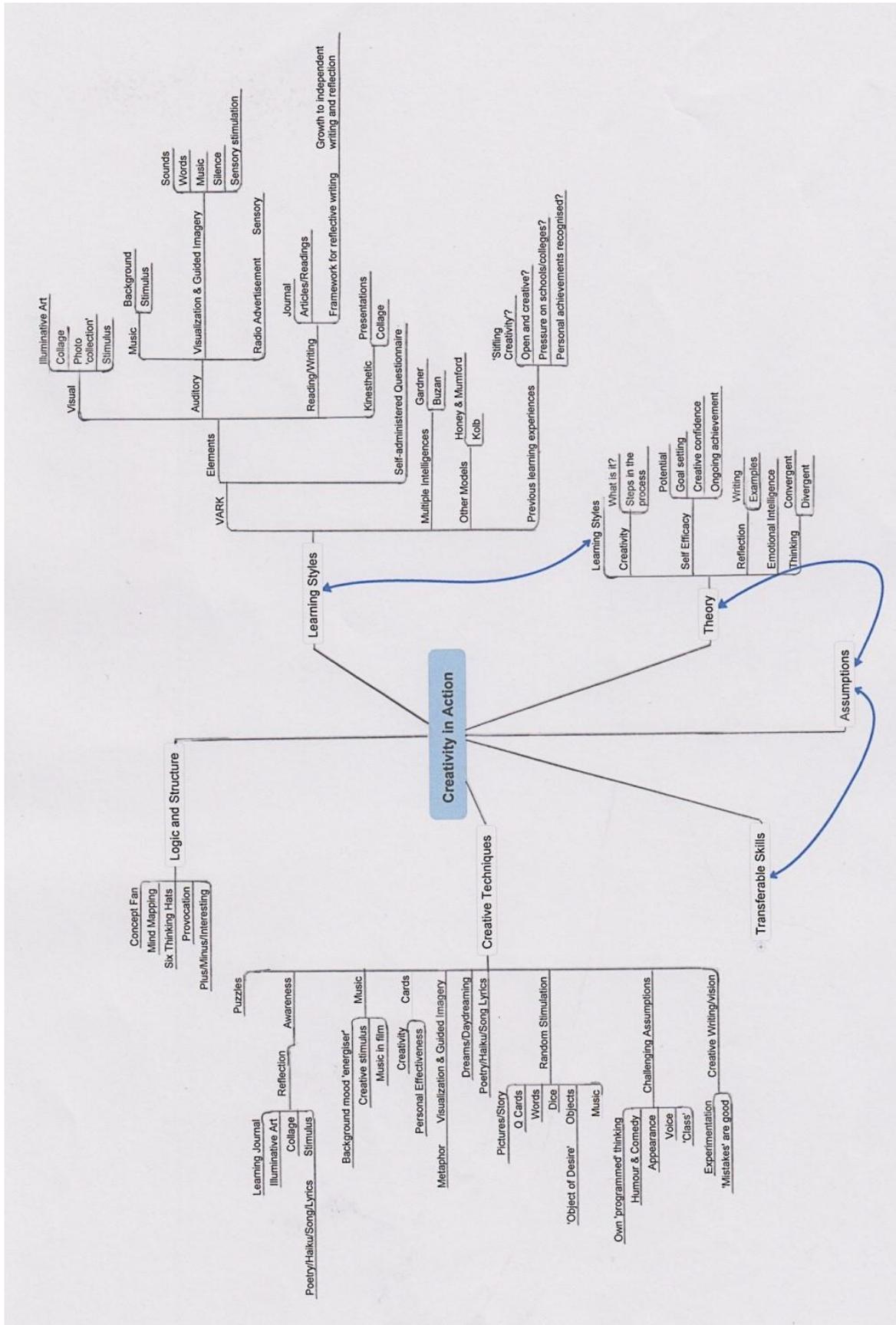


Figure 1.1: Creativity in Action: mind map of topics

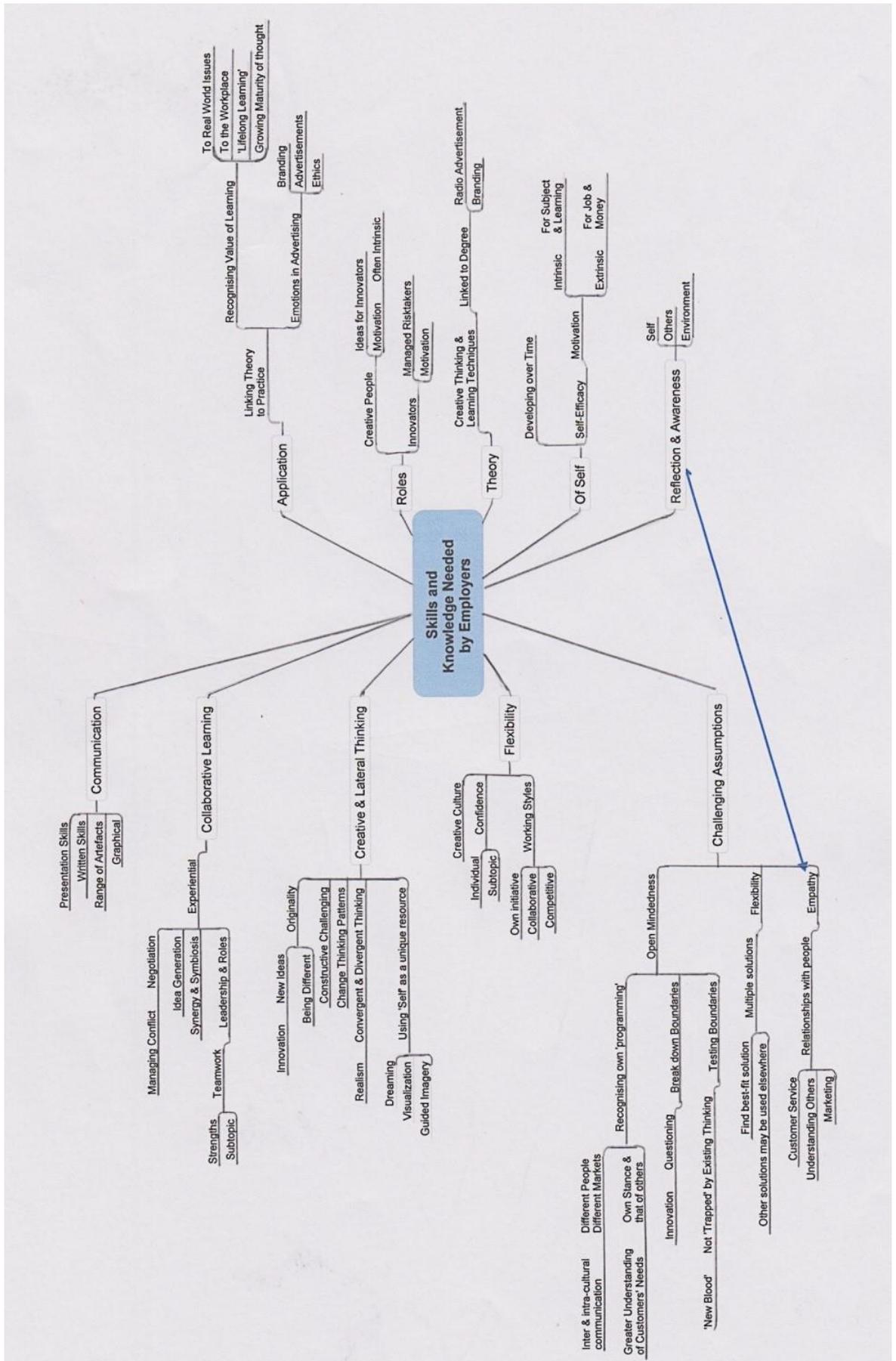


Figure 1.2: Creativity in Action: mind map of transferable skills

'Creative Personal Development' module

This optional module (10 CATS points) operates in the final year (Year Three) of a different full-time undergraduate programme to 'Creativity in Action'. It is also delivered as a two-hour experiential workshop but, at the time the research, was conducted only in the second semester of the final year of the degree. In essence, this is a personal development module that requires students to reflect on their individuality and to explore this aspect of their self to identify their own strengths and areas for development. Students also appraise their personal profiles and influences to assist in their own preparation for interview and job orientation. A goal of this unit is to embed a reflective approach to study and broader aspects of life with a view to the students achieving greater effectiveness in the workplace and for the remainder of their undergraduate studies.

It is not a careers-based set of workshops, but a module whose rationale recognises that students who are able to demonstrate a greater understanding of themselves, through reflective thought and reflexivity for example, may be in a better position to manage others. This is because they may have developed a number of reflexive and transferable 'soft' skills in the process. The module requires students to create their own analytical structures and develop their own methods of presentation to tackle assessment. This works on the assumption that each student is an individual and can be empowered to voice thoughts in media that are best suited to him or her.

Using a range of stimuli such as pictures, poems, histories, biographies, music compilations, writing, drawing and collage, students express their own thoughts, feelings and ideas in the production of their own creative output and by synthesising the creative artefacts of others. This could be the combination of, for instance, lyrics or elements of collage, with their own drawing, writing, photography or finished collage, for example. Students can find challenging the creation of their own structure to a problem. I argue that, because many issues and problems do not have a set structure for solution, the ability to think creatively around issues is a key criterion for successful study and subsequent graduate employment. This enabling learning strategy is in keeping with the concept of

student scaffolding, empowerment and growing independence in learning at undergraduate level. Assessment in this module is by a Personal Reflective Document submitted at the end of the module. The media and style of submission is potentially wide-ranging but discussion and guidance is offered to help mould the individual students' desires into a realistic and meaningful format. The content for this module is illustrated in Figure 1.3. There is a stronger focus on development of the self in this module when compared with the 'Creativity in Action' module. The scheme of work is included in Appendix 1.2.

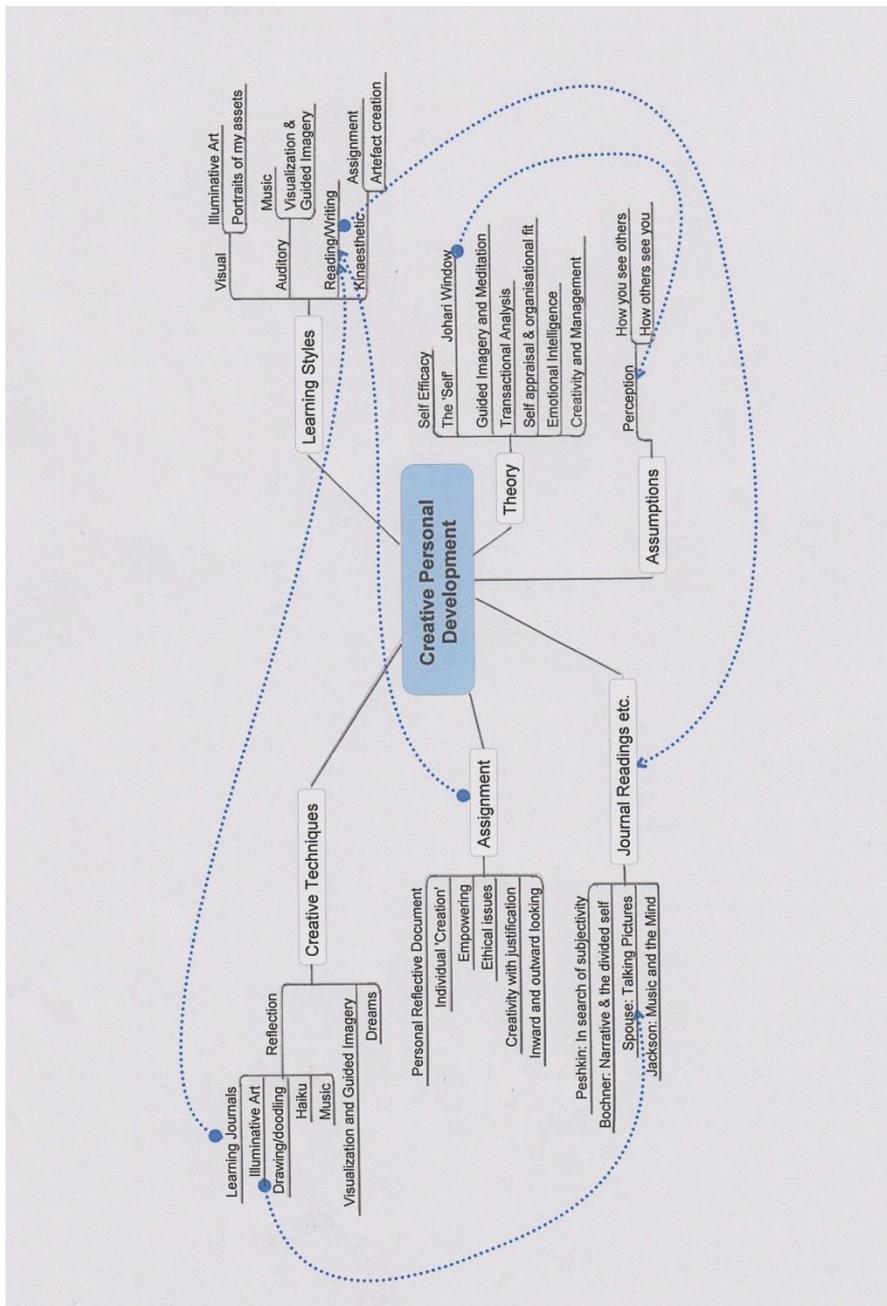


Figure 1.3: Creative Personal Development: mind map of topics

The guided imagery and creative visualisation workshops

Guided imagery and creative visualisation form a major part of this research. Both approaches have been described and their relevance to the research fully explained in the literature review. There is a commonality of material and delivery with regard to this part of the curriculum in both the first year 'Creativity in Action' and the third year 'Creative Personal Development' modules. The curriculum delivery in both modules with regard to this area of study took place in two two-hour workshops on successive weeks. There were minor variations and refinements in the weekly activities between the pilot study and the main research, but the overall thrust was the same. A detailed description of all the visualisations and accompanying music and sounds and guided imagery scenarios used throughout this research project, together with associated learning material is included as Appendices 4.1 to 4.5.

Visualisation and guided imagery are novel and, prior to this research, untested means to access and facilitate undergraduate creativity. There is no published research on the use of these approaches in higher education with minimal reference to the primary and secondary education sectors. Before I embarked on this project I had discovered that these techniques were useful for me in creative idea generation, reflection and personal development through regular weekly workshops that I had attended for several years prior to the research. It was my contention at the outset that these approaches could also be useful to undergraduates in pursuit of their own academic studies and their own development. This thesis examines the extent to which my positive experience of visualisation and guided imagery was mirrored by students following an undergraduate creative business-type programme together with the reasons for student acceptance, ambivalence towards or rejection of the approaches. This thesis also examines the attitudes of students towards the broader creative curriculum and the linkage between the two main thrusts of this work, creative approaches to learning and guided imagery.

Through the research conducted with students who have taken these modules, this thesis explores a number of issues with regard to the impact of a creative

curriculum on the undergraduate learning experience. Areas of particular significance and developed in the later chapters of this work are concerned with how students respond when faced with a need to develop different ways of studying and the growth of independence and responsibility for their own learning. Specific issues include differences in student engagement, maturity, self-efficacy and self-confidence and factors which are external to the academic programme.

Honest research: Situating myself in the work

Increasingly in qualitative research projects, the role of the researcher together with the perceptions and biases he or she brings to a particular project need to be recognised and reflected upon. Peshkin (1988), Bochner (1997), Ellingson (1998), Saukko (2002), Coffey (1999), Bentz and Shapiro (1998) and others assert that, in order for qualitative research to be meaningful and have validity, the researcher should identify his or her stance and make this explicit. Stance is a term used by Carr and Kemmis (1986) and Schön (1971) to denote 'attitudes, values, beliefs, expectations and assumptions' (Schön, cited in Hutton 1989: 53). An example of this in action is a researcher's (Saukko 2000) use of personal experience of anorexia (2000: 251) to analyse 'the subjective self' with this condition. It is clear that she could not have written the article without the personal knowledge gained through her own experiences that she brings to bear on interpretation and presentation of the data. Her experiences may have also influenced the choice of research topic. As unique individuals, we have our own perceptions on the world, how it operates and how we believe it should function. Each has a unique set of personal and professional experiences that is brought to the world of research and impacts upon all other aspects of our lives. Coffey (1999) maintains that these all have a bearing on how we, particularly ethnographers and insider researchers, conduct research: 'as a positioned and contexted individual the ethnographer (researcher) is undeniably part of the complexities and relations of the field' (p.22). In short, the essence of qualitative research is in making judgments as to relevance of various elements of transcribed or other collected data. These data will either be selected or not included by the professional researcher in the production of a report, which should be transparent and trustworthy. In declaring his or her position on the topic, the researcher provides the reader with a

framework within which the work can be read or judged. I regard this as 'honest research'.

In qualitative research, the position of the researcher needs to be stated and thus that person is situated in the research, article, thesis or other output. Readers need to be aware of the relevant background and personal motivations of the researcher so they can read the work both in context and with information which will help them reach a conclusion as to the researcher's positionality and subjectivities. The researcher needs critically to consider what motivates him or her to follow certain paths of inquiry and not others. The answer can usually be found in an evaluation of our own thoughts, past experiences, desires, interests and beliefs coupled with an ongoing process of reflection.

In the following section, I explore one of the key writings regarding situated research to provide a framework that identifies my motivation within this project and, in turn, helps establish boundaries. These allow valid recognition and incorporation of my own educational beliefs and motivations, together with a reflective and often reflexive track back to their origins and their impact on the research.

Situated research: My own professional context

This thesis, by its very nature, centres on the reported experiences of a number of undergraduate students, but it is also an account of my own learning journey or narrative which runs alongside that of the students. It is crucial in a qualitative work such as this for the researcher to identify their own stance and motivations in undertaking the work and to reflect on this as the research progresses (Simons, 2009; Bold, 2012)

Peshkin (1988) maintains that researchers need to identify their own subjectivity at the outset, before data are collected and, indeed, throughout the period of the research as subjective positions can shift over time. He describes subjectivity as 'a garment that cannot be removed' (p.17) and goes on to describe what he calls his own 'I's. These are the elements of his Self which, in his view, contribute to

making him the person he is and contribute to the perspectives and approaches he adopts in relation to research. The subjective 'I's for any researcher are usually built up through reflection and reflexive activity or a 'subjectivity audit'. An individual's 'I's are produced through reflection and can appear as discrete building blocks when put on paper. In reality they are largely interdependent and contribute to forming me and my approach to life and research.

My work in a number of modules on the research training programme has led me to reflect about the professional choices I have made over the years and continue to do so in choice of careers, published written output and my decision to embark on a PhD. Work on 'The Self in Case Study' introduced the notion of the subjective self and required introspection and application to my individual project. The module 'Communicating and Disseminating Research' also, somewhat unexpectedly, revealed pathways of my previous written work on a variety of subjects moving towards this project as a convergence and an integration of these varied writing directions, and led to a published conference paper (2007) and a professional journal article (2009) based on this research included as Appendices 1.3 and 1.4.

Peshkin (1988) uses rather complex (at times, even pretentious) titles to express the analysis of his various elements of 'Self'. His 'Pedagogical Meliorist "I"' means he wants to be a better teacher, whilst his 'E-Pluribus-Unum "I"' means that he celebrates being a member of a multicultural American society. I prefer to describe mine in more everyday language. I work in a School of Communication, and communication does not depend on using the most complex vocabulary. This is an element of one of my own 'I's, described below.

My enabling 'I'

I work as a lecturer at a post-1992 university in the United Kingdom. I enjoy working with students in the creative, production and management/business-based areas which I teach. I believe that I am enthusiastic and encouraging about my subjects and this enthusiasm and supportive outlook is picked up by my students – at least, that is what they report on evaluation forms. I can remember from my own education at secondary school how dispiriting it was when the good

points of work were not praised and the faults were the elements that were highlighted. As a lecturer I try to seek out the 'good' in every piece of student work and to sandwich areas for further student development between genuinely positive comments. I feel that these elements of my own educational past have contributed to my approach towards my own undergraduate students.

My fairness 'I'

Peshkin (1988) includes a 'Justice Seeking "I"' as one of his own characteristics. I prefer not to use the word 'justice', which is frequently not an outcome within our current society in legal, social and governmental terms. I choose the word 'fairness', which I see as more accurately representing my own position. In relation to my teaching and professional position I help students identify and access appropriate support mechanisms for difficulties or issues they encounter. I will always speak out in Committees and Boards with justifications if I believe that an inequitable or unfair decision has been or is likely to be made.

My Diversity in Self 'I'

The students in my classes come from a wide range of backgrounds, whether social, economic, ethnic or geographic. I believe that each brings to the classroom a variety of experiences from which others can learn. Sometimes this involves opposing views or personal examples, which can help illustrate a particular point. I studied French and German as a first degree and spent study periods in France, West Germany and the former East Germany. I remember, some thirty years ago, that I looked forward to immersion in these different societies and wanted to learn more about different societies to more readily understand the people, the culture and systems which operated in these countries at the time to broaden my horizons. My hobby since a teenager of short-wave listening brought me into contact over the airwaves with people from vastly different political, economic, social-cultural and economic lives than my own. In recent years, I have noted an increase in the number of overseas students in my classes, most recently from states in Eastern Europe and Russia. Their experiences enrich my own perspective and can provide a different standpoint for UK-based students. Equally, there are varieties in thought and community within UK-based students; religion, social grouping and ethnicity are but three bases of differentiation.

My humanistic 'I'

This 'I' is something of a composite 'I', drawing on the previous three. The humanistic orientation to learning, drawing on philosophies of Maslow and Rogers and developed in the 1970s and 1980s treats people as individuals with feelings and who seek to grow, in contrast to more scientific management approaches where individuals are treated as objects. Tennant (1997:12) states that consideration of 'self' is 'a hallmark of humanistic psychology'. My wish to include this 'I' stems from the previous three and is an extension of my belief in personal self-development, not just for myself as an individual but as a facilitator for my students and colleagues in the university.

My experiential 'I'

One of my core educational beliefs is that I learn through experience and that I need to repeat and revisit experiences in order to become more proficient in any particular area. In order to learn, I need to find things out for myself. I believe that this deep learning-based 'I' is central to what has been described by many as a 'PhD journey'. For me, the PhD is an accumulation of experiences, revelations, bouncing back from setbacks, finding things out for yourself, juggling competing demands and, above all, growing in confidence and finding your own voice. Focusing, organising and carrying out the main research for the project was problematic at times and is fully explained in the methodology (Chapter Three). In relation to whether I would change anything on my journey, there are several aspects of the research methodology that would have made for an easier life if they had been carried out differently in the first place. However, I firmly believe that for the PhD learning experience to be productive and ultimately successful one has to face challenges, come across obstacles over a marathon course and overcome them. I have been able to transfer my learning and experiences throughout the PhD process to my own practice. Two published examples are included as Appendices 1.3 and 1.4.

My adaptable 'I'

As well as learning from others with regard to different perspectives on life and increasing my own knowledge, I feel that I have a wide variety of elements or

diversity of 'self' from a professional perspective. I have always sought variety in my professional life. Starting off as a radio broadcaster, and then becoming lecturer, chartered marketer, university programme group leader and, of course, postgraduate researcher, I like to keep all these pots 'boiling'. Achieving one goal or target leads to the creation of another. I started off teaching international marketing, now I teach radio production, public relations and creative approaches to learning. I am not afraid to adapt to change – indeed, I welcome it, particularly when I am the initiator of this change, as has been the case to date. 'My Adaptable "I"' differs from 'My Diversity in Self "I"' in that the former relates specifically to employment outcomes and career directions that build transferable experiences, whereas the latter are not specifically employment related but aspects of personality.

My teacher 'I' versus researcher 'I'

This comparative 'I' illustrates a tension and conflict generated by role ambiguity. These are discussed fully from an ethical perspective in Chapter Three. Essentially, the teacher 'I' seeks the best experience for the students and takes an active approach to their learning and my professional development and attunement to their requirements. The researcher 'I' is more of an observer, recorder and reporter in this research. As a teacher, I take risks in introducing unconventional curriculum areas into my teaching, such as visualisation, and I am responsible for the actions and responses this causes. My researcher 'I' collects data, analyses and reports findings and reflects on all this. The two roles can sit together, but sometimes the fit can be uncomfortable. Only through analysis of my 'I's can I try to minimise these tensions and the possible impact on the collection of data and interpretation of the results.

My creative 'I'

I have a strong belief in my own creativity, or exploration of self and individuality. In the courses I teach creativity is a basic tenet, whether in spoken word and use of sound in radio or through artistic, literary, musical or thought-based attributes. In a world of increasing conformity, I believe creative approaches to employment and study hold the key to successful outcomes both for myself and the students in my classes. Clearly, this 'I' is central in forming the basis of this research project. I am

approaching the research with an inherent desire for creative learning approaches to work and be seen to work. I have a professional interest in seeing a positive outcome as it is what I teach and I want to be a better teacher.

The wider context

This section of the thesis specifically addresses the relevance of the research to higher education in the United Kingdom today. In particular, it positions the activities carried out and the student learning achieved in the two modules involved in the research in relation to a number of issues which drive current higher education policy.

There is no shortage of supporters for the promotion of creativity and creative thinking in higher education. Jackson (2006: 1) maintains that 'students will become more effective learners and, ultimately, successful people if they can recognise and harness their own creative abilities and combine them with more traditional academic abilities'.

Csikszentmihalyi, (2006: xx) argues for the systematic introduction of creativity into higher education 'to help students come up with original answers **and** original questions'. He maintains that many students, through previous educational experience, accept what is taught in the classroom and that they are not encouraged to question when they arrive at university. This call was echoed by the Commons Education and Skills Committee in October 2007, which recognised that 'much still remains to be done to embed creative teaching and learning [in the primary and secondary curriculum]' (p.4). Sir Ken Robinson, author of the influential 1999 NACCCE report, went further in a 2006 lecture when he argued that creativity is as important as literacy and that it should be treated with the same status. He went on in the lecture to state that schools 'are educating people out of their creative capacities' and are killing student creativity. He further argues that degree programmes should focus on creative aspects of learning in order to see 'our creative capacities for the richness they are and seeing our children for the hope that they are'.

The support goes on: Grove-White (2008: 205) maintains that a high degree of career and skills flexibility will be the key for successful graduates in coming years. She argues that creativity in higher education is central to this process to allow students to 'negotiate their environments and to flourish personally and professionally'. Walker-Gibbs (2006: 345) notes the shift in economies around the world from the creation of products 'to ideas, intellectual capital and the acquisition of knowledge', with an emphasis on originality and creativity. These comments alone suggest that creativity and innovation are increasingly necessary skills in degree programmes generally, and that underpinning work has not been carried out particularly effectively at primary and secondary school. They also indicate that creative thinking skills will not only be of particular use to undergraduates in their studies, but will also be attractive to employers on graduation and throughout their working lives.

Relevance of the research to higher education with reference to policy

There have been a number of official reports and papers in recent years that underpin the relevance of this doctoral research to national policy in higher education and industry. Recent years have seen the introduction of Foundation degrees, a widening participation agenda and the introduction of student fees. But the main area of relevance of this research to recent public policy is the match between graduates and their skills, knowledge and abilities and the needs of industry and the economy, the knowledge economy in particular. The need for this joined-up thinking was made clear in 'The Future of Higher Education' (Department for Education and Skills 2003). This White Paper announced plans to expand the university sector, but it also spelled out the need for a close match between skills and knowledge acquired by students through course curricula and the needs of the economy (p.57). This imperative was repeated by the Government in its response to The Gateway to the Professions Report (Department for Education and Skills 2005: 7). The report stated that there needed to be a strong linkage between course curricula and future careers. In particular, courses should provide students with 'the skills and attributes that individuals need to meet the demands of the modern global economy' (p.7). The Lambert Review of Business-University Collaboration (HM Treasury 2003) makes a different point in

determining the role of universities. In particular, it recognises (p.107: 8.2) 'that the role of universities is to educate students, rather than to train them for the specific needs of businesses. But it is important for the UK economy that students leave universities with skills that are relevant to employers'. It states that in some (unspecified) areas, there is a mismatch between the needs of industry and the courses run by universities. The report goes on to say that, in some areas of science, engineering and technology, companies find it difficult to recruit graduates of a suitable quality. This aspect, particularly in relation to the creativity skills gap, is developed in the final section of this introduction.

There are many reports, policy documents and reviews concerning the promotion of creativity specifically at primary and secondary schools. The major recent policy documents and reports including the NACCCE 'Robinson' Report (1999) and the 21 other policy reports released between 2000 and 2006 within the United Kingdom relate specifically to compulsory primary and secondary education and FE colleges or sixth forms. These reports are not developed for the tertiary university sector, but they inform practice in higher education as part of a continuum of learning.

The term 'creativity' seems to disappear in government reports outside the primary, secondary and college sector. When applied to higher education, the term creativity tends to evolve into terms such as 'innovation' and 'entrepreneurship'. Whilst these are not synonymous with creativity, Smith-Bingham (2006: 11) makes a pertinent point on the subject. He argues that entrepreneurship and innovation are underpinned by creativity. In other words, creativity is a prerequisite for innovative and entrepreneurial activities. Consequently, such references are particularly relevant to the development of creative thinking within the undergraduate curriculum.

The Enterprise and Learning Committee of the National Assembly for Wales (National Assembly for Wales Enterprise and Learning Committee 2009: 3) makes a strong economic case for a positive approach to creativity in the higher education curriculum. It reports that 'there is a symbiotic relationship between innovative and enterprising higher education institutions and successful and

wealthy regional and local economies'. The European Commission (2002: 11) also cites innovation as a cornerstone for future success. The knowledge economy, or use of knowledge to create jobs, will demand creativity and innovation. For the future, a third generation innovation policy 'would place innovation at the heart of each policy area'.

Just as creativity disappears as a term from educational government policy documents and reports in favour of 'innovation' and 'entrepreneurship' in the university sector, business and enterprise has a similar, strange disconnect from the word 'creativity'. A distinction has to be made in analysis of government policy concerning creativity directed towards the so-called creative industries, on the one hand, and creativity that is applied within industry in general, on the other. The creative industries in the UK are 13 industry sectors defined and designated by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS 2001) that cover areas such as advertising, crafts, design, radio and television. As such, Government reports largely consider creativity in this tightly defined context.

One of the more recent reports (DCMS 2006) considers the role of higher and further education in developing entrepreneurship for the creative industries. The report highlights the continued growth of the creative industries sector in the UK and recognises that entrepreneurship needs to be encouraged. The report identifies (p.6) that there is a lack of a national policy framework to develop entrepreneurship in the creative industries and that this should be embedded within the curriculum (p.7). This point is an echo from the 1997 National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, the Dearing Report (p.201), which recommended that universities should 'consider the scope for encouraging entrepreneurship through innovative approaches to programme design'.

One report which bucks the trend and focuses on creativity across a range of businesses is the Cox Review of Creativity in Business (HM Treasury 2005). In this, the need for the integration of creative and lateral thinking approaches in undergraduate curricula is made explicit: 'Creativity needs to pervade the whole of an organisation and, for this reason, the nature and value of creativity needs to be an integral part of all learning' (p.28). It recognises that successful products and

services are produced through a combination of talents, not just the divergent thinking of creativity but through the convergent analytical thinking of the business mind. 'The requirement is simple. We need business people who understand creativity, who know when and how to use the specialist, and who can manage innovation' (p.28). This report is at the heart of the rationale for this research reported in this thesis. It argues that children are channelled into arts or science streams at school (p.29), which reinforces the notion that creativity relates to artistic people when 'it should pervade every aspect of modern life, including business. Creativity needs to be part of technological and scientific learning, and also of management or business studies' (p.29). One contributor to the report, Hamish Pringle, Director General of the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising, is in no doubt that the ability for staff in his industry to meld creative and analytical thinking together is crucial for success. 'Advertising agencies look for ... thinkers—those who can move comfortably and rapidly between linear and lateral thought processes, people who think 'creatively but commercially'.(pp.31/32) The report says the same applies to students from other disciplines:

The outcome would be executives who better understand how to exploit creativity and manage innovation, creative specialists better able to apply their skills ... and more engineers and scientists destined for the boardroom. (p.33)

As far as policy is concerned, the relevance of the research in this project is clear. There is a growing link between learning on undergraduate courses and careers. This is not just for individual career progression but for the success of the wider economy. This extends further to European policy and the global competitive environment through improved communications and movement of labour and capital. Appreciation and application of creativity is crucial not just to individuals in the government-designated 'creative industries' sector, but in the wider industrial marketplace.

Pedagogical developments in higher education

The Futurelab report by Loveless (2007: 5) provides a useful definition of pedagogy in this context. She argues that it is activity designed to enhance

learning for others that makes an effective connection between creative teaching and teaching for creativity. For Loveless, 'pedagogy for creativity needs... to be able to design learning experiences and spaces which allow incubation, generation and analysis both in the curriculum and in the community'.

A number of key drivers stemming from the above policy pronouncements have influenced pedagogical developments in higher education in recent years. The issues of employability and entrepreneurship in particular have been discussed in policy terms in the previous section. These broad policy issues need to be translated into action in the classroom through pedagogical developments and the further reflection on and refinement of existing pedagogy. This section identifies the key pedagogical goals and approaches relevant to this research and illustrates how the actions and findings of this project can contribute to a more efficacious delivery in pursuit of these goals.

One of the main players promoting a creative HE curriculum is the Higher Education Academy (HEA). The Imaginative Curriculum Network and the Imaginative Curriculum Project are both central to this, each 'a cross-disciplinary group of individuals interested in promoting creativity and who care about Higher Education's role in students' creative development' (Palatine-HEA 2010).

Peter Knight, from that network, argues that 'transfer' is important for creativity (2002). This means the use of knowledge applied in novel ways to address a particular issue, either academic or practice-related. This is very much in keeping with the lateral thinking approach to creativity and creative thinking. He argues a creative curriculum should be underpinned by learning approaches with creative potential. This is the main component of the Creativity in Action (Year One) module discussed in my research. He also maintains that understanding the development of strategies for tackling problems and metacognition are central to the creative curriculum; in other words, greater self-awareness and second-order reflection. Both these points are the basis of the Creative Personal Development (Year Three) module. Other elements include learning for understanding rather than learning for extensive content mastery, a portfolio 'owned' by the student, openness to innovation on the part of the delivering lecturer (and I would argue for

the student as well) and 'knowing' students. This final point is a classroom culture where students need to be aware of the expectations of the module teaching content and the assessed outcomes. He cites Doyle (1983) by maintaining that students need to become immersed in a culture of creativity and so be prepared to take risks and enter into the spirit of challenging assumptions. Students who do not, he claims, 'are likely to try much harder to bargain (their learning) into familiar and safe shapes'. Knight (2002) goes further and suggests that portfolios of work are a positive way of creative student learning. The student needs to use the skills of metacognition or second-order reflection to 'sustain their own claims to achievement'. Portfolio building forms part of both the taught modules.

Whilst Knight stresses the conditions for a successful creative curriculum in the classroom, the HEA proposes the strategic implications for a curriculum which addresses student employability and student engagement (2006: 13). These implications, developed from earlier work by Yorke and Knight (2004), are aimed at optimising student academic development. They focus on four main areas: Firstly, real-world learning activities, activities which replicate industry practice (as in *Creativity in Action*) or of activities which are based on the self (as in *Creative Personal Development*); second, collaborative work where appropriate; thirdly, the provision of cognitive scaffolding to enable students to achieve outcomes which otherwise would not be possible with a progression towards independent learning; and fourthly, encouraging the development of metacognition through reflection and self-regulation. These approaches are used in both the modules discussed in this research.

A study by Ball et al. (2010) seeks to identify and match the future needs of creative industries and creative graduates and reinforces the need to align learning outcomes on undergraduate courses with a changing job market. There is a growth in 'portfolio working', where graduates have a number of different jobs, including self-employment. Graduates identified that creativity and innovation were the skills that they rated most highly. Those which were least well developed were 'client-facing skills' such as assessing client needs and interpersonal communication. The concept of universities enhancing employability through the development of industry-centred skills is developed in research by Mahon and

Ranchhod (2010). In relation to their focus on developing appropriate student creative skills demanded by the advertising industry, they argue that lateral thinking skills and creative problem-solving skills are in high demand by various stakeholders within the industry. When advertising agencies seek to recruit creative staff such as art directors and copywriters, the employers rank lateral thinking skills first in a list of 35 desirable skills, and problem solving at number three. These are core competences in both modules featured in this research. When seeking to recruit account handlers and planners, lateral thinking skills rank seventh and fourth out of 35, and problem solving fifth and eleventh out of 35 desirable skills, respectively. The relevance of this research project in relation to these drivers is that there is a strong link between the ethos of both the modules in this research and the pedagogical implications of a curriculum, with relevant graduate employment and ability to be creative within it, as a final desired outcome.

Creativity in Subject Benchmarks across higher education courses and the demands for graduates with skills in creativity

Jackson and Shaw's work on subject perspectives on creativity (2005) and Jackson's (2005) associated work on indicators of creativity in QAA Subject Benchmarks show clearly that creativity, however one defines it, is embedded in HE curricula across a range of disparate disciplines. Jackson and Shaw (2005) examined 18 QAA Subject Benchmark statements for elements of creativity. These subjects included accountancy, biosciences, business and management, environmental sciences, maths, medicine and nursing, to name a few. Art and Design, and Dance, Drama and Performance, both overtly creative disciplines, were also included in the study. Only five subjects made explicit mention of creativity as a desirable outcome. These were English, Medicine, Geography, Nursing and Business and Management. Another six subject statements said that students should think creatively and the remaining seven made no reference to creativity at all.

However, the interpretation of creativity in a higher education context is crucial to understanding the extent to which creativity is a desirable outcome. In interpreting

creative engagement in higher education as using imagination and originality, thinking abilities, the generation and evaluation of ideas and problem solving, the situation is improved. Each Subject Benchmark contained at least three references to creativity in its broader interpretation. Accountancy registered three, and maths five. Nursing contained eight references, and Art and Design received the most mentions of creativity at thirteen.

What this analysis indicates is that the need for creativity is inherent in all HE study. It is a narrow interpretation, indeed, to suggest that creativity is restricted to Art and Design. It is justifiable to unpick the term creativity, as has been carried out in literature review, and to identify the elements that make up that term.

Jackson and Shaw's paper identifies the skills most frequently mentioned in the QAA Subject Benchmarks at that time. These include originality, making use of the imagination, finding and thinking about complex problems, and exploring ideas and creativity in problem solving. It would seem, therefore, that whilst creativity may not appear to receive a particularly high profile through explicit comment in a number of the Subject Benchmarks, creativity and creative thinking does feature significantly in and through the required development of transferable and applied skills inherent in undergraduate study.

Given the specific comment on subject benchmarking, it is appropriate to review some of the recent subject-based literature concerned with creativity. This will reinforce the notion mentioned above that creativity and creative thinking have a relevance permeating all undergraduate disciplines and extending into industry post-graduation. The subject area that has generated most comment with regard to creativity is engineering, with six separate articles in recent years calling for greater emphasis on creativity in that area. Lewis (2004) argues that typical engineering students are not particularly creative and, because of that, they should develop their creative conceptual skills and utilise learning approaches to enhance their creativity. Chen et al. (2005) introduced a creativity-fostering programme into an industrial engineering and management curriculum in order to boost students' problem solving ability. They maintain that, in line with Lewis' comments (2004), the development of creativity in engineering students has become a crucial issue. These most recent articles have developed earlier papers advocating creativity in

engineering education from the UK and Scandinavia. Baillie and Walker (1998), Berglund *et al.* (1998), Tornkvist (1998) and Blicbau and Steiner (1998) all outline their efforts to boost creativity in their subject discipline of engineering. These involve providing motivation for students to recognise their existing creativity and capacity for engagement in this area (Baillie & Walker 1998). Also featured were methods of assessment to increase students' creativity (Berglund *et al.* 1998), a questioning of traditional engineering culture that, at that time, rejected the notion of creativity (Tornkvist 1998), and an illustration of the broad spectrum of creative thought and output (Blicbau & Steiner 1998).

Marie (2008) promotes creative thought in the sciences. She argues that science students need to be taught about creativity and the creative process in order to move from identification of a problem to data collection and a subsequent hypothesis formation. She argues that opening student minds to approaches to creative thinking is needed for deeper learning in that subject area. Burgess (2004) proposes changes to design in social work education and curricula to engender creativity in students and their interactions with clients.

Considering business and management subjects studied at undergraduate level, three articles can be cited to support the inclusion of creative thinking approaches in the curriculum. Snyder (2003) maintains that companies complain that entry-level graduates lack creativity and critical thinking skills. She argues that university business schools need to incorporate creative and critical thinking skills into their curricula to make them more relevant to students, both within their programmes and when they enter the graduate employment market. Kirby (2004) proposes that entrepreneurship, central to developmental business programmes, should be equated with creativity and change rather than the creation of small businesses. The final article by Morrison and Johnston (2003) argues the same points as Kirby that creativity and strategies to develop creative thinking need to be introduced or developed more fully in undergraduate curricula in general, and in business schools in particular. The authors talk of a 'void' in creative thinking, in these courses, that needs to be addressed, and suggest that creative learning approaches could be integrated into courses more fully.

The scene is now set for the investigation and journey into the use of creative approaches to learning for the self-development of undergraduate students.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The contextual setting

This chapter situates the research topic of the thesis within published literature and develops the principal themes and the links between the various elements. The context of the research is explored with identification of the main areas and interconnections within the subject field. It puts forward the present state of knowledge with regard to creative approaches to learning and undergraduate self-development in higher education, together with visualisation and guided imagery. These are particular foci of the thesis and of the research questions identified in Chapter One. This critical literature review is therefore the base upon which the methodology was developed and subsequently applied. In short, a significant amount of material relating to creativity in schools exists but, until recently, very little on creativity in higher education. There is a paucity of published material regarding the use of guided imagery and visualisation in education in general and a total lack of material regarding visualisation and higher education.

Creativity in education has been high on the Government agenda in recent years but largely in the primary and secondary sectors. As indicated in Chapter One, many official reports concerned with creativity in education have been produced in the past decade or so. Loveless (2007) cites a selection of 21 policy reports and discussion papers on creativity in the curriculum which were published in the United Kingdom between 2000 and 2006 alone.

One publication in particular started the ball rolling for 'creativity in education'. It was the influential report from the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE) of May 1999, *All Our Futures*. Although the report relates specifically to primary and secondary education, many of the comments seem to be equally applicable to tertiary education. The report opened the debate by recognising that creativity, as a set of learning skills, can be taught.

The NACCCE Report provides two main concepts upon which this research is based. Firstly, that teaching creatively and teaching creativity are two different elements of creativity in education and, I maintain, two separate but interdependent elements. This is also supported by Jeffrey and Craft (2001: 5) who regard teaching for creativity as a student-empowering curriculum and creative teaching as 'effective pedagogy'. In essence, teaching for creativity is teaching students ways to become creative, whilst creativity in teaching is the practice by the teacher of creative ways of delivery and study. The second premise upon which the research is based is that notions of self-esteem and self-efficacy are central to cultivating a creative student, where the individual is confident to put forward his or her own creative ideas. Here, Sternberg and Williams (1996) argue that a key determinant of academic success for students depends on what that student believes he or she is capable of. 'The main limitation on what students *can* do is what they think they *can't* do' (original italics) (Sternberg & Williams 1996). Innovative ways are produced in a number of universities to motivate students to engage creatively and to promote personal development. One example is the case study discussed by Shaw and Moriarty (2011) in which students produce a socially conscious piece of writing and reflect on how the module impacts on their personal and academic development. Hunt (1998) also promotes student personal development, but through creative writing using autobiography as a starting point for fiction by a process known as 'writing with the Voice of the Child'.

Writers on creativity have proposed their own understanding of what creativity is. In true creative fashion, they tend to be unique, sometimes idiosyncratic and, of course, creative. Most decline to produce a single line definition but propose a series of factors or aspects that need to be present for an act of creativity to have taken place. In short, the concept of creativity continues to be defined, redefined and differentiated from its associated concept, the imagination. Cropley (2001: 5-6) is a leading thinker concerning creativity in education; he identifies three aspects of creativity. Firstly, there needs to be a degree of novelty in the outcome or idea. Secondly, the product, concept or idea needs to be effective. To this end, a product needs to work but a work of art or a piece of music, for example, needs to be effective in creating a positive aesthetic or artistic feeling in the mind of the

viewer or listener. Cropley's (2001) final defining aspect of creativity is that it must be ethical. To this end, creative output should not be used 'to describe selfish or destructive behaviour'. Crime and warmongering are cited as examples falling into this destructive category.

Boden, another writer on creativity (2004: 1), offers a one-sentence definition: 'Creativity is the ability to come up with ideas or artefacts that are *new, surprising and valuable*' (original italics). Boden argues that ideas and artefacts are both outputs from the thinking process. For her, ideas are creative output in a non-physical form such as scientific theories, musical composition, choreography, jokes and recipes, whilst artefacts have a physical presence such as paintings, sculptures, vacuum cleaners and pottery. Such a distinction does not address the matter of the performance of the musical composition, nor of the on-stage dance, that is the manifestation of the choreography. Are these ideas, artefacts or a third category, that of performance? Although Boden does not elaborate on her definition in the 2004 text, she does go further (without giving a definition) in an earlier work: 'Novel combinations of ideas must be valuable in some way, because to call an idea creative is to say that it is not only new, but interesting' (Boden 1996: 75). This raises the question of value; of who is to say an idea, project, concept or product is interesting. The matter is not explicitly addressed, but Boden does maintain that creativity requires a 'positive evaluation'.

Gaut (2003) maintains that creativity exhibits three elements. Firstly, it should involve 'a production of things which are original, that is, saliently new... [and have] at least some... merit'. The second condition is that the creative work should be 'something which is original and which has considerable value'. Gaut describes value not in financial but in artistic terms, citing Picasso as being creative. Such a tight definition of value could leave students on undergraduate courses failing to achieve creative output, as they are not on a par with Picasso. Perhaps a more appropriate comment would have been for the value, relating to a piece of undergraduate work, to be determined by the student or the tutor. The question, however, remains generally of who attributes value. There is some consensus in that a creative output should be original in some way and be of some value. The level of value, as described above, is the subject of debate among writers on

creativity. My own working definition of creativity is the 'production of an object or other output which displays originality and is of value to at least one person'. This encompasses the issue of originality in one or a number of forms and has value attributed to it by at least one person, even if this is the originator of the work.

Turning to the broad topic of creativity in education, most research has been centred on schools rather than the tertiary sector. Work by Craft, Jeffrey and Leibling (2001) and Gilbert (2002) deal with creative approaches to learning and motivation within the classroom, but outside the university sector. Equally, most official reports to do with creativity in education such as *Nurturing Creativity in Young People* (Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2006), *Emerging Good Practice in Promoting Creativity* (HM Inspectorate of Education 2006) and *Expecting the Unexpected* (OFSTED 2003) also restrict themselves to the compulsory education sector. Csikszentmihalyi (2006) argues that university students frequently do not think creatively. They may have learned to answer questions about their studies, but are often at a loss to come up with their own ideas for dissertations. There is a need for cultural change or paradigm shift to embrace creativity in higher education. Jackson (2006) argues that individual teachers are often constrained by the rules and norms of the organisation in which they operate and therefore in order for creativity to flourish it needs the genuine backing throughout the organisational hierarchy. Jackson further (2010: ix) maintains that 'higher education... pays far too little attention to students' creative development... [and that] creativity as an outcome of higher education, at least in the UK, is often more by accident than design'. This is a particularly appropriate example of Argyris and Schön's (1974) espoused theories and theories in use. The university must not just say it promotes creativity in learning; it must show this by action.

Chetty (2010) introduces the notion of the development of creative capital within the higher education institution. Chetty argues that university graduates should be able to undertake 'novel challenges' and synthesise "'big picture" scenarios' and incorporate employability in their course curricula. He argues that the creation of student creative capital should be a core objective of any university course, 'to ensure that students are creative thinkers who can generate ideas that can be

converted into innovative products and services' (p.144). This is indicative of a growing awareness by managers in higher education institutions that student and graduate creativity is a trait highly valued by employers. Comments made in the previous chapter are testament to this.

The body of literature includes discussion of the scientific basis for creativity in education. Seger et al. (2000) measured brain activity when linking verbs to nouns, extrapolating the findings to more complex creative tasks. They suggest that there is rapid activity using many areas of the brain. Howard-Jones (2002) argues that two distinct types of thinking are necessary for a positive creative outcome in whatever medium is being used. These are generative and analytical: the creative 'part' of the brain produces a range of possible solutions to a creative problem or issue. Some solutions are more useful than others. The analytical 'part' of the brain then assesses the options and decides upon the most appropriate outcome. This is analogous to the divergent and convergent modes of thinking suggested in approaches to lateral thinking discussed elsewhere in the literature review. It can also be likened to a coming together of freedom and control. For example, Chappell (2007) explores the feelings of dancers with regard to the freedom of performers to interpret a piece in a particular way, within the control of a notated choreography, and examines the extent to which the dancers are confident to move outside their comfort zone and to interpret.

It is generally accepted that elements of creativity can be taught, but what is particularly relevant is the extent to which individuals will attempt to integrate new ways of thinking into their approaches to study or will resist this, and the extent to which higher education establishments will integrate creativity into curricula. The issue of individual students' comfort zones and their willingness to expand or to move outside these zones is therefore especially relevant in this thesis, as this is a significant aspect of this research produced following analysis of the participant data. This aspect of creativity, assessing the extent to which an individual wishes or is prepared to move outside their comfort zone, can be further linked to the concept of stance as proposed by Hutton (1989) that echoes the dynamic conservatism of Schön (1971; 1991). For Hutton, among other things stance represents the attitudes, values, beliefs, expectations and assumptions an

individual holds and exercises to maintain what is called the stable state. The essence of stance in relation to creativity and creative thinking is that individuals will often resist change, and that ways of thinking that have become embedded in study habits, for example, can be difficult to alter.

This section of the literature review has illustrated the nebulous concept of creativity and the push in recent years to develop a creative curriculum in schools and universities. The extent to which such developments will be effective is likely to depend to a large extent on the capacity or willingness of students and university managers to engage with new approaches to study that challenge existing notions of education and an examination of the individual's motivation to study.

Teaching creatively

The NACCCE Report (1999: 102) defines 'teaching creatively' as 'using imaginative approaches to make learning more interesting, exciting and effective'. Teaching creatively also implies that the teacher or lecturer needs to be adaptable within the classroom in order to respond to creative suggestions from members of the class. DeWulf and Baillie (1999: 14-15) suggest three sets of abilities that need to be fostered to help student creativity: firstly, an ability to visualise ideas; secondly, effective use of memory; and thirdly, divergent and convergent ways of thinking. Jackson (2004), as part of the Imaginative Curriculum Project, reported on innovative ways of fostering creativity in higher education. These included giving students permission to be creative, providing safe spaces for creative experimentation, adopting a questioning approach to learning, allowing for lecturers to take risks in the delivery of new material, and for the new approaches to learning that provide a balance between freedom and control. Jackson and Shaw (2006) develop this theme further in the higher education context by identifying a number of features to which academics relate in working or teaching creatively. These include being imaginative and generating new ideas; being original; being curious; being resourceful; being able to combine complex data; being able to think critically and being able to respond to feedback.

But teaching creatively also carries risks. Nygaard, Courtney and Holtham (2010) argue that there is often resistance within the university itself to creative approaches to learning and teaching that challenge the institution's orthodoxy: 'it is perhaps not too surprising that academics tend to be at least initially sceptical of teaching innovation' (p.10). They go on to say the same can be said of students, who frequently show resistance to change: 'there is little doubt that many [students] are comfortable with conventional, relatively passive methods that emphasise transmission.... Less conventional methods may be met with scepticism or worse' (p.10). Joubert (2001) also recognises that it is not straightforward to embark on a strategy of teaching creatively in higher education and puts forward a number of further barriers to this approach.

The first of these is an understanding of what creativity is. Given the impasse in 'experts' agreeing a definition, it is not surprising that schools and universities can talk at cross purposes. The second barrier is the timescale and political will required at national level to move such initiatives forward. The third barrier is to do with national academic policy, with a switch between what has been termed progressive education of earlier years and the current control and accountability required of head teachers and university vice-chancellors. The final barrier relates to the willingness of an organisation to commit to risk taking in adopting creative approaches to teaching. Lucas (2001) proposes several approaches which should be incorporated into a creative pedagogy. These include active rather than passive learning, the use of several different learning styles to encourage and explore emotional (reflective) responses, to offer ambiguities rather than definite answers and using the visual, auditory, reading/writing and kinaesthetic model of learning styles for course delivery. Baillie (2006) suggests a number of key lessons and implications for teachers and lecturers in teaching creatively. The first issue is the lecturer, teacher or facilitator and their ability to match particular learning approaches to a particular problem or question. If the approach is unusual then, as indicated earlier in this review, some students may resist the new way of learning or addressing a question. In particular, the lecturer needs to be able to help learners to link approaches or techniques that may seem unusual and to allow them to work their way through to a positive end result. The second issue that can hinder teaching creatively relates to internal and external barriers. This means

reluctance on the part of the student to take on new ideas or creative risks in a seminar session. External barriers, for example, relate to the type of room used for the workshops and the time of day the workshops are held together with the level of support within a course or faculty for the creative teaching programme. The third issue is related to classroom management and those students who may find such activities 'silly'. It is argued that students need to see the relevance of the work and need to be convinced of this. A fourth issue relates to mixing and matching approaches in a lesson, and the ability to read a class and respond positively to any discontent, disbelief or objections.

Baillie maintains that some students may find a range of random approaches, such as some of those described in the following two sections of this review (for example illuminative art and guided imagery) problematic to apply. These students will often rely on more traditional forms of learning and so may establish increasingly a block to learning with these creative approaches.

Teaching creativity: 'Creativity in Action'

This third section of the literature review focuses on literature relating to the curriculum content of the 'Creativity in Action' module. The module incorporates a number of lateral and creative thinking approaches developed by a range of authors.

Edward de Bono (1990, 1992, 2000, 2007) is the main thinker whose lateral thinking ideas have been incorporated into the module. For de Bono, lateral thinking is designed to generate a range of options and alternatives and it runs alongside what he calls vertical or traditional thinking. He argues that vertical thinking, in contrast to lateral thinking, follows a logical and analytical structure. Both types of thinking need to be incorporated into the development of ideas. These are generated in the first instance using creative, lateral or divergent thinking. Once a range of options has been produced, these can be narrowed down into feasible propositions using traditional or convergent thinking. Many of these approaches are applied to recent advertising campaigns by Pricken (2002) through what he calls the 'KickStart Catalogue' of creative thinking techniques.

This illustrates how the approaches can be applied in specific industry-based settings and so can bring a theoretical concept to life with current visual examples.

Random stimulation (de Bono 1990, 2007) is an approach to creativity involving the use of random words, objects, pictures or cards and requires the participant to make links between the apparently unrelated items. Pricken (2002) calls this approach 'mixing and matching'. De Bono argues that the brain will want to make sense out of two or more apparently unconnected words, pictures or objects and so create several links connecting the items, which can be further developed into an original concept or artefact. The Six Thinking Hats approach (de Bono 2000) is a structured approach to generating and analysing data and information. The basic premise is that decision making is frequently complex. One way to simplify the complexity is to see things from different points of view. Each hat has a different colour, representing a different mode of thinking. De Bono's concept fan (1992) is closely linked with the mind map of Buzan (1995); he states a problem and uses radiating lines to generate various alternatives and justifications. Some will be more appropriate than others. Buzan uses mind maps to organise thinking in a linked way using colour and images to make the mind map memorable.

Sternberg and Lubart (1999: 5) criticise de Bono's work because, from their perspective as behavioural scientists, it is not scientific. They argue that de Bono has adopted a populist and pragmatic approach to developing creativity and understanding it, but they complain that the validity and statistical efficacy is not measured. Further, they argue that de Bono comes from a commercial and practice-based standpoint and that he ignores the theoretical perspective. For students taking this module it is the application that is required, since they are on a creative-based degree, not the detailed theory that may be more appropriate to the psychology lecture.

Illuminative art is an approach used twice in the academic year in this module, at the beginning and at the end, to allow students to compare their perceptions of university on a longitudinal basis. It is a concept most recently developed by Spouse (2000, 2003) from an earlier paper by Bentley (1989) in which nursing students drew their impressions of practical training and the university nursing

course in a longitudinal study. Spouse (2003: 20) argues that asking students to draw their feelings and experiences offers a different way for the student nurses to express themselves from a written or verbal form. She maintains that using a different form of 'language' helped students to put on paper what they wanted to say, which could then be subsequently articulated verbally. The general concept of using images and art to express personal feelings in education and psychology has a long history with eight further papers cited in Spouse (2003: 24) supporting this approach.

Part of the curriculum is concerned with Gardner's (2004) multiple intelligences, initially published in 1984, and Buzan's (2000) intelligences that are closely linked. Gardner argues that intelligence is significantly more than the traditional Intelligence Quotient (IQ) and number eight: linguistic, logical-mathematical and spatial, which represent the standard IQ measuring criteria and linguistic, musical, bodily-kinaesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalist. Buzan produces a list of different names correlating in some cases to Gardner's. Buzan adds creative, spiritual, sensory and sexual intelligences to Gardner's listings.

The module also deals with preferred learning styles, with particular reference to the Visual, Auditory, Reading/Writing and Kinaesthetic (VARK) model. This was developed by Fleming (1995, 2001) and relates to the senses of sight, hearing and touch as methods of learning or taking in and giving out information, with reading and writing as another possible preferred style. This model is widely used throughout the world in schools and universities and individual students can complete a questionnaire to help them determine their preferred methods of learning. Use of this method suggests that it is straightforward for students to understand and gives teachers and lecturers food for thought in preparing material. Murphy et al. (2004) suggest that dental students prefer lectures which have a significant amount of visual material, with time allowed to take notes in class. However, according to Drago and Wagner (2004), students taking online courses tend towards visual and reading/writing preferred learning styles. Hawk and Shah (2007) argue that the VARK is one of the main learning style formats and is one which gives the most valid and reliable coverage of learning styles and approaches to study.

The final element of the curriculum of Creativity in Action is concerned with reflection and reflective writing in a learning journal. Moon (2006) says there are many reasons to use learning journals with students to help them learn from experience, to aid in the development of critical thinking skills and to develop a questioning attitude. Holly (1989) discusses personal-professional journals for education professionals. She argues that the journal extends beyond the recording of spontaneous ideas and accounts of activities to deliberative thought and analysis related to practice. The journal is 'a document that includes both the objective data of the log and the personal interpretations and experience of the diary, but which moves beyond these to intentional personal and professional reflection, analysis, planning and evaluation' (p.26). Holly encourages journal writers to draw, annotate, create charts and diagrams and to use it explicitly for personal development. The journal is written over a period of time, thus changes in knowledge and attitude can be seen and recorded through second-order reflection. The 'wheel of life' activity, after Kanin (1981), for example, allows individuals to produce a visual representation of their life to date and perhaps to anticipate future goals and desires.

Schön (1991) is a leading writer in this area but in a business and industrial context. His work discusses reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. The former relates to thinking on one's feet, having to respond instinctively to a situation based on past experience. In short, the reflection of previous experience has been incorporated into the way an individual functions so it becomes almost automatic. Reflection-on-action relates to reflecting after an event which can then inform and be integrated into future decision making. Kolb (1984), too, cites reflective observation as one of the elements in his learning loop involving concrete experience, which leads to reflective observation, leading in turn to abstract conceptualisation and finally, active experimentation. The cycle then starts again. This is similar to Schön's work in that reflection-on-action is analogous to Kolb's reflective observation. The abstract conceptualisation from Kolb is implied in time passing for Schön, and reflection-in-action is identical to the active experimentation and concrete experience phases for Kolb.

Teaching creative self-development: 'Creative Personal Development'

This brief fourth section of the literature review covers the additional curriculum content of the 'Creative Personal Development' module described in Appendix 1.2. Several areas of learning in this module have already been covered in the previous section of this review such as illuminative art, learning journals and VARK. Guided imagery and creative visualisation are covered in the next section. The additional personal development-based elements of this module covered here include dreams, an elaboration of the concept of self and student self-efficacy, and two journal articles on self.

Fontana (1997) maintains that dreams are invaluable in helping individuals reach a self-understanding. He discusses how the unconscious part of our brain can make sense of issues while we are asleep and present possible solutions in the form of dreams. Fontana spells out a number of strategies for individuals to help generate and remember dreams, to record them and to move into ways of making sense of them. Doll (1982) regards understanding of dreams significant for learners. She advocates integrating this into the curriculum for individuals, with reflection and guidance, to learn more about their self, their issues and their culture. Since dreams are largely visual events, Fontana recommends imagining pictures of images and events whilst awake to encourage the brain to work in this way during sleep. The thrust of this module is the self. Bulkeley (2000) develops the self-development aspect of dreaming by reinforcing that dreams provide a pathway to deeper self-awareness and knowledge.

Turning to the 'self', this is a major psychological concept that relates to how an individual regards him or herself. It is also closely related to self-efficacy discussed earlier in the review. McGraw (2001) argues that individuals need to identify and establish their own self-concept. Bandura (1997: 10) defines self-concept as 'a composite view of oneself that is presumed to be formed through direct experience and evaluations adopted from significant others'. In other words, it is how that individual views himself or herself with regard to the outside world. The concept is often largely defined by what has happened in the past. This part of the curriculum does not address the self as researcher (e.g. Coffey 1999) but as a person in a

wider personal and professional world. It is important to identify the internal and external factors at play in an individual's life and the influences from the past (McGraw 2001) in order to recognise the person we are now and how we can move forward using self-efficacy. Creative visualisation and guided imagery make up part of the curriculum in both modules. It is also a particular research focus in this thesis. The topic has been covered in neither section so far, and is elaborated below.

Creative visualisation, guided imagery, relaxation and education

There is a significant lack of published research on the application of these techniques in education, with most material centred on their use in primary and secondary schools and a total lack of research on their use in higher education. Literature concerning visualisation in education is limited to Grace (2001), who sees creative visualisation in schools as a way to instil positive attitudes in young people: 'By introducing visualisation exercises into your work with students, you are helping them be conscious of their image-making ability so they can learn to create images that are self-empowering' (p.118). She suggests that visualisation can be especially useful in enhancing self-esteem or dealing with stressful issues and concludes that use of creative visualisation and guided imagery can be a resource for life (Grace 2001: 119). This work seeks to offer the beginnings of a literature base for guided imagery and visualisation in higher education.

Creative visualisation and guided imagery concern using the mind and the imagination in a particular way to create a mental image of a goal or desire. Through the individual focusing on the particular goal, often over a prolonged period of time, it is suggested that the goal can become a reality. Guided imagery and visualisation can also be used to imagine a range of scenarios as potential solutions to a problem or issue and as a means for personal self-development. I consider here research in these areas to provide a definition of these two aspects of the imagination and to outline the main educational, psychological and medical research backing up this contention.

Grace (2001) makes a distinction between guided imagery and creative visualisation. Guided imagery, as the name suggests, is a story or scenario which is listened to in a quiet and calm environment. For Grace, it can be a powerful tool in the classroom:

It is a guided 'inner' journey, undertaken with eyes closed, that becomes a living story for individuals as they enter into a very personal experience of it through their imagination, particularly when it is sensory oriented and images are vivid. (Grace 2001: 118)

Guided imagery often relies on metaphor to be effective. Pearson (2003) uses stones which are given to students with guided imagery when they complete a counselling course. These mark a transition from an individual in training to a qualified counsellor. The stone is a tangible reminder of their professional status.

Imagery and visualisation can be regarded as 'seeing with the mind's eye' and indeed 'hearing with the mind's ear' and all the other senses. The concept is not new. Gladding (1986) argues that metaphor and images help individuals see, hear and feel more clearly. Gladding also cites other research which argues that using imagery has a positive effect on the achievement of goals and is more effective than other developmental strategies.

Creative visualisation uses imagery, but relies less on spoken guidance or direction. It can be carried out in silence and the individual can go on their own mental journey. In practice, it is carried out in a small group with some general guidance and direction from a facilitator. Gawain (2002: 3) describes it as 'the technique of using your imagination to create what you want in your life'. It involves the individual finding a quiet time and space to use the imagination to create and set goals in life and for specific purposes, such as studying, future employment and desired family life. One further aspect of creative visualisation also allows for the creation of what is known as a 'treasure map' drawn on paper. The treasure is the achievement of the goals with the individual at the centre of the map. The treasure map forms a tangible and permanent reminder of the goals set at a particular date.

Morton (1997) also argues that creative visualisation and guided imagery are powerful tools for personal development and transformation. Using a mixture of participant observation and analysis of a series of qualitative interviews with adult learners, the positive role of visualisation in the developmental process became apparent: 'Visualisation is one technique that blends the power from several perspectives and, through such integration, can be used to amplify critical thinking and critical reflectivity' (p.335).

Fontana (2002) and Fontana and Slack (1997) produce useful work within the UK linking the application of relaxation, meditation, visualisation and imagery to young people, once again outside the higher education environment. They maintain that these techniques can be ethically and effectively applied by parents and teachers in education. For these authors, visualisation needs to be clearly separated and distinguished from cults. They argue that educators need to be aware of the possibility of indoctrination, and to guard against this: 'Meditation isn't a cult, and doesn't belong exclusively to any one religion or philosophy ... it is important that you teach meditation without the trappings of any particular set of beliefs' (Fontana & Slack, xi).

Work that links visualisation to tangible personal outcomes is also somewhat sparse, generally coming from the later years of the twentieth century, and can be largely found in the hypnosis or counselling literature (O'Hanlon & Martin 1992; Young 1986). As stated earlier, the techniques employed in this research project are specifically not intended to be used as therapy, nor do they hypnotise individuals, but are intended to allow and encourage a student's mind to become more open and to empower that individual to work creatively through a set of options to identify and address. Creative visualisation and guided imagery do not set out to address specific 'problems', but to allow an individual student to reflect on a longer-term personal direction, overall personal effectiveness and to assist in the identification and management of those long-term goals.

The therapeutic application of visualisation is strictly outside the bounds and scope of this thesis. However, it is useful to identify and assimilate appropriate research

in the therapeutic field to recognise that any application of imagery in my research will be purely student-developmental.

The use of relaxation techniques in education is discussed by a number of authors. The argument is that a relaxed state of mind and a relaxed body can facilitate and fuel the imagination. Galyean (1983) is one of those supporters of 'relaxation before application' in the classroom. She maintains that imagery used in the classroom can lead to a greater focus on lessons and an improvement in the retention of information, general effectiveness and an enhancement in self-acceptance. This is consistent with the findings of Grace (2001), as already discussed. But Galyean, who works within the American educational system, applies her work solely to the school classroom – extension to the higher education setting, as ever, is not made. Once again, research findings within a different environment or context need to be drawn upon to provide pointers to applicability within the tertiary sector within the UK. Galyean (1983) sees the use of visualisation and imagery in education as a three-pronged tool. Firstly she identifies the guided, cognitive sense, where the development of thinking skills and the relationship to taught elements within the curriculum is stressed. Secondly the guided, affective sense is discussed with the application to self-worth and the acceptance of others. The third application is in the guided, transpersonal sense, going 'beyond the ordinary physical-emotional way of viewing oneself and the world, and to recognise as valid mystical, psychic and spiritual dimensions as well' (p.57).

The benefits of relaxation and visualisation within a learning environment are repeated by Hill (1986), King et al. (1998), Laselle & Russell (1993), Scully (2003) and Utley (1999). Hill recommends that learning which is visualised in the mind's eye will prove to be better understood and retained. Furthermore, that visualisation of a future achievement can lead to an improved self-concept and performance. The main point of King et al. is that realistic goals need to be set for students using relaxation techniques. However, it should be borne in mind that these techniques are restricted to straightforward muscle relaxation training and no element of creative visualisation is used.

To conclude this section, four other aspects will be highlighted as areas of relevance to the consideration of the efficacy of imagery and visualisation. These are: research in the fields of firstly sport, secondly medicine, and thirdly surgery and psychology. It is useful for this thesis to assess their role within these areas and to gauge the extent to which findings in this domain are transferable to the task of undergraduate creativity and self-development

A literature search on the use of imagery in sport readily produces around fifty refereed articles in recent years espousing the use of visualisation as a motivational tool, for which it is in common use. Ranging from the general application within various types of sport (Page et al. 1999; Hall 2001; Evans et al. 2004) and tightly focused applications (Farahat et al. 2004; Short et al. 2002), researchers are unanimously enthusiastic about the use of visualisation techniques to link the motivational aspects of the mind with actual performance of the body. Page et al. (1999) successfully used imagery to reduce anxiety in competitive swimmers, Hall (2001) reviewed numerous studies to show that imagery is an important skill for athletes, and Evans et al. (2004) highlighted the need to tailor imagery to the specific needs of athletes. Farahat et al. (2004) used imagery to help university sport students to learn a series of patterned movements and Short et al. (2002) focused on the positive use of imagery in golf putting.

Visualisation is also advocated by medical practitioners to patients to help alleviate the stress of serious illnesses and to improve quality of life. There also appears to be unanimity within the medical research field as to the overall efficacy of this approach (see e.g. Baider et al. 1994; Lambert 1996; Fors et al. 2002). Baider et al. found that cancer patients who carried out guided imagery with muscle relaxation showed marked improvement as to the perception of their control over the disease and reduced anxiety. Lambert (1996) used guided imagery with children who had had operations, with the imagery focusing on a positive healing process. The children who were in the group that experienced guided imagery reported significantly lower pain and were discharged earlier than children in a control group. Fors et al. (2002) found the use of pleasant images through guided imagery resulted in reduced pain experienced by patients compared to the control group.

Recent psychological and neurological research shows that imagining something, that is to say visualisation and imagery, has the same effect as experiencing it in terms of brain activation. O'Craven and Kanwisher (2000) and Ganis et al. (2004) used Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) to measure brain activity when individuals were shown photographs of faces or drawings. The findings showed that the same areas of the brain were activated when the individual was imagining the faces or drawings or actually seeing them. Kosslyn et al. (2001) and Kosslyn's more recent work (2005) also show that the areas of the brain activated when an individual is thinking of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting or touching are the same areas when those senses are actually used. No such similar work has been carried out in higher education.

It is suggested that imagery also has an influence on perception and emotion (Holmes & Mathews 2005; Holmes et al. 2008). In the first work, Holmes and Mathews (2005) propose that a link exists between imagery and anxiety. This research shows that participants who were asked to imagine being anxious actually reported feeling more anxious than another group of people who had just been asked to focus on the verbal meaning of anxiety. In the second study, Holmes et al. (2008) developed this theme in research with individuals using pictures and words. The results produced further and stronger evidence that people have a more profound experience when using their imagination and using their senses, than just focusing on words and their meaning.

As mentioned elsewhere, this thesis has an educational focus and as such psychological, sport-based and medical issues are dealt with only insofar as they provide relevant background information and allow a greater illumination of the project from an educational perspective.

The research gap is clear. The intention became that this thesis should be the start of published literature regarding the use of guided imagery and creative visualisation in the higher education sector. Whilst there is a significant amount of material published regarding creativity in education, until relatively recently this has been restricted to the primary and secondary sectors. Material has now

started to be published regarding aspects of creativity in higher education, but none relates to the type of data generated by the methodology used in this thesis and no material has been published regarding guided imagery and creative visualisation in higher education. The remainder of this thesis sets out the research in detail through a number of case study profiles that are then melded into a cross-case analysis in a manner by which new knowledge is generated and presented.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Initially, this research project centred on the application of creative visualisation and guided imagery as tools that students could use to reflect on their own performance, past, present and desired future. Creative visualisation, as described in the literature review, is 'the technique of using your imagination to create what you want in your life' (Gawain 2002: 3). Guided imagery also allows an individual to use their imagination but it is an activity where the individual's imagination is guided to produce mental images, reflections or feelings, or to use mental senses by words from a facilitator. Using the students' own imagination, or what could be described as guided daydreaming, the initial direction of the project was to examine the role of just one approach out of around a dozen incorporated within the two modules taught – 'Creativity in Action' and 'Creative Personal Development'. The content of these modules was described in Chapter One with the schemes of work presented in Appendices 1.1 and 1.2.

These modules were chosen for the project primarily because I taught both these sets of workshops and thus had ready access to students who could generate legitimate data for the project, subject to various ethical considerations described later. The two modules formed part of separate undergraduate programmes and were delivered to different undergraduate levels; Level Four (Year 1) for 'Creativity in Action' and Level Six (Year 3) for 'Creative Personal Development'. One had a focus on the development of generic creativity; the other had a personal development bias, although many of the learning approaches were the same. The individual module learning outcomes reflected the difference in study level. Involving students from these two modules permitted the comparison of approach and reported experience between students at the same and different levels of study. It also allowed for a longitudinal comparison for two students who studied the Level Four module, as they could be followed across their undergraduate career and the effect of the creative approaches to learning and their application could be tracked throughout the three years of their degree course.

The research did not flow smoothly for a variety of reasons, both methodological and practical. Initially, relevant data collection proved problematic because of a lack of direction and clarity in the initial research question, which centred on student motivation. This was the first critical incident that needed to be addressed. It became apparent in conducting the pilot study that a narrow focus such as visualisation and guided imagery was problematic, since it was difficult to disentangle a student's perception of one approach, that is to say visualisation and guided imagery, from the others which ran alongside in the delivery of those modules. Neither the intended learning within the module nor the students' perspectives and understandings fell into a discrete box of experiences of visualisation. The use of music, mind maps, reflection and the study of self-efficacy, for example, all topics within the taught module, impacted upon the student experience of visualisation and guided imagery. Indeed, it was also the purpose of the taught modules that students should understand and develop student self-efficacy and intellectual maturity and be able to choose their own mixture of effective creative approaches to study. The intention behind both of the modules was for the student to gain experience in a range of creative learning approaches and to use them in a holistic fashion, not on an individual basis. In one module, 'Creativity in Action', the overall aim was to stimulate student creative output and in the other, 'Creative Personal Development', the main learning outcomes were to enhance the personal and professional development of the student. Any of the approaches employed could influence and impact upon the experience of the other methods used in the modules.

Following analysis of the pilot study and for the reasons given above, it became evident that the consideration of a broader creative approach to learning was a more productive and appropriate research avenue than a single focus on the very tightly defined techniques of guided imagery and visualisation. This does not dismiss or discredit the early findings of the pilot study. The pilot study informed the direction of the project and hence the findings were used to reorient the research topic and thus the subsequent methodology. As a result, the final research has been reshaped from that originally envisaged to provide a more cohesive, relevant and hence transferable assessment of creative learning in the university classroom. I also encountered difficulties in data collection during the

main research interviews. Although the project now had a redefined focus for the main research, I was unclear as to the level and type of data to be collected to provide meaningful material for subsequent analysis. In total, three focus group interviews and seven individual interviews were conducted during the 2006 autumn term, which I subsequently transcribed in full. Although at the time I thought that I knew the type and quality of data that I needed to contribute to a meaningful project, this was not forthcoming in the student interviews at that time. Despite probing the responses of the students through additional questions and follow-up prompts in the interviews, they were unable to produce comments of significant depth to permit analysis. A number provided short answers to questions and I or my methods were unable to stimulate them to reflect on their experiences. Equally, having broadened the scope and focus of my research, I felt that some areas of my questioning were based on a scattergun type of approach, where my thinking at the time seemed to be to acquire data of any sort, with a limited consideration of its relevance.

I transcribed the interviews in their entirety as, at that stage, I was unsure which data were relevant and which were not. For the reasons stated above, none of the students interviewed in academic year 2006/7 have been included in this research. This was the second critical incident in the research that needed to be addressed through a further refocusing, this time on the direction of my own questioning with regard to the revised topic through closer targeting of questioning and data collection with reference to the research questions.

My rationale and research motivation

Following the pilot study I wanted to explore ways to stimulate undergraduate student engagement with creative learning and to examine the apparent willingness, or otherwise, of students to develop and express their own views and refine arguments within class and their university work in general. This was an aspect of learning that interested me as an area for curriculum development within my own university and furthering my own professional development as a researcher and academic. Application outside the formal module curriculum was also envisaged. This involved, on the one hand, a directed student learning

context (i.e. scheduled workshop activities and assignments) and on the other, through the student's own independent study and motivation, a willingness to become responsible for their own learning and academic development. The latter aspect involves issues of student self-confidence and self-efficacy as well as competence in addition to general motivation to study.

I teach on a number of undergraduate courses in the field of communication, creative and professional arts. I wanted to discover if there was a difference in approach between students in the first year of a degree course and students in their final year. I teach two modules incorporated in this research. 'Creativity in Action' is a first year module designed to awaken and develop generic creative skills, which can then be employed in a subject-specific way. 'Creative Personal Development' is a final year module on a different degree programme that uses a creative approach to undergraduate self-development.

I have adopted a qualitative approach to this work because I am interested in the individual undergraduate and what is going on in their student world, which informs their study and other aspects of their life. Miller and Glassner (2004: 137) argue in favour of interviews as one method of data collection: 'a strength of qualitative interviewing is the opportunity it provides to collect and rigorously examine narrative accounts of social words'. I wanted to focus on the individual student experience: in some cases, there is much emotion and revelation which can only be portrayed by the student's own words. My wish has been to explore the students' feelings, experiences, reflections and motivations. In following the individuals over a period of time, I wished to explore some of the factors that affect modern undergraduates in their study and to identify and study changes in their approach over time. Peräkylä (2004: 286) argues for a longitudinal research element in qualitative studies on the basis that research participants' views and experiences can change over time. Using a single interview as a snapshot in time can have shortcomings: 'in the research based on recordings of single encounters, there is a risk that some of these longer-term temporal processes will be lost from sight'. In this research, two of the students are interviewed and data collected longitudinally.

In addition, because multiple methods are used with all the participants, a richer vein of data is established. Student learning journals, for example, cover a whole academic year, as do assignments, and have been used as part of document research. Qualitative approaches are particularly valid in the field of education as they use inductive reasoning to move from the specific to the general and recognise 'multiple realities': there is no one, single truth (Lichtman 2013). Robert Stake (1995) discusses 'the unique case' in which a single case can be used as a basis for research and from which generalisations can be drawn. Stake also argues that multiple case studies can be used in a research project, stating that: 'balance and variety are important; opportunity to learn is of primary importance' (p.6). This is the model used in this thesis.

This study uses as data creative approaches to learning and their products such as student learning journals, illuminative art, collaborative learning, mind mapping and a number of lateral thinking strategies that are generic in nature, but which can be applied within a specific creative learning and subject-based environment. It also relies on interviews which, for two students in this research, were conducted over time to permit a longitudinal approach. This was beneficial as this allowed two first year students to be tracked throughout their degree and so enabled analysis of the extent to which the creative approaches to learning were independently implemented over the course of the degree programme.

As explained in Chapter One, I wanted the study to be useful in my own teaching context. I also wanted the research to be transferable to a wider educational community. The students who took part therefore needed to be undergraduates and able and willing to take part in a meaningful piece of research. As a full-time lecturer in higher education undertaking a part-time doctorate, I felt that it was most sensible to offer the students in two of my modules an opportunity to participate in the research. Their feedback would improve delivery for subsequent years. Clearly, there are ethical issues involved in such an approach but these matters are inherent in any type of research where the practitioner has a dual role as teacher and researcher. These matters are fully discussed later in this chapter. At this stage it is sufficient to say that using one's own students for the generation

of primary research data is a way forward, but it requires close ethical consideration and monitoring throughout the project.

The research for two of the participants in the main study was longitudinal in that they were followed over time through interview, reflective journals and other creative output. A further two first year students were followed through part of their undergraduate career, whilst two third year students reflected on how the approaches affected them in their final year of study and beyond. For final year students taking 'Creative Personal Development', completion of the module marked the end of their study.

I adopted a multiple method approach to data collection. This comprised a pilot study, using individual interviews, extracts from individual student learning journals and other creative artefacts such as drawings, colourings and writings. This general approach was also adopted in the main body of the research conducted following the pilot study. The rationale for this was that it permitted the generation of a range of rich data from various sources, which could be used to construct individual profiles of the students and to permit the generation of a cross-case thematic analysis.

In keeping with the accepted thinking on anonymity (or pseudoanonymity) within educational projects, no reference that can directly identify the university where the course was delivered, the course itself, the module or individual students has been included. However, as Johnson (1982) in Spouse (2003: 31) explains, the most one can do to protect anonymity in a project such as this is to disguise institutions and participant names in order to ensure that a level of responsibility has been discharged in this respect. I have used examples of student work in the analysis chapters (Chapters Five and Six) to illustrate a number of issues and to give colour to the various student participant profiles and their stories. A number of these contributions are in the student's handwriting or are examples of their own illuminative art discussing or portraying elements of their study or personal lives. Their names are not mentioned in these illustrative insertions, but it is possible that the student participant could be recognised by their handwriting or drawing style. There is a dilemma in this instance regarding the extent to which student

anonymity is preserved. Furthermore, in cases where identifying material has been included by the student, such as naming the module in a piece of student work or signing a name at the base of a piece of illuminative art, these have all been obliterated from the illustration. I have also made a decision to exclude from the thesis material which is of a sensitive or personal nature. Although I have been given written and ongoing permission to use all material from interview and related documents I feel that it is incumbent upon me to exercise caution to protect participants, even though they are not named, from the inclusion of material which is sensitive. This has been carried out in full.

Epistemology

This section of the thesis considers the approach to primary research in this project from a philosophical perspective. I make a case for the validity of the approach adopted and justify this within a framework of what is appropriate and realistic for the purpose of a PhD research project in general and for this research in particular. I begin with an assessment of the overarching research paradigm in relation to this research, moving to the precise methodological details and final identification and justification of the research methods used.

In any thesis, the researcher is endeavouring to produce new knowledge. Whether it is new knowledge depends on the validity of the data collected, the quality of the analysis and reporting and to the relationship to knowledge which existed prior to the study. To produce one part of such a structure for my research, I shall use the proposals of Burrell and Morgan (1979, cited by Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007). They argue for four sets of hierarchical considerations or assumptions on which any empirical research should be based, starting from one overarching premise relating to 'the essence of the social phenomena being investigated' (Cohen et al. 2007 p. 7), through epistemological considerations and human nature to an ultimate methodology (Figure 3.1).

Ontology, described by Clough and Nutbrown (2002: 30) as 'a theory of what exists and how it exists', is concerned with the nature of being. Oliver (2004: 28) goes further to suggest that it is to do with 'the fundamental nature of the world

and what it means to exist in that world'. It can be argued that these heady realms are the grand starting point for any research, albeit largely theoretical. The two extremes of this ontological continuum are 'nominalism' and 'realism'. The nominalist thinker believes that there is very little that is concrete in the world and an individual's interpretation of a word is unique. The realist thinker sees the world in a strictly defined way, with little scope for individual interpretation. My own position tends towards one of nominalism, where each individual is treated as being unique. This initial, largely theoretical, construct or framework allows the researcher to progress to epistemology, as a concept.

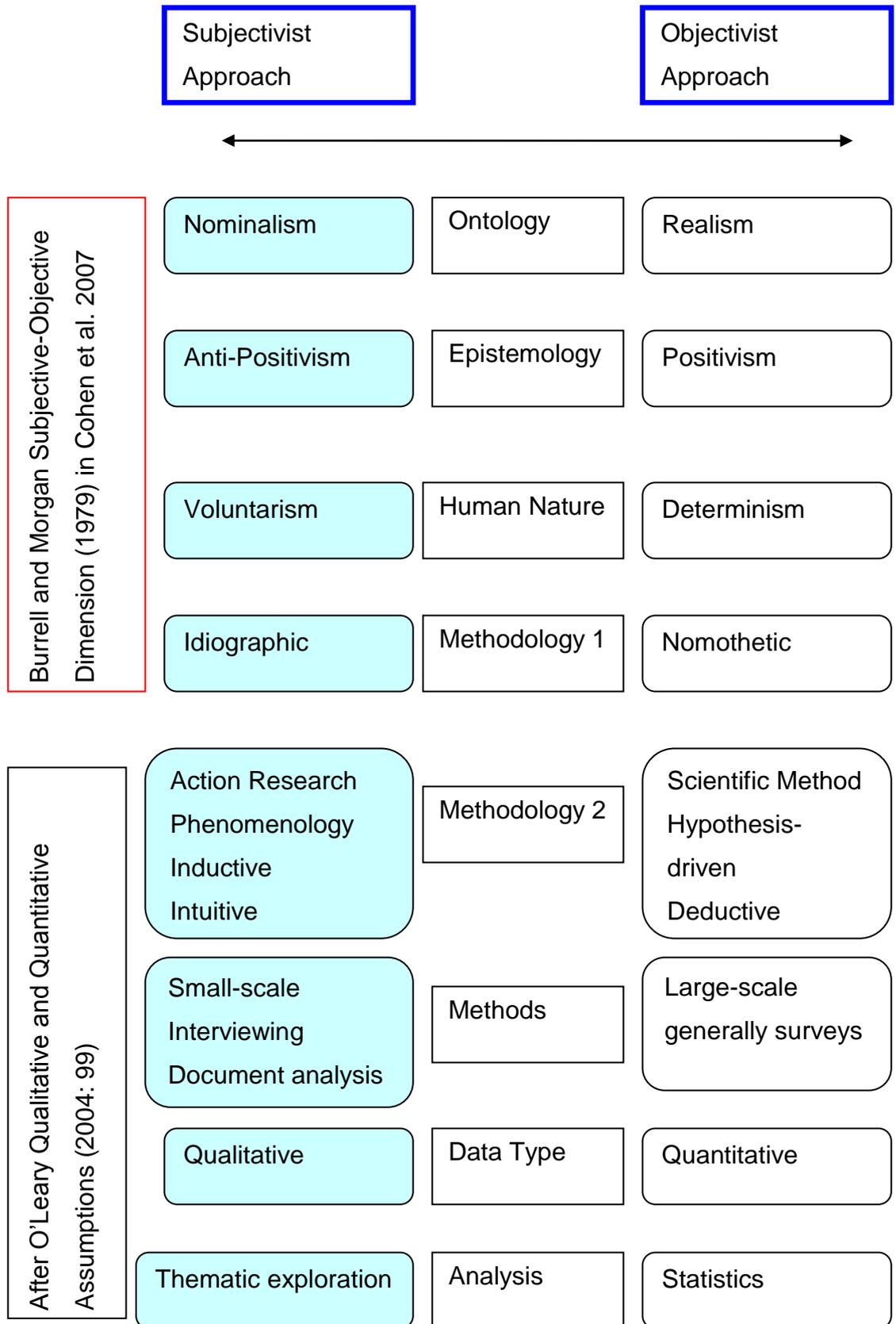


Figure 3.1: Epistemological and methodological assumptions regarding the research project

Epistemology also recognises two ends of a continuum but allows interpretation of the ontological aspects in terms which are more readily applicable to research. Coyle (2007: 11) argues that epistemology is to do with 'the theory of knowledge... that tries to answer questions about *how* we can know and *what* we can know'. Compared to the existential definition of ontology, given above, epistemology specifically relates to knowledge at the heart of any piece of work such as this. Whereas a positivist approach to knowledge is based on verifiable and repeatable data, such as knowledge as it relates to the natural sciences and its validity, the anti-positivist or post-positivist (O'Leary 2004) or interpretative stance views the world as ambiguous, variable and 'multiple in its realities'. According to the latter, individuals will have different perceptions of what truth is since their understanding of truth relates largely to how that individual interprets a situation in the light of her own experiences. In this research I adopt a largely interpretative approach. I contend that generally individuals experience their own realities and create their own truths. I believe that any event will be interpreted uniquely by each individual. If I hold a workshop, seminar or lecture, the words spoken, and presumably heard in that session, are the same for each individual in the room, but how each student makes sense of those words depends on their own experiences, understanding and ability or willingness to apply them to a given situation such as an activity, assessment or examination. The basis for my beliefs comes partly from my experience as a university lecturer and partly from my 'I's, as discussed in the introductory chapter.

Burrell and Morgan's (1979) third assumption relates to human nature and whether individuals are totally controlled by the environment in which they live, determinism, or whether they think and act individually; as Cohen et al. (2007: p. 8) put it, 'as initiators of their own actions, with free will and creativity, producing their own environments' - voluntarism. My own view on human nature is that individuals are certainly influenced by the external environment, but how they respond to those external issues is a personal choice and this will vary according to the individual. This is a fundamental tenet of this research project. To say that an individual student's lot is completely pre-determined based entirely on, for example, political, socio-cultural factors, technological and legal factors, is difficult to argue. Such a position would suggest that one is given a position in life from

which one cannot deviate. In terms of higher education, this position would dictate that the student would make an automatic choice, whether a university education was a foregone conclusion or a concept not to be entertained. Certainly, Government action in recent years has focused on raising aspirations of young people in particular with regard to tertiary education and there has been a steady increase in the number of students who are the first generation university educated within a family. This would suggest that national HE policy is in line with voluntarism and giving them responsibility for their own actions.

Given that individuals have personal choice and their motivations for university study are equally individual, it is therefore an extension to conclude that the methodology, influenced by Burrell and Morgan's ideas, is idiographic. That is to say, profiles of individuals and inquiry into their motivations can provide material for case studies or individual portraits that are unique to that individual. The 'narrative life world' (Smith & Eatough, cited by Lyons & Coyle 2007) of that individual is a rich source of valid data and is to be reported, as are themes from the various profiles which can take on a generic application.

Ethics specific to the research topic

Several matters pertaining to research ethics were identified and addressed when the initial methodology was produced and initial ethical approval sought and given. A new research governance protocol at the University of Southampton was implemented throughout the University during the course of the research and confirmation of ethical compliance with the new code was obtained subsequent to the initial ethical approval, as required. Documentation in relation to this approval is included in Appendices 3.1–3.6.

There were two potentially problematic ethical areas specifically raised by the project. These related firstly to my dual role as teacher/researcher, and secondly to the nature of the creative learning approaches used in the classroom, particularly with regard to visualisation and guided imagery.

To consider the first point raised by my dual teacher/researcher role, the main ethical issue related to the possibility of real or perceived power differences between me and the students. As a lecturer in higher education I have not only the responsibility for delivering a curriculum but also, under normal circumstances, for marking the assessed work of my students. In a higher education environment, the assessments are entirely set by the subject teachers and generally marked by the 'setters' as well. There is, of course, a quality control mechanism requiring second marking and external oversight, but the fact remains that in higher education the lecturer who teaches a student decides what mark that individual obtains, which places them in a position of power. The ethical issue is that since I, adopting the lecturer role, normally decide an individual student's marks a student might choose to participate in the research believing that they would gain a higher grade in assessed work by providing me, in my researcher role, with research data. Equally, a student not wishing to participate in the research may feel pressured to do so for the same reason.

I developed an approach to minimise the effect of any perceived power difference or conflict of interest, and hence reconcile my dual role of researcher and lecturer. The proposal was for a colleague of mine who teaches the same Year One module 'Creativity in Action', but with different groups, to mark my students' work and for me to mark hers. This approach was also used with regard to the Level Three module 'Creative Personal Development'. This was agreed and implemented for the duration of project. Students were also made aware of this decision at the time, together with the reasons for it. As far as participation in the research project was concerned, students could opt-in and be considered as participants for the project or choose not to take part. They could also withdraw at any time, without having to say why.

A second aspect of my dual teacher/researcher role relates to the question of the student or research participant being required to take part in the classroom activities that form part of the research. A research participant should not, of course, be obliged to take part in a research project, but there is a question regarding the extent to which there is conflict where the research activities are core to that individual's validated and published curriculum. Just as I have a role

as teacher/researcher, the undergraduate has the choice of a dual role as a student and, if desired, as a research participant, or if he or she chooses, simply as a student.

Turning to the nature of the creative approaches used in the two modules there is an ethical issue regarding the individual student's response to the approaches and activities carried out. As identified elsewhere in this thesis, I adopt a largely interpretative approach throughout this work, believing that the individual is capable of original thought and reaction to various stimuli or events. As such, creative stimuli can be, and indeed are, designed to produce individual creative outputs in a variety of forms. But from my knowledge and experience of student responses in other courses, I believe that any stimulus which encourages an individual to use their imagination can have outputs or responses and reactions beyond what would generally be predicted. I also believe that I endeavour to design my activities to minimise any potential negative consequences. If a student was asked to produce an advertising campaign to promote, for example, an awareness of domestic violence, and that student had encountered domestic violence in their own life, the activity could potentially trigger a negative reaction. I have both a legal and a moral duty of care towards my students and although students cannot operate in a totally sanitised learning environment, sensible precautions and thought need to be taken in developing topics for assignment or class activity.

An ethical issue of considerable importance is whether the activities required in the research could generate 'psychological stress or anxiety, cause harm or have negative consequences for the participants (beyond the risks encountered in their normal lifestyles)' (Ethics Checklist). I did not feel certain that this would not happen. I design my programmes in the light of my experience to minimise any negative consequences, but I cannot honestly say that there are no circumstances in my classes under which an individual would have stress, anxiety, harm or negative consequences. Nonetheless, my approach as a professional educator meant that I was readily aware of the sensitivity of areas of creativity and the areas for student support should a student become distressed by activities.

I felt that one area, in particular, needed close ethical scrutiny. Guided imagery and creative visualisation, as learning approaches, use the imagination to create pictures in the mind of an individual. As with any creative technique, the user cannot predict what the imagination will produce. The image may be disturbing, even though the visualisations are designed for the images to be supportive and affirmative. Nevertheless, it is possible for an individual to be disturbed by an image that has a positive intention. Asking a student to think of a positive personal quality, for example, may be problematic for some students who have low self-esteem and who may not be able to imagine such a positive quality. The activities carried out are certainly not intended to be therapeutic in nature, but developmental.

A number of more generic ethical issues relating to this research were also identified whilst completing the checklist and producing the protocol. Confidentiality and anonymity for participants is normally a requirement for academic research and this project is no different. Confidentiality relates to the right to participant privacy and anonymity the right for participants to have their identity hidden in a research report (Oliver 2003). All the research participants were given a pseudonym in the transcripts and the thesis and a link to their real names kept secure. For the first group of students, when transcribing the interviews I produced a pseudonym, taken from the *Dictionary of First Names* (McLeod 1987). I subsequently asked the student if they were happy with that pseudonym. In generating it I gave a name consistent with the individual's gender. With international students, I used a gender-specific first name appropriate for an individual of that nationality, but not one which would implicitly identify that nationality. I ensured that the pseudonym used did not begin with the first letter of that person's real first name. For subsequent cohorts I altered this approach and asked students to choose their own pseudonym according to the guidelines above. I believed that this gave the student a voice and greater ownership of what was written about them and the reporting of their words as they had actively chosen the name by which they were to be referred in this text and this was not my decision.

I also prefer to call the students who take part in the research 'participants' because that is how I view their contribution to my research. I do not regard them

as 'respondents' which, in my opinion, does not do justice to their role in the research. Merely 'responding' to questions from the researcher does not adequately recognise the interaction that takes place when interviews are taking place or a learning journal read. Certainly, the students are contributing to my research by agreeing to take part in the various research activities. They are participants in that this thesis tells their story and in piecing together the stories of a number of individuals they provide a panorama of different perceptions and reactions, all unique, but from which a number of themes and threads can be drawn.

In the participant information sheet I clarified that the individual student would not be identified, neither in this thesis nor in any associated published work, and the name of the course would not be disclosed, nor would the true name of the module taken. Indeed, the name of the university is not included in this thesis. This is all done to respect anonymity and to protect confidentiality. In truth, participant anonymity should be called pseudoanonymity. Given the wealth of information, especially online, it would not be difficult to identify the university where I teach through a basic enquiry of an internet search engine. Equally, the modules I teach could also be identified without significant effort, should an individual wish to do this. On the other hand, student confidentiality exists within the university and names of students enrolled on a module would not be disclosed to enquirers. So, it can be argued that despite my published profile, anyone wishing to identify an individual student would find it difficult to do so given the layers of protection which have been incorporated into this research.

Voluntary informed consent in writing on the part of the participant and which is reviewed and renewed at regular intervals as is a requirement of any reputable research project. This was fully carried out in this project by issuing a project information sheet to the participant, with a verbal briefing and a research project agreement sheet. The participant consent form was signed both by me as the researcher and by the student as the participant, if they were willing to take part. I hold a signed copy as required by the ethical protocol and a further copy, signed by me, is retained by the research participant. For students who have been interviewed on an ongoing basis, there is the matter of ongoing informed consent.

If a student was interviewed in subsequent academic years, the student was issued with a new information sheet and consent form which were discussed and completed as above to remain active for that university session. The only changes in these documents from year to year related to the academic year to which the document pertained and, from academic year 2008, an additional statement advising students of online thesis submission that would lead to wider access of the material than in previous years.

Pilot study: Methods and data collection

The pilot was devised and implemented in Year Two of my part-time registration. The ethical review checklist and protocol were drawn up during the Autumn Term 2005 and approved in January 2006. The pilot group research started shortly afterwards. The aim of the pilot study was to gather initial qualitative data on students' perception of the guided imagery and visualisation approach which had been incorporated within the Year One 'Creativity in Action' and Year Three 'Creative Personal Development' modules. A chart showing the initial planning process for the pilot is included in Figure 3.2 and a graphical timeline for the pilot appears as Figure 3.3.

The initial premise was that students entering higher education needed to develop a wide range of creative study skills and approaches in order to tackle in-course tasks successfully. Continuing to develop these skills would allow completion of the course with a positive final outcome. I proposed that using creative visualisation and guided imagery could help students in their approach to study.

Creative learning approaches for undergraduate self-development

Research Phase One – Preparation for and implementation of pilot study

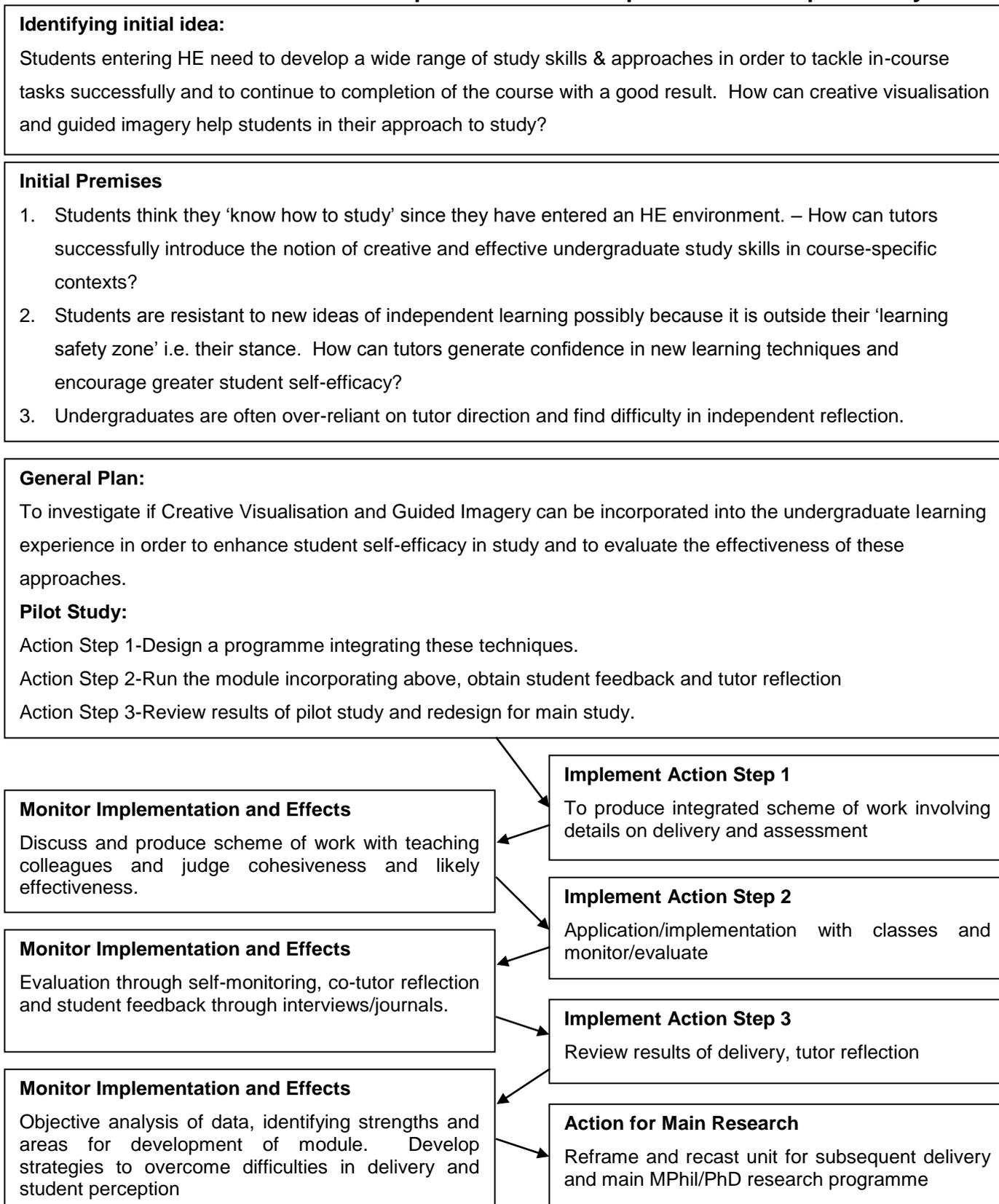
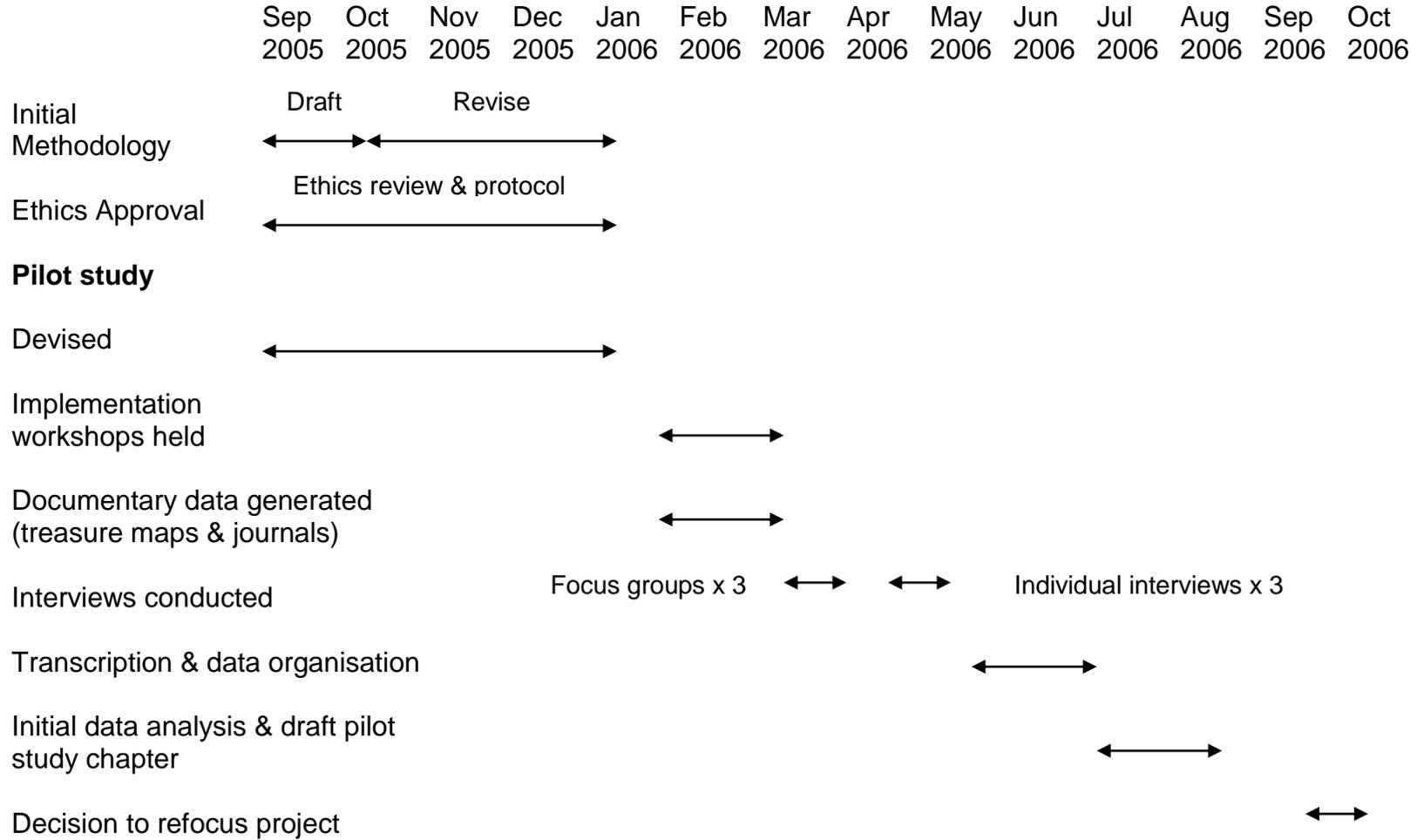


Figure 3.2: Research Phase One – Preparation for and implementation of pilot study

Figure 3.3: Research timeline – initial methodology and pilot study

Research Timeline – Initial Methodology and Pilot Study



Three main questions presented themselves in relation to student attitude to study. Firstly, do students think they know how to study since they have been successful already in entering higher education? Secondly, are students resistant to new ideas of independent and deep learning because it may be outside their 'learning safety zone'? Thirdly, are undergraduates over-reliant on tutor direction and find difficulty in independent reflection? At this pilot stage, the research plan was to investigate whether creative visualisation and guided imagery could be incorporated into the undergraduate learning experience to enhance student self-efficacy and to evaluate the effectiveness of these approaches. This involved redesigning the delivery of the two modules that used these techniques, running the modules and obtaining feedback, then reviewing the results of the pilot study and redesigning delivery for the main research stage. An integrated scheme of work was devised for the two modules incorporating two weeks of creative visualisation and guided imagery input, which was discussed and agreed with teaching colleagues in advance to judge the likely cohesiveness and effectiveness.

At the very outset three focus groups were organised from students in the Year 1 group, 'Creativity in Action', who had experienced the visualisation sessions and who were willing to participate in the research. The purpose of these focus groups was to gain initial data from which a more detailed and targeted approach to questioning and interview schedule could be developed. From these focus groups, one student was followed up with an individual interview (Angela), and her story is told in the following chapter as she was fully able to articulate reflections of her experience of visualisation. Other students from the focus groups provided either very short verbal answers, or were unable when pressed to explain their thought process, or appeared to be making comments that contradicted their earlier comments in class which was problematic. One limitation of this work is that the responses of these students do not form part of the reported study. It would be useful to have explored the reasons for each of these but, given the need to focus on students who report an engagement with the imagery and creative learning approaches – either positive or negative – I decided that students who are unable

to provide any usable reflective comment must fall outside the remit for inclusion in the pilot study.

The remaining two students who are the focus of the reported pilot study, Stephanie and Mark, were interviewed individually after they informally discussed their views on visualisation with me independently and subsequently agreed to be interviewed for the pilot. They were chosen to provide a balance between positive and negative views, to provide rich, thick data which were used to tell their individual stories and experiences in the following chapter. This number of students was selected as I wanted to tell the stories of students in a ratio to reflect the numbers of students taking the modules, therefore twice as many (two students) from Level Four 'Creativity in Action' as from Level Three 'Creative Personal Development' (one student). The methods utilised in the pilot study were face-to-face semi-structured interviews together with document analysis through drawings produced by the students following the 'great smoking mirror' visualisation, as well as learning journal extracts pertaining to the imagery and visualisation sessions. However, management of the pilot study was not straightforward. Initially, three focus group sessions were held with a total of ten Year 1 students with two follow-up interviews with individual students from Year 1. One interview was also held with a student from the much smaller Year 3 group who had reported a strong and positive experience within the visualisation sessions. The focus groups were comprised of the students who had initially indicated their willingness to take part in the research project. The purpose of the focus group was to test the method as a means of data collection in this context. I subsequently selected one student from these focus groups for follow-up individual interviews and collection of other documentary data for reasons already described. The focus groups produced interview data that were entirely positive towards the visualisation approaches used, to the extent that it appeared unrepresentative. Students who, in class, had expressed criticism of the approach at the time of the workshop (and therefore had been asked to take part in the research to contribute to a balanced data set) suddenly appeared to change their view. I felt that some of the students were trying to provide answers that they thought I wanted to hear, rather than discussing their earlier unrecorded and critical comments. In the focus groups, too, some wanted to discuss other areas of the curriculum that were, at

that stage, not part of the research project. It was because of this that I subsequently reflected on the thrust of my research and concluded that, although it was possible for students to give a considered view on the efficacy of imagery and visualisation in undergraduate study, it was problematic to isolate this individual topic as a number of other study experiences within the module contributed to their understanding and experience of those specific techniques.

One of the pilot study focus groups produced a further critical incident when a recording device failed. I was intending to use a single digital audio recorder for the focus group interview and concluded that it would be difficult to differentiate the spoken comments and attribute them to specific individuals on the basis of voice playback alone, and also that it would not be appropriate for contributors to give their name before making a comment. I decided to use a video camera to record both vision and sound so that I could easily identify the speaker for the transcript. I had been assured by the university technicians that it had been tested and was in good order. On playback, the video camera produced images but the microphone in the camera failed to function, even though it appeared to be recording as normal. I managed to complete the transcription by matching the sound from my digital audio recorder to the pictures from the camera. This experience prompted me to personally verify that equipment was working prior to use and subsequently to use two digital audio recorders in all interviews in case of a failure on one of them, to ensure that the individual interviews were definitely captured electronically for the transcription.

The interviews at the pilot stage were focused on reported experience of the imagery and visualisation techniques. They were semi-structured to permit consistency of questioning with the research participants but allowing the exploration of supplementary or complementary themes or issues as they arose. Active listening (Egan 1998) was used within the interviews to listen carefully to what participants are saying, both verbally and non-verbally, and to understand their story. This is a method I had learned in an earlier professional development course and have subsequently applied within my work context. The approach involves putting the speaker at ease through verbal and non-verbal statements and maintaining this throughout the interview. Comment from the speaker and

development of thoughts is elicited through techniques such as reflecting thoughts and feelings back to the student, summarising, and the judicious use of silence to prompt further comment by the student.

As initial analysis of the pilot focus groups showed a number of potential difficulties, described above, I adopted a pragmatic approach to gaining a representative initial data set that could be developed for the main research phase and to provide an initial base for reporting. The students were chosen for inclusion in reporting the pilot study as they were able to articulate their experience of the imagery sessions verbally and to provide a rich level of reflective comment in relation to that experience. This permitted a level of analysis of the experience of visualisation on the part of the student that could be meaningfully incorporated into the thesis results. The students were also chosen to form the basis of the pilot study analysis because their comments complemented each other and could be woven together to form a richer and multi-dimensional tapestry of the student experience in relation to the sessions. One student who took part in one of the focus group sessions was included in the reporting of the pilot as she was able to express a deep level of reflection and insight in relation to her positive experiences of visualisation. The other two students included in the report of the pilot in the next chapter had not taken part in a focus group but had been interviewed individually and had spoken to me previously about taking part in the research, and were able to express their views with a level of criticality and reflection that allowed for meaningful depth of both initial reporting and subsequent analysis. I wanted the participants in the report of the pilot to reflect the gender balance within the two groups and the number of students taking each module. Although representative samples are generally not the goal in qualitative research (Silverman, 2013; Stake, 1995) in my purposive sampling my interest was in probing the range of people taking the modules and learning of their experiences. A project information sheet was given out prior to the group session and consent forms issued to students happy to participate. I have retained the individual signed consent forms and a copy has been kept by the student participant. The students were also selected because of the range of experiences they reported, which contributed to a rich patchwork of profiles for subsequent cross-case thematic analysis. In conducting the interviews as teacher-researcher, given the inherent

issues of role ambiguity (both on the part of the teacher/lecturer and the student/participant), I was at pains to stress the need for honest comment and that the purpose of the research was to obtain an honest student response to the activity.

One interview was conducted with Mark, who appeared to be able to articulate his views well in a class setting and for whom experience of the ‘treasure map’ session had appeared to be particularly powerful. Another interview was with Angela, who had seemed to take special interest in the drawing part of the ‘treasure map’ activity. A pilot interview was also conducted with a single final year student, Stephanie, who reported different experiences for the various visualisations she had followed. All three accounts provided rich data that are analysed in Chapter Four of this thesis.

Tables showing the data collected from the students in the pilot and incorporated into the thesis are included below as Figures 3.3 and 3.4

Participant Name (Pseudonym)	Module Taken	Year Module Taken	Interview Dates and Durations
Angela	Creativity in Action	2005-6	Interview: 8 May 2006 Duration: 5'41"
Mark	Creativity in Action	2005-6	Interview: 9 May 2006 Duration: 26'57"
Stephanie	Creative Personal Development	2005-6	Interview: 11 May 2006 Duration: 9'14"

Figure 3.4: Pilot Study Participants: Interview schedule

Participant Name (Pseudonym)	Module Taken	Year Module Taken	Documents
Angela	Creativity in Action	2005-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview transcript • Learning journal • Treasure map
Mark	Creativity in Action	2005-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview transcript
Stephanie	Creative Personal Development	2005-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview transcript • Learning journal • Treasure map

Figure 3.5: Pilot Study participants: Data collected

The pilot interviews were recorded and transferred to computer and then converted to a common .mp3 format. This allowed the recording to be compatible with the Soundsciber transcription package I used to create the transcript. In keeping with the ethical concepts of anonymity and confidentiality, pseudonyms were used that were gender and nationality specific, but which were designed to minimise the chance of possible identification of the participant.

In addition to the focus group and individual interviews, two of the students submitted learning journals that they had compiled throughout the academic year. The journals and documents also included visual material such as illuminative art. This multiple method approach to the research assisted in corroborating the students' accounts and developing data obtained from that individual. Relevant parts of the learning journals were photocopied and retained for use in this project. This range of data permitted subsequent analysis of three data sources for the students, verbal (interview), written (learning journal) and visual (treasure map/visualisation drawing).

Pilot study: Data analysis and reporting

All the pilot study focus groups and individual interviews were transcribed in their entirety. I made a decision to transcribe them all because, at this stage, I was unsure of the final direction of the research. I had already attended a series of workshop sessions for the NVivo CAQDAS (Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software) programme to assist in qualitative research. I had produced one assignment using this software but I found that use of NVivo tended to fragment my data. I was concerned that the individual stories of the participants could become lost, or at least become obscured through use of NVivo in data analysis. By word processing the transcripts I became familiar with the content and the voiced thoughts of each participant, together with the other artefacts such as drawings, treasure maps and the learning journals. I wanted to work with the transcribed data rather than separate 'chunks' on screen. After careful consideration I concluded that it would be appropriate to substitute an approach to analysing data by hand.

My own reflections subsequent to the focus groups were that the level of analysis which I was trying to elicit from the participants was perhaps too deep for them to articulate. Some comments which were made in focus groups seemed to be relevant but rather superficial. I sensed that an initial answer was given and students were reticent and reluctant to expand on their basic comments because they were either unsure where the comments or questioning would lead, or that they were unable to access a deeper level of analysis or were unwilling to share this. I felt that this was possibly due to the group situation. I concluded that, although some meaningful data had been obtained from the focus groups, it would be more appropriate to conduct individual interviews with selected students from that focus group for the pilot study analysis. The selection was made on the basis of students being able to articulate and reflect on the reasons for their engagement, and providing a breadth of reported experiences, together with depth obtained by an ability to reflect on the sessions and to verbalise this. Using this strategy has potential implications for the appropriateness of the data included within the research. By including individuals on the basis of being able to articulate a point of view, students who are less able to verbalise have not been included in

the research. This issue was identified at an early stage of the project. Although this is a potential limitation of the research as it limits data collection to those students who are articulate and able to reflect, it is a compromise that I, as researcher, recognise but justify on the basis that the parameters of the sample are identified in the project, are in keeping with the thrust and ethos of the project and are necessary to ensure depth and breadth of responses. Ultimately a researcher needs to make a judgment of what is a useful and useable data set. If the project and research questions specifically set out to examine inability or reluctance to contribute to a project then the data would be flawed. As the thesis title and research questions are designed to explore the depth and breadth of student experiences of creative approaches to learning, a range was achieved on the dimension of intellectual and emotional response, but was limited to the most articulate.

A decision was made to focus on individuals who could explain and reflect on their response to the visualisation and the reasons for this. I also decided to choose a sample which, on the basis of response in class, was in my opinion a general representation of how students had responded to the activity. A decision also had to be made as to a realistic research workload. The data were analysed and presented in a profile format also be used for the main research. The visual representations of two of the students (Angela and Stephanie) were analysed by use of the students' own words in interview. It is my belief that, in analysing the drawings and pictures produced by the students, it should be the student who analyses the output. This is a similar approach adopted by Spouse (2003) with her research into student nurse experiences of their undergraduate course. She, too, asked students to produce artwork or drawings and asked them to explain the output, as she believed it triggered thoughts and feelings which otherwise may have lain dormant:

this [drawing] gave them an alternative means of expressing what it felt like to become nurses. Having a different form of 'language' helped them reach experiences that were perhaps too difficult to bring to mind or talk about, but once displayed visually, students could begin to find the necessary words to describe their experiences. (Spouse 2003: 23)

Quinn and Calkin (2008: 1) also argue for an arts-based approach to research using visual output by the research participant as 'dialogue in words and images'. In that article they used output by artists as a vehicle for the artist to articulate the meaning of the pictures. Whilst much of the literature on visual interpretation of images is moving image-based (Bazeley 2013), photographic (Prosser 1998) or spatial (Emmison & Smith 2000), this is not a project where the researcher uses content analysis or semiotics to interpret a third party's output. It is student or participant focused. To this end, it is my belief that the drawings produced by the students are to be interpreted by the students with further questioning during interview to elicit a deeper response or reflection. This also equates to an approach I have encountered during a professional development workshop I attended on the use of counselling skills in a student support setting where the student is encouraged to reflect on a particular issue and, with the support of the tutor, unpack the various elements and come to a conclusion.

Detailed analysis of the pilot study data exposed two particular areas of difficulty. The first related to the extent to which two separate two-hour workshops could provide data in sufficient depth for this thesis. As I have outlined, a further area of concern for me was that I was taking one study element in isolation, that is to say guided imagery and visualisation, when the workshops in both modules formed part of a cohesive and whole module of study, lasting either 13 weeks (Creative Personal Development) or 26 weeks (Creativity in Action). It became less appropriate to focus on an isolated element of the teaching modules when the approach of both modules was an integrated one. To concentrate on a single element would be to analyse out of context. Indeed, I started to realise that a broader, contextual analysis of the student response to the two modules would be beneficial both with regard to my own practice and to lead to greater opportunities for dissemination.

Widening my research from a tight focus on one specific and largely undocumented approach in higher education to encompass broader creative approaches to learning seemed to offer a more holistic and more appropriate research direction. The refocusing did not mean that the data from the pilot were

lost, irrelevant or invalid. Much was drawn from the initial focus on imagery and informed the data collection and analysis on visualisation for the main body of the research. It also provided the basis for my conference paper, 'Guided Imagery as a Trigger for Creativity: creative visualisation in a higher education setting', which I presented at the 'Creativity or Conformity' conference at UWIST in Cardiff (McClellan 2007, Appendix 1.3).

Turning to how the pilot data are reported in the thesis, this is a qualitative research project and I wanted to tell the learning stories of the students chosen for inclusion in this thesis. In analysing and reporting the research findings I became aware that I was writing an account not just of how the learning was experienced by the students, but how it unearthed the impact of the learning in a number of unexpected ways and the reasons for this, which were often related to personal and socio-cultural factors. At the pilot stage though, this story relates solely to their experiences of imagery and visualisation, as this was the direction of the research at that time. I wanted to allow the reader to build up a picture of how these three individuals engaged with the imagery material and to explore their reported thoughts and subsequent actions in a short vignette. For the pilot, the broader curriculum within the modules was not considered within the data collection. The wider approach to cover creative approaches to learning was, however, implemented in the main study. In the following chapter I report on the pilot profiles each of the students as individual case studies, with excerpts from their learning journals and quotes from their interviews. I adopted a narrative approach to analysis and reporting on the pilot student cases and the reason for this is explained later in this chapter. The pilot case studies' contribution to the wider research is included in an analytical and applied cross-case thematic chapter (Chapter Six).

Main study: Methods and data collection

The pilot study was completed during Summer Term 2006 and the refocusing, described above led to a change in emphasis in the interview questions and the research themes. The research methods remained the same. My epistemological

view had not changed, neither had the broad means of data collection. The purpose of the main study was to gauge, through a range of qualitative techniques, the response of students to the various creative approaches to learning used in pursuit of enhanced creativity and personal development. Their response to guided imagery and visualisation was of particular note. The procedure adopted is described in Figure 3.6 below.

Three focus groups were initially held in Autumn Term 2006 with a view to identifying a number of individuals able to provide a range of views and data for consideration in this thesis. A timeline illustrating this is included as Figure 3.7.

Creative learning approaches for undergraduate self-development

Research Phase Two – Preparation for and implementation of main research

Revising initial idea:

Students utilise a range of study skills and approaches in order to tackle in-class and course tasks successfully. How can creative learning methods and the use of creative visualisation and guided imagery be of help to students in their approach to undergraduate study and in their personal and academic development?

Revised Premises

1. As initial premises
2. Students develop their creativity through a range of approaches and strategies. It is not appropriate to isolate one method as the inter-connections between the various methods to enhance creativity need to be identified and analysed
3. Undergraduate student have differing attitudes to their own creativity and its development

Revised Plan:

1. To investigate if multiple creative learning methods, in particular creative visualisation and guided imagery can be incorporated into the undergraduate learning experience in order to enhance learning and personal development.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of these approaches.

Main Study

Action Step 1-Run two separate modules which integrate creative learning methods

Action Step 2-Conduct qualitative research through interviews and documents: data collection

Action Step 3-Code the results and assess the significance and relevance: data analysis

Action Step 4-Produce analysis chapters for thesis

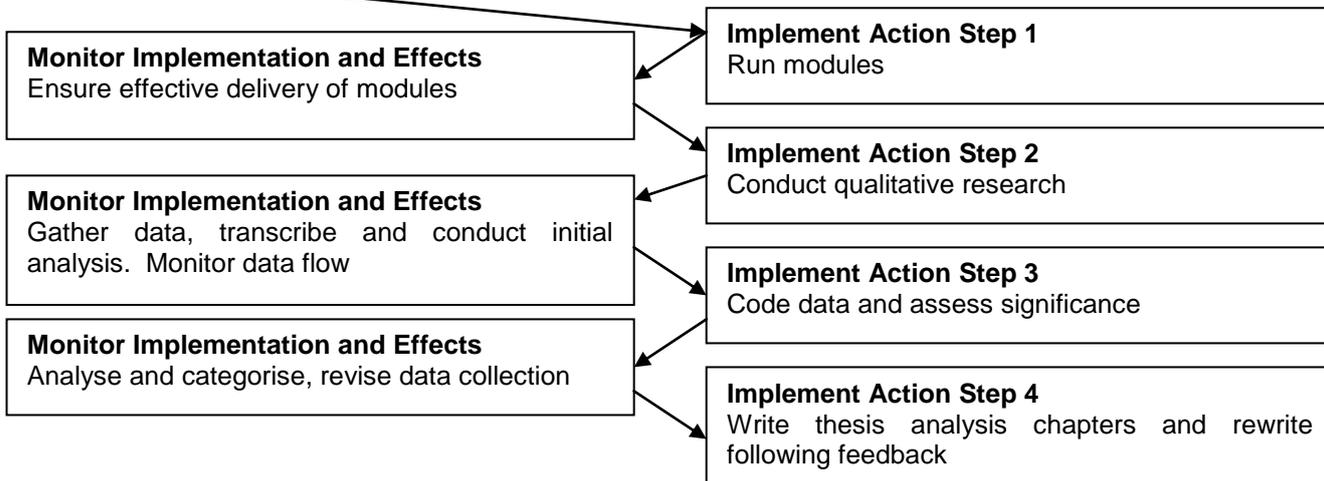


Figure 3.6: Research Phase Two - Preparation for and implementation of main research

Research Timeline – Main Study: initial research interviews

	2006	Nov 29	Dec 1	Dec 3	Dec 5	Dec 7	Dec 9	Dec 11	Dec 13	Dec 15
Focus Group 1			x							
Focus Group 2					x					
Chris					x					
Susan					x					
Focus Group 3							x			
Tania					x					
Jenny						x				
David								x		
Pete									x	
Andrew										x

Figure 3.7: Research Timeline – Main study: initial research interviews

The basis of student inclusion in this initial attempt at data collection for the main study was, as with the pilot in the previous academic year, to obtain opinions and comment of the students taking the two modules, together with the ability of those selected to articulate those views either independently or through questioning. I subsequently selected individuals from these focus groups for one-to-one interviewing on the evidence of participant comment and contribution to the study. Their views needed to be and which fitted the context of the focus group. Their comments therefore had to contribute meaningfully to the research and cover a range of perspectives. However, outside influences intervened that meant that the research was put on hold. For a variety of unavoidable work-related reasons and a suspension of my PhD studies only very limited progress was made on primary research for two academic years. I was required to undertake additional academic and administrative responsibilities at my own university as a result of restructuring, with a significant impact on the amount of time and work that I could allocate to the project. These interviews were transcribed in full but, as in the pilot study, I found that many of the students had difficulty in demonstrating appropriate sufficient level of criticality to their work. As a result, none of these data were used in the final study. This critical incident meant that time for completion of the project was running out and I had few meaningful data that could be utilised for a main analysis. I needed to reflect urgently on what had gone wrong with this last attempt at data collection, notwithstanding the increased pressure and workload at my own university, and to take remedial action.

In order to address this lack of primary data, I opted to refocus the data collection phase of my research once again and continue further data collection with students from the 2007-8 cohort together with additional students who studied the modules in academic years 2009-10 and 2011-12.

This time, I was far more selective in the students to be included in the data set. I was aware that, as in the pilot study, in my earlier attempt to generate meaningful data for the project in the main part of the study I had adopted a scattergun approach on the basis that the more data that were gathered, the more material straightforward the analysis would be. This was a mistake. I concluded that I needed to be far more structured as to the level of questioning in the interviews

and to select students deliberately for the project who articulated a range of views about the module that could be backed up by reflection and justification, where possible. The students to be included in the main analysis needed to be a cross-section, to reflect the gender balance in the modules and the number of students taking the modules. Students also needed to be able to tell their story and narrate their learning journey. I needed to collect a broad base of reported experiences with students who were positive towards the learning within the modules and with those who had attended but were less enthusiastic about the curriculum as a whole. I found that a much tighter control on the selection criteria for inclusion in the main research led to a far more productive set of interviews and each student who took part in this phase of the main research has their story told and analysed in Chapters Five and Six.

The meaningful data collection for the main study started with two students from the 2007-08 Year 1 cohort who agreed to take part in the research and were each interviewed several times over the course of their study. I was able to accommodate this focused approach to data collection in 2008-9 alongside my increased university teaching and administrative workload. Their learning journals and other artefacts were made available to supplement the interviews. This approach allowed for a longitudinal study of these two students throughout the three years of their degree programme. This would allow me to learn from and report on how the students had independently incorporated the creative learning approaches into their own study and provide possible avenues for analysis. One student from the (much smaller) 2007-08 cohort of 'Creative Personal Development' students who fitted the criteria previously mentioned was also chosen for inclusion in the main research. The data were subsequently transcribed, as in the pilot study.

In order to obtain a richer seam of data and a broader field of perspectives, three other students who took the modules in academic year 2010-11 were included in the study and interviewed and their documents analysed, as with the previous participants, on completion of the module. It was not problematic methodologically to select individuals from different cohorts as the curriculum was essentially the same between years. Indeed, selecting students from different cohorts may give

an indication of consistency or change of attitude over years. This approach is consistent with that argued by O'Leary (2004) who maintains that case (or participant) selection is generally non-random and that it is acceptable for the researcher to choose cases or participants who are, in the opinion of the researcher, typical and where the researcher seeks 'wide variance in order to aid theory generation' (p. 117). This is the basis on which the participants were selected for inclusion in the research. A timeline showing data collection through interview for the students whose cases are presented in the final research is included in Figure 3.8.

Smith and Eatough (2007) discuss the appropriate number of profiles for qualitative studies and suggest between six and eight participants. They readily accept that there is no hard and fast rule as to the appropriate number of individual profiles or people taking part and argue the validity in some cases of a single research participant, in that a single analysis gives insight into that individual's world. My research does not focus on one individual but uses a meaningful and representative group of students across two modules voicing a range of perspectives, which is also feasible in terms of depth and quality of data collection, as discussed above.

The sampling approach adopted throughout this research in the selection of individuals has been one of purposive selection. That is to say students 'for whom the research question will be significant' (Smith & Eatough 2007: 40). The students chosen as profile subjects were those who attended the workshop sessions and participated in the activities. It was important for students to have experienced the learning in order to comment on the content and its efficacy. I included students from both modules in the research, with a bias in numbers in favour of 'Creativity in Action'. This is because that module runs for the whole year and has around eighty students, as opposed to 'Creative Personal Development' that runs for one semester and has around 25 students enrolled. Those included in the research provided, in my view, articulate and varied responses raising a number of issues for reflection and discussion.

Research Timeline – Main Study: Data collection-interviews used in reported research

Student	Jan 2009	Jun 2009	Jan 2010	Jun 2010	Jan 2011	Jun 2011	Jan 2012	Jun 2012
Sarah	x							
Simone	x		x	x				
Mike		x		x				
Anna							x	
Carl							x	
Peter								x

Figure 3.8: Research Timeline – Main study: Data collection – interviews used in reported research

The interviews ranged from half an hour to almost an hour and a half. Because a semi-structured interview format was adopted throughout, there was a flow to each interview but with the possibility for relevant expansion and development. Active listening was employed, as with the pilot study. I fully transcribed the interviews because a full transcription can help identify subtleties and logical development of thought or apparent changes in the participant's demeanour. I chose to do this myself as I could recall how the respondents behaved and I was aware of their verbal idiosyncrasies, which would assist in a more meaningful transcription and annotation, where appropriate. As with the pilot study, the data were transcribed using Soundsciber software. A second digital recording device was also used as backup to ensure that an audio copy of the interview was obtained in the case of recorder failure. The interviews were transcribed using the pseudonyms in the transcripts. The transcripts were kept at my home address with no link to the individual student's name available there. A key to the students' actual names was written down and held securely at my office at my university.

Extracts from student learning journals (Creativity in Action) or submitted Creative Personal Documents (Creative Personal Development) were copied and retained for those students who had agreed to take part in the research. They were linked with the interview transcripts to provide a written, oral (transcription) and graphical representation of their experience of the particular module. The original work is returned to all students as normal. The photocopied work was destroyed of the students who ultimately were not selected for inclusion in this thesis. The photocopied work of students and interview transcripts of students included in a profile will be securely retained at my home for a period following completion of this thesis, in keeping with university policy, and then destroyed.

A diagram showing the data collection details of the students included in the main body of the work is included below in Figures 3.9 and 3.10. The participant names are those used throughout this text but are anonymised. The individuals included in the participant list are not the only ones to have been interviewed as part of this research project. A further six interviews were also carried out with different students, but I decided not to pursue these further because the level of articulation

and depth of comment was not as high and their views tended to replicate those who have been included.

Participant Name (Pseudonym)	Module Taken	Year Module Taken	Interview Dates and Durations
Sarah	Creative Personal Development	2007-8	Interview: 6 Feb 2009 Duration: 57'25"
Simone	Creativity in Action	2007-8	Interview: 9 Jan 2009 Duration: 48'42" Interview: 17 Mar 2010 Duration: 43'08" Interview: 28 May 2010 Duration: 22'33"
Mike	Creativity in Action	2007-8	Interview: 13 May 2009 Duration: 76'15" Interviews: 28 May 2010 Duration: 54'35" Duration: 13'42"
Anna	Creative Personal Development	2010-11	Interview: 11 Jan 2012 Duration: 65'01"
Carl	Creativity in Action	2010-11	Interview: 14 Dec 2011 Duration: 48'51"
Peter	Creativity in Action	2010-11	Interviews: 23 Mar 2012 Duration: 32'13" Duration: 23'03"

Figure 3.9: Main Research Participants: Interview schedule

Participant (Pseudo-nym)	Module Taken	Year Module Taken	Documents
Sarah	Creative Personal Development	2007-08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview transcript • Personal reflective document (assessment)
Simone	Creativity in Action	2007-08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview transcripts • Module Reflective Learning Journal • Reflective papers 1 & 2 (assessments) • Extracts from additional personal learning journal • Additional treasure maps
Mike	Creativity in Action	2007-08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview transcripts • Module Reflective Learning Journal • Reflective papers 1 & 2 (assessments) • Additional treasure maps
Anna	Creative Personal Development	2010-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview transcript • Personal reflective document (assessment) • Website
Carl	Creativity in Action	2010-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview transcript • Module Reflective Learning Journal • Reflective papers 1 & 2 (assessments) • Treasure map
Peter	Creativity in Action	2010-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview transcript • Module Reflective Learning Journal • Treasure map

Figure 3.10: Main Research participants: Data collected

Main study: Data analysis and reporting

Before the process of data analysis took place, thought had to be given to the desired output from and format of the reported research. Spouse (2003) had used participant profiles in her work on personal and professional development of student nurses and had called these case studies. The data from these individual case studies were then analysed on a thematic basis. I decided that a similar approach would be suitable for study of the students' reported experience in this research. Bazeley (2013) argues that from multiple cases such as the six students selected for the main research, results can be obtained that are not idiosyncratic, a potential difficulty if a small number of cases or indeed one case is selected for analysis and reporting. Bazeley (2013) also suggests cross-case analysis as a suitable structure for reporting the analysis in conjunction with the individual profiles.

As well as being a university lecturer I am a radio journalist. I am interested in people, their experiences and their motivations. Each individual has their own story and this thesis tells the learning journeys of the six individuals in the main body of the research, together with three from the pilot. At the outset I chose a narrative approach as this recounts the students' stories gathered and generated from the multiple data sources. I have already discussed, in the methodology chapter, the blind alleys up which the research led me at the outset whilst I defined, first of all, the precise research questions and then became more focused on the data needed to address these in terms of interview questioning and the participants chosen for inclusion in the research.

Narrative inquiry is 'set in human stories of experience' (Webster & Mertova, 2007: 1) and allows researchers to investigate how individuals experience and interpret the world from their own perspective. Chase (2011: 422) and Simons (2009: 75) discuss the notion of a 'lived experience' through the choice of words and the interaction between the researcher and the narrator. This was evident in the interviews included in the thesis. The participants were encouraged to give voice to their learning experiences from the module and, frequently, there were pauses while the individual thought deeply perhaps, and responded on how their previous

learning experiences had impacted their approach to study or a reflection allowed them to reveal that pressures within their own family circle had led them to choose a course of study that was not right for them. These stories were built up through active listening at the time of the interview and by close subsequent textual analysis of transcripts and other visual and documentary data. Gibbs (2007: 61) highlights the 'turning point', either single or multiple, voiced by a student in their contribution. In other words, an epiphany which each of the case study students experienced in one way or another; some positive and some negative.

My rationale for a further analysis chapter which cuts across the individual cases is drawn from arguments made by Simons (2009) and Richards (2005). Such an analysis demands comparison between cases with a view to highlighting common issues and central themes. The student research participants were selected to provide a breadth of views and reported learning experiences coupled with an ability to provide a depth of analysis of their experiences. The data generated with the students permit various levels of abstraction that lead to the development of cross-case generalisations applicable to all the participants or naturalistic generalisations (Stake, 1995). Stake argues that the case studies, in this case the student profiles, are undertaken 'to make the case understandable' (p.85).

The data were therefore analysed and presented in two stages in the form of participant profiles or case studies (Chapter Five) and as a cross-case thematic analysis (Chapter Six). This is illustrated in Figure 3.8 in what I term vertical and horizontal approaches to analysis.

Figure 3.11: Chart to illustrate analysis and presentation of participant data

		Cross-Case Thematic Analysis Chapter Six Horizontal Analysis								
		←			→					
		Angela (Pilot)	Mark (Pilot)	Stephanie (Pilot)	Sarah	Simone	Mike	Anna	Carl	Peter
Profile analysis of each research participant Chapter Five Vertical Analysis	↑	Theme One								
	Theme Two									
	Theme Three									
	Theme Four									
	Theme Five									
	Theme Six									
	Theme Seven									
	Theme Eight									
	↓	Theme Nine								

Analysis on the vertical axis involved the development of individual participant profiles. This analysis focused on individual students' experiences of the methods in the module and illustration of this by way of extracts from their interviews, reflective journal, assignments and classwork in spoken, written and visual forms. The cross-case thematic analysis in the horizontal approach cuts across the individual student cases and synthesises these according to themes relevant to addressing the research questions. Use of the profile approach permits the portrayal of individual student vignettes and cohesion in the telling of their story, whilst the cross-case approach enables a drawing together of commonalities and differences in an analytical framework.

The analytical structure may appear straightforward when presented in the figure above, but when I was presented with the student data I initially found it problematic to translate into a story reflecting the individuality of each student case. The data initially needed to be analysed as a set of compelling, complementary and contrasting profiles of relevance to the research. The interview transcripts of the profile students were initially matched with and appended to each individual's written documents and other artefacts, such as learning journals, reflection pieces or Creative Personal Documents, providing a comprehensive batch of material for that individual. Because the data collection for the main study took place over several years, the analysis was not carried out at one time. An initial evaluation was made of the interview after it had taken place and notes taken to take forward for future interviews. The interviews were transcribed following the recording. A further set of notes was taken for themes to develop with that individual in the future or in interviews with other participants. In hindsight, it would have been more appropriate and productive to have transcribed the interviews soon after recording and to have formally broached the issue of writing up findings more swiftly. The individual student case studies or stories were completed in full before the cross-case thematic analysis took place. I wanted to have a complete set of cases that provided a diverse range of individual experiences that could be used for cross-tabulation. This initial approach permitted a meaningful student case to be built up. The six stories of the student learning journeys are presented in Chapter Five.

I also found progress on the cross-case thematic analysis problematic as initially I had difficulty in separating out themes from individual student accounts, and because of the potential danger of merely repeating profile data and failing to take the abstraction to a higher level. Whilst the detail of the various themes had been included in the profile chapters, the thematic chapter needed to concentrate on comparisons and analyses across the participants. In other words, the vertical or profile approach had to be recast to provide meaningful horizontal or thematic analysis and presentation. I found the solution to this was a more rigorous and robust coding structure for the data. I have always wanted physically to touch the data in transcripts or in other documents. I felt that software led to a more fragmented approach that hindered an understanding of the bigger picture. Transcripts and profiles were manually cut and the relevant sections pasted onto separate sheets with a numerical code, as suggested by Simons (2009: 140). This was mapped to a separate grid and attributed to the individual and a specific theme. Because there was so much data, even with just six students in the main body of the research and three from the pilot, it was difficult to distinguish topics or issues with commonality across the various cases. Consequently, I drew up a series of charts on A3 sheets showing the student pseudonyms across the top and a list of themes discussed in interview (and further included in learning journals etc.) down one side. The data were initially analysed for each individual under themes regarding their learning that represented the specific students' experience. Each time the topic was raised in interview, it was noted in the appropriate box with a number corresponding to a place in an interview transcript or document and, over time, a manual spreadsheet was produced that allowed a literal and visual overview of all the topics discussed in the interviews, with the participants' stance also duly noted. I conducted this process firstly for the students' views on creative approaches to learning in general and then specifically with reference to visualisation and guided imagery.

Over time, a number of themes developed through this form of analysis. The themes were then melded into sections that addressed the initial research question and then connected in a form which produced a logical progression of analysis and argument. This allowed for much easier formulation of a cross-case analytical structure and subsequent writing of the cross-case chapter.

Chapter Four: The Pilot Study – Case Studies

The pilot study sought to ascertain the key themes associated with creative visualisation and guided imagery experienced by the students. Major themes to be explored through the technique were threefold; firstly, student ability to engage with unfamiliar methods of creative study; secondly, reflection on the students' own experiences of visualisation; and thirdly, the development of greater student awareness and self-efficacy as a result of visualisation and guided imagery.

The pilot data focused on the students' initial experience of the visualisation and guided imagery approaches. Data were collected from students taking first year and third year undergraduate modules. The students experienced several visualisations or guided imagery scenarios including:

- 'Guided Relaxation', which involved the student imagining light travelling through their body
- 'Graduation' where the student collects his or her qualification
- 'Beach' which is the exploration of a seashore and use of a pebble as a source of inspiration and personal empowerment
- 'Great Smoking Mirror' where smoke clears from the glass of a mirror to reveal a picture of the student looking into it.

Each visualisation is accompanied by either relaxing music, natural sounds such as lapping waves on a seashore in the case of 'Beach', or a mixture of the two in the case of 'Great Smoking Mirror' (music and sounds of a river).

Details of the individual visualisations are contained in Appendices 4.1 to 4.5.

The visualisation sessions were linked to the workshops concerning student self-efficacy, thinking about what he or she, and other students, wanted to achieve in their academic and professional lives and how they might attain this. Students were also asked to draw a picture of their experiences in the form of a treasure

map (see Appendix 4.4) showing what they wanted to achieve in their academic and future life. In the accounts of the individual students below I include extracts from learning journals. Capital letters, underlining and bold type are reproduced as per the original source document.

These three student case studies and profiles below demonstrate how students who undertake the same creative curriculum report significantly different learning journeys. Angela's reported first year experience of guided imagery was entirely positive and she used this to address her admitted lack of academic self-confidence. Mark, on the other hand, dismissed the visualisation approach in terms of its usefulness in his learning but admitted that it helped him make up his mind to move to a course that was better suited to his study motivations and future career plans. Stephanie used visualisation to link her imagination with positive images of nature and the environment to experience a vivid, unique and personal creative journey. The case studies show how visualisation and guided imagery touched these three students and how it motivated them in important transitions in their academic lives.

Angela

Angela was a first year undergraduate when she experienced creative visualisation in the workshop. She had come to the course from Spain and was a full-time international student. She was taking the 'Creativity in Action' module. She had also been writing a learning journal during the academic year. The visualisation sessions took place in March, around three-quarters of the way through the first year, and so she had become accustomed to writing in a reflective manner in her journal. In this section, Angela describes her positive feelings towards the concept of visualisation but these are tempered by a limiting belief both in her own ability to acquire the success she seeks and whether she feels she deserves to reach her goals.

In her journal, Angela used a few lines to express her growing self-awareness following the first week of the visualisation and guided imagery sessions and her feelings towards what she is doing in her course. She acknowledges that not

everything is clear cut or can be planned for. Life, academic, social, personal and professional is not laid out as a set path in front of us. The capitals and underlining in the text below are as Angela wrote in her journal.

Imagining, but not only imagining, **BELIEVING!** Believing through imagining myself achieving. **ACHIEVING** what I want to **ACHIEVE**. And even if I didn't (still don't) clearly know what exactly I want to achieve, I just thought about how I want to feel. The feelings I want to feel every day. Being proud of myself because I have achieved 'something'. (Angela's Journal)

Angela used space in the journal for reflection to conclude that she did not really believe in herself as capable of achievement. This was not a therapeutic exercise but, when asked to honestly reflect on one's own approach to success or life, it is possible that doubts and uncomfortable feelings can surface.

If what I want is to feel in this special way, why can't I do this now? Maybe it is a problem I have, maybe if I achieved I wouldn't feel this way because I never realize that I have achieved something. I am not aware of what I achieve. I never realize that I have really made it so that is why I am not proud of myself in the sense that I am satisfied. (Angela's Journal)

Angela's apparent self-doubt is challenged by positive affirmations within the workshop, by the visualisations and the action of producing a treasure map.

WHAT EXACTLY IS THE POINT OR WHAT DOES IT ACHIEVE, WHAT EFFECT HAS IT GOT ON ME??? Firstly, it makes me feel satisfied, before and after the meditation. After the exercise I felt [I had] more energy with more enthusiasm, with strength to do anything (almost...), wanting to **START**, wanting to achieve. These feelings disappear as I have more and more touch with 'reality'. (Angela's Journal)

Such a statement suggests that there is an immediate positive motivational effect of the visualisations but that the student found it difficult to 'hold on' to these positive feelings, even though this was what she professed to want to do.

In a reflective paper written at the end of the year, Angela looked back on the thoughts of a few months earlier and tries to make sense of her feelings then and now.

Creative visualisation made me realise that if I can imagine myself doing something, then it is possible for me to fulfil it. My aim gets a little bit closer to me as I imagine it happening. I am getting ready for it to happen. I have to be self-efficacious in order to be successful. This is obvious as how can anyone be successful without believing in it? I have learned that it is essential to be able to recognise my potential. In this way I will be more motivated and focused on my goal. I was not at all centred in the beginning of this new life at university. Over the course of time during this module, I slowly achieved it. (Angela's Reflective Paper)

Angela took time outside the workshop to produce her own personal affirmations, which she repeated to herself. She focused on what she wanted to be - a successful student - and identified the attributes that she believed she already had and those which she needed to develop in order to achieve her goal. Her written goal was:

'I AM A SUCCESSFUL STUDENT' (Angela's Journal)

The whole phrase was circled and the emboldened words **I AM** were circled within the bubble surrounding the statement.

For her personal affirmations, in bullet point form, Angela wrote:

- I am creative
- I am intelligent
- I believe in myself
- I can get anything I want

(Angela's Journal)

Angela's obstacles were all centred on herself and her perceived abilities, or rather inabilities.

I am not good at studying (clumsy)
I often fail
I am afraid to fail
I am bad at English
(Angela's Journal)

She turned these round to positive affirmations, written in capitals in her journal

I AM INTELLIGENT
I NEVER FAIL
I AM GOOD AT ENGLISH
I AM NOT AFRAID TO FAIL
(Angela's Journal)

For this student, the use of affirmations appeared to be a challenging but positive experience.

These positive affirmations, produced by myself for myself, made me feel good, relaxed and powerful at the same time. They made me want to start now... getting on with my work to achieve my visualisation. The barrier between potential and achievement was getting thinner and thinner.(Angela's Reflective Paper)

Angela's treasure map (see Figure 4.1) is a representation of her aims and goals and how she links to them.



Figure 4.1: Angela: Treasure Map

She focused on learning in her drawing and used several positive nouns and adjectives such as 'powerful', 'free', 'clear mind' and 'proud'. Angela drew herself at the centre of the treasure map and positive environments for study. On two occasions there are vistas of a beach which can be seen from the open windows just beyond the study desk. There is a coat stand with academic gown and mortar board and a photograph book of positive memories of Angela's life at university.

In her own words, Angela explained that the treasure map now helped her stay focused on her studies and helps her move towards her goal of a good honours degree.

I've painted it in a way that it would help me to study and concentrate more on what I want, because sometimes I forget about why I am studying and why I am doing what I am doing. So, satisfaction, motivation... these are lots of words that are key words for me to concentrate on what I am doing. I need to have results to be motivated. If I have bad results, then I won't be motivated. Then there are other key words like, for example, having a clear mind, being secure, trusting in myself, concentration, like find out, create, study, and that's me in the middle, having my good marks. It's just focusing on not giving up, just because I (may) have a bad

mark suddenly or something or because of the fact that I'm not so good in English, just like... keep fighting... (Angela Interview, 8 May 2006)

At the time of the interview Angela was integrating the treasure map into her approach to study. She actively used it to remind herself why she was at university and to reinforce the positive study elements.

I have this one (treasure map) already hanging up in my bedroom, just there like, every time I think 'I didn't do so well in this' I just look at it and you know it's like 'fight'... .It's motivating me, it's kind of a motivation thing that makes me continue...

It's preparing me for the future. I know that I'm going to go through bad phases and so I just draw it, what I was thinking, when I feel like that I'm going to look at this and I'm going to be more motivated and that's what it does. (Angela Interview, 8 May 2006)

It would seem that the concept of creative visualisation was not just a positive experience within a workshop for Angela, but one which affected her in a way which made her question her own self-doubts and reassess her approach and ability. Using the affirmations and tangible 'treasure map' output, Angela was able to put her personal stamp on this motivational tool. In identifying her own personal goals and perceived limitations, she was able to challenge her negative self-perceptions and channel new energy into her desire to obtain a good degree. The sessions also revealed some self-doubt in achieving the goals she was setting for herself

Mark

The case of Mark throws a somewhat unexpected light on the student experience of visualisation and guided imagery. Mark completed most of the first year of his course but at the end of that first year he decided to transfer to another university to read Music, a subject substantially different to the one he had originally chosen. It also became apparent that the experience of guided imagery had contributed

significantly to his decision to leave the course. Certainly, this was an unexpected outcome of the approach and, at first sight, not a recommendation for the method.

Mark had come to the university from what could be termed a 'high-achieving' family with parents in highly paid and high-powered jobs and siblings following in those footsteps after time at Oxford and Cambridge universities. The university where Mark was taking his initial undergraduate course, where this research took place, was the equivalent of a former Polytechnic.

Mark's view was that the visualisation and guided imagery sessions in the 'Creativity in Action' module were unusual and that he experienced difficulty in engaging with the concept of using visualisation as a stimulus to trigger creative ideas. Mark appeared to be somewhat embarrassed and unsure in the interview about his experience of visualisation. He rephrased his comments, did not speak fluently and it appeared that there was a tension in what he wanted to say and what he did say. In articulating his thoughts about part of a course I teach, perhaps initially he was saying what he thought I wanted to hear.

It was certainly a very interesting approach and one that I'd never experienced before. I, for myself, it wasn't the easiest thing to do and I think it's because I work quite logically and academically rather than 'alternative' methods and... I wouldn't say it's been entirely beneficial for my studies so far. (Interview, 9 May 2006)

One difficulty encountered in 'Beach' guided visualisation was an apparent inability or unwillingness for Mark to 'unhook' from the rational thought process.

Certainly with the stone, it's very much affirming the fact that the stone is yours and it wasn't made for anyone else, it's for you, that specific stone and you've got that which is something that's very personal to you, that you can relate to almost, but um... I appreciate that... but then with my 'thought train' I then take an objective look back and think 'it's just a stone' and that's me. I can understand how it could be helpful, but for me with my way of thinking, it wouldn't have been so... it wouldn't have been helpful or relevant. (Interview, 9 May 2006).

However, one positive element to emerge from the visualisation for Mark was identification of the use of music to help him study and to come up with ideas.

The music, I would agree with because I certainly use, maybe not that kind of music, but I use music to work to. I use different kinds of music, for instance when I'm driving I'm into a certain kind of music and when I'm working I'll be listening to a certain kind of music, when I'm sleeping I'm listening to a certain kind of music but I can appreciate that and I think it kind of opens the ideas to people so that they can use it themselves. (Interview, 9 May 2006)

Mark found that using music as a basis for reflection had its positive aspects but, for him, the environment and context of using music or silence had a major impact on its effectiveness. The type of academic work which needed to be done dictated the genre of music that would help that work; indeed, silence might be most appropriate for Mark.

I find it very hard to switch off when being asked to switch off and just because there's silence, quite a lot of the time I'm reflecting. If I'm really honest I can't remember the exact one but the likelihood is that I'd have tried to reflect and then thinking about the past and the future and then all of a sudden I'd be thinking 'I'm really hungry' or 'I'm going to go out tonight but I've got to do washing first' and not only reflecting but more like just thinking. (Interview, 9 May 2006)

Running these workshops has shown that being unable to 'switch off' is not uncommon in any visualisation or meditation exercise. It is not a failure, merely something that happens. It can be argued that visualisation and meditation gives space and time for the mind to take its own path. In Mark's case, this is where it takes him. It is far from a failure, indeed, it seems to have given him the space and time to sort out his thoughts for the day which, at that time, were uppermost in his mind.

Mark has a love for sounds as his ultimate decision to leave the course at the end of the first year to take a BA in Music elsewhere shows. When asked what he has in his mind's eye as a goal, Mark states that he 'hears' his future rather than 'sees' it.

I think it's almost a question of hearing myself, like I know where I want to be, my dream would be either presenting a good radio... maybe in the future, we'll see... But certainly singing I'd love to do something like Tim Hughes who's a Christian singer and I'd love to do something like that. (Interview, 9 May 2006).

Is it right to 'dream' of a career? From what Mark says, he has a goal, to be a radio presenter or a professional singer but he is rather unsure of how to get there. This introduces the notion of self-efficacy not just as a student but also in relation to professional and industry goals post-graduation.

A particularly revealing and poignant part of the interview with Mark came when he described the visualisation which concentrated on graduation (see Appendix 4.5). As Mark mentioned earlier, he felt that he often could not see the 'wood for the trees' in his studies with a treadmill of coursework obscuring the gradual progress towards final examinations or dissertations and ultimate award of a qualification. Certainly my intention was for the student to feel pride at having achieved their ultimate study goal, but with Mark, this was not the effect obtained. He came onto his original undergraduate course with a view to making a success in business but this was not the choice in his heart.

For me, interestingly, graduation, when we did that, that was the exercise which made me realise that I want to change university because I thought to myself we're asking to look three years ahead and getting my degree from [this] university. You were mentioning how proud I'd be and I thought to myself, to be honest, I won't be proud. I wouldn't....If I stayed for three years, at the end of it... there's nothing wrong with the Uni but I will not be proud of the degree I've got and I want to be proud of the degree I've got and...I'm not trying to sound better than this university because for some people, even students for three 'A's, this would be perfect, but for me, with less marks, this isn't perfect and I feel that I could do something, especially in music, because music's always been my thing, it's the main thing in my life so I would like to go and do music. (Interview, 9 May 2006)

For Mark, the graduation visualisation was a turning point in his university life as it forced him to reflect seriously on his choice of course and to take the significant step of transferring to a totally different discipline at a different institution.

Basically, you were saying the graduation in quite a positive way when you were saying it and although I didn't visualise the positive elements, I guess it made me realise that I disagreed with those positive elements and so brought out my true feelings of it and especially when you were saying stuff like you're so proud, although maybe I couldn't put myself in that situation of feeling so proud [gulps and is emotional], I realised I couldn't and so I suppose in a way that does help. I'd say it's contributed to my decision. (Interview, 9 May 2006)

My initial reaction was that the visualisation had backfired badly in that the imagery designed to inspire and promote confidence in abilities and the course had, in fact, led to the loss of a student to another university. But I reflected and discussed the issue with my colleagues and actually the visualisation activity did have its intended outcome. My desired outcome for the students was for them to obtain a good degree from my university, yet Mark's desired outcome was to obtain a good degree from a university in a subject that he truly wanted to study. As a teacher who runs courses on challenging assumptions, I had fallen into a trap of my own making.

Despite the earlier voiced reservations about visualisation and guided imagery, Mark's actions and comments on 'graduation' indicate that it was a powerful tool for self-empowerment. Visualisation does not force people to think in a particular way, but allows individuals the space to focus their thoughts and to make up their own mind.

Mark's story reveals several additional areas that appear to be relevant in any consideration of visualisation and imagery in higher education. These include approaches and motivation to study in general, preferred learning styles with particular regard to Visual, Auditory, Reading and Kinesthetic (VARK) and Multiple Intelligences, and student stance or preparedness to be open-minded when faced with new approaches to study. It became clear that the use of music or sounds as

an aid to reflection, creativity and student self-efficacy could also be an important factor in effective and creative student learning.

What was also apparent was how I, as researcher, reacted to the somewhat unexpected outcome with this student. This matter highlighted the relevance of and need for monitoring of self by the researcher to 'make sense' of the findings and, perhaps, because of the dual role of teacher-researcher, disentangling the issues and decoding the findings from each perspective.

Stephanie

Stephanie was an international student on an Erasmus exchange for a semester from France. She was a third year student who would complete her studies at her home university the following year. She was taking the 'Creative Personal Development' module. The imagery sessions which appeared to be particularly relevant for her were 'Beach' and 'Great Smoking Mirror'. However, unlike Mark, the graduation ceremony visualisation did not strike a chord. Perhaps this was because the visualisation was imagined as a British university ceremony and not the ceremony in Stephanie's home country. Stephanie was able to voice her own feelings about the two visualisations which affected her the most, 'Beach' and 'Great Smoking Mirror'.

Those really struck me and I've been thinking over and over again and perhaps the one with the pebble was the best because I very often go to beaches and like to enjoy the sun, just to walk along and I collect the rocks and pebbles. I have so many at home and perhaps this one is powerful because I can relate this material thing [the stone] to what I believe in and the day that I had there and the feelings that I had and it was quite a good experience but hard sometimes because I could not see things. I just wonder if others can. I thought it would be natural for me and it didn't come all the time.

For the mirror I would have loved to have been able to see me in the future and I was a bit confused that I could not see myself. You set yourself goals but you can't see yourself achieving them. (Interview, 11 May 2006)

Her comments on 'Beach' suggest that there is already a connection with her way of thinking and her current experience. Stephanie likes to walk on the beach in real life and picking up stones is also something she does.

In the meditation, while Tim was talking about the sand, I could feel the fine sand of the beaches of my country, but I saw the round smooth pebbles of Cassis (in France). It smelled good, (I could) smell the sea air. I could hardly feel the wind but I smelled the air it carried. The pebble was my friend and was an emblem of good memories and of the people I was with when I collected it. (Learning Journal)

Stephanie has kept the stone, like many of the students. One point of observation is the expectation that one should see a particular thing or feel a particular way. As a lecturer, I always stress that each person's experience is unique and valid. There are no rights and no wrongs, the experience is the way it is and that students should not try to force a particular image, just let thoughts and images flow into and out of the mind in response to the words and sounds. Her comment about wondering if others can see and feel more than her can also be a reflection on achieving a particular 'standard' when, of course, there is none as each experience is individual.

With 'The Great Smoking Mirror', Stephanie seemed to be trying to force an image to appear in her mind's eye. In this visualisation on this occasion, students were also asked to think of an environment where they studied best. But she was moved to commit her feelings to paper in a graphical way at home, later in the day. She explained in interview that the drawing represented her feelings as the visualisation progressed (Figure 4.2).

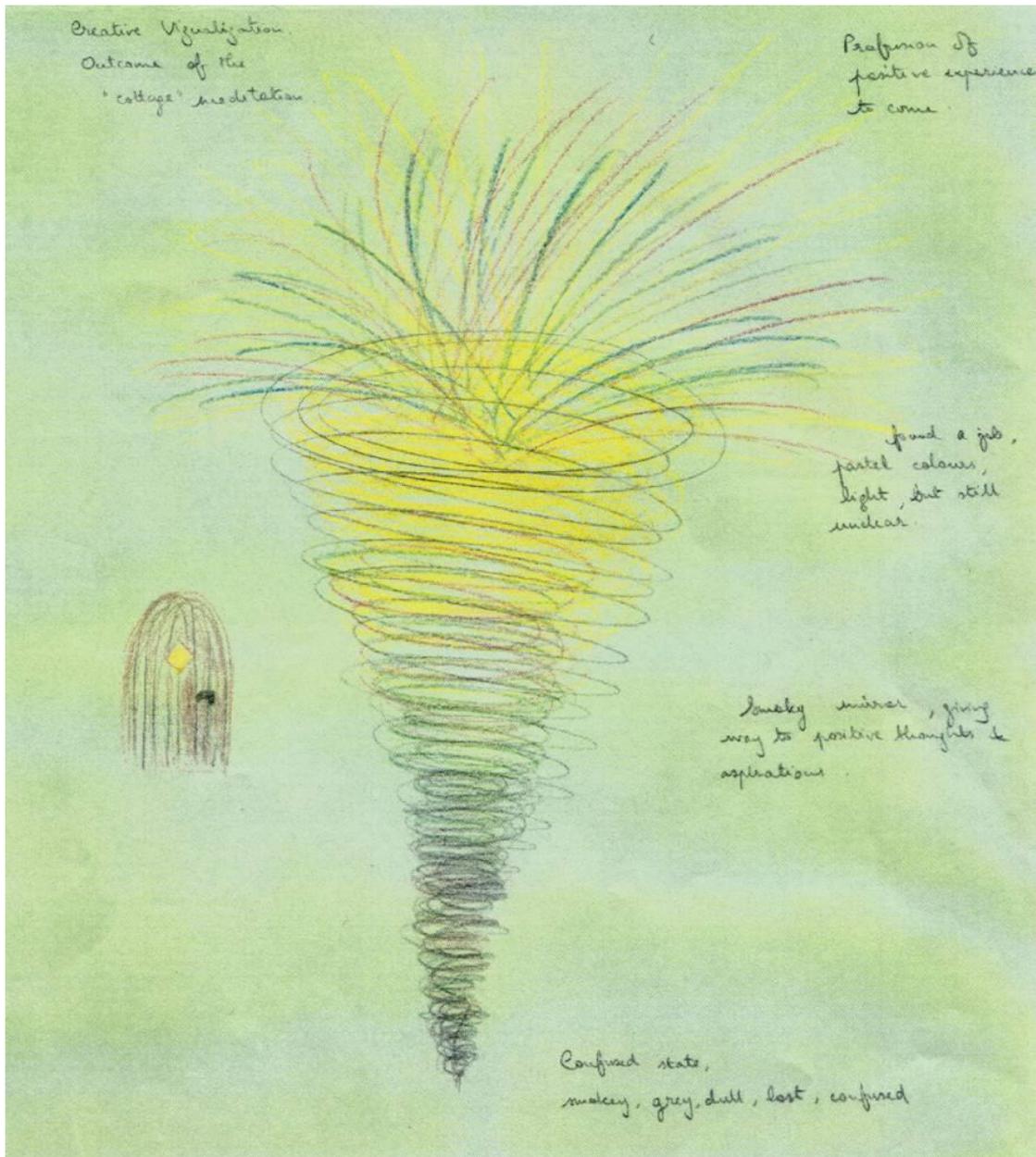


Figure 4.2: Stephanie: Smoking mirror vortex

Here is a spiral and I was here where there is so much pressure and it was a bit like I was in a confused state as it was smoky, grey and dull, I was lost and confused which is here at the bottom... when you said just think of a place where you can learn and you learn things and you feel comfortable, I really saw myself in Munich because I spend most of my time there and I would like to take a job there... then when you say 'you see through the mirror' there was nothing. I could not see perhaps Munich... I was not comfortable here and afterwards I made a drawing of this experience... I drew this spiral with more colours, up here where you get looser just to make the mirrors make me see things etc. and here I have written there are many colours find a job, pastel colours, light. (Interview, 11 May 2006)

The drawing is the student's representation of her experience, expressing her feelings as a colourful vortex with bright, positive light shooting out. Stephanie voiced her explanation in the interview.

I've chosen yellow because I think it's bright, it's gay, it's really lively and it attracts the eye and everything and here is some red and blue and positive colours. What I've written was positive experiences to come because I think they will come pretty positive about the things that I can achieve right now. At home from time to time I think about it. I just get my mind right and I think of so many things and that's a good thing because it was my way of visualisation of trying to see things in the future and thinking of it when I do my Masters when I would like to study and where it could lead to. (Interview, 11 May 2006)

As well as drawing her impressions, Stephanie drew inspiration from the imagery workshops and started to practise her own form of visualisation in her own time. She learned to use the methods independently and focus on her goals and how to achieve them.

It was unconscious because I didn't really think 'OK I should continue the visualisation we did in class, I will put the music on and think or escape from my daily life, it was just natural for me to sit because this activity of meditation has struck me and it made me think very often that 'how will I be in the future, how will it look like, how will I be dressing' and I tried to see concrete things which could make me see myself and it was just like it made me think, where do you want to go, what do you want to achieve and when should you do to reach that? Yes, it was a simple way of doing it, just sometimes just let your mind go off and think. (Interview, 11 May 2006)

Stephanie had set her academic and career goals. She had a plan of what she wanted to do and how she would get there. Unlike Mark, who was at the start of his university life and found visualisation was a part of his decision to change direction, Stephanie used visualisation to make her path clearer and to envision her goals.

Because you believe in yourself and if you want something good, if you set goals it just means that you know yourself, partly at least, in life, you know what you want and what you would like to achieve... It really makes us fix a target and reach it... for me it was good, I really enjoyed it. (Interview, 11 May 2006)

For Stephanie, the experience of visualisation appeared to be a positive one overall. But it was one which was tempered by her perceived inability, at times, to let her mind move to where she felt it ought to go. Visualisation seemed to have surprised Stephanie in allowing her imagination travel across a series of paths. It appeared that Stephanie had had a positive response to these activities because she could easily relate to what was being asked of her at times.

Stephanie also had difficulties in initially accepting the validity of her own experiences in this activity. After written reflection, Stephanie could accept her own experience as a valid, unique and personal journey. In suspending judgment and then reflecting, it can be argued that some of the critical faculties required for success in higher education are developed within this activity. They may be different to what the student has already come across in previous study and even within the same higher education establishment, challenging what has gone before but such critical analysis of self and experiences encompasses a set of skills nonetheless which is central to the effective graduate. This could relate to the transition to higher education from study at sixth form, college or other provision, including study in different cultures and countries as is the case with this student, and how an appropriate match can be made between previous learning experience and those particularly in Years Two and Three of an undergraduate course.

Conclusion

The pilot study provided an opportunity to test the methods and the data they could generate in a live setting prior to full implementation. One of the purposes was to reflect on the likely efficacy of the research when rolled out for the main project. The three short student profiles obtained from the pilot focused solely on visualisation and imagery and it became apparent from data analysis that it was

problematic to disentangle the visualisation and imagery element of the modules from other approaches covered, such as idea generation and other visual means of learning.

The student experiences reported in this chapter produced some initial themes relating to how visualisation and imagery could contribute to the enhancement of undergraduate education and some of the potential difficulties of these approaches to explore more fully with the main research group. The question of student stance and ability to move out of one's 'comfort zone' is clearly revealed through analysis of the pilot data. Mark was not convinced by the visualisation approach because he said he was a 'logical' individual, whereas Stephanie ultimately was able to reflect on her experience but had initial difficulties. One clear question posed by the pilot study is the combination of factors that determine an open-minded approach in students in engaging with creative ways of learning. It has also been shown through the pilot, in relation to stance, that some students accept the first possible solution that they produce to a creative problem whilst creative thinking requires divergent thinking at the outset to produce a range of ideas from which the most suitable can be ultimately selected. The inter-relationship of these various elements needed to be explored.

It appeared from the pilot that some students were more willing to draw, paint and make a collage to encapsulate their thoughts and feelings, rather than to write. Stephanie and Angela produced coloured visuals that were meaningful to them, whilst Mark did not. Although the pilot was a small scale piece of research, this variance in approach and attitude on the part of the student did suggest that this avenue of research would be profitable with the main research group.

What students want to achieve from their time at university and their general motivation is also relevant in addressing the research questions. An academic qualification may be taken for granted as a motivation whilst at university, but from the 'treasure maps' included in the text, numerous external and non-academic goals are evident. The university is judged by the final academic output of students in classifications but for students, their motivation for being at university may lie elsewhere to a large extent. There is a question of extrinsic and intrinsic goals

whilst at university and the linkage between the two should be explored to help understand engagement with the learning. Allied to this topic is the issue of student self-efficacy and academic self-motivation, that is to say the ability of a student to believe that he or she can achieve a particular goal and their approach in tackling this.

My own reflections on the findings of the pilot as given above, together with further secondary research within the topic area, have led me to refocus my research and the direction to pursue. The subsequent chapters of this thesis reflect this fresh focus that relates to the research questions stated in this introduction to the thesis.

What follows in Chapter Five is a narrative account of the experience of six students who have taken one or other of the two modules in years following this pilot study. The stories are personal profiles that reflect their engagement with creative learning methods and the extent to which the creative learning methods have been beneficial in enhancing their education and personal development. Profile and subsequent cross-case thematic analysis of those individuals' reported experiences explore the linkages and tensions between creative delivery and the goal of an enhanced student output.

Chapter Five: The Student Case Studies

Introduction

This chapter presents the experiences and stories of the six undergraduates who form the main body of research for this thesis. The reasons for their inclusion in this section are to provide a range of experiences of how undergraduate students engage with creativity in their learning. How they portray their thoughts and reflections of the creative approaches to learning shows their unique experience and how their individual learning journeys take them all in different directions. The participants and their stories also contribute to a broader perspective, discussed further in the next chapter, of creativity in learning in undergraduate higher education. Four students took the first year 'Creativity in Action' module while the remaining two were enrolled on the third year 'Creative Personal Development' programme of study. Each student has a different story to tell, with different outcomes and journeys of their experience of one of the two modules.

These profiles depict the students' experiences - good and bad - of the modules they took and provide the basis for the integrative cross-case thematic analysis section of the thesis presented in Chapter Six. The profiles draw strongly on the concept of 'thick description' as advocated by Geertz (1993: 10) in which the experience of the individual 'is a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another'. It is the job of the researcher to 'contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render'. The data presented here are written in a way to provide the reader with the first rendering, in Geertz' terminology, and an opportunity to absorb the stories of these six individuals who were either embarking on their university career as a student or about to graduate and transport their learning to the world of work.

The case studies were compiled from a range of rich, qualitative verbal, visual and written data sources detailed in the methodology chapter. The students were selected for the research to create a rich tapestry of stories and experiences. They illustrate that the individual student journey is rooted as much in past experiences

as they are in the present and future. This profile chapter outlining the case studies of the six students provides a breadth and depth of experience and student insight within a small number of cases. It lays the foundation of the cross-case interpretation and thematic analysis chapter following these profiles.

Sarah – Growing through creativity

Sarah's story is one of self-discovery. At the start of her final year she started to challenge assumptions she had about herself and her abilities. This led her to reflect on her own capacity for learning and her outlook to final year undergraduate study to reappraise and ultimately achieve her academic goal. Like many undergraduates, Sarah started the three year degree course straight from a sixth form comprehensive school. She left with an upper second classification. Coming to university from a comprehensive school, Sarah's A Levels were at the basic threshold to be admitted to the course. Her siblings and parents had strong academic track records, and although she was not under family pressure to perform well at university, she set herself the goal of achieving a 2:1 because 'I wanted to prove to myself that I could do it' (Interview, 6 February 2009). That goal did not sit well with her second year grades and, indeed, her own expectations of herself at the start of her final year. The pressure to perform well and succeed was, she implied, self-imposed. 'They are [her family] always very supportive, but I always felt a bit stupid and so I may be developed a chip on my shoulder. I just wanted to get a 2:1 because I thought that I could do it'.

Throughout her time at university Sarah was a conscientious student and was achieving mid to high 2:2 grades for the first two years of the course. However, a mark of 43 per cent in a second year piece of reflective work, which she thought had been a good submission, had demoralised her and this caused her, once again, to reflect on her capacity to succeed. Initially, when faced with her option choice for the final year, Sarah had shied away from taking the Creative Personal Development module, reluctant, in the light of the above experience, to take a module which was experiential. She was happier with modules with clearly delineated boundaries of content and specific theoretical parameters of assessment. She had first chosen a course that was more firmly rooted in the

concrete application of theory and without personal reflection as a core component of learning. However, just before the start of the module she changed her mind, but not without much soul-searching: 'I was quite apprehensive about it at first because I'm not really that creative... I have a lot of barriers I was a little bit worried about how they would come out' (Interview, 6 February 2009).

Sarah's earlier reflective work had been specified in the module descriptor as a reflective log, required for a work experience placement in another module in Year Two of her degree, and this is the element where she performed poorly. This played on her mind while deciding whether to change option to 'Creative Personal Development' in her final year, which involves portraying reflective thoughts and reflexivity in a creative way as the single assessment component; 'I was very worried about expressing myself as I should in order to get the right grade and early on I voiced my concerns with you that I was worried about it' (Interview, 6 February 2009).

Sarah commented on how she viewed her work at university.

One of the things we talked about in the [Creative Personal Development] lessons is that nothing is ever black and white, there are always shades of grey. I suppose that I always prefer things to be simple black and white but I suppose that I hadn't really thought about that. Nothing is ever black and white. (Interview, 6 February 2009)

The possibility of several appropriate responses to a scenario that could be validated through argument or creative thought troubled her. 'I was quite concerned that because this [Creative Personal Development Module] is much more creative [than the other option module], that I wouldn't be expressing the right information for this' (Interview, 6 February 2009).

Sarah had come to me to seek guidance on her final year dissertation. She claimed that the feedback she had received from another tutor on her work was limited and she needed a fuller account. On further questioning, it became apparent that the feedback actually had been appropriate but that Sarah seemed

to lack the confidence to put forward her own thoughts and arguments without verification or the approval of a tutor. I remember reassuring Sarah at the time that her views were valid and insightful but that she needed to develop the capacity for independent learning and the confidence to express herself, especially in the final year of an undergraduate course.

As one of her tutors for the previous two years I felt that Sarah was a creative individual and that the 'Creative Personal Development' module could help her develop a more confident approach to expressing and arguing her own views. As students are aware that final year marks are worth two-thirds of their final classification grade with the remaining third coming from Year Two, the final year is often one where students tend to choose modules where they are confident with the mode of assessment. If Sarah were to choose an experiential module that relied on reflection, a big leap of faith on her part would be needed. The question was whether she would see things the same way as I did. Certainly, Sarah began to question what she needed to do to succeed on the module. She put aside her perceived security of a purely theoretical module, which was the other option, and convinced herself that the creative and reflective route was a positive way forward. 'Initially I was worried that I wouldn't be able to get it right because it was so broad but in the end I really enjoyed it' (Interview, 6 February 2009).

One aspect that drew Sarah to the module was the way the curriculum was delivered. The 'Creative Personal Development' module was different to the others on the course. As a practice-based degree, the other modules focused on introducing theories and applying these to a range of practical and real-life scenarios. They involved little introspection. This relied entirely on introspection and employed learning approaches, not generally used in the other modules on the course. In Sarah's words:

in these lessons it exercised your brain and it wasn't just writing essays. It was drawing pictures, listening to things or interacting with your classmates rather than just sitting in a lecture theatre and, you know, just being spoken at. (Interview, 6 February 2009)

Sarah was eventually attracted to the option because of the experiential nature of the learning. She saw final year assessment in other areas of the degree as a stream of essays, a dissertation and written reports. She described these as 'hard going' but viewed the 'Creative Personal Development' unit in a completely different light. For Sarah, this module was like a 'little holiday... and you looked forward to it because you knew that you'd be colouring-in' (Interview, 6 February 2009). Colouring-in did feature in several workshops but this activity worked at several levels. At a superficial level, it was a primary school-type activity, but at a subconscious level, it can be argued that the enjoyment and opportunity for self-expression in a medium other than black type on white paper can help access reflections that might otherwise lay dormant. This was how Sarah viewed her experience of the module:

I think that maybe we didn't realise at first where it was going. I didn't certainly, but by the end of it you look back and definitely when I was doing my reflective document [assignment submission] I sort of thought 'now I understand that' or my brain's been working at that in its sub-conscious since that lesson and now I understand how these [approaches to self-development are] useful to me. (Interview, 6 February 2009)

Sarah opted to take the module because she asked one of her friends who had taken the class the previous year. In the end, she surprised herself at the grade she achieved. 'If I'd done Ethics then I wouldn't have got such a good grade. I got 70 per cent in this. I didn't expect to get that good a grade' (Interview, 6 February 2009). Sarah highlighted her growing awareness that many aspects of life are not 'black and white' in part of her Creative Personal Document, submitted for assessment. The topic of one of the sessions was on the assumptions that people often make, which are based on incomplete information. In the section on 'Assumptions' in her assessment work, the Creative Personal Document, she reflected on this aspect and related this to her own examination of herself and how she may have been viewed by other people. In Figure 5.1, Sarah begins to access how she felt about arriving at university and how other people viewed her. In the third paragraph she writes about putting on a confident front at the start of university when actually she was scared. She uses the metaphor of an onion with

many layers to describe her feelings. A second element relates to her upbringing in the final paragraph. The 'assumptions' exercise develops an earlier theme of Self and how experiences from the past often shape our present and can shape our future. Sarah's contribution here has a personal focus. She recognised that one of her hurdles in the past had been to view academic concepts in very concrete terms. Through reflection and participation in the module activities she modified her view. 'Not everything is black and white. Life is full of grey areas and not everything is as it may seem'.

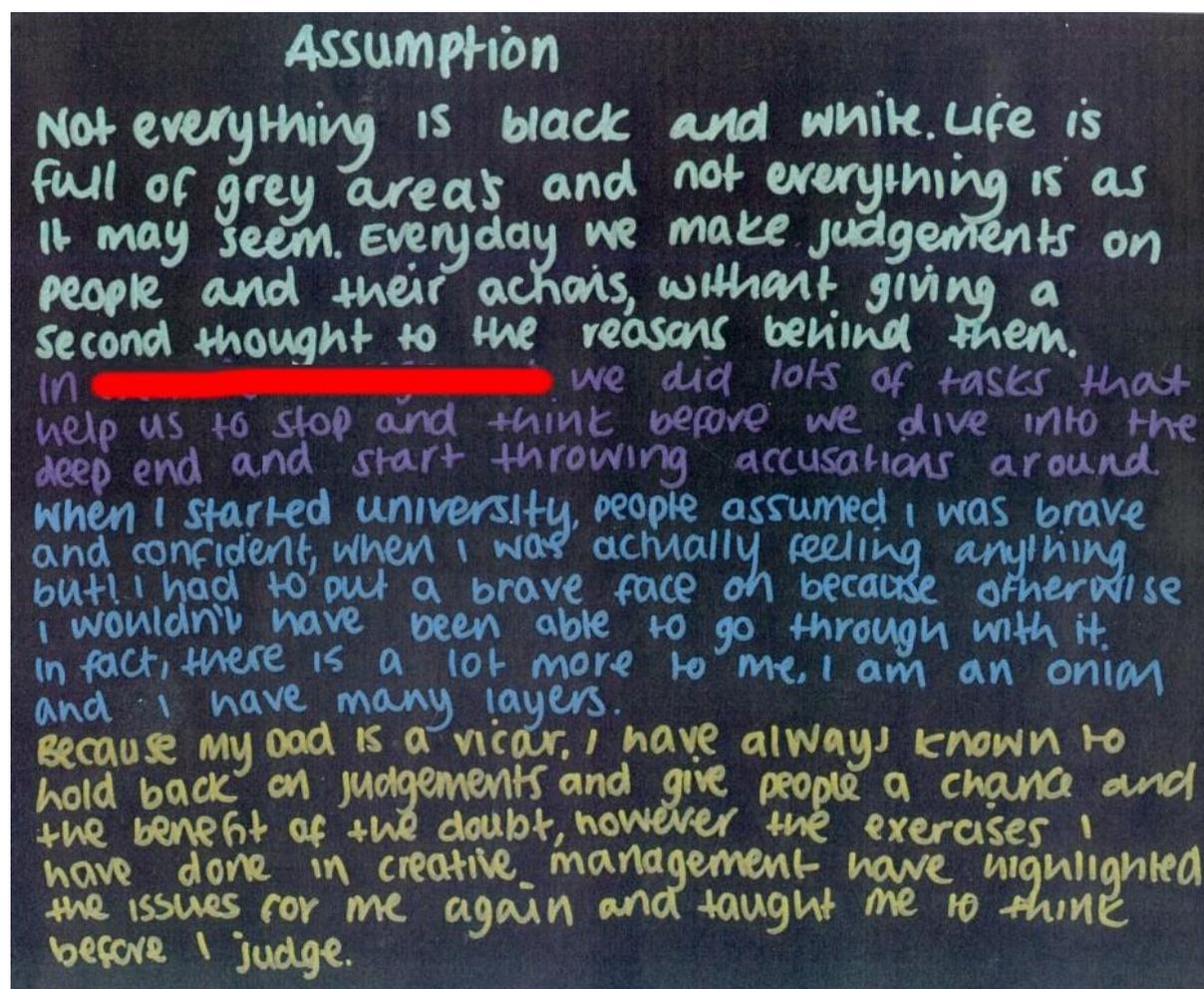


Figure 5.1: Sarah: 'Assumptions' page from Creative Personal Document

Sarah found the introspective focus of the unit both challenging and revealing. As a learning experience, she believed the emphasis on examining herself gave her insights that she would be able to apply in professional field after graduating.

I learned a lot of things. I learned about myself and what my behavioural patterns are and probably why I do the things the way I do them. I learned about looking at things in a different light. You know like I said about looking at things as if they're just black and white. Understanding that things are more complicated, there are lots of different factors to things. I learned about looking at issues from a different angle, from someone else's point of view and also... addressing how I approach issues. That's really good because I definitely used to be a real worrier and I used to be a real panicker and since I finished the module and Uni I've started to say to myself what's the point in worrying about things that you can't change. I really felt that I learned a lot from the module and was really surprised how helpful it was... Some people may have taken the module as an easy option because they thought it was just colouring-in but people didn't realise how helpful it was going to be. Certainly I don't think that I did and then when I finished I said 'that was really good'. I really enjoyed doing that module. (Interview, 6 February 2009)

Sarah thought that there was an atmosphere in the class that was different from other lessons, and that this was central to the success of the module.

We did a lot of talking. We were really encouraged to talk about what we thought and to give our opinions... and there was no right or wrong and that was really good. Sometimes when you're in class with a lot of people, you might not be really friendly with everyone and you might not want to say the wrong thing and that was really good because we were really relaxed and we didn't always sit behind tables did we? We often sat in a circle. Silly things like that, I think that they make a real difference because you're facing each other rather than looking at the back of someone's head. We also used lots of different learning techniques... like drawing. (Interview, 6 February 2009)

One of the exercises which the group undertook was the Johari Window. This is a tool to examine and explain aspects of self-disclosure. Sarah used her creative and artistic abilities to represent her view of herself as part of the Creative

Personal Document which she submitted for assessment (Figure 5.2).

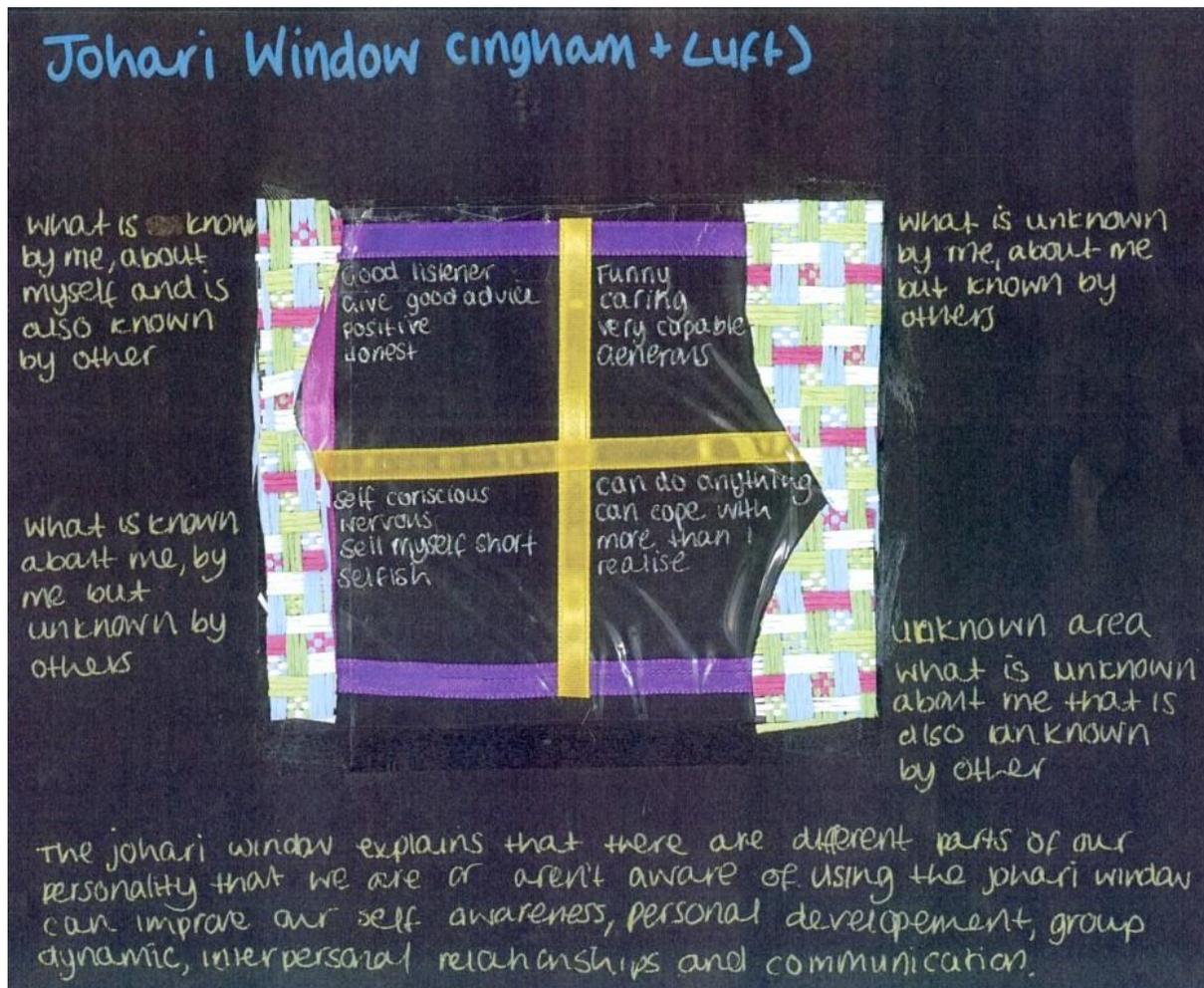


Figure 5.2: Sarah: 'Johari window' page from Creative Personal Document

Sarah admitted that she tended to be reluctant to put forward her opinion for fear of being 'wrong' and this exercise gave her an opportunity to reflect on why she acted as she did.

Sometimes I'm like an open book and sometimes I put barriers up against people so that they can't see how I'm really feeling and I think it was interesting for me to think about what I do let people see of myself and what I don't let people see of myself. (Interview, 6 February 2009)

The Johari Window exercise allowed Sarah to conclude that there were aspects of her personality that she did not understand: 'Actually there are a lot of things that I don't talk about and I'm not sure why' (Interview, 6 February 2009). In the diagram

she highlights an outward air of confidence but inwardly feeling unsure of herself. This is illustrated in the top right and bottom left quadrants of the window. It is an area for further reflection and self-development, which she identified and worked on throughout her final year at university.

Over the course of the module, Sarah gradually came to see herself as a creative person and liked the class exercises that demanded colouring and drawing. She believed that using colour and artistic techniques allowed her to access thoughts more readily. One of the assessment criteria involved presenting the Creative Personal Document in a creative way. Sarah produced hers in the form of a large album with thick black cartridge paper. She chose to use writing by hand using a light coloured pen to contrast with what had been the rule for assignments in most of the other modules. 'We've been doing a lot of black type on white A4 paper for three years. I thought 'doesn't he know we're supposed to be doing essays?' (Interview, 6 February 2009). Sarah took one of the principles of lateral thinking, assumption reversal, to move away from the confines of typed assignments in other units to make the most of the opportunity to integrate pictures and text.

I think that because it was such a big contrast to everything else and it did make me think very laterally, I've never been very good at that. I'm not very good at thinking outside of the box. It was a really good exercise. (Interview, 6 February 2009)

Sarah's assignment was full of contrasting and bright colours with her narrative written in silver or gold ink directly onto the black paper. She reported that she enjoyed producing the assignment, but recognised that she needed to develop the confidence to move away from strict rules relating to what was or was not permitted as part of the submission to a more individual choice of presentation: 'I was a little bit confused about doing it' (Interview, 6 February 2009). In the interview Sarah became particularly enthused and animated when she described how she produced her assignment. She talked quickly and her words seemed to come out in one long stream of thought:

I think that using different colours, textures and different materials let me go a bit crazy and do what I wanted to do and go a bit free and unrestricted which was nice because you spend so much time at Uni using your laptop, taking notes, pads and paper and everything is so similar and generic and all of a sudden you're allowed to use colouring pens and glue and glitter. It was fun and because it was fun I really enjoyed it and as time went on in the module I realised that I was having more fun and I was enjoying it more and it was less like Uni and more like 'we can all have a chat and you can talk about your favourite book and you can tell me what you think about this and I'm not going to judge you for it'. I think that was it. (Interview, 6 February 2009)

Sarah reflected on her description of the workshop sessions and felt that the classes were relaxed and supportive, but that they still had clear learning outcomes:

The lessons were definitely structured and guided by you as to what we'd be talking about, how we'd be addressing it, making sure that everyone had a chance to say what they wanted to and that there wasn't one person who stayed quiet the whole lesson, I think that everyone had an equal input into everything. (Interview, 6 February 2009)

She was keen to emphasise that that the delivery of the module was different to other workshops and seminars she had attended:

The lessons were always structured but they never felt structured. It was never like 'sit down, we're going to talk about this'. Like in a seminar we'd have a teacher talk to us and then we'd all go off into our little groups. Everything felt as if it flowed, really easily. (Interview, 6 February 2009)

Bright colours and visual creativity were clearly evident in Sarah's work throughout this module. Some examples include her personal timeline which consisted of a golden cord running through it from birth to the date she submitted the work and beyond, her personal SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis (Figures 5.3 and 5.4) and a flower which she chose to represent her personal assets (Figure 5.5).

Sarah's golden thread of life highlighted what she regarded as the key moments in her life. A number of these were the deaths of grandparents and meeting her partner, but the others were largely education-oriented with the start of school and university and end-examinations. Sarah continued her timeline into the future with largely personal goals of getting married and giving birth. Sarah chose to present her personal SWOT analysis (Figures 5.3 and 5.4) in the form of a four-sided flat shape with petals that could be opened to reveal the answers to her personal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. She chose this herself – it had not been discussed as a possible way of presenting ideas. A number of the comments tend to reflect the content of the Johari Window, but Sarah picked out a positive and practical use of the exercise in Figures 5.3 and 5.4. She was able to use the thoughts and conclusions of these exercises in job interviews. 'I was ready to answer questions about my strengths and weaknesses and I had thought about the targets and goals I wanted to achieve so I think this gave me a benefit in my interviews' (Interview, 6 February 2009).

Sarah says that what she had learned in this part of the module was instrumental in her being offered a position as a Marketing Assistant straight after completing her degree course.

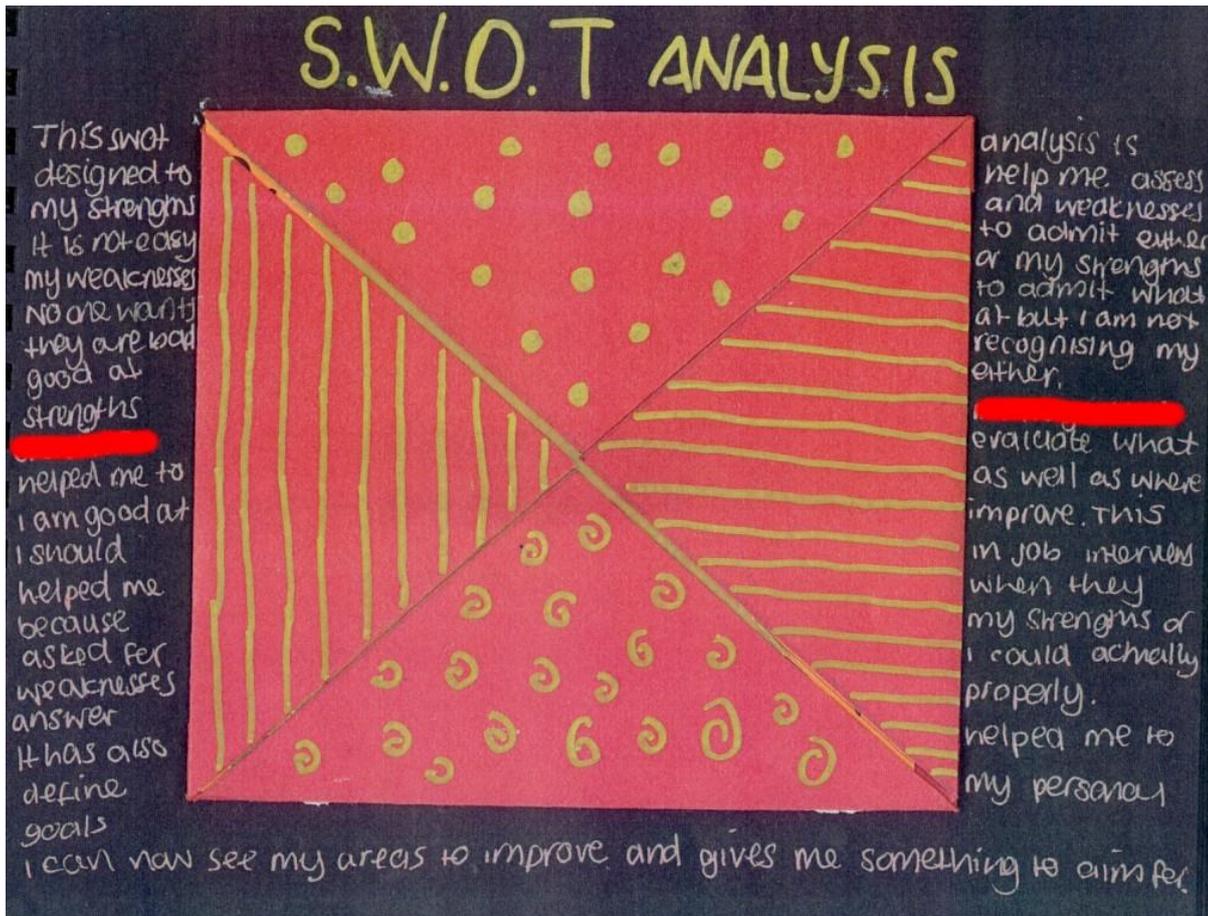


Figure 5.3: Sarah: 'SWOT analysis closed' page from Creative Personal Document



Figure 5.4: Sarah: 'SWOT analysis open' page from Creative Personal Document

Sarah thought it was important not to just see the work in class and the assignment as tasks that had to be carried out to achieve a particular grade. The work is personal, individual and a snapshot of a moment in time.

Doing a SWOT analysis of yourself and putting it away in a drawer and going back to have a look at what you wanted to improve about yourself, (seeing) good things about yourself, when you're feeling down, if you're having a bad day, you can go on back and say I've got all these qualities. (Interview, 6 February 2009).

She particularly liked drawing both as part of the work in class and in compiling her Creative Document for assessment. She said that she wanted to 'do myself proud'

and to use images of the sun shining down onto a flower as a metaphor for her own personal growth and positive qualities.

I was looking for different images that I liked. This is a flower, I thought that I'd do it in the shape of a flower with all the colours. To me that's quite aesthetically pleasing [pause] and the sun, yes, I've drawn a lot of sun rays and flowers. The sun, it has words coming out of it as well. And the sun, you know how the sun encourages things to grow, what I was wanting to put across there is that those are the things that I wanted to achieve more of and those are the things that I wanted from other people. (Interview, 6 February 2009)

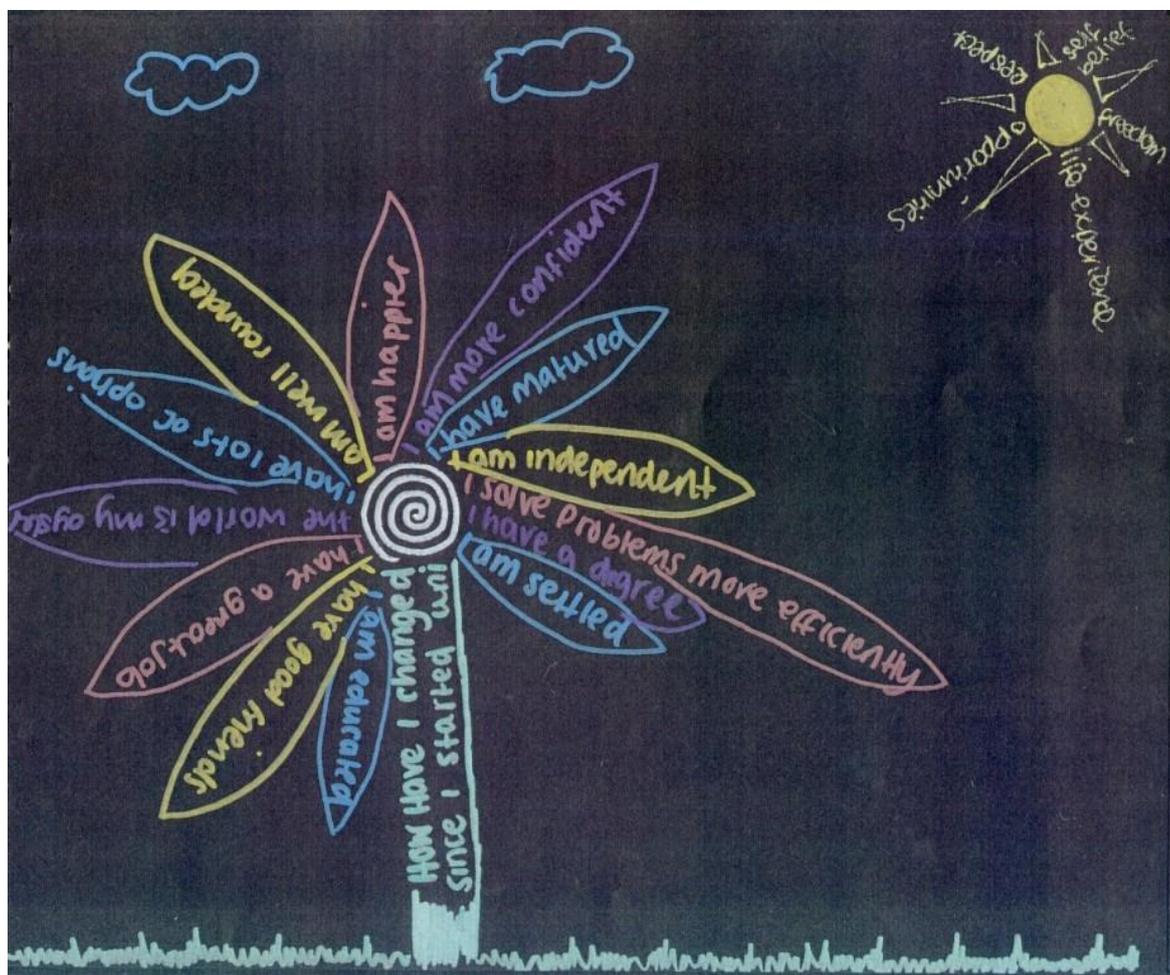


Figure 5.5: Sarah: 'Positive flower' page from Creative Personal Document

The creative focus of the module was ultimately a positive factor for Sarah, but it was not always, as noted earlier. Initially she had been reluctant to opt for a module that was introspective, perhaps because she was afraid what she would

find and because the required assignment output unlike the other elements of her course. As she admits here, she doubted whether she would have gained as much from the module if she had not been encouraged to put her thoughts down in a visual way.

I think that by doing things visually with drawings and pictures and cutting and sticking, it encouraged me to think more laterally whereas when I was doing my reflective log [in a previous module] and just typing I don't really think that my mind was stretched enough. [In that other module] I was writing the basic, just the bare minimum. Whereas here I was really digging around in my brain into all the corners to get out what I wanted to say and I think that's maybe why I got a good grade in this and in the reflective log [in a different module] I didn't. Maybe this allowed me to think more than in the reflective log. (Interview, 6 February 2009)

Her drawings and text on 'what makes me happy' (Figure 5.6) and 'portraits of my assets' (Figure 5.7) present a picture of someone who is confident and outgoing. Here, Sarah uses colour and single words or phrases to express herself.

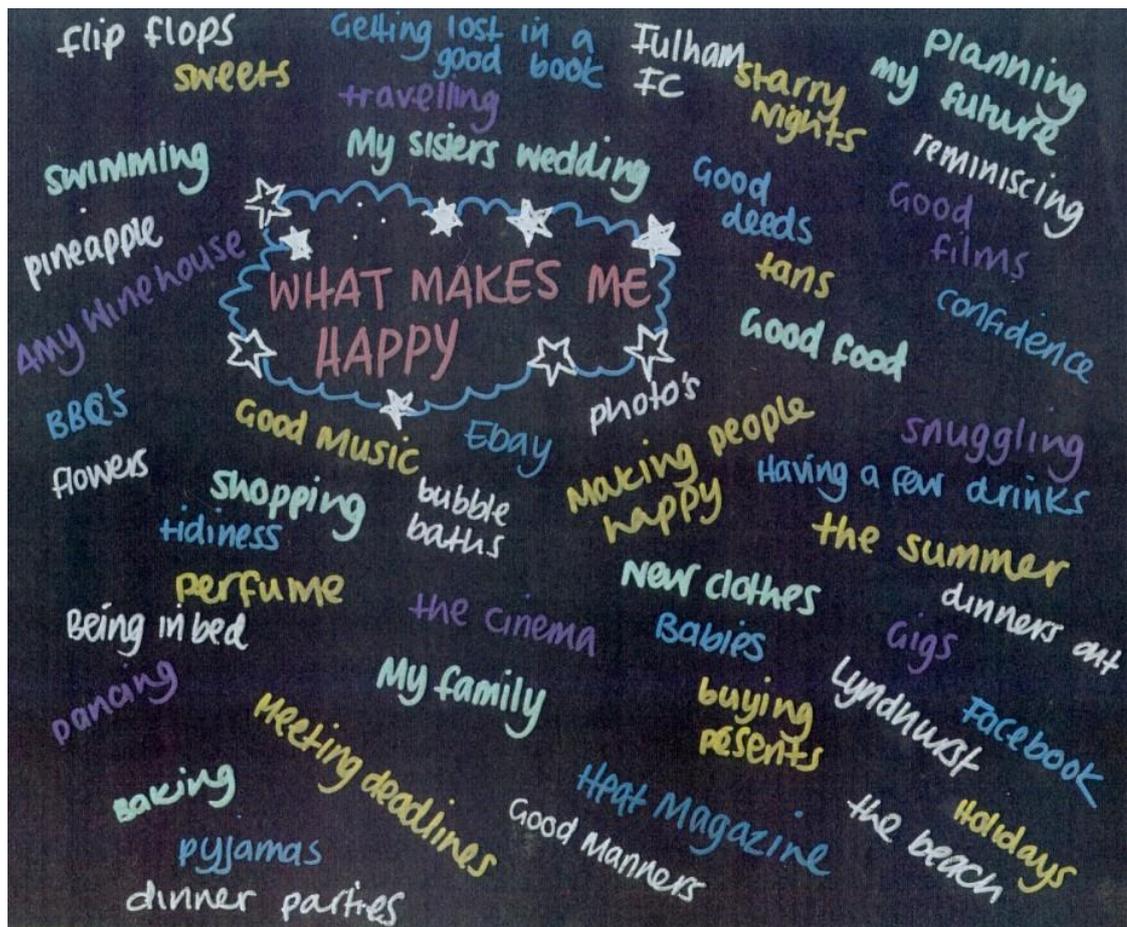


Figure 5.6: Sarah: 'What makes me happy' page from Creative Personal Document

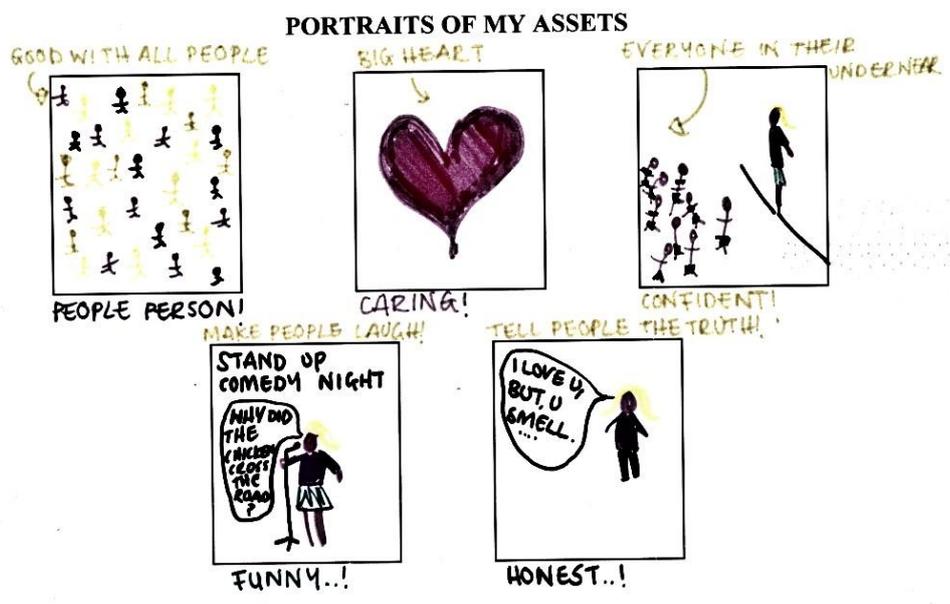


Figure 5.7: Sarah: 'Portraits of my assets' page from Creative Personal Document

Visualisation and guided imagery were an area that Sarah did not particularly focus on or use to a great extent as a means for reflection or creativity. She did, however, tend to use this as a way of relaxing. She had come across these concepts when she was at school and studied Drama for GCSE. There the students had to lie on the floor and imagine that they were somewhere else. Sarah recalled the 'Beach' visualisation and says that she uses this as a tool for relaxation and to help her go to sleep: 'I wouldn't say that visualisation is something that I'd use from day to day but I do use it to shut my brain down and as a relaxation tool which I find really useful' (Interview, 6 February 2009).

However, one of the visualisations held in class with a positive effect on Sarah was 'Graduation'. In this, students had guided imagery to help them imagine their own graduation ceremony. For Sarah, it motivated her to do all she could to achieve the 2: 1 classification which she was aiming for.

I imagined what it would be like to have your friends there and all your family and how you'd feel getting your certificate. It did focus me because it was towards the end of the semester and everyone was really gunning for the finish line. We'd had

enough of everything. Dissertations we were sick of them, all the different hand-ins we'd all just had enough of it and at the end of it there was even more revision.

That really helped us focus on why we were in our third year, why we were doing all this work and why we'd been working for it. That's the goal. That's what I want to get to. I want to graduate and make my parents proud and I want to be proud of myself. I want to make sure that all of this hard work has been worth it. (Interview, 6 February 2009)

Sarah also highlights 12 specific areas in her Creative Document where the module has had a positive impact on how she views herself and has modified her outlook (Figure 5.8).

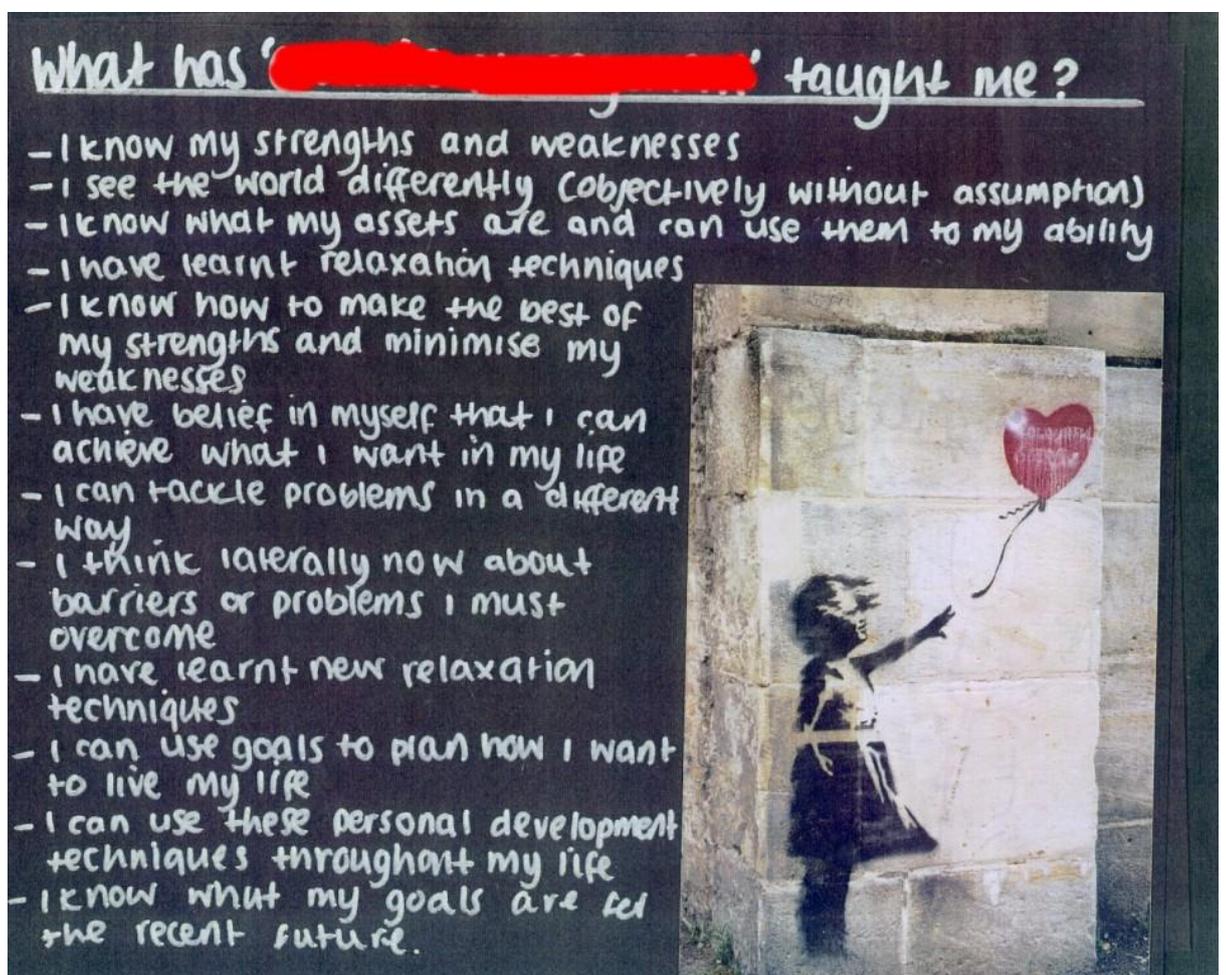


Figure 5.8: Sarah: 'What has this module taught me?' page from Creative Personal Document

Sarah identifies a much greater personal awareness of her own personal development through studying the module. Of particular note are knowledge of and reflection on her personal qualities and how she can apply these and develop

others to set and achieve her personal goals. In her single interview, Sarah said that she needed to focus on, believe in and rely on herself. She could see a definite shift in her approach to life and growth in her self-confidence.

Things have changed and I don't know if it's down to the module or some of the effect that it has had on me but I want to be more independent and I definitely felt that as I was doing the module. And when I got it [the assessed Creative Document] back I said to myself I remember doing that and I remember how I felt when I wrote that down.... It taught me a lot about myself. About how I can think and how I can change my thinking, where my strengths are and where my weaknesses are. Learning to think about things in a different way, to learn to let go of things that can't be changed. It made me want to be a more independent person and definitely made me take a long hard look at myself, about what I want to do now and later in life and how am I going to get there? I felt that it taught me quite a lot. It was really valuable. (Interview, 6 February 2009)

Sarah's story is one of self-discovery and, in many ways, a battle with her own self-belief and self-confidence. Her upbringing and the perceived pressure she imposed on herself from sibling success are the elements that made Sarah feel that she had to perform. What is clear is that it must have taken courage for her to go with her instinct and to change her option choice to an experiential module focusing on her own self and demanding the development of mature introspection. Sarah's experience of the module was positive and she concluded that undergraduate programmes should demonstrate a focus on creativity and reflection:

It [Creative Personal Development module] was completely different to anything else that we'd been doing and that's why... I thought it should be made a compulsory part of the course because it's your brain's opportunity to be free and wander around and not be constrained or confined at all. (Interview, 6 February 2009)

Simone – The power of the image

Simone was an eighteen-year-old international student from Spain. From the age of seven she had attended an English school in the Middle East where the learning style was practically by rote. She contrasted this with the practical application and independent learning she encountered in her undergraduate education in England. Simone came from a high-achieving family and had been given encouragement throughout her life. At university, she took the 'Creativity in Action' module in the first year of her course. Simone's speaking, listening and writing skills in English were excellent. She graduated with a high 2:1 classification and, from analysis of her transcript, would have been awarded a first class degree if she had not earned a poor mark in one final year module. Simone has since gone on to achieve a Master's degree in International Relations at a different university and is now working for an international governmental organisation. She also took advantage of a one-semester exchange with a university in France in her second year, where she scored high marks in all her courses.

Simone enjoyed writing in her weekly journal. She used her journal to differentiate between class notes that were subject-specific and largely descriptive or fact-oriented, and journal entries and comments that were reflective and analytical. She noticed a change in her journal writing over time. At the outset she described her writing style as 'childish' and tending towards description in many places, but she found that her entries became more analytical as time went on. The journal was part of the coursework and, although she found it useful, she did not continue writing a personal journal in the second and third years of the course. She did, however, keep a visual journal in the final two years of the course.

Simone described herself as a creative person: she enjoyed the activities in the module, which she was easily able to apply to her studies elsewhere on the course:

I realised... here it is, creativity is imagination, invention, endless thinking, freedom, risk, style and a way of letting your mind stream through its hidden possibilities. (Interview, 9 January 2009)

Simone liked drawing and in the creativity module she drew several images from the visualisations and guided imagery sessions. She reported that she found these beneficial because the act of transferring an image in her mind to paper made a transient thought permanent and this permanence made the thought more concrete and, in her mind, achievable. Although her first year journal, intended largely to be written, contained a number of images, the visual notebook/journal she kept voluntarily in Years Two and Three was far more colourful. These included sketches and sometimes collages or photographs on a coloured background. These tended to reflect her emotions and feelings at the time in relation to her course and life in general.

During her first year, as time progressed Simone started to become more expressive with her drawings. The first exercise in illuminative art at the very start of the first year was to do with how she felt at beginning her university studies (Figure 5.9).



Figure 5.9: Simone: Illuminative art from in-class work

In the journal she wrote at the time of the workshop (October 2007), she started to adopt a deeper approach to learning. Simone admits that this was a 'rough and ready' drawing which she was originally going to ignore and not include in her

journal. She then reflected on what she had drawn and began to draw out and articulate a deeper meaning:

In my notes I have done a strange and abstract picture which I was going to ignore but I think that I've learned that even the most insignificant things can hide secrets, so here it is... (Reflective Learning Journal)

She writes that at first sight the drawing does not seem to make sense but she believes that the explosion shows what she feels at that moment as a student. She sees the stick people as symbolic in that she does not feel alone and that she is surrounded by people who are close to her and who are, in her words 'living the same experience' (Reflective Learning Journal). The face on the far right of the drawing, to Simone, symbolises happiness. She sees the confusion in the left hand side, which does not make much sense at first sight. There is a bus in a maze of what looks like a road, and neither does this make sense. She interprets this as searching for her own way in herself. She contrasts this with an illuminative art piece drawn at the end of the module in Figure 5.10.

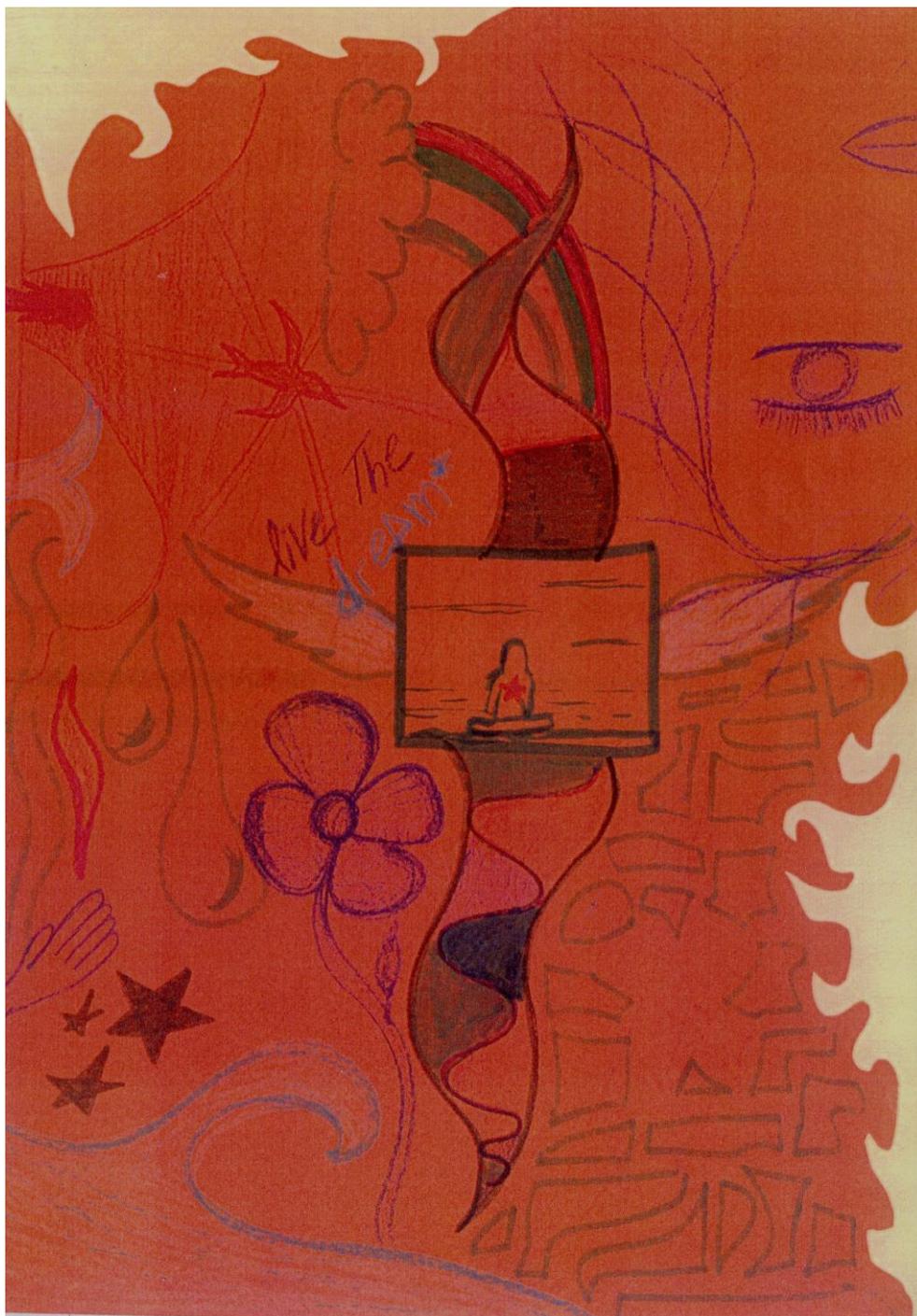


Figure 5.10: Simone: Illuminative art, end of module / year-independent work

In a reflective paper at the end of the first year, Simone contrasts the two drawings. The first, she says, is simple and has few colours but reflected her thoughts at the time, namely an explosion of emotions and making new friends. The second drawing she describes as ‘a chaotic melange of feelings, shapes and colours [which] clearly show how my head is continuously busy with thoughts and true meanings’ (Reflective Learning Journal). She gives a detailed analysis of the

various elements of the drawing in her journal. Her conclusion in the assessed reflective paper is that the months between the beginning and end of her first year taught her how to grow as an individual and how to express herself visually and on paper. She concludes that drawing showed her 'how to search inside my head for what I truly hide' (Reflective Paper).

Simone was able to apply the creative approaches used in class to her other modules. In particular, she liked to use the technique of challenging assumptions to help her come up with original and unusual ideas and responses to assessment briefs. In one of these briefs, the task was to produce a drawing to promote a form of superglue as a potential advertising message. She went through a process of idea generation and creative thinking and then applied critical thinking in dismissing a number of the original ideas to finally come up with leaves being stuck to trees in autumn: the only tree with leaves after the storm was the one where the superglue had been applied. The creative promotional message was clear that this form of glue was the only one that would withstand a violent storm when applied to tree branches.

Simone was a high-achieving student as an undergraduate and she liked working in groups for assessed work with people who had a similar approach to study. However, when they did not, this had a knock-on effect and the module in which she did not score well in her final year was based on group work. She said that she did not like to rock the boat with her own ideas when there were more vocal group members putting forward ideas.

Simone continued to explore her experiences through images in her Erasmus study placement at a university in the south of France in the second half of her second year. She was apprehensive about this placement, despite having lived in several countries before. Her nervousness about starting the course in France was not only that it was a new programme with new students, but that it was delivered in a fourth language for Simone. On her own initiative she drew on the concept of 'illuminative art' that had been covered in the first year of her undergraduate programme in England and used this to express her emotions as she embarked on her course in France.

She portrayed herself at the beginning of that course as being under the sea, surrounded by a bubble in Figure 5.11.



Figure 5.11: Simone: Illuminative art at end of second year – independent work

Above the water is the Spanish word for hope, '*esperanza*', to one side, the Spanish for 'I am free' (*ya soy libre*). She described herself as 'drowning' at the beginning of her stay there but perceived the bubble that surrounded her in the picture as an energy, invigorating her and pushing her on to succeed, despite her initial reservations. There are seven footsteps on the left of the drawing. Seven is a number that Simone likes and feels is lucky for her. She says that the footsteps start at the bottom of the drawing but there is still a way to go to reach the word 'hope' which is above the surface of the sea.

Always when I write things or I draw things I feel like getting emotions out of myself. It helps me to visualise. It shows in a clear way this is where I am. These are my aims (pointing to the Spanish words for 'hope' and 'I am free') and this is where I am. If not, I would be a bit lost. (Interview, 17 March 2010)

According to Simone, it took about a month to get used to the new study regime in France. She developed new friendships and began to think, speak and write more fluently in French. She used the illuminative art drawing as a visual motivator. It showed where she started at the beginning of her placement in France and because the drawing was on display in her room, she could recognise the progress she was making in integrating with other students and with the academic side of the course.

Simone seemed to like abstract concepts and metaphor as ways to develop her thinking. She made positive reference to a lecturer at the French university who made a particular impression on her and who tended to use philosophical phrases in his teaching. One phrase which stuck in her mind was 'risk is the poetry of action'. 'He [the French tutor] taught us to think rather than just learn,' she said (Interview, 17 March 2010). His comments and style of teaching reminded Simone of her 'Creativity in Action' class in England. She recalled that, at university, learning increasingly became the responsibility of the student. Simone appeared to take a responsible, mature and independent approach to her studies. She says the key to her successful study skills was organisation. She was able to prioritise study activities and to make decisions as to what was relevant when researching assignments.

During her first and second years, Simone produced a number of other drawings and visual statements. She concluded that if the images had not been put down on paper they would have stayed in her head unconsciously. These drawings and images are discussed further in the analysis.

For Simone, the classes on guided imagery and creative visualisation were 'strange and unusual', but in a positive way. In one interview, Simone said that visualisation was the key to success in her studies: 'If you see yourself there, you believe in yourself. If you think that it's a real thing then you believe in yourself... and that's the first step'. (Interview, 17 March 2010). She describes her experiences clearly and fully in her journal. The stone which she picked up as part of the 'Beach' visualisation is at her home in Spain, where it is safe. She sees the stone as part of herself and as part of her unconscious or subconscious mind. She

can draw strength from it just knowing it is there. Simone's analysis of her treasure map (Figure 5.12) shows her following a path towards success, and this is discussed in greater depth in the thematic analysis chapter of the thesis. Once again, she was able to produce a creative artefact and on reflection and identify and explain the meanings behind each individual element.

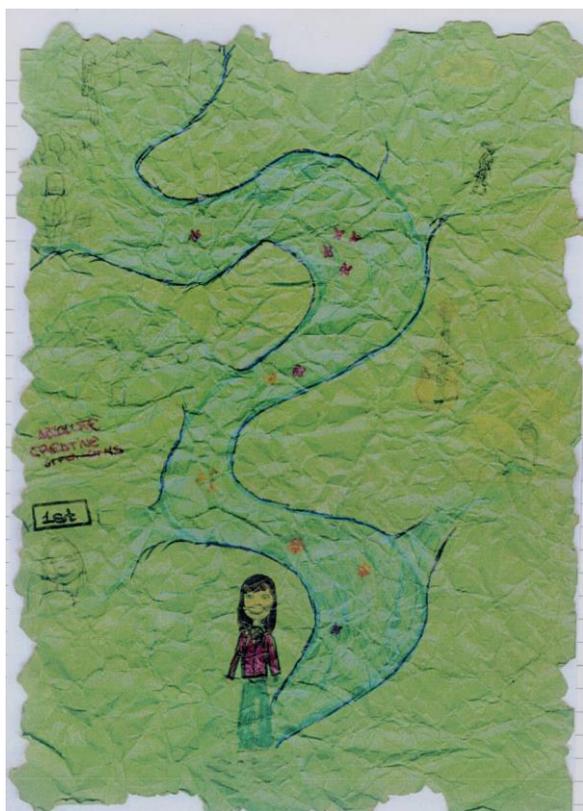


Figure 5.12: Simone: Creative visualisation treasure map from in-class work

Simone acquired an interest in philosophical thought during the early years of university and developed a more independent approach to study. She sought out extra sessions in French and philosophy and seemed to enjoy questioning, analysing and making sense of the world around her. She started to develop her own picture of herself as an individual, where she wanted to go and how she could get there.

The question of intrinsic and/or extrinsic motivation to learn and engagement with creative approaches to learning is one that is central to Simone's approach to study. For her, the essence is in the learning. In her first interview (Interview, 9 January 2009), Simone said that since secondary or high school, she had

developed a belief that learning and the pleasure of learning was more important than marks or summative assessment. One point which she made in her last interview (Interview, 28 May 2010) was that she seemed to have a different motivation to many of the other students on the course. Simone believed that the aim of most of the other students is just to get a job in their chosen industry at the end of their course. She was critical of the approach of some of the other students on the course. She said they had spent three years on the course to build a portfolio just to get a job. In contrast, she viewed her undergraduate programme as a means to express her creativity rather than to hone particular skills for a specific career direction although, as noted earlier, she did go on to take a Master's course in International Relations, which does not quite bear out the philosophy she espoused with reference to her undergraduate education. She saw the 'Creativity in Action' module as a vehicle allowing her to validate her belief that university should be about learning and academic and personal self-development rather than a route to a job. She described the module as 'about knowing yourself, it's about life, the future' (Interview, 9 January 2009).

It was clear from the series of interviews, her reflective assignments and the journal that Simone had furthered her learning, understanding and application of approaches to creative thinking and creative problem solving explored in the module topics. She could see how the Multiple Intelligences of Howard Gardner and the modified version of these by Tony Buzan could be useful in teamwork and identifying career paths for individuals. She was able to apply these concepts when she was in France, where she began to notice how individuals had different strengths in mathematics, language or philosophy. She became aware that people have different strengths and even someone who was deemed 'clever' would have areas where they would not excel (Interview, 28 May 2010).

Simone identified the concept of self-efficacy as central to her own development and life philosophy (Interview, 17 March 2010). For her, it is important to know her positive qualities and that, in many ways, the world is her oyster. She visualised gaining an internship the previous summer and was successful in her application, saying that the process of becoming self-efficacious started in the first year of her course (Interview, 17 March 2010). There was a lesson based on this concept and

it seemed to create a spark in her. Simone says it was a gradual progression, and that by the start of her third year she believed in herself (Interview, 17 March 2010). She felt that finding the confidence to explore herself and her beliefs and actions through her earlier university studies triggered this, citing an example where she found one module particularly difficult. In it, she had to create part of a website and she found the web programme especially complex and not intuitive. Although she felt that initially she was going to fail the module because she did not really understand the programme she took the time to learn on her own to overcome the obstacles and eventually passed the module with a good mark (Interview, 17 March 2010).

The third time I interviewed Simone was at the end of her three-year undergraduate course (Interview, 28 May 2010). She decided to independently produce a further piece of illuminative art (Figure 5.13) to illustrate her emotions about reaching the end of her degree programme.



Figure 5.13: Simone: Illuminative art at end of final year – independent work

She used a blue piece of paper because, for her, blue symbolises peace. She drew a cloud because she wanted to show that she was on her own cloud and, as with her second illuminative art piece, she also included water. She said that water

symbolises life and included pink in her drawing to symbolise energy and green to represent life. She also drew a plant representing personal growth. The plant contains three leaves, each one a different colour. Simone said that it represented the three different ways in which she had developed over the course; personally, intellectually and spiritually. As with the drawing at the end of the first year, she included seven footsteps with the last footprint being larger than the others because, for Simone, the last step, moving on from the undergraduate course, is the biggest.

Simone recalled the drawing from the start of her course representing the explosion and state of uncertainty. At the end, it still represented an explosion of energy but the latest picture represented the clear direction her life was taking. She included the words 'question mark' at the top of the drawing and chose to do this rather than drawing a question mark because she likes to use words as well as draw. In this case, she thought that the words made the point more strongly. The words means that Simone did not really know where her life was going to take her but she had, over the course of the previous three years, developed more skills, knowledge, application and experience to use as a springboard for the Master's course she was planning to follow. Simone also drew a separate pair of closed eyes (Figure 5.14) with the words, in French, 'I don't know'. This, too, represented the feeling of not knowing what the next step in her life would be.



Figure 5.14: Simone: Additional illuminative art at end of final year – independent work

Simone felt that drawing her feelings did help her access thoughts and feelings which she would not have otherwise identified:

it is really curious because I discovered that even when I am explaining to you, if I hadn't drawn these things then I wouldn't have been able to think what was really [happening] inside and when I put it on paper, it is shouting back at me, 'this is what you feel now'. (Interview, 28 May 2010)

Throughout the three years of her undergraduate studies Simone appeared to have grown in becoming an active learner. She had developed her knowledge and insight outside the set curriculum to include philosophy and she chose a challenging dissertation topic to do with the conditioning of international students' identity in the light of philosophical theory. In it she used many visual artefacts and integrated aspects of philosophical writings that she had researched and did not form part of the standard learning programme. Simone saw words and pictures as being interchangeable in describing and analysing concepts:

Maybe writing is another way of visualising, because writing is all about metaphor for me, it's all about images. It's just that the tools we use are different. Here it's a pencil and colours and writing is words. (Interview, 28 May 2010)

As an international student, Simone had made a conscious decision to study in a country other than her native Spain. Clearly a committed student, she was keen to make the most of her undergraduate experience. One aspect which will be explored in the analysis section of the thesis relates to the characteristics of students who engage with creativity and integrate this into their individual framework for learning. Simone's experience could suggest that having an international background and a broader perspective may be beneficial in integrating creativity and learning. It is a topic to which I return in the cross-case analysis section in the next chapter. She believed that students who decided to study abroad tended to be more aware of and would take better advantage of the opportunities and benefits of study in a foreign country than many domestic students. She also thought that having been brought up in a non-British culture

gave international students a different perspective that could help them to develop ideas and concepts in a different way to British students.

In summary, Simone saw creativity as a central force in her life. She was happy to work within a frame of uncertainty, not knowing where actions would lead her. She discovered that drawing was a positive way of expressing her thoughts and feelings. Simone showed a strong intrinsic motivation and engagement with creative approaches to learning and demonstrated this by wishing to expand her knowledge, application and learning for the love of it, rather than having a specific employment outcome. At the time of writing she possesses a Master's degree and a sought-after position in international governmental administration, with her international outlook and linguistic capability, Simone looks set to continue the successful career she has chosen to pursue.

Mike – Living the creative life

Mike's story is one of self-belief and intrinsic motivation with regard to creativity. He was highly confident in his interviews and contributions in class. This story shows how, little by little, the creative and nurturing familial environment he experienced as a child helped him develop as a creative individual and impacted on his approach to the 'Creativity in Action' module in the first year of his undergraduate course. Mike was a nineteen-year-old international student from Italy when he arrived at university. He was a student who always looked beyond the obvious in his work, both in this first-year module and in the final two years of his course. He was enthusiastic towards both his studies and his interests outside class. He aimed high and, as far as his academic work was concerned, he achieved his goal.

Reflecting early in his first interview on the origins of his creativity, Mike saw himself as being different from other people in the class 'I think that I'm a more creative person than a lot of the people that I meet'. He took it for granted that people should dream about their life and aspirations and he readily accepted and applied the creative elements of the curriculum within the module: 'This

imagination thing, the setting of goals and all that, making these little “mental movies”, all this I’ve done since I can remember’ (Interview, 13 May 2009).

For Mike, a multicultural family brought with it a number of national identities stemming from his grandmother who was Anglo-Italian and a grandfather who was Italian and lived in the United States. Mike also spent part of his early life in South Africa when his family moved there. This varied cultural background led him to observe: ‘I haven’t got a particular culture. I can’t say that I’m Italian. I’m Italian for some things and I’m English for a lot of things’ (Interview, 13 May 2009).

Mike’s parents divorced when he was six, an event that he described as a turning point in his life both emotionally and in using his imagination:

I think that from that moment, being so small and I couldn’t do anything really, I had to imagine that I would be able to do something one day so I started to imagine ‘I’ll do this, I’ll do that. (Interview, 13 May 2009)

He instinctively started to imagine being in different places, with his father and not his mother, and he came up with novel ways of breaking free from his family home and moving to be with his father ‘The first things that I started to imagine were ways to escape’ (Interview, 13 May 2009). He came up with examples of walking along a road to where his father lived and what he would find on the way. He imagined crawling out of his house to start his journey and using a jet pack to give a faster journey:

I still have the image of this jet pack that I was dreaming about with the colours and everything and the commands on the joysticks and I still remember it. It’s such a clear image. (Interview, 13 May 2009)

A creative start may have also helped Mike develop his analytical skills prior to starting his undergraduate course. He took it for granted that, in university, situations should be viewed from various angles. In class he adopted a definite visual perspective in the way he described situations. He illustrates this by talking about how he analyses television programmes:

Whenever I see a television programme I always look at it from different points of view. I say if I was the Director I would have made the actors say this instead of that or I would have taken a shot from the ground instead or in different light or made the scene longer. (Interview, 13 May 2009)

For Mike, a cognitive ability to develop and appreciate a range of interpretations or viewpoints, which some undergraduates find difficult to grasp, is something that was quite natural to him. He also mentions this in his learning journal and in his final interview (Interview, 28 May 2010) just before completing his studies. So, on arriving at university, Mike was at ease both with the concept of creativity and trying new ways of thinking. One of the first exercises in class was to use illuminative art to explain how each student felt to be starting the degree course. Mike's image is reproduced in Figure 5.15.

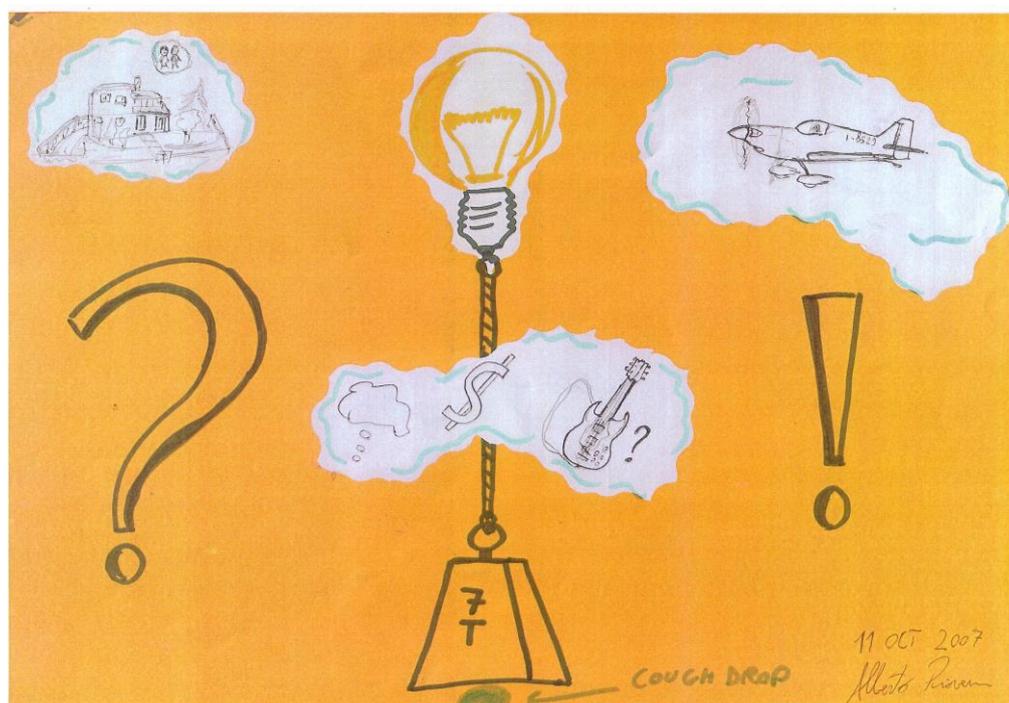


Figure 5.15: Mike: Illuminative art at start of module - in-class work

In the first interview, Mike explained that the light bulb represents his mind and this was beginning to glow with ideas with ideas at the start of a degree course, which he really wants to take. The cough drop at the bottom represents the immediate difficulty he had at the time of a bout of flu. The question mark represents the

unknown elements of the future and what he wants from life and the exclamation mark the exciting, unexpected and eventful aspects of life. Mike said in that interview that he had no clear idea of what he wanted to do when he completed the course. The aeroplane in the cloud which is in the top right hand corner of the drawing represents one of Mike's passions – flying. He had been hoping to train as a pilot in the Italian Air Force but was unable to be considered for selection on medical grounds. The images tend to relate to a time after graduation and the benefits that a good degree in a creative subject could bring. He focuses on buying a house, and other elements in the centre of the piece are what he described as 'things that are in-between having ideas and things that I have to do and things that I'm not sure of'. (Interview, 13 May 2009). These include his hobbies of playing guitar – 'I really wanted to be a rock star for three or four years but then it drifted away' – together with making money represented by the dollar sign (Interview, 13 May 2009).

Mike chose the orange paper for his illuminative art in Figure 5.16 because he said it was a strong 'happy colour'. He had originally considered a pale lemon paper, but 'it's not as vivid and happy. Orange to me is full of life, it's a really powerful colour' (Interview, 13 May 2009). Mike had interpreted the seminar brief in a different way to most of his peers. Whilst others tended to use coloured pencils or felt-tipped pens on the paper, Mike went for two different colours for his paper and used the pale blue to represent the clouds and the surround for the light bulb. There is very little to do with actual studying in the image. Mike says that this is because he was not worried about the course at all, once again demonstrating a belief in his own abilities.

I was never worried about studying here because I made a choice to come here and when I made the choice I said 'OK, I'll go there and do what it takes to get the best result so that was not a problem'. (Interview, 13 May 2009)

Over the course of the year, he said he became aware that he had been instinctively using his imagination during his childhood but that no-one had focused on developing his creativity or explaining the positive aspects of thinking in a creative way: 'I was starting to think that it was wrong to imagine or to make all

these movies [in his mind]' (Interview, 13 May 2009). He got to a stage before he came to university when he thought that he should change his thought processes:

I was saying 'I'm not really normal, I should stop doing this stuff and be like everybody else' but the [module] just made me think that I was actually doing [something] good. (Interview, 13 May 2009)

Mike reported that he was very keen on his learning from the visualisation and guided imagery sessions. He asked for guidance outside the class on how to develop this side of his creativity and independently followed a CD-based course in this approach (Interview, 28 May 2010). In particular, he found the ability to visualise was straightforward, having been using this throughout his childhood. In Years One and Two he applied visualisation specifically to the various assessed and optional creative briefs that came his way. Initially he used the light and relaxation exercises to focus his thoughts and, when relaxed, allowed images that addressed those briefs to come into his mind. Later he moved to that stage without having to mentally wind down:

When I concentrate on a brief I can think just about that. That wasn't possible before. It happens automatically now but I remember that last year [before he experienced the imagery sessions] I couldn't do it. (Interview, 13 May 2009)

Mike reported in all the interviews and in his learning journal how imagery in the mind played a large part in his creative life and his approach to undergraduate study. He explained how to use all the senses in his imagined scenes: sight, smell, sound, touch and where appropriate, smell to help him produce creative ideas (Interview, 13 May 2009; Interview, 28 May 2010). He was not an enthusiastic writer, however his VARK scores suggest strengths as a visual and auditory learner. He reflects, 'it's a process which is integrated in my imagination' and he uses visual material to generate creative stimuli: 'I go on Google and look for pictures' (Interview, 28 May 2010). Naturally, he had to produce a written answer when required, but instead of writing an initial draft answer to essay assignment questions he would sometimes dictate various options into a voice recorder and then transcribed the one that he felt was most appropriate.

Mike demonstrated an active and independent commitment to his own learning. He would analyse what he wanted to achieve and would seek out what he needed to do to reach his goal. For example, after experiencing the visualisations in class he went on to follow a commercial course in visualisation and self-development called 'The Gateway Experience', which he integrated into his approach to study. This is a CD-based course to develop the imagination and personal development through the use of tonal sounds and affirmations. This helped his creativity by helping him generate unusual ideas: he said he was 'searching for something' and that he 'wanted to explore areas which are not everyday' (Interview 28 May 2010). In the same interview he said that through this external course he had been inspired to independently experience lucid dreaming. 'It could bring an enormous benefit to anyone who wants to do creative things' (Interview 28 May 2010).

As well as guided imagery, the creative technique of most use to Mike in his first and second years of study was mind mapping. For him, mind maps offered an organic framework for the development of ideas as well as a structure to develop arguments and to recognise linkages. 'If you force yourself to write things down then you come up with things that you wouldn't come up with otherwise' (Interview, 28 May 2010). Once again, Mike actively took his learning from the 'Creativity in Action' module and applied it in other areas of the curriculum. He explained (Interview, 28 May 2010) how he used a mind map to produce a creative solution to a brief that required an advertising concept to promote hot Tabasco sauce. In it, he wrote 'Hot' in the middle of the page and then, radiating from that, words and images reflecting heat including chilli peppers, a volcano and fire. He chose to develop the volcano concept and linked self-created imagery into his creative approach to solving this problem: 'From volcano I trace a line to lava and then from lava I have this image, I'm still using visualisation, I see the lava from the volcano going into the sea and I see steam' (Interview, 28 May 2010). From there, Mike took the steam image, which reminded him of a scene in the movie *Titanic* and involved physical activity and sweat. He produced the visual image of a sweat band to promote Tabasco sauce and a slogan of 'be prepared' and reflects, 'there is no way that I would have been able to get to the sweat band if I hadn't drawn a mind map'. The other possible solutions from the mind map, which were

discarded, also remain and could be resurrected for an alternative promotional campaign.

In following Mike through the three years of his course it was clear that that he became more confident in integrating a number of these creative approaches to learning into his overall approach to study. Mind maps were important to him in the first and second years, but he tended to rely on these less in his third year. However, he reported that he still went through the same organic process for mind mapping in that final year (Interview, 28 May 2010). He circumvented the process of drawing and writing on paper, but followed the same procedures to come up with a final idea. Mike showed the same commitment with visualisation. He was an advocate of the concept because, with practice over the first two years of the course, he became adept at this technique and could move straight to a complex image. He said he used these approaches 'automatically' and had become more 'confident in generating ideas' (Interview, 28 May 2010).

Mike was able to assimilate many of the approaches to learning that were introduced in the module directly into his learning with positive effect. For him, the approach which was least useful was 'Six Thinking Hats', where each of six hats has a different colour representing a mode of thinking: 'For me it doesn't mean too much' (Interview, 13 May 2009). He saw this technique as stifling his own ideas and putting him in something of a creative straitjacket. It forced him to think in a structured way when tackling a problem or an applied assignment brief: 'I don't see that as a creative person I have to do that' (Interview, 28 May 2010). Here, Mike showed his resistance to a concept that he saw as imposing a structure and constraint on his creativity, despite the intention of the approach to ensure that the full range of issues in project management is considered and to support creativity, not stifle it.

Of all the modules in his first year, Mike chose creative visualisation and guided imagery as his favourite. He developed his thoughts by reflecting that students who followed a more business-oriented curriculum might find the concepts too abstract, but for an individual, such as him, who wanted to focus on creativity in his

course and career, this was essential learning. Mike's grandmother used to tell him as a child, 'if you can imagine it, it will happen' (Interview, 13 May 2009).

In the reflective paper he wrote at the end of the module he recounts his belief that his open-mindedness to the concepts was central to integrating them into his broader approach to study:

most of the techniques that have been taught... are things that I have been using for a long time. What the module did was to give most of these techniques a name as well as showing me new ways in which I could use them. (Reflective Paper)

In the paper he described his experience of the module as 'extremely deep' and that it had changed him 'from the inside':

What [this module] did for me was similar to what changing tyres does for a sports car. A Ferrari could simply never show off its brilliant performance without an adequate set of racing wheels, just as I couldn't give my best without the renewed mind-set that I gained thanks to this [module]. (Interview, 13 May 2009)

Mike was apparently a very confident character with a strong track record. He won a national competition for a prestigious work placement and tended to succeed in whatever he chose to do. He did not like to be told what to do and tended to rebel when this happened. He stopped learning the piano at school because his teachers told him that he had to play classical pieces and would not let him play his own compositions. He switched to the guitar and was completely self-taught, learning to play a complicated rock solo within six months: 'If I'd gone to guitar classes I wouldn't have been able to do something that complex' (Interview, 13 May 2009). This rebellious streak is not untypical of creative individuals. With the 'Six Thinking Hats' concept he did not like being 'told' by virtue of the colour of the hat to think in a particular way:

It's like forcing myself. For me it's like admitting to myself that I cannot switch automatically and that I had to imagine the hats. And I like to think that I can do it without imagining the hats. (Interview, 13 May 2009)

Mike was in no doubt that he was a naturally creative person and tended to distance himself from people who he regarded as not being particularly creative. He said that people who did not have a positive experience of the module were missing out – ‘I feel sorry for them’ – and that they were probably ‘more analytical and would do well in the business areas of the course instead’ (Interview 13 May 2009).

Mike appeared to be motivated to learn both intrinsically and extrinsically. He regarded both the module and indeed the rest of his undergraduate course not as work or a hardship, but as a series of opportunities for self-improvement. ‘It’s not a course to me, it’s learning to become better at what I love. The assignments, I love to do them. So it’s my life... I’m actually doing my life here’ (Interview, 13 May 2009). There was also a definite extrinsic motivation in terms of rewards which he planned to achieve by putting these talents to use in generating material wealth and assets:

I dream of a very expensive house... I want to be in the Stock Exchange, invest here and there, buy houses [and] fly aeroplanes... I want to become someone like Richard Branson, a really big, powerful person.

In his visualisation treasure map (Figure 6.10) he saw himself working in the financial district of a major city and drew a series of skyscrapers to represent this and his success: ‘The tallest one would be my building. It’s got a helicopter pad on top of it’ (Interview, 13 May 2009).

Mike’s involvement with and positive experience of imagery, following his evident visual preferred learning style, was extensive and this is examined and analysed in detail in the cross-case analysis section of this thesis. Clearly, Mike was a student who demonstrated a strong and mature engagement with the module content and the style of teaching and delivery was a good match for him. He was able to understand and apply the approaches constructively in his studies, commenting ‘the module really taught me how to use creativity in a useful way’, and he was able to build on his first year experience of this in subsequent years with positive

results (Interview, 28 May 2010). By constant application during his course, Mike was able to increase his analytical skills in determining what was required in an academic task – ‘now I can focus a laser beam on my assignment brief’ – and to be more objective in selecting the appropriate solution to the brief, ultimately reflecting ‘I’m not so precious about my ideas as I used to be’ (Interview, 28 May 2010).

Mike completed his undergraduate studies successfully and graduated with a first.

Anna – Creativity: a passport to employment

At the time of the study Anna was a twenty-one year old final year undergraduate whose attitude changed over the course of the ‘Creative Personal Development’ module, coming to the conclusion that it made her feel that ‘being creative is OK’ (Interview, 11 January 2012). She was initially ‘excited’ about taking the module as she was a ‘naturally creative person’ (Reflective Journal, 1 October 2010), but she had not anticipated how much independent study and application would be needed to complete the single assessment. In her end-of-year assessment she writes of how the work had been a challenge because in other modules there had been a methodical and generally applicable structure to follow, ‘but because of this [module] I now understand that through the use of less structure and strict briefing I could decipher my own path’ (Personal Reflective Document, June 2011). Anna was aiming for an upper second degree classification and knew that she could not afford to take an optional module that would bring down her weighted classification average. She described her reaction when she was first faced with the assignment as one of ‘sheer panic’ (Interview, 11 January 2012) as she was unsure about the broad and individual scope of the assignment: ‘I think that we were all very confused about the brief at first’ (Interview, 11 January 2012). Over the course of the module, however, she became more confident at developing her creative talents and proactive in acquiring and applying the technical and thinking skills she needed to achieve a good mark in the module.

Anna's story is one of determination and facing up to what she needed to do to succeed in the module, and in the final year overall. She revealed in the interview that she was dyslexic. She said that it had 'held her back in the past' and that she had always viewed her writing and spelling as a weakness and 'worried about making mistakes' (Interview, 11 January 2012). In her previous years on the course and at school, she recalled that she had tended to restrict what she said in class to things that she knew were correct, 'you'd rather not do something to stop you making a mistake'. In this module, she was able to use ways other than writing to demonstrate what she could do. 'Finding other ways to show what I mean was really nice rather than the pressure of how to conform to how it should be written or presented' (Interview, 11 January 2012). She had always had to take particular care with written work and time to assimilate study texts. 'Bravery' is one of the words that she used extensively in the interview. This bravery, as she describes it, was expressed through the courage to attempt and apply new approaches to study, reflection and thinking. As her piece of work for assessment in the module, Anna chose to plan and produce a website geared towards promoting herself in her search for a graduate level job at the end of her course. She was awarded 68 per cent for the work, contributing to her desired final degree classification.

Anna had wanted to focus on a practice-based output for her assignment, drawing on her creativity rather than what she saw as the largely theory-bound modules that she said made up much of the remainder of her degree: 'I'm really looking forward to the chance to express myself with other means than just words' (Reflective Journal, 1 October 2010). However, having identified the chosen medium to present her work at an early stage, namely the construction of a live website, Anna identified the potential pitfalls, namely that her website development skills were limited. Anna's preference for learning visually rather than through words became evident in the first lesson when students used flipchart paper to portray, in whatever form they wished, their own understanding of creativity. Her portrayal in Figure 5.16, she notes in her journal, 'was the only one in the class that had patterns, colours, something different about it' (Reflective Journal, 1 October 2010).

In her journal, Anna wrote that she wanted the illuminative art work of her initial emotions to be 'busy, full and creative', as that was how she thought the module would be for her. The string of 'zzzs' represent that the lesson was at 9am on a Friday and she associated this with getting up early, not to be confused with getting bored. The smiley face and word 'excited' in bold indicate that she was both happy and excited to have been allocated this optional module for part of her final year of study. The giant question mark, coupled with the worried face, point to her initial confusion over the assignment brief but the light bulb signifies that she was starting to understand the learning and teaching approach of the module. Finally, the box was Anna's acknowledgement that she needed to think 'outside the box' in order to be successful in the module (Reflective Journal, 15 October 2010).

As the module progressed, Anna both enjoyed and benefitted from the various activities that involved drawing. She found that she could be more expressive through visual representation and this gave her space to think and organise her thoughts in a way which was especially helpful to her, 'it allows me to think... in more depth instead of getting stumped or stopping on sentences (and) having to get it out in the right way' (Interview, 11 January 2012). Her confidence in using the creative approaches grew over time. As she received feedback on her work in class she became more forthcoming and original. This is something that she recognised also: 'you question what you can do, at the beginning it's like being thrown in at the deep end, you don't know where to start with it but then you get involved' (Interview, 11 January 2012).

Anna was assiduous in keeping a weekly learning journal. While some of the writing was descriptive with regard to the lessons, she often used this as a springboard to reflect on her own attitude and response to the week's learning. In response to de Bono's theories of creative thinking, for example, she used the metaphor, 'you cannot dig a hole in a different place by digging the same hole deeper' (Reflective Journal, 8 October 2012). In other words, in order to come up with original and creative ideas, it can be useful to use a different approach. She reflects in her journal that she initially struggled with the concept of guided imagery, thinking it 'odd' at first in the workshop, but later revised these thoughts and noted in particular how it worked well for her

when participating in a guided imagery of graduation. It brought alive the goal of gaining a degree and collecting the award: 'this helped me because it was based on a day which I can't wait to come' (Reflective Journal, 19 November 2010). Anna wrote at the time that the activity helped her see graduation as a 'realistic goal' and that 'it doesn't feel so daunting'. Her experience of visualisation is explored in greater detail in the cross-case analysis in the following chapter.

Overall, Anna recognised the value of the journal for reflecting on her assessed work: 'the process of reflecting at each stage enabled me to see what I had learnt and why that actually helped me as an individual grow and develop my professional skill set' (Personal Reflective Document, June 2011). Throughout her journal Anna commented on the activities that involved drawing. These always generated a positive response. For the 'Excited' illuminative art (Figure 5.17) she observed that it really made her think in greater depth about her feelings and expectations of the module (Learning Journal, 15 October 2012). She stressed her use of colour in the whole picture and used crimping scissors to make it look like a thought bubble, as 'for me it was the easiest way to symbolise my thought process' (Learning Journal, 15 October 2012).

In her only interview Anna talked with passion about how she overcame her concerns regarding the assessment and, over time, gained the confidence to tackle the work in a systematic manner: 'you have to be quite brave to try something different or outside the box and not the norm'. She also recognised a growth in maturity of approach to study, which is required for a good final year, slowly being established 'by making my own decisions... you have to be brave and just go for it' (Interview, 11 January 2012). For Anna, it was important to identify her goal, in this case an original submission to achieve a good module mark with an upper second degree classification overall, and then push herself to achieve it: 'my confidence in my ability to do my own research and follow my own path was a lot better' (Interview, 11 January 2012).

Anna's strategy to clarify what was required of her for the assignment was to seek feedback, available to all students, and to check in the independent study project that the right direction was being followed. 'I wanted to do really well' (Interview, 11

January 2012). This was not a path followed by all students. Instead of choosing a simpler path, Anna decided to acquire the necessary skills of coding and HTML website construction through independent study and directed learning. This could be argued to be a high-risk strategy because of the other demands on her time in the final year, but she kept to a tight timeframe that she monitored closely and achieved a good overall result. Anna wrote that she 'wasn't sat with my head in a book like other [modules] on the course' and that she wanted to create her 'own path to follow' (Personal Reflective Document, July 2011).

Anna's website was designed to appeal to both students and employers. Its focus was to do with the importance of creativity and creative thinking to both groups. The site contained eight pages, initially, including a blog (weblog) (Figure 5.18) together with several pages of material related to creative thinking and a number of the approaches explored in the module and their relevance to businesses and students. On the website, Anna includes her CV, rationale for producing the site and other elements that are discussed in the cross-case thematic analysis section of the thesis.



Figure 5.18: Anna: Blog header

While she found visualisation an enjoyable and useful approach to creativity within

a classroom setting, she doubted that it would apply in the workplace: she 'struggled to see the true value of it as a technique' (Personal Reflective Document, June 2011) and so she did not include it in her website.

In summary, Anna experienced an epiphany through this module, punctuated by a series of contrasts. These comprised the excitement of studying the weekly topics and the initial self-doubt regarding the assignment; the open nature of the brief for this module and what she saw as the restrictive briefs for many other modules; and the visual nature of this module and the written content of others. She recognised that the module made her 'look at things differently' and that there are 'other ways to learn'. From a pedagogical viewpoint, she said that the module made her think more deeply and reflectively. Specifically, the module built up her self-belief: 'it gave me more confidence in myself to be able to go out and achieve the things I want to'. Being given an independent topic to select, research and deliver in an appropriate medium was a particular challenge: 'it's the hardest thing I've ever done [in my degree course]' (Interview, 11 January 2012).

Anna was offered and accepted a job in public relations just after completing her degree course. She reported (Interview, 11 January 2012) that the module helped her get her dream job. She showed the website she built to people at the company and it was a major factor in her appointment.

Carl – A structured approach to study

Carl was a first-year student taking the module 'Creativity in Action'. Aged twenty, he was slightly older than most first year students when he started his undergraduate course. He had strong views about many topics, including the learning he experienced in these classes, and showed antipathy towards many of the approaches employed. Carl's educational story is one of overcoming difficulties in his early years to become more focused in his outlook and starting to recognise how to work with others. The creative approaches to learning did not gel with him and this profile points to some of the factors which played a part in this.

Carl's journey starts with a troubled childhood in which he developed Chronic Fatigue Syndrome at the age of twelve and was taken out of school to receive his education at home. He subsequently developed depression. He described himself as being a 'smart kid' when he was younger (Interview, 14 December 2011), but he noted that he was seen as an awkward child at primary school because he kept asking questions: 'I didn't understand why I was different' (Interview, 14 December 2011). A child psychologist was brought in for this reason when he was seven. In his only interview he reflected back to that time and recounted how he was not prepared to 'play ball' with the psychologist with her tests and diagnostic activities. He claimed that he knew what the psychologist was trying to do with her questions and he twisted his answers to give a different result. Unlike most students, he did not take GCSEs at the age of sixteen because of his circumstances, but chose to sit Mathematics and English a year later. He passed these and was accepted onto a Foundation BTEC course in Art and Design and progressed to a BTEC Diploma in Graphic Design. This appeared to be Carl's niche. In spite of a troubled educational past, he gained the highest marks in each of his BTEC Diploma subjects with distinction and starred distinction grades. This might have suggested a degree course in Graphic Design, but Carl decided to move away from that area of study because he had 'had enough of that' (Interview, 14 December 2011). Instead, he chose a different discipline with a greater business orientation. He had chosen his university course with a career in mind: 'I want a degree because degrees open doors'. His aim was to build up a portfolio of work that he could present at interview and then be offered a job.

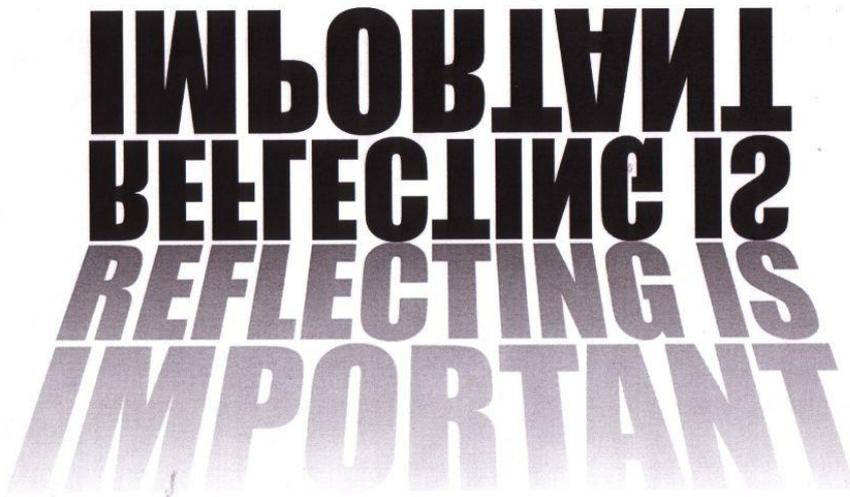
Both Carl's parents were graduates and pressure from them to succeed academically is what he believed led to his 'breakdown' as a teenager; 'they pushed me too much as a child' (Interview, 14 December 2011). He said that his parents had always been supportive and, although they were too pushy in the past, they were fully behind him now in whatever he wanted to do.

On the whole Carl had a negative view towards the 'Creativity in Action' module. He particularly disliked the sessions on guided imagery and creative visualisation: 'I found this technique insulting to my intelligence' (Assignment Two, May 2011). He also did not take his first year of undergraduate study particularly seriously in

general: 'I didn't try to get good marks because they didn't count towards the degree' (Interview, 14 December 2011). Despite this admission of his instrumental approach, Carl passed all his first year modules with marks generally in the mid-fifties.

Carl seemed to like structure and order in his study. He preferred working on his own to being in a group, but if he was put in a group there had to be a clear direction: 'I prefer to either take the lead or have a strong leader' (Interview, 14 December 2011). Equally, with the approaches used in the 'Creativity in Action' module, a clear structure was important to him. Mind maps, to Carl, were organic and lacking in structure: 'I find mind maps too distracting and disjointed, it is something I use when [I am] told to use them' (Assignment One, January 2011). He much preferred the Concept Fan by de Bono, which adopts a very structured approach to problem solving and which he says 'is a much more logical diagram' (Assignment One, January 2011).

Part of Carl's difficulty in engaging with a number of the creative approaches introduced in the module appeared to be that he was happy with his existing ability to generate ideas and satisfied with his bank of strategies. He was most reluctant to take on new concepts of idea generation and creativity. He said that his creative ideas just came naturally, they are 'automatic' and he commented that his mind 'just comes up with them'. (Interview, 14 December 2011). In one part of the interview, Carl indicated he was a big fan of black and white 'because they contrast so well'. In fact, in his workbook he represented the topic of reflection with a polarised black and white graphic (Figure 5.19).



IMBORTANT
BELECTING IS
REFLECTING IS
IMPORTANT

Figure 5.19: Carl: 'Reflecting is important' from Reflective Journal

Carl was also critical of approaches that confirmed what he believed he already knew about himself. He filled in the VARK (Visual, Auditory, Reading and Kinesthetic) preferred learning styles questionnaire which indicated that his preferred learning styles were visual and auditory, and responded 'I knew this already from my own experience... I felt this was a waste of my time' (Semester One Assignment, January 2011).

Carl was a complex student and, although being very reluctant to apply new approaches himself, he sometimes admitted that they may have merit for others. Whilst he disliked the VARK questionnaire because he believed that it did not tell him anything he did not already know about himself, he conceded that it might be useful for his peers; 'for the class at large it may have helped people discover their learning style so that is good' (Semester One Assignment, January 2011). On the concept of illuminative art he commented: 'I found this very easy and boring as I am very aware of my future and where I want to go', and on collage he wrote 'I found the exercise boring and childish, but I do see its practical use' (Reflective Journal, October 2011).

Carl's main criticisms, however, he saved for guided imagery and creative visualisation. In the interview, assignments and reflective journal he wrote extensively about these sessions. His experience of visualisation was entirely negative. He saw it as manipulative and reminiscent of his time in therapy as a child: 'That technique really put me off because I think, to be blunt, that it is a weak minded technique, people should be stronger minded' (Interview, 14 December 2011). He found the imagery exercise with the pebble particularly challenging: 'if people need a pet rock, I think they need some sort of therapy really' (Interview, 14 December 2011). He found it difficult to understand the concept and rationale of visualisation. To him, there seemed to be two types of people: firstly, those who actively engage with the imagery activities who he regards as being 'weak minded' and who 'lie to themselves', and people like him who are rooted in reality (Semester One Assignment, January 2011). The former group he saw as having diametrically opposite views to his own perspective on creativity, '[they] should be taught [visualisation] separately so as not to waste my or other people's time', he commented (Interview, 14 December 2011).

This disconnect with many of the creative elements taught within the sessions illustrate a dichotomy. Carl disliked much of the module, yet attended all the sessions. He had his own views of how the world functions, however he found the workshops on provocation and assumption reversal beneficial. These employed the same basic premise of taking an idea or situation and turning it on its head. There is a structure and order in this approach. He commented after this experience, 'I rely far too much on stereotypes' (Semester Two Assignment, May 2011). He also found that reflection has its positive side in that '[it] helps to cement and remind you of all the techniques'.

One way to sum up Carl's experience of the module is his belief in his own knowledge about himself. In class and in discussion he was rarely self-critical – 'I am naturally very good at thinking differently' – and liked to do things his own way – 'I think it is important to stress individualism' (Interview, 14 December 2011). His views tended to be fixed and polarised. Carl's stance with regard to creative approaches to learning did not help him to get the most from the techniques. Although he engaged with the activities, this tended to be on a level where he

could deconstruct and criticise the approaches. The module invites and encourages critical reflection, but Carl seemed to have difficulty in recognising potential benefits for the methods used. However, his reaction and insight from interview and reflective journal throw a different light on student experience of the approaches and they provide an alternative perspective to the comments made by the previous profile students in this chapter.

Peter – A story of logic and reason

Peter was a first-year student who took the 'Creativity in Action' module. He left school at sixteen with no GCSEs, but was accepted at college to study a BTEC Art and Design Foundation year and received distinction grades throughout that course. He chose to progress from that programme to a practice-based undergraduate degree in a media-type discipline. Peter's story is one of a successful transition to, and progress in, higher education study, despite leaving school with no qualifications. He seemed to have a polarised view of the elements taught on the module: 'there have been techniques that I have found compelling and useful but I have found other techniques unproductive, pathetic and even personally offending' (Assignment Two, May 2012).

Peter had dyslexia, which he understood had held him back in his compulsory education: 'at school I was told I was not trying' (Interview, 23 March 2012) and that he had not been given a fair chance: 'I felt a bit cheated, it was too late. It isn't of course, I turned it around' (Interview, 23 March 2012). He went on to score 92 per cent in one second year undergraduate writing module and he used this to motivate himself further: 'I'm really happy with that [mark], to me that's victory, I completely turned it around, that's word-based!' (Interview, 23 March 2012). He used an image in his recorded interview to represent this: 'I've subliminally got over certain rocks for learning'. The main strategy he employed was to read very slowly, 'perhaps four or five times slower than most people, but I do remember what I read'. (Interview, 23 March 2012).

The concept of VARK (Visual, Auditory, Reading/Writing and Kinaesthetic learning styles) and the associated questionnaire is one approach that Peter found a positive learning experience. It allowed him to reflect on the results, particularly with regard to his dyslexia. The findings from the questionnaire gave him a high preference for reading and auditory learning styles, whilst the visual category achieved a low preference score. At first sight, Peter found this confusing because of the visual nature of his previous BTEC course, but then he reflected in his assignment that 'two of my favourite hobbies are reading and watching documentaries' (Assignment Two, May 2011), which would support the VARK findings. He also analysed the reason for his low preference score for visual learning, pointing out that the questions and possible [multiple choice] answers in the standard VARK test did not align with his view of a preferred visual learning style. In the questionnaire, the visual learning style was represented by examples 'involving graphs, maps, hierarchies, circles, symbolic arrows and diagrams which is, arguably, not the conventional view of imagery' (Assignment Two, May 2011). This is a criticism examined and developed later in the thesis.

Peter acknowledged that he still relied heavily on graphical and visual representations to help him produce creative ideas and develop his creative concepts in an integrated way: 'I have found mind maps, mood boards and the Concept Fan the most successful and productive' (Assignment Two, May 2011). For him, the opportunity to introduce and develop ideas for seminars and assignments by using pictures as the vehicle allowed him to subsequently translate these ideas into a written form and to produce a logical justification:

you've got images and you can build words from that... it's like building that association... being able to associate things and reference and link depending on your context and where you are [in your work]. (Interview, 23 March 2012)

A particular thread developed during the interview conducted when Peter had completed the module was the perceived shift of emphasis on his part during the first year and a half of his university studies from visual to more written and verbal output: 'I'm far more interested in words now than I am in images. I was very

picture-based, very image-based interaction and now I'm words-based. It's completely revised' (Interview, 23 March 2012).

One of the topics in the module that Peter particularly disliked was guided imagery and visualisation. In an extract from his final assessment he asserts that 'superstition and unjustified belief are in direct conflict with all that I stand for' (Assignment Two, May 2011); he was referring to the personification of the pebble in the 'Beach' visualisation. In his Learning Journal, where the individual is asked to question the pebble about its history, Peter writes that he refused to participate: 'I put down the stone, both in the visualisation and in reality. I will not, even if beneficial, for any reason extract self-efficacy from an authentic rock' (Learning Journal, November 2010). He described himself as a 'rational and reasonable' person (Interview, 23 March 2012) and he argued that this rationality meant that he did not like the fact that the stone was used as a vehicle for creative thinking: '[The stone] was embodied with supernatural and metaphysical properties and I don't like that idea! I want to get creativity from things that are real' (Interview, 23 March 2012).

Peter was clear when asked in the interview to differentiate between being asked to read a text, such as Harry Potter, which relies on magic as its main plot development, and the visualisation which has the individual student at the centre: 'Right at the beginning you will find out that [Harry Potter] it's not reality, you'll find out that it's a story because it's a book and it's fiction, it's in the fiction section'. For Peter, asking students to question a stone was 'foul play' (Interview, 23 March 2012): he would not let his imagination stretch that far.

Peter summed up his essence as a person as 'honest, reasonable and rational' (Interview, 23 March 2012). He also maintained that his approach to life and study habits was rooted in the past where personal and family difficulties as he was growing up contributed to his poor academic performance at school. He felt that he had lost out on his earlier opportunities for education because of his dyslexia and was now making the most of his chances:

I love reading academic stuff, I love to learn... if I go to sleep and I've not learned something new then I feel like I've failed in a way. It's not that I'm living up to anyone either, it's just that's my passion. (Interview, 23 March 2012)

He observed that although each lesson in the 'Creativity in Action' module was discrete and self-contained, the approaches which were delivered in class gelled to form a cohesive package: 'when we were taught each technique it seemed like they were treated like they are separate items when they are not. They are all the same essentially – they are all creativity' (Interview, 23 March 2012).

Peter did not draw the treasure map associated with the 'Great Smoking Mirror' visualisation in the lesson, but subsequently chose to do this outside the scheduled class time when asked to do so. Being asked to draw or write his goals as the treasure map was what he called 'forcing', and in the lesson he could not make up his mind how to do this. 'Do I write this down or do I draw this?' he pondered (Interview, 23 March 2012). His reason for not doing it was also tied up with his perspective on life. For him, because ambitions were not firm or fixed, this precluded him for putting these down in a permanent form on paper: 'I thought "no" [I'm not going to draw this] because everything is tentative to me' (Interview, 23 March 2012). For Peter, goals had to be certain: 'it's not absolute to be dreaming, it's my nature and I'm especially like that with where I want to be with my ambitions because I change more frequently than anyone I know' (Interview, 23 March 2012).

When Peter eventually did decide to draw a treasure map, he used black ballpoint pen on white paper and put a cartoon character at the centre, to represent him, with five written statements around the outside (Figure 5.20). He also included a narrative underneath the drawing which appeared to suggest that he did not find this a useful exercise and was only doing this because he was asked to.

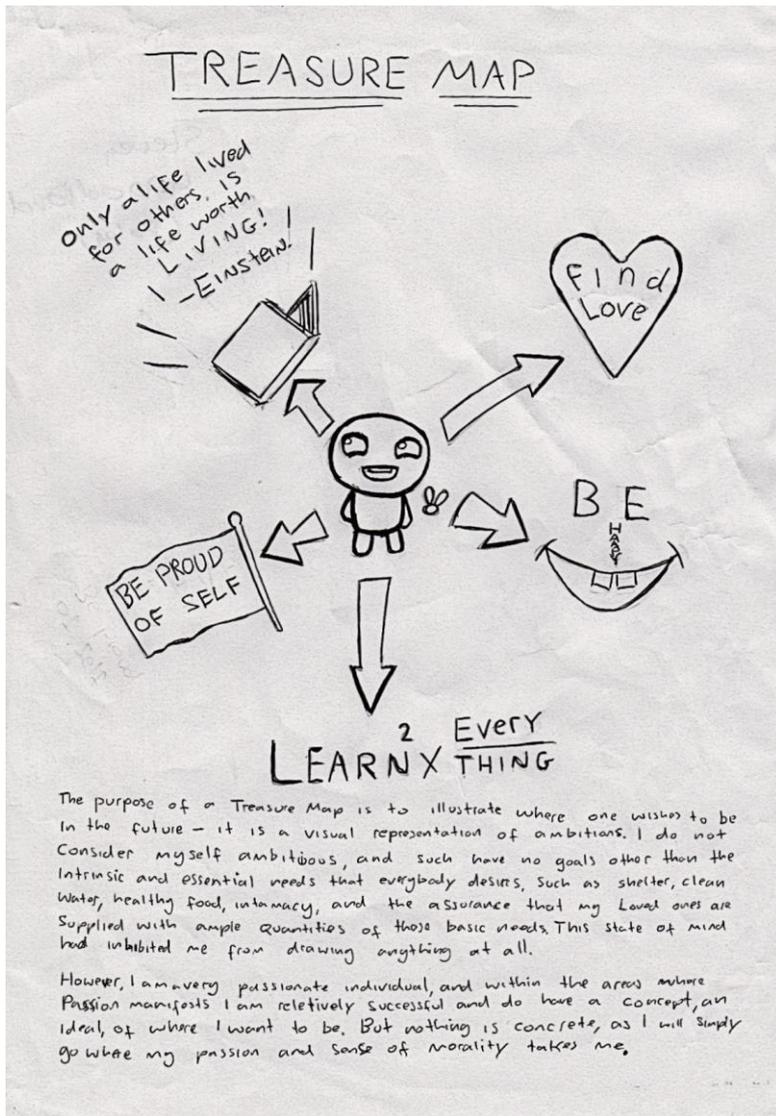


Figure 5.20: Peter: 'Treasure Map' from work outside class

In the text accompanying the treasure map, Peter explains that he does not regard himself as being ambitious and:

as such, I have no goals other than the essential needs that everybody desires such as shelter, clean water and healthy food. This state of mind has inhibited me from drawing anything at all. (Treasure Map, November 2010)

This contradicts the fact that he did produce a number of images in the drawing in Figure 5.20, which seemed to go beyond the apparently limiting beliefs in his narrative. Peter does not interpret these images further in the commentary, making

it one of many examples in which he did not adhere to the guidelines for an exercise.

From the examples cited above, Peter presented himself as having strong views on what he was willing to attempt and commit to fully as a new creative learning experience, and what he would either reject or participate in. He was able to articulate his reasons for disliking particular approaches, which forms part of the cross-case thematic analysis in the next chapter and which permits comparison and contrast with students who voiced a more positive experience of the learning methods.

Chapter Six: Cross-Case Thematic Analysis

Introduction

This cross-case analysis chapter interprets and synthesises the findings from the research and cuts across the individual student data and case studies in a horizontal, thematic fashion. It contrasts with the previous chapter of participant profiles that adopts a narrative, or vertical, approach in describing the individuals' reported experience of the learning approaches of the two modules. This analysis also interprets the individual learning journeys and stories in a manner by which new knowledge can be generated and presented both in this and the concluding chapters. This chapter is presented in thematic sections which, as overarching themes, broadly reflect the thrust of the thesis research questions and these develop the issues that were deduced from the data sets. The structure of the chapter is presented diagrammatically in Figure 6.1. I also set out a number of new models and concepts that I have derived from interpretation and synthesis of the primary data. These models focus on various aspects of student engagement with creative learning and lead to the gradual revelation of a student personal developmental pathway through creative learning, termed the student Creative Learning Cycle. These models are presented as a visual analysis, synthesis and exposition of the data. The chapter concludes with the identification of a set of criteria for successful student engagement with and application of creative approaches to undergraduate learning and personal development.

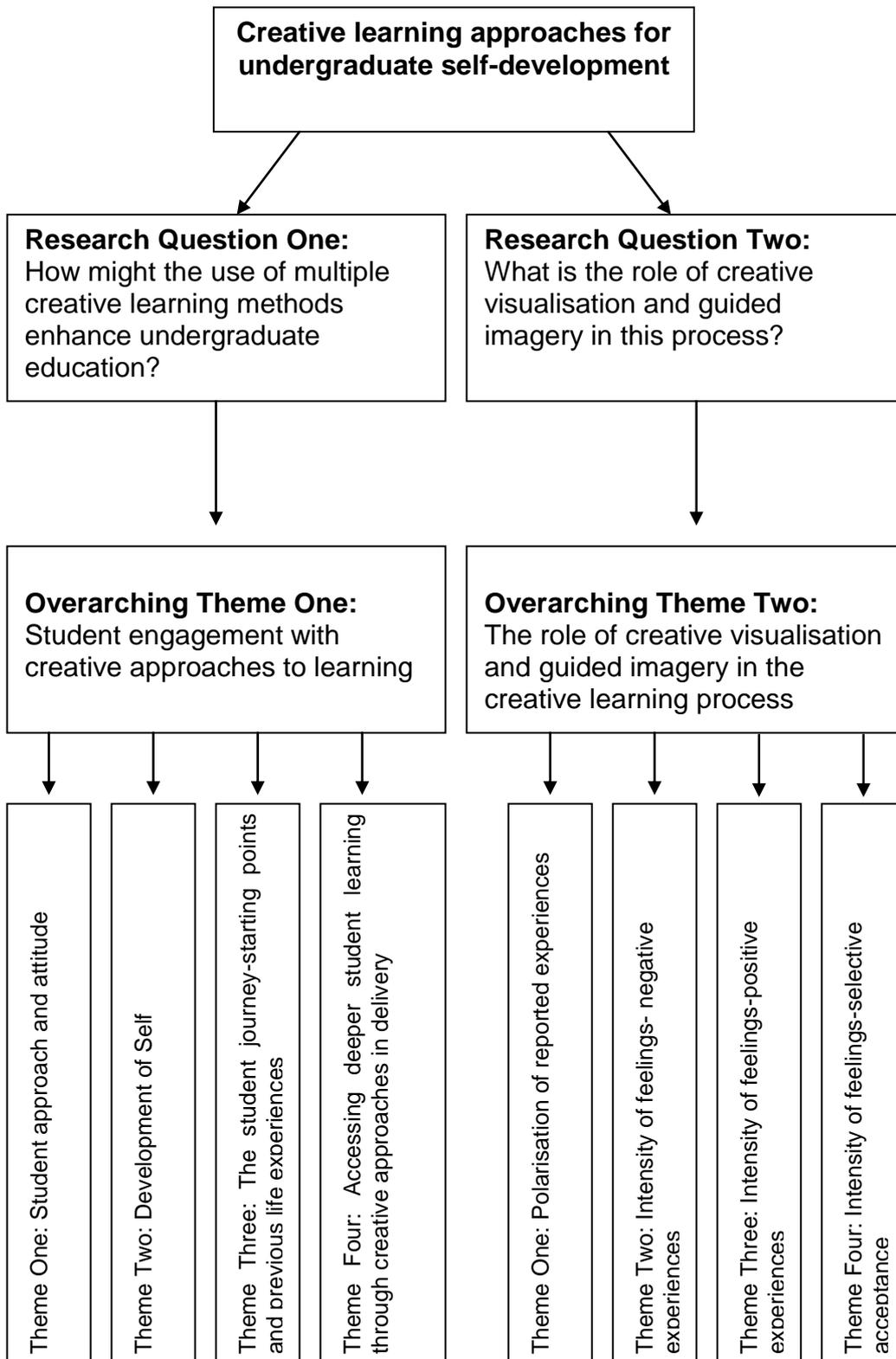


Figure 6.1: Cross-case thematic analysis structure

Overarching Theme One: Student engagement with creative approaches to learning

The overarching theme that became evident early in the research was the extent to which students were able or willing to engage with the learning material. From the profiles in the previous chapter, at first sight it can be argued that four of the students in the main research group – Sarah, Simone, Mike and Anna –engaged with the creative learning approaches, whilst two –Carl and Peter – did not. This echoes the findings from the pilot study, where two students – Stephanie and Angela - reported a positive experience whilst one, Mark, was generally negative. Taking a reported positive or negative experience at face value, however, is too simplistic and fuller understanding of the nature of engagement is needed. Trowler and Trowler (2010: 2) put forward a definition of student engagement as:

the investment of time, effort and other relevant resources by both students and their institutions intended to optimise the student experience and enhance the learning outcomes and development of students.

Engagement is further divided into ‘individual student learning’ – being a student-centred and active learning curriculum ‘process’, meaning involvement of students in decision-making processes – and ‘identity’ – a student’s sense of belonging to a community. This thesis focuses on the first category of individual student learning. In order to facilitate student engagement, Bryson and Hand (2007) stress that to facilitate and optimise student engagement teaching staff need to focus on three key factors to optimise engagement. These are discourse with students, enthusiasm for the subject and professionalism in teaching.

Certainly, all nine students from the main and pilot studies attended well, participated in the activities and submitted reflective assignments, as required. In this sense, they could all be described as having active or meaningful engagement with the module.

Theme One: Student approach and attitude

For four of the students in the main study (two of whom took the first year module and two the final year option), there was clear evidence of positive or positive and active engagement with the curriculum. This is shown by their consistently positive comments about the overall learning approaches both in interview and elsewhere. However, for Carl and Peter, their engagement with the module resulted in a largely negative reaction.

The students with a positive reaction to the creative learning approaches tended to show an open-minded attitude to trying out these techniques within the workshops and integrating them, to a greater or lesser extent, into their future learning. As evidenced in the student profile, for Sarah the approaches were positive because of the experiential nature of the curriculum, the encouragement for students to talk about their own experiences and because she saw the learning as 'fun'. For Anna, the module allowed her the flexibility to mould her assessed work within a context of direct benefit to her profession following the course. For Simone, the essence of her positive view of the module is that it allowed her to be creative, especially through drawing. Mike saw the module content and the delivery style attractive and that it was a good match for him.

In contrast to the above responses, Carl was critical because he regarded some of the material as childish or because it told him something that he already knew. Peter was less negative than Carl, but particularly disliked visualisation and methods that pushed students to find connections between apparently random objects or words. Given this variety of reported experiences, the analysis needed to explore how these clear differences in perception and experience could be explained.

Those with overwhelmingly or generally negative feelings towards the module reported certain traits and views in their interview that were not apparent in students with a positive perception. Carl described himself as not motivated in his

first year of study. He explained that he 'didn't try to get good marks because it didn't count towards the degree' and that the techniques were, for him, largely pointless: 'I have no problem generating ideas myself, so I didn't think that the lessons helped. I don't see myself needing to use them [the creative approaches]' (Interview, 14 December 2011). Peter made two separate references in his interview to being 'a rational person', adding that his preferred approach to learning had to be based on fact and data. For example, he said 'I appear closed-minded but I respond to reason' (Interview, 23 March 2012). In the pilot study, Mark stated that he did not readily accept new ways of thinking and study: 'it's because I work quite logically and academically rather than [with] "alternative" methods' (Interview, 9 May 2006). It seems that students who have a negative attitude towards creative approaches to learning may tend to restrict themselves to techniques within their existing comfort zone, be unwilling to try new approaches to study and may demonstrate personal preferences for facts and data to produce answers rather than imagination.

For those who report a highly positive experience, the indicators are almost the complete opposite of those of the detractors. Simone said the lessons opened her eyes to new ways of study:

it shows that there's not only one way, but there are so many ways to approach what you want and your ideas and to motivate your creativity and to work in it... it's good to have lots of possibilities. (Interview, 9 January 2009)

She demonstrated an openness to try out fresh ways of learning that can be summed up in her reflection, 'you're experiencing things and that motivates me' (Interview, 17 March 2010). She was also evidently happy to move out of her learning comfort zone, commenting 'you teach us to explore ourselves, to explore our mind and our dreams and our ways of learning' (Interview, 17 March 2010). For Sarah, the experience gave her a shift in perception: 'I learned about looking at things in a different light' (Interview, 6 February 2009) and an opportunity to study in a way that appeared to suit her learning preferences: 'it was so much fun to do something completely different, to sitting with your laptop, not having to reference a book or look up a quote. It was refreshing!' Anna had a similar

viewpoint in that she wasn't 'sat with [her] head in a book like other modules' (Personal Reflective Document, July 2011). Mike found the classes beneficial because they moved away from the traditional lecture and seminar approach: 'This one was really more abstract, different... interesting and entertaining' (Interview, 13 May 2009).

Thus, the issue of student engagement with creative learning approaches can be viewed in terms of a degree of polarisation, with some students engaging in a positive manner in a way that seems to suit their learning style. For others the approaches tend to rankle and seem to be a poor fit with their learning style. These initial findings are represented diagrammatically below. Figure 6.2 reflects the preferred learning approaches as stated in interview and written documentation by the nine students (six from the main study and three from the pilot). It identifies a straight preference between traditional and creative approaches from students involved in the research. This distinct split in preferences was clear from the data analysis, with three students preferring traditional approaches and six students favouring the creative approaches.

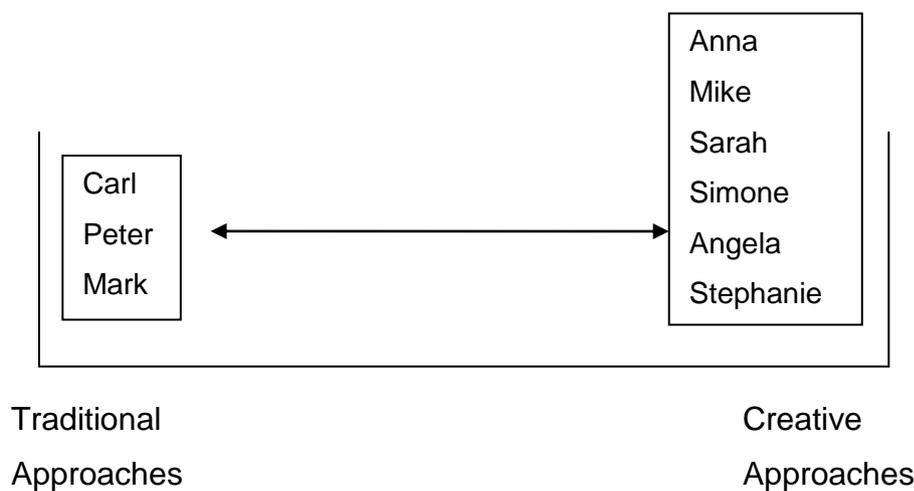


Figure 6.2: Creative approaches to learning: student polarisation

Students who enthusiastically embraced traditional approaches were actively against the concept of creative approaches to learning, but were able to engage with the concepts, albeit by producing an almost entirely negative critique of

creative approaches. For these students, a conservative or didactic approach to education was the preferred fit. Experiential learning, defined as ‘the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience’ (Kolb 1984), did not sit easily within their frame of reference for what constitutes university learning. These students would attend classes and carry out the experiential workshop tasks but they saw little validity in them. They would engage with the module by attending and participating, but received little or no reported intrinsic benefit. The students engaged with the curriculum content and actively participated, but the reported outcomes were not positive with regard to the approaches used. Figure 6.3 illustrates this phenomenon in graphical form.

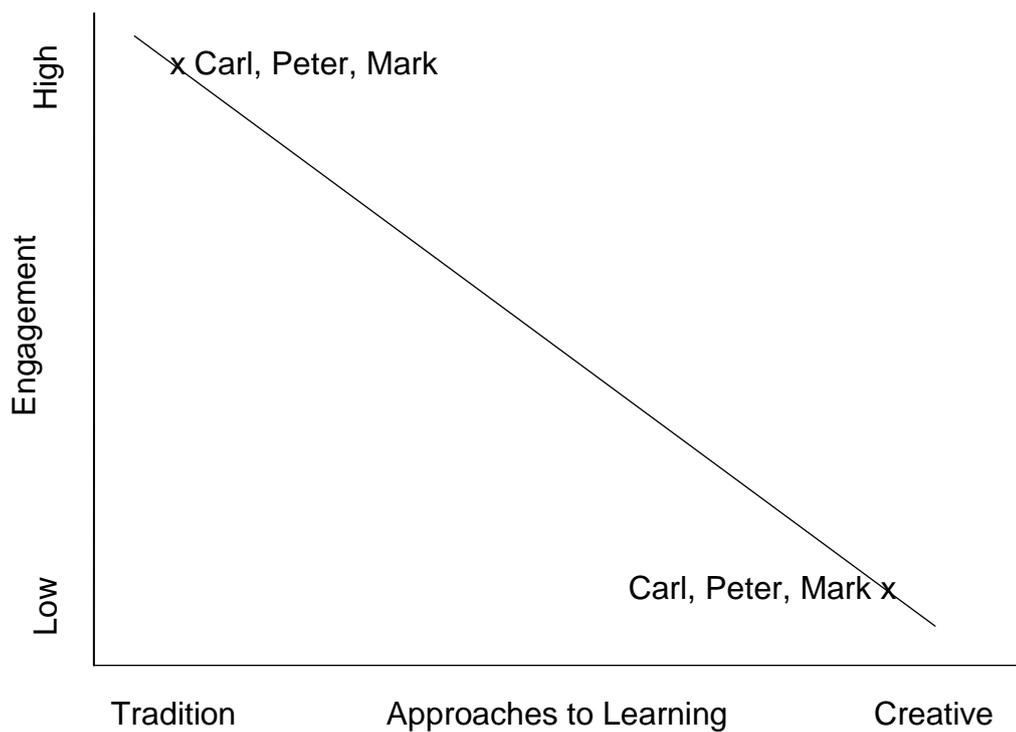


Figure 6.3: Continuum for students demonstrating high engagement with traditional approaches to learning and low engagement with creative approaches

The students who were enthusiastic about the creative learning experienced and reported this in their work, and the converse is largely true, as reflected in Figure 6.4.

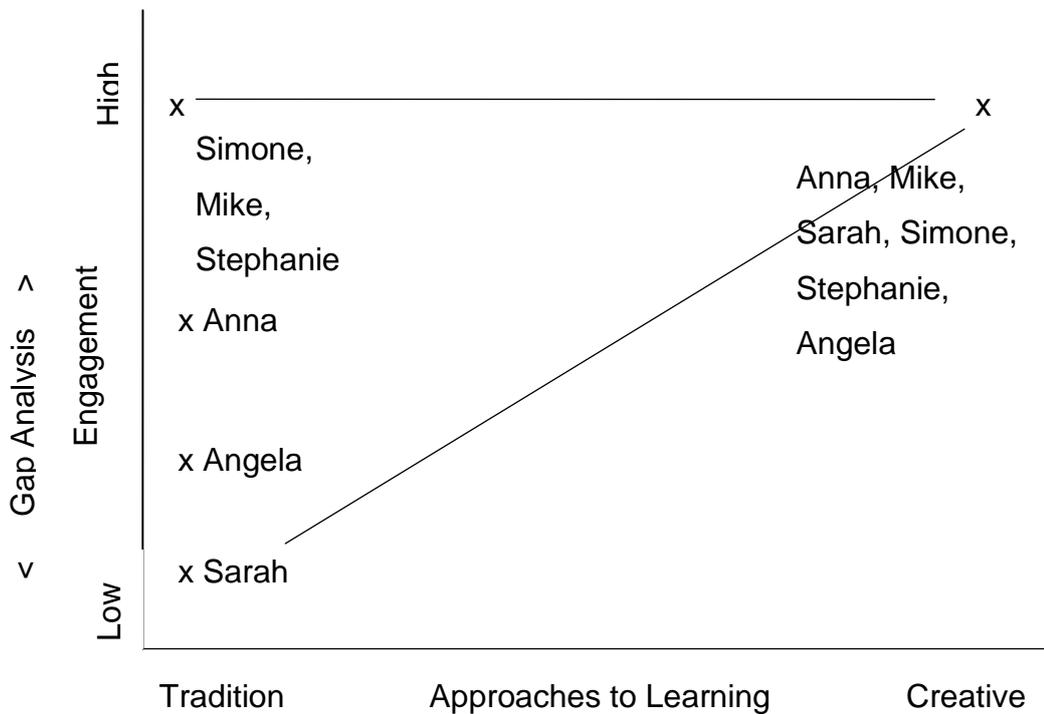


Figure 6.4: Continuum for students demonstrating high engagement with creative approaches to learning

The six students who reported positive engagement with the approaches provide a single common point, in consequence in the top right corner of Figure 6.4. The representation shows the marked difference from the traditional enthusiasts in Figure 6.3. Here, there was a range of engagement with the traditional forms of learning, as typically delivered in other modules on their course. As evidenced by the data, some were not at all keen on traditional learning approaches, such as Sarah. At the same time Stephanie, Simone and Mike were able to engage positively with the traditional learning as well as the creative. They viewed the creative approaches to learning as a further way of accessing, processing and outputting of ideas. However, they were explicit in saying that they preferred the creative learning approaches. For these students, there was recognition and acceptance of what de Bono (1990) calls the traditional or vertical forms of thinking and the lateral, creative or horizontal forms of thinking. Anna, Angela and Sarah all reported varying degrees of disenchantment with the traditional forms of learning,

particularly essays and report writing based on traditional taught input. Therefore the level of engagement with traditional approaches of students who favour creative learning approaches is not unique. It provides a single common engagement point for the creative aspects, but spread up the vertical axis in their perception of traditional forms of learning. The difference between students with high and low engagement in Figure 6.4 can be ascribed to their level of self-efficacy, doing what is necessary to achieve their desired goal as well as their ability to engage with traditional learning.

Based on the data, a refined model of student engagement can be elicited, as illustrated in Figure 6.5.

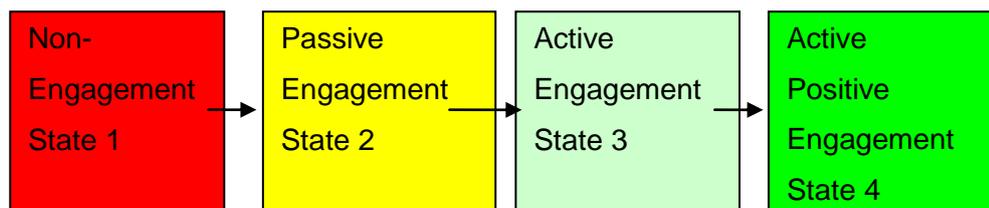


Figure 6.5: Model of student engagement

Pedagogical non-engagement can describe the state in which a student does not attend or rarely attends and does not submit assessed work, or who does submit work but it is significantly below pass standard. The term 'passive engagement' can be used to describe the state in which students attend many of the sessions and will take part in the pedagogical activities, but typically will be easily distracted. They will be present in the classroom but may have difficulty in developing great enthusiasm for the workshop task and may frequently question how a particular task is relevant to their learning, expressing difficulty in recognising the connection even after discussion. The actions of three of the profiled students fit into this

category (Carl, Peter and Mark). The two final boxes, States Three and Four, 'Active Engagement' and 'Active Positive Engagement', are shared by the remaining profile students (Anna, Mike, Sarah, Simone, Stephanie and Angela).

The fourth box relating to engagement is 'Active Positive Engagement'. This is the grouping that produces the greatest student resonance with the creative learning approaches and most effective output. This is the position held by Simone, Mike and Stephanie. They are able to integrate most of the creative learning approaches easily into their study habits and have a strong inclination to independent application of the techniques. Angela, Sarah and Anna fall into the third category, 'Active Engagement'. For these students, creative learning approaches offer a new perspective on their studies, as they have typically not come across these methods before. They can have difficulty in assimilating or applying some of the techniques. This is also a category which offers most scope for movement between these engagement states. As the learning approaches are often new to the individual, the student can require more scaffolding, support and explanation than peers in both the 'Passive' and 'Active Positive' states of engagement. This is in contrast to 'Active Positive Engagement' students who have often experienced a number of these approaches before, albeit in a setting outside the formal classroom, and who have no difficulty in recognising the connection with their learning and applying them. It also contrasts with the 'Passive Engagement' students who are generally reluctant to move outside their comfort zone of learning that has served them well in the past.

The pathway through the student engagement model is clear. The most effective learning, related to intended module learning outcomes, takes place when there is 'Active Positive Engagement' on the part of the student. This does not imply meek acceptance of the approaches taught, but demands a critical approach commensurate with the level of study undertaken. It is also clear that the task of the tutor is to create a learning environment in which students may gravitate towards the final position, 'Active Positive Engagement'. It is acceptable and understandable that students whose educational or developmental frame of reference does not permit them to accept new concepts of learning can achieve their own form of reflective learning through analysis and evaluation of their own

experience of the learning. In other words, they hold a position, they are engaged, but they do not have a positive experience to report and show little appetite to assimilate the approaches.

Naturally, students may move from one state to another. Students who have not attended in semester one may discover a new-found sense of urgency, sometimes after a poor first assessment grade, and so move from 'Non-Engagement' or 'Passive Engagement', when assessment realisation dawns, or to 'Active Engagement' or 'Active Positive Engagement'.

Theme Two: Development of self

Sub-theme One: Overcoming fear of the unknown

Students who actively engaged with the creative delivery were also those who were able to transform this input into both their own creative output and into their own personal development and reflection. Anna and Sarah, who both took the final year module, 'Creative Personal Development', took on this option as a personal challenge to confront and overcome some of the obstacles that they perceived prevented them reaching their goals. Anna started her study first with excitement and then with 'sheer panic' when she received the assignment. Sarah had asked for the guidance of others who had taken the option in previous years to help her decide if this was for her. Her interview contained several instances where there was self-doubt: 'I always felt a bit stupid and so maybe I developed a chip on my shoulder' (Interview, 6 February 2009). Anna mentioned 'bravery' (Interview, 11 January 2012) on several occasions in relation to deciding to opt for a module with a different way of learning to other areas of her course.

Students' confidence tended to grow as the module progressed regarding their ability to tackle the assessment and ability to incorporate the concepts into their study life and reflect this into their own personal development. Sarah learned how to look at things from different people's points of view. She observed that she had changed from being a 'real panicker' to taking things more in her stride, admitting

'what's the point in worrying about things that you can't change?'. Sarah also moved from seeing academic and aspects of life in general as being polarised 'black and white' to life being 'full of grey areas and [that] not everything is as it may seem' (Personal Creative Document).

Fear of the unknown is therefore an obstacle that students seem to have to overcome in order to be successful in using creative approaches to learning in an experiential setting. This can be addressed by the individual student seeking clarification and tutor support to form individual scaffolding with which they can progress.

Sub-theme Two: Desire to succeed – self-efficacy

A second strand of self-development that led to success for students using these approaches relates to self-efficacy in the undergraduates able to engage actively and positively with the approaches and reflective curriculum adopted. This aspect is closely linked to Sub-theme One, above. For those who had overcome their initial 'fear' came the realisation of what had to be addressed in order to appropriately tackle the assignment. Sarah identified a change in her thinking from a polarised black and white view, where answers were right or wrong, to one where there could be a range of different and valid perspectives on particular topics. She put this perceptual shift down to discussions on the topic, that were held in the workshops and upon which students were encouraged to reflect. Anna, too, overcame her fear of the assignment and demonstrated 'bravery' in identifying the skills to develop in order to produce the blog and website she wanted to present as her assignment. She set about acquiring these skills independently: 'you've got to learn through finding your own path' (Interview, 11 January 2012). She saw the nature of the curriculum and the delivery as central to her success in and her enjoyment of the module, 'it was interesting having to look for it myself and find my own information and use different techniques' (Interview, 11 January 2012). Anna went about acquiring skills in web design and production by voluntarily attending additional courses and seeking out the appropriate guidance and support.

Two students in the main study did not report experiencing fear in the module or in the assignments and found the module beneficial for their studies. For Simone, the module served to help her realise her potential in the field of creativity: 'it showed me that I have the power to do what I can and that I am a creativity specialist... it shows that I can develop from being confused and knowing nothing to realising all that I've learned' (Interview, 9 January 2009). Mike maintained that the freedom to learn in the way which suited him best helped him increase his confidence and quality of creative work: 'it's drastically changed on so many levels, that it's hard to compare it to before [he took the module]' (Interview, 28 May 2010).

The two students who did not positively engage with the learning showed no specific signs of enthusiasm or commitment to success in the module beyond merely passing the assignments, an instrumental motivation. The module needed to be passed in order to progress to the next level with no credit deficit. Carl identified the module as being just 'a bag of ideas' and reported that he was not enthused by the experience: 'I don't overdo things unless I'm passionately driven to' (Interview, 14 December 2011). Peter said about the techniques taught, 'I don't apply them at all' (Interview, 23 March 2012).

Sub-theme Three: Journals, reflection and reflexivity

A third element of student personal development which became apparent through analysis of the data was the extent to which students were able to reflect on their experience and apply it profitably both to the assessment task and to their own development. The principal intended vehicle for reflection within the two modules for reflection was the Reflective Learning Journal that students were encouraged to complete on a regular basis. Each student reports a different experience and perspective with regard to journal entry and this section of the thesis analyses the reasons for these differences.

Some students were particularly enthusiastic about writing in their journal, and others were not. Each week, Simone wrote in her book after the lesson and produced a handwritten journal of nearly a hundred full A4 pages. For her it was

an important discipline to get things down on paper: 'in the journal it's more about what you think and how you got all the information... you are applying it and working with that knowledge'. Putting her thoughts down in written form gave her an evidence base on how she had progressed as the year went on: 'at the beginning my writing was really childish saying today we did this but then I was amazed and the more I read, the deeper I got into things and it was better' (Interview 1, 9 January 2009). Sarah, too, grew to like writing in her journal. In an earlier module she had been given a poor mark for her reflective log and was apprehensive about the task of maintaining a journal:

at the beginning of my reflective journal for you [this module] I started off by saying 'this is what we did, I enjoyed it and this week we are looking at such and such'. Whereas towards the end I was delving more deeply into my thoughts and my feelings... at the beginning I wasn't going into it deeply enough and now I started thinking about 'why' as well as 'what'. (Interview, 6 February 2009)

Anna was able to grasp the nature of reflection early on and was able to use her journal to make links between the taught elements of the lesson and the wider impact and application:

instead of looking on the surface level of what I thought or felt it made me crucially analyse why it was good, what I was thinking, or how it was going to help me or what I learned from it instead of just thinking why I enjoyed doing that, it was good to properly look at something. (Interview, 11 January 2012)

Mike initially regarded the journal as 'a burden' and had difficulty in engaging with the task of writing: 'It wasn't tough to write about, it was tough to motivate myself to write because I don't like writing, that's it' (Interview, 13 May 2009). Mike liked to express himself in a visual way: 'I have to say I don't like writing, I like drawing'. As the module progressed he used the journal as a vehicle for stream of consciousness writing that he then found both enjoyable and beneficial to his studies: 'if you have to do it because it's an assignment then you start writing and if you start writing you force your mind to think about a topic and different things come out' (Interview, 13 May 2009).

Other students did not have such a positive experience with the journal. Carl, who gained a BTEC in Graphic Design in earlier studies, kept his journal in word processed format even though it had been suggested to students that it was generally a good idea to handwrite and illustrate their journals, as they saw fit. His was essentially a descriptive account of the weekly lessons. For Carl, writing in a physical journal made the words permanent and, for him, unable to be altered: 'typing is a lot easier, you can correct it, you can go back to it but if you use pen and paper it's far more concrete' (Interview, 14 December 2011). Peter saw little point in the use of a journal. He regarded himself as reflective student – 'I reflect all the time' – but this was not in a written form but a development of his own thoughts. He adopted a pragmatic approach to the journal. The journal itself was not going to be formally marked, so there was little point in investing a significant amount of time:

at the beginning I thought that we were marked on it so I spent a bit more time making sure I got my thoughts down and I learned later on in the unit that it wasn't marked... so I became remiss, essentially. (Interview, 28 March 2012)

The approach to the task of producing a student learning journal shows two distinct directions. One group of students took an independent, visually-based and enthusiastic approach, an intrinsic motivation, whilst the second group of profile students tended towards a mechanistic and word processed approach. Students were given free rein to produce a journal in the form that they thought best suited them, but a reinforcement of different types of journal, possibly video, IT or audio-based output could have elicited a more positive response from the students with limited engagement.

Only one of the students continued with a voluntary learning journal after completion of their module. For Sarah and Anna, their degree course had come to a conclusion anyway, but for the other four members of the main research group, another two years remained. Peter and Carl had a negative experience of the journal so their decision not to carry on with a journal was understandable. Mike earlier expressed a dislike of writing, so his journal also went by the wayside.

Simone was the only student who continued with a journal, and in a form that she adapted from her work in the module in order for it to be of particular relevance and interest to her. Indeed, she failed to recognise that what she had been producing in her second and third years was, in fact, a journal. For Simone, if the teacher had not specifically asked for a task to be done, then she had difficulty in recognising the benefit of independently applying a learning tool that had proved to be beneficial. Simone did not, in her mind, keep up with writing a journal:

because I wasn't asked to do it? How could I keep it up if I don't have classes? I have creative technique classes but we're not asked to write a journal.

She did not, at that stage, recognise the link between independent reflection and application to other modules in a course: 'I'm scared that it wouldn't work with another subject because this subject [Creativity in Action] was abstract and the other subjects we do are more about cultural influences' (Interview, 9 January 2009). In fact, Simone did produce her own journal and reflective material, which was largely visual, and this is illustrated later in this chapter.

Both modules demand reflection on the part of students but the purpose of this is to enable students to recognise and initiate change, not just in their studies but in their own personal development. The four students who reported a positive experience of reflection were able to elaborate in their journals and interviews but for Carl and Peter there was little appetite to apply reflection to other modules. When asked if he had been able to apply reflection to work in other areas of his degree course, Carl swiftly and definitively answered: 'I can't, no' (Interview, 14 December 2011). Peter recognised the benefit of reflection but did this informally: 'I reflect a lot, but I didn't particularly get [any beneficial techniques] from this module' (Interview, 23 March 2012).

The four students who gained benefits from reflection were able to articulate this clearly in their interviews. For Sarah, reflection allowed her to take a more reasoned and analytical approach to her work than she had experienced before:

maybe we didn't realise at first where [the module] was going, I certainly didn't, but by the end of it you look back and definitely when I was doing my reflective document [assignment submission] I thought 'now I understand that', my brain's been working in its subconscious since that lesson and now I understand how Johari Window or SWOT is useful to me. (Interview, 6 February 2009)

The reflection for Sarah came not just through the journal but through the activities, which pushed her to think more deeply in a way in which she had not encountered before. She described the workshop activities as 'a little holiday' with pleasurable 'colouring in' (Interview, 6 February 2009). Simone focused on how her journal provided a permanent record of her thinking at a specific temporal point and showed its further development over time:

I could go back and read what I thought and I could think that my thoughts had changed, so that was really curious... I didn't just only gain knowledge but I also gained a way of using that knowledge myself and reflecting more thoughts each time. (Interview, 9 January 2009)

Anna, like Sarah, focused on the various creative approaches to help her develop her reflection. She used spider diagrams and other visual devices to access a deeper level of thought and reflection:

instead of just looking on the surface level of what I thought or felt, it made me critically analyse why it was good, what I was thinking, or how it was going to help me... it was good to properly look at something' (Interview, 11 January 2012)

Mike also recognised an increased level of reflection at the end of the module. This was not due to the reflective journal but to the nature of the workshop activities:

I see a general environment which goes around my creative activities... and these activities that we were doing, dreaming, random stimulation, all of that makes the environment which I think is better for sparking new ideas. (Interview, 28 May 2010)

The data show that an active engagement with reflective techniques does not come naturally to all students. They indicate that students who demonstrate a strong visual learning style are able to work readily in producing visual journals outside the taught curriculum. Students who have a more limited engagement with creative learning find producing a journal in any form arduous and problematic. A point for my own reflection is how to engage such students in producing a meaningful journal. Some ideas for this include producing a journal in different media such as video, audio or IT format. Production of a joint-journal as a formative task is a further possibility. Students could be paired randomly for a short, reflective project to learn from each other's perspectives.

Sub-theme Four: Personal and academic growth and development

This sub-theme flows directly from the previous section of the analysis. It relates to the application of the learning from the module in a practical way both within the degree course as a whole and in changes in the individual students' perspectives of themselves and their place in the world.

A growth in maturity was mentioned by a number of the profile students. This was identified particularly by Simone:

I feel more mature... maybe not physically but in the way I act. I'm only twenty but I feel like I'm asking more. I'm still naïve but experiences make you realise things, always in a positive way' (Interview 2, 17 March 2010)

Although Simone regarded herself as naïve, she also recognised that self-efficacy and belief in herself was central to her future academic success: 'I think it's the most important thing to believe in oneself, to know, to visualise that you are there already and you can do it' (Interview, 17 March 2010). Sarah also saw a shift in the way she assessed situations and addressed her academic work. Prior to taking the module she said that she had seen things more simply, as 'black and white'. Through the range of activities in the module she gradually changed her perception from always looking for concrete outcomes to recognising that there

can be multiple approaches to solving a problem: 'nothing is ever black and white, there are always shades of grey' (Interview, 6 February 2009).

All the students who reported positive perceptions of the module stated that they had generated new approaches to study because of their experiences in class. Anna found that her skills of critical analysis had been enhanced through the weekly workshops and the final assessment task: 'it makes you question what you think'. The lesson on challenging assumptions, in particular, showed Anna that it was acceptable and appropriate in an academic environment to question and challenge:

My dissertation was on the company, Shell, and my assumptions were that they were an ethical company. My entire perception of them as a company changed by the time I finished my dissertation, so it was good to challenge assumptions or your own inbuilt assumptions. (Interview, 11 January 2012)

Mike assimilated the approaches from the workshops into his study habits. He did not have to decide actively which technique to employ when faced with a study task, he knew which approach to adopt:

I don't sit there and say 'now I use this technique', I believe that this kind of thinking has got a benefit on my normal creative thinking.... I think it opened my mind even more into not limiting myself to anything. (Interview, 28 May 2010)

He saw that his ability to work easily with the taught creative concepts allowed him to produce effective and efficient creative ideas for his other modules: 'now I can focus like a laser beam on that brief... I can do that unconsciously now, I don't have to think about that' (Interview, 28 May 2010). At the start of her course, Simone recognised a tension between this and her previous learning experience, which was in the Middle East. There, she said, learning was by rote: 'we had to read and summarise, read, summarise and then talk about that in the exams' (Interview, 9 January 2009). Through the module she learned to use many of the creative learning approaches to positive developmental effect. The learning journal was of great benefit together with illuminative art: 'it is really curious because I

discover things like even now explaining to you', and creative visualisation: 'to know the purpose of why you're doing something [is really important] you can visualise what you want to get so that really motivates you when you're studying' (Interview, 28 May 2010). Sarah found that her breakthrough was to do with becoming a more effective independent learner: 'this module challenged us and I think that it was a jolt for your brain because you thought differently' (Interview, 6 February 2009).

Personal development of the student is a key theme in this thesis, and an aspect mentioned by all the students with a positive experience of creative learning approaches was the development of confidence. Anna mentioned on five separate occasions in her interview that her confidence had been positively affected by her experience of the module. She started by saying that she had more confidence in her ability to be able to come up with her own challenges and followed that by saying the module gave her permission to be herself, within a bounded framework of learning: 'it's built my confidence in the sense that it makes me feel that being creative is OK and it gives you the confidence to be creative'. The module also helped her to think beyond her course and look towards employment after graduation: 'it [the module] gave me more confidence in myself to be able to go out and achieve the things I want to once I finish studying'. It also helped her address issues of confidence with her dyslexia: 'at the beginning it's like being thrown in at the deep end, you don't know where to start with it and then you get involved' (Interview, 11 January 2012).

Anna was categorical that gaining confidence was the most important aspect, for her, to have taken from the module: 'it was good to learn and do things in a different way' (Interview, 11 January 2012). Mike also believed the module helped him to become more confident. For him, this was to do with trusting his own creative decisions; 'I'm more confident in my ideas because I am more confident in my judgment' (Interview 2, 28 May 2010). For Sarah, her confidence grew during the module and this helped her focus on positive applications for employment when she completed her course: 'it made me want to be a more independent person and made me take a long hard look at myself, about what I want to do now and later in life' (Interview, 6 February 2009).

Analysis of the students' reported experiences of the module can be used to develop two models of typical response to creative learning. The first (Figure 6.6) represents the student journey of self-discovery in which the learning path is traced through various developmental stages linked to the widening of the individual students' comfort zones. This path is followed by students who display either 'Active Engagement' or 'Active Positive Engagement' with the module. Here, there is an initial positive (or at least not negative) perception of the module and the likely learning. Collaborative learning is viewed in a positive light and there is an initial sense of excitement. This excitement is tinged with fear of the 'unknown' and to addressing the assessment brief adequately. The fear is overcome through a mixture of scaffolding, formative feedback and development of a strategy for student self-efficacy. Motivation is essentially intrinsic.

Phase	Topics and Issues
Unusual	Innate creativity Positive perspective of module
Excitement	Discovery Feeling they will enjoy module Positive to collaborative learning
Fear	Pre-module, during module or both. Ambiguity. Different from the norm Questioning own ability
Overcome Fear	Peer support, tutor support, reflection, self efficacy, link task to own motivation, confidence building, create own structure
Strategy Development	Self-efficacy, independent acquisition of skills and knowledge to complete task, taking control of learning and task, organic.
Intrinsic Learning	See task as pleasure, self-actualisation

Figure 6.6: Student journey of self-discovery ('Active Engagement' and 'Active Positive Engagement' students)

The second model (Figure 6.7) represents a pathway of the student who demonstrates Passive Engagement with creative approaches to learning. The approach tends to be mechanistic and motivation is instrumental and extrinsic. There is little excitement in the learning, which is seen as being in conflict with their educational beliefs. These students prefer learning individually and do not enjoy group work or collaborative learning unless it is with an individual who has a similar perspective on study and creative learning. These students do not report any sense of fear in studying the module as their aim is not to excel in this area, but to merely pass.

Phase	Topics and Issues
Unusual	Not a positive perspective of module Prefer logical and structured problems and approaches
Not excited or ambivalent	Feeling they will not enjoy module
Conflict with own educational beliefs	Prefer working individually or with like-minded individuals. Logical and structured thinking is best
No Fear	
Strategy Development	Pragmatic approach to pass or reach appropriate standard. Mechanistic.
Extrinsic Learning	See task as necessary to pass module.

Figure 6.7: Student journey with negative view of creative approaches to learning ('passive engagement' students)

Theme Three: the student journey – starting points and previous life experiences

To analyse how an individual student responded to or displayed a particular predisposition towards creative approaches to learning, it was useful to identify their starting point on that programme of learning. It became clear in analysing the data that the profile students presented a range of personal and academic experiences prior to starting their respective modules that impacted their expectations and attitude towards study of creative applications to learning. This theme identifies and examines how individual life stories and previous events have influenced the students' perspective on and approach to the study of their creative module. For some students this has resulted in barriers being erected against the creative learning approach and, for others, this has helped feed a passion to explore creative learning more fully.

Sarah was taking the final year module in 'Creative Personal Development'. She regarded herself as a less academically accomplished member of her family. Sarah stated that as a result she developed 'a chip on [her] shoulder'. (Interview, 6 February 2009). One of the pilot study participants, Mark, also felt family pressure to take a communications industry-related degree in the expectation that it would lead to a well-paid job. When students were asked to visualise their own graduation in the workshop, he became agitated and was not only unable to do this, he rejected the notion of this: 'I will not be proud of the degree [I would get from this course] and I want to be proud of the degree I've got' (Interview, 9 May 2006).

Peter took the first year module 'Creativity in Action' and shared a good deal of intimate family history in his individual interview; in particular, he was raised by his father. He recognised the impact of his family issues on his development and described himself as being 'different'; 'I'm not like other people' (Interview, 23 March 2012). This reinforced the assertion that a student's background, both academic and personal, will have a bearing on how they respond to the specific demands of higher education and the course and modules they are following. Peter's opinions towards the module appear to be deep, immovable and based on

what he sees as logic: 'If I'm really against something... I will do what I can to rationalise that in my mind or do what I can to look at it from an objective perspective, not subjective' (Interview, 23 March 2012). This aspect of his personality cannot be ignored in any analysis of his reported experience of the module. Peter's life experiences prior to university appear to have contributed to a rigid belief system that has fed his apparent dislike and mistrust of some of the methods used in this research. It seems to have impacted significantly on his ability to have a positive experience of his 'Creativity in Action' module.

Carl also recounted that he experienced a difficult childhood. His parents were graduates and had professional careers. Pressure from them for him to succeed academically, he believed, led to his breakdown as a teenager: 'they pushed me too much as a child which led to a build-up of stress' (Interview, 14 December 2011).

In contrast to Peter's view of the world, Mike's international and multicultural background contributed to a more open-minded attitude. Mike took the first year 'Creativity in Action' module and completed his degree programme with first class honours in 2010. He prided himself on trying to understand other cultures. These traits, generated by his early family experience, positively affected his reaction to the module. He was Italian by birth but other family members included Indian, American and South African nationalities: 'I haven't got a particular culture' (Interview, 13 May 2009). He attributed a vivid imagination to a life experience when he was six years old. His parents divorced and he was forced to live in a home he did not choose. In reaction, he began to imagine ways to escape to the other home by 'making up this little movie in my mind'. His parents' divorce had a substantial impact on the way he viewed the world: 'I started to imagine things that didn't exist'. His father was a mechanical engineer and he wanted to be like his father and started to design devices that came from his imagination. One of these was a jet pack that would carry him to the other parent's home. Imagination became second nature to him and it also gave him an open mind, 'I always look at things from different points of view' (Interview, 13 May 2009). Simone also comes from an international background – 'I've moved around a lot'. Her father was a diplomat and she had lived in Jordan and Spain as well as the UK. Like Mike,

Simone took the 'Creativity in Action' module in 2010 and she graduated with upper second class honours. Similarly, her multicultural background exposed her to a range of different beliefs and points of view that were beneficial in adapting to new learning styles and cultures. Simone said that, because her family moved around Europe and the Middle East, she did not have difficulty in accepting the abstract nature of the learning within the module: 'In general, I don't think that we're [international students] privileged.... I just think that the way we were brought up influences the way we think' (Interview, 28 May 2010).

Sarah reported that she had always felt that she was under pressure, largely imposed by herself, she admits, to perform well in higher education because of the academic successes of her parents and siblings. Sarah found the final year 'quite hard going' and complained about the systematic and text-based nature of her other modules: 'we had dissertations and reports and lots of long essays and that kind of thing'. Reflection was a significant element in the assignment for her 'Creative Personal Development' module. Sarah reflected on the experiential nature of the optional unit prior to enrolling and, because this would be a new type of learning experience, she was scared about her ability to perform at an appropriate level.

I came to see you even before I started the module because I was really worried about it... there wasn't really a right or wrong... it did scare me because I'm much better at black and white rather than grey areas. (Interview, 6 February 2009)

What finally convinced Sarah that she should grasp the nettle and take the optional module was advice from a friend: 'one of the students from the year previous said she had done it and had really enjoyed it' (Interview, 6 February 2009).

Sarah's previous educational history suggested that she took a cautious approach to learning. She was reluctant to push the boundaries of her own study comfort zone. She had been used to clearly defined tasks in assignments and study and was reluctant to take on an experiential learning module because of what she perceived as lack of structure and, as a result, she was 'scared'. In choosing the

module she was definitely moving outside her comfort zone. For Sarah, one tension was whether to take a leap into the unknown by taking the module and risk a further poor module mark, jeopardising a potential upper second overall classification, or to stay with a text-based module and assignment that she was used to tackling.

Like Sarah, Carl and Peter both started their university student careers not having performed well at school. Carl started his course at the age of twenty and had been taken out of school at the age of twelve with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, subsequently receiving home schooling. He did not take GCSEs at age sixteen but successfully took Mathematics and English a year later. Carl admitted that he was under parental pressure to perform when he was young and was also pushed by them to undertake a Graphic Design degree. He rejected this and chose to follow a media-based degree instead. Both these students overcame low levels of educational achievement in their mid-teens to prosper academically on a practical (BTEC) programme that has served as an appropriate base for their degree study.

In interview, Mike did not reveal details about his prior educational background, but stated that he approached the module feeling confident: 'Well, this imagination thing, the setting of goals and all that, making these little "mental movies", all that I've done since I can remember' (Interview, 28 May 2010). Simone, too, exuded confidence in her interviews, and she related a storied educational past. She felt that the different teaching styles and expectations she had experienced overseas previously did not prepare her well for a British undergraduate programme. However, she identified what she perceived as significant shortcomings in the pedagogical approaches employed in her learning in Spain and the Middle East and as a result she was receptive to and adapted well to more participative teaching styles, in general, at a British university and the experiential nature of the 'Creativity in Action' module. Her studies in Jordan and Spain had been highly structured, so she stated she was: 'shocked at the way of teaching here because it's really practical and you do it on your own' (Interview, 9 January 2009).

Student interviews revealed potential barriers to the success of some of the approaches used in this study. Carl, having been forced by ill health to be

schooled at home, did not feel he learned to work within a group until he arrived at university. In addition, negative memories of his interaction with child psychologists led him to feel that he was 'different' (Interview, 14 December 2011). In interview he reflected back to how he had guessed what the psychologist was trying to accomplish with her questions when he was twelve years old, so he manipulated his answers to produce a different result that did not fit what the psychologist was expecting. Carl described himself as a student who was 'always coming near the top of the class' when he had been at school. He felt that a major part of the content of this unit was beneath his intellect, stated that he preferred a highly structured approach, and found the technique of creative visualisation 'insulting to my intelligence'. He began this module believing he already possessed an existing and innate ability to produce creative ideas, and reported being happy with the strategies he had developed on his own prior to the course. Carl was also keen to state that he much preferred working on his own: 'I'm not much of a people person' (Interview, 14 December 2011).

Two of the students, Peter and Anna, both report having dyslexia. Peter described a serious form of the disorder that he believed was the main reason for his previous poor academic performance: 'It impacted me for a long time because at school I was told I was not trying... I felt a bit cheated' (Interview, 23 March 2012). Anna reported a less severe form of dyslexia, but did reveal concern about the impact of the disorder on her coursework at university: 'It has held me back in the past... it does hold you back because you are worried about making mistakes' (Interview, 11 January 2012). Both reported having developed having techniques to lessen the impact of their visual processing dysfunction; nevertheless, dyslexia could account for both Peter and Anna displaying some negative beliefs related either to the module or themselves. One significant observation is that Peter had a largely negative experience of the module, while Anna had a positive assessment.

To summarise, from analysis of the data it became evident that the student participants' life experiences and their responses to them had an impact on their attitude towards creative approaches to learning. As noted above, some elements of family relationships and educational experiences had either negative or positive effects on students' approaches and attitudes towards the module. Sarah, Mark

and Carl all entered the programme feeling pressure to perform due to perceived or real beliefs about their abilities compared to their family members. Anna, too, expressed fear and 'sheer panic' at the onset of the module, as it required a previously untried way, for her, of approaching coursework.

Other students, such as Mike and Simone, were very happy to work with new creative concepts from the very beginning. For these two students, their home and family environments nurtured change, curiosity and creativity. They both seemed to easily adapt to methods of teaching that require the student to provide the structure for learning and to learn independently. Both Mike and Simone were confident and able to accept new concepts when they started the module, attributing their flexibility to varied family and educational experiences throughout their lives. But not all students reported positive experiences of the creative approaches to learning. Peter and Carl, for example, were reluctant to adopt a number of the methods. Indeed, they were actively hostile towards some approaches. They had difficulty working within a frame of uncertainty, preferring instead to focus mainly on aspects they felt were realistic and concrete.

Theme Four: Accessing deeper student learning through creative approaches in delivery

This theme developed through evaluation of the students' appraisal of their learning through the module, with particular reference to their preferred learning style. Of the six students included in the main research, five claimed a preference for visual learning and one for reading and writing. This section examines the extent to which the visual learning modality, in particular, was employed by the students to access aspects of deeper learning and insights of self and motivation either not apparent or less evident, using what can be termed as traditional approaches to learning. This section also examines the role and extent of tutor-provided scaffolding as means to promote deeper student learning.

Sub-theme One: Visual preferences

For most of the students, the thought of using colour, drawing and sketching to access thoughts and feelings was novel. Two students, Anna and Sarah, reported a sense of fear. Anna spoke frequently about her bravery in moving out of her comfort zone at the outset with illuminative art: 'you have to be quite brave to try something different or "outside the box" and not the norm' (Interview, 11 January 2012). Likewise, Sarah spoke of her worry at coming to terms with learning through drawing: 'creativity isn't [just about] being able to draw a picture but I was worried about my ability to express my thoughts and feelings through the reflective document in the way that I wanted to' (Interview, 6 February 2009). Other students reflected on uncertainty. Simone talked of her confusion in the initial classes, which focused on illuminative art and graphical work with flip charts: 'I didn't understand what the whole thing meant and then I changed and realised this will help me because it will help me control my creativity' (Interview, 9 January 2009). Mike, on the other hand, was concerned that he had not been able to express his visual, graphical and creative abilities in his learning before arriving at university and that had coloured his judgment of what education, learning and creativity was all about. For him, learning through visual means was a validation of his intrinsic beliefs: 'I was actually starting to think that it was wrong to imagine... I was saying... I'm not really normal, I should stop doing this [creativity and imagination] stuff and be like everybody else' (Interview, 13 May 2009).

Once students became used to the application of creative learning approaches, most became comfortable in learning through this mode. However, two of the profile students did not particularly engage with this type of learning and their experience of the module is explored later in this theme. For the majority, the use of drawings, collage and visual student output required them to think differently and to produce output in a different way to other modules. Sarah saw learning through pictures as therapeutic: 'I had to think about things that I hadn't thought about before' (Interview, 6 February 2009). For Anna, a visual focus initially provided a refreshing change: 'other things [in other modules] were really theory-heavy this was quite nice to get away from a computer screen' (Interview, 11 January 2012). In the interview, Sarah discussed at several places the benefit she

had gained by learning in a visual way. She explored in depth the reasons for her positive experience: 'using different colours, textures and materials let me go a bit crazy'. Like Anna, Sarah also contrasted the learning and output in this module with much of the learning elsewhere on her course: 'you spend so much time at Uni using your laptop, taking notes, using pads and paper and everything is so similar... all of a sudden you're allowed to use colouring pens and glue and glitter'. For her, using visual means for learning and reflection proved to be something of an epiphany: 'I think that drawing cemented it really... it taught me a lot about myself about how I can think and how I can change my thinking'.

To summarise, students may have to overcome an initial feeling of shock when encouraged to draw as a means of personal expression. For some this is pleasant, for others it is more challenging. Once any initial concerns are overcome then students can use this independently as a means of accessing feelings and for personal reflection and development.

Sub-theme Two: Accessing deeper learning

All four students from the main study who expressed an overall positive view of the unit stated that the learning within the module enabled them to access what they regarded as deep levels of learning. Flowing from the comments in the previous paragraphs, both Sarah and Simone saw the learning as being effective because of the motivational qualities of the methods adopted. Simone saw the module as a means to discover more about herself as well as her degree subject:

with your module, it was more creative, more about knowing yourself and I think that your module is all about the future. It's all about life, not just about [my degree subject]...you teach us to explore ourselves to explore our mind and our dreams.
(Interview, 17 March 2010)

Sarah found the visual methods of presentation both within class and in the assessment as a means to trigger her creativity and motivation in an intrinsic way she hadn't previously been able to access: 'I was doing it [the assessment] for me. I wanted to do a good job because I enjoyed the module and I wanted to make it

good for myself. I wanted to do myself proud' (Interview, 6 February 2009). For Mike, the module was one with which he could easily engage with and which allowed him to show his creativity: 'the classes were my favourite in the whole year... they were really more abstract... I could never imagine a class of this kind existing... it's not something that you do in schools or universities' (Interview, 13 May 2009). Anna, too, relished the independent learning aspect of the module:

it's totally different to any other course or module I've ever done in the sense that 'here is the brief, answer A, B, C and D and you should then get the right grade' whereas with this [module] it was 'find your own path' but with support. You've got to find your way and learn through finding your own path. (Interview, 11 January 2012)

Simone, Mike and Sarah echoed Anna's comments about the independent learning initiated by the course, not just for the assessment but beyond the curriculum, to explore their own creative thinking and to broaden their academic and personal horizons. As a result of the visualisation exercises Mike independently undertook a CD-based course in personal development based on meditation, lucid dreaming and reflection, 'The Gateway Experience': 'I was really searching for something... I really wanted to see how far I could go in my subconscious mind' (Interview, 28 May 2010). Simone moved into independently keeping a visual journal to trigger memories, but also to act as a visual stimulus for her academic and personal life. She also carried on with illuminative art outside the taught curriculum as a means to access her inner feelings. She drew what she felt without identifying a logical interpretation, but then looked back at her work and could see visual metaphors for her situation and the way she felt at the time.

Simone interpreted her illuminative art (Figure 5.12) in one of her interviews. She recalled the energy bubble from the visualisations, surrounding and protecting her. This was an important link to her previous learning and one she used subsequently. She is under the sea, and interpreted this as representing how she viewed university work: 'I know that I have hope above me but at the same time I am drowning so I feel that everything is coming on top of me'. She moves her interpretation to the seven footsteps on the right hand side of the page. For

Simone, seven is a lucky number. She analyses the direction as progressing to a successful outcome in her studies: 'the seven footsteps... means to follow a way that starts right at the bottom so there's still a way that I have to go'. She includes the Spanish word for hope in the picture to spur her on, and voices how useful her independent creative journal has been:

this painting might seem quite nothing but I think that really it did help me a lot because it showed me my situation then... and then I have a journal here... I wouldn't call it a journal exactly, it's more that I can paint in it, I can write stories, I can write poems. (Interview, 17 March 2010)

Sarah, too, took a strong independent line when producing her assessment. She allowed herself to move out of her admitted comfort zone, where assignment briefs had strict assessment criteria and full guidance on how to complete, and to begin to trust her own instincts on what was appropriate to include and how to present this. Sarah argued that the protection, as she saw it, of strict assessment guidelines and criteria in assignments from other modules had actually prevented her from thinking or responding to those assessments creatively, because an expected framework for response had already been given. As her confidence grew, so did the quality of her output:

Early on, I was worried about it and I think that perhaps I hadn't understood the brief. Initially I was worried that I wouldn't be able to get it right, but in the end... it was really different from anything else and that was really, really, helpful (Interview, 6 February 2009)

In summary, students who engage actively with the module are able to achieve deep levels of learning through the use of creative approaches to learning, which are generally not used in any other areas of their curriculum. By moving away from what students saw as traditional forms of both assessment and module delivery, the creative style of learning gave students permission to explore their own creativity and expression. Tailored scaffolding on the part of the tutor supports students on their individual learning journey within the module, but the research shows that students who actively engage with the creative learning are able to

continue this independently and unprompted and in their chosen style on completion of the module.

Sub-theme Three: Reflection

This chapter has already illustrated how Simone used her illuminative art for reflection. Sarah, too, used her learning journal to explore areas outside the taught curriculum. She incorporated these into the main body of her work. She chose to focus on what 'success' meant for her and to help go beyond her thoughts on starting the module in purely financial or material items: 'time to make a decision as to what my priorities should be... that's something that's important to me' (Interview, 6 February 2009). Sarah viewed taking the module as a turning point in her life. It allowed her, for the first time, to think about herself and what she wanted from life. Sarah admitted that as a result of reflecting on what she really wanted from life and to make some significant life changes. One of the purposes of reflection is to reappraise the sense of self and to identify a direction in which to take our life. In some cases this can lead to life altering decisions, as with Sarah.

Anna, too, completed a reflective journal. Whilst part of the journal contained an overview of the content of the lecture, not the purpose of the reflective journal, Anna went further and incorporated her thoughts and reflections. 'I did it after every lecture and what I took from it... and then critically analysed it and thought how it worked for me and whether it did work'. For Anna, reflection allowed her to extend her comfort zone by offering a framework to explore her own new thinking: '[reflection helps] to see what you think and to look a little bit deeper, to look beyond the obvious and that was really good' (Interview, 11 January 2012). Mike, however, did not have such a positive experience with the journal: 'I'd never done a journal before and it was a bit of a burden I have to say. I don't like writing, I like drawing'. Mike did reflect though on his experience of producing a journal. He noticed a change in initially writing a methodical and descriptive account of the lessons of the first few weeks to a stream of consciousness form of writing. 'I started kind of slow and when I started writing I stopped thinking about writing and writing just came down and I stopped worrying about the grammar and the writing and the spelling'. In his interview, Mike revised his earlier comment about writing

being uninspiring: 'it was kind of enjoyable really: it did help me to be able to exclude all other thoughts' (Interview, 13 May 2009).

Simone, however, found reflection and journaling a highly positive experience: 'when I write things or I draw things, I feel like getting emotions out of myself, which is quite helpful'. As discussed earlier, Simone loved to draw and then analyse what she had produced: 'writing is all about metaphors for me, it's all about images, it's just that the tools we use are different. Here it is pencil and colours, and with writing it's words' (Interview, 28 May 2010). In her journal Simone used abstract drawings and scrap paper to form and articulate her views of her changing self. For one item in her independent journal she picked up a piece of scrap paper from the university library with some computer code printed along one edge and converted this into a personal statement using metaphor (Figure 6.8).



Figure 6.8: Simone: Abstract drawing

The arrow represents her academic direction, upwards. It is green because it is a positive colour for her: 'green is a colour that really shows hope... the arrow is

solid so it's very clear and it says you're going that way, but what you're going to find, right now you don't know so you can't decode it yet', hence the use of the inscrutable computer code. She adds that the water continues to represent her feeling that she is drowning, but if she follows the arrow, she will reach her goal. During the interview, articulating her analysis gave her a further insight into her inner world:

Maybe I should focus more in the moment, it really shows unconsciously when you draw things because right now I never thought that I focused so much on the future. (Interview, 17 March 2010).

The research shows that reflection, then, does not have to be in structured, written form. Students can access deep levels of meaning and understanding through drawings, sketches and doodles. The drawings can often be metaphors for aspects of the students' academic or personal lives that they can then decode and articulate either verbally, as in the interviews, or in written form. Undiscovered layers of understanding of self can be revealed through visual reflection, which serve as a base for further reflection.

Sub-theme Four: Passive approaches to learning

As identified earlier in this chapter, some students attended the workshop sessions and participated in activities but tended to do so, by their own admission, for what they regarded as largely extrinsically motivated reasons, largely to ensure the module was passed. They reported a generally negative experience. Of course, their experiences are valid, but these experiences are different from those of the other students in the research group. This sub-theme analyses the key characteristics displayed by the students who demonstrated Passive Engagement with the unit.

One key element that differentiated Carl and Peter from the other four students, evident when analysing their interview transcripts, was a largely extrinsic motivation. Carl attended the classes because he needed to pass the module in order to get his qualification: 'I want a degree because degrees open doors'

(Interview, 14 December 2011). Peter was less negative towards the learning on the module, but still focused on a job-related outcome: 'this is not so much about a challenge [undertaking new approaches to learning] it is more about [getting] a job' (Interview, 23 March 2012). Both saved their most strident criticism for creative visualisation, discussed in the next section of this chapter, but what became evident when analysing their interview data in general was that they both held strong views about learning that neither liked challenged. Peter had fixed beliefs on approaches to learning and life in general: 'if something is against my values [in learning and life] I don't care who I offend' (Interview, 23 March 2013). Carl focused his comments purely on learning. He was used to a way of studying and he was not going to try anything new: 'that might make me look closed-minded, that might make me look a bit of an idiot... but I completely understand that' (Interview 23 March 2012).

Both students who disliked the approaches had negative experiences when working with other people. Carl was explicit when asked about his approach to group work: 'I don't like working in groups, I much prefer to work on my own... I want to just do my work myself, I'm very much a sort of loner and an introvert' (Interview, 14 December 2011). Peter expressed similar sentiments about the difficulties encountered working with or mixing with others: 'I'm not like most people my age, I don't go out... I'm introverted' (Interview 23 March 2012). Both also report difficulties when encountering learning concepts that challenge their accepted orthodoxy: '[I'm] honest, reasonable, rational' (Peter, Interview, 23 March 2012): 'I'm a level-headed person' (Carl, Interview, 14 December 2011).

One further action that both students reported and which is consistent with Passive Engagement was a desire to produce what they viewed as enough to gain a pass mark but not to seek a higher grade. Carl was honest in his outlook, saying that as he was not producing work for a business and consequently it was not worth investing a significant amount of time on his assignment:

I'm not lazy but I don't overgo unless I'm passionately driven. I'm quite happy to come up with quite good ideas but they don't need to be improved upon, I'm not getting paid for this. (Interview, 14 December 2011).

Peter also identified that his effort was aimed solely at his assignment. He remarked that he wrote significantly less in his reflective journal when he found out that the document itself wasn't going to be marked: 'when I learned that it was just something that we handed in alongside the assignments [and it wasn't marked] then I became remiss' (Interview, 23 March 2012).

Finally, neither of these students applied any of the approaches taught once they had completed the module: 'I don't apply them [the concepts], I come up with a lot of ideas naturally' (Carl, Interview, 14 December 2011): 'I recognise why they [the approaches] would be useful [to some students] but you just develop a preference for certain things' (Peter, Interview, 23 March 2012).

To summarise, in contrast to the students who actively and positively engage with creative learning approaches, some students exhibit an instrumental approach and mere Passive Engagement. Some students who adopt this latter strategy to the creative learning approaches display a number of characteristics contrasting with those who show Positive Engagement. These included a largely extrinsically motivated approach to their learning, without perceiving a need to produce their best work. This may be coupled with a reluctance to engage with the new learning approaches and a preference for relying on logic for creative ideas in their seminars and coursework rather than application of the techniques and for working alone.

Overarching Theme Two: The role of creative visualisation and guided imagery in the creative learning process

The subsidiary research question that was posed in this thesis relates to the role of creative visualisation and guided imagery in the learning process and the development of enhanced creative faculties of undergraduate students. This section of the cross-case thematic analysis specifically isolates and focuses on the reported experiences of creative visualisation and guided imagery by students within the main study and the pilot study. Much of this chapter has been

concerned solely with the experiences of the main study group to the exclusion of the pilot study students. This is because the focus of the thesis shifted in the light of the pilot study results from creative visualisation, in particular, with the pilot students to a broader spotlight of creative learning with the main group. The reasons for this reorientation are fully explained in the conclusion of Chapter Four – The Pilot Study. Consequently, as the students who provided the primary research data for the pilot study were questioned solely on creative visualisation and guided imagery, their responses play a more significant role in this section of the analysis.

Theme One: Polarisation of reported experiences

The main and evident feature from the students' responses concerning creative visualisation and guided imagery was a clear polarisation of views held by students. The division generally reflected the views and positions reported in Figure 6.2, but with far greater intensity, both for and against visualisation. Some students were able to benefit from and apply some of the visualisation exercises and not others. I have categorised these students as reporting selective positive experiences.

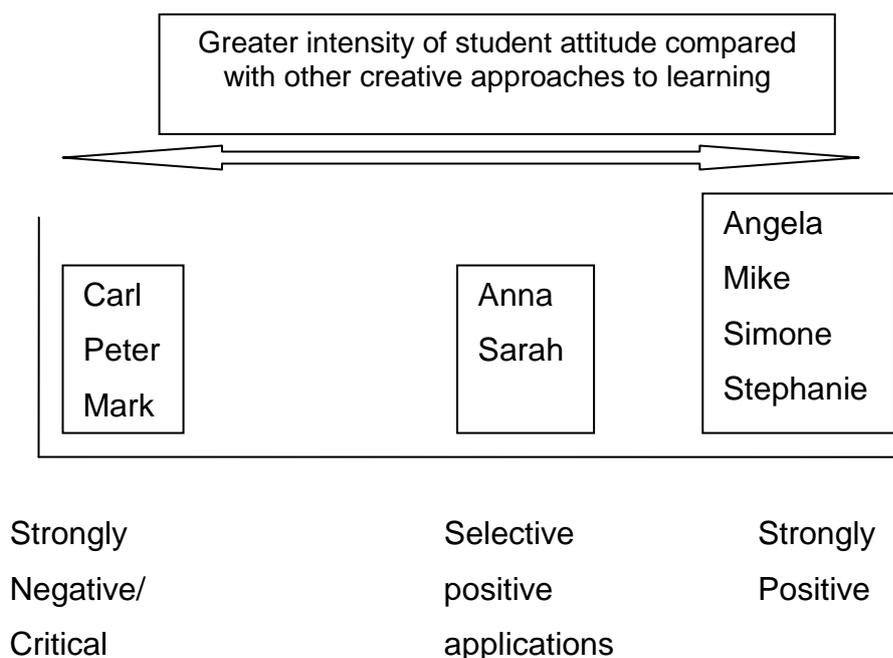


Figure 6.9: Creative visualisation and guided imagery: student polarisation

Sub-theme One: Negative experiences

Carl and Peter, who expressed a general dislike for creative approaches to learning, both used strong and scathing language in expressing their criticism of the visualisation sessions. For Carl, the concept was 'manipulative' and although he still has his pebble from the 'Beach' visualisation, he kept it because, he said, 'it reminds me how much I disliked the lesson'. He concluded by saying that: 'if people need a pet rock, they have much deeper issues than being on a [university] course, they need some sort of therapy' (Interview, 14 December 2011). Peter was equally critical of the approaches. He thought that asking students to attribute emotions to a stone was 'foul play' and did not play any active role in the workshop: 'I just sat there and looked out towards the wall... I blocked your voice... because it just annoyed me' (Interview, 23 March 2012). Mark, from the pilot group, also reported a negative overall experience of visualisation. Although he was not as negative as Carl and Peter in his choice of language, Mark made it clear that guided imagery was not for him. He could not allow his imagination to attribute emotions to the pebble in the 'Beach' visualisation: 'it's just a stone' (Interview, 9 May 2006).

Sub-theme Two: Positive experiences

In contrast, four of the students, two from the main group and two from the pilot, gave very positive feedback on their experience of creative visualisation and guided imagery. Simone said it was the key to her success as a student and she had integrated the concepts and techniques into her academic life and career planning: 'creative visualisation is so important and all the drawings, drawing your own way, what you want, it's really powerful' (Interview, 9 January 2009). Mike talked in all his interviews about making 'mental movies' that replicate imagery and visualisation. He developed the concepts independently by taking a recognised course in this approach, The Gateway Experience, and explored a more advanced technique, lucid dreaming, and actively applied both approaches profitably in his studies: 'it all goes together to making me able to get more detached... when I think creatively [by using visualisation]' (Interview, 28 May 2010).

From the pilot group, Angela displayed her visualisation treasure map in her bedroom as a constant reminder of why she was doing the course and she used it daily to reinforce her commitment to overcoming her study obstacles: 'every time I think "I didn't do so well in this", it's like "fight" ... it's a kind of motivation that makes me continue' (Interview, 8 May 2006). Stephanie used visualisation to affirm her belief in her own abilities and to set goals for the future. She, too, integrated this into her regular study routine and practised this independently in a way which was useful to her:

it was just natural for me to sit [and do this] because this activity of meditation has struck me and it made me think very often 'how will I be in the future, how will it look like'... and I tried to see concrete things which could make me see myself, 'where do you want to go? What do you want to achieve?' (Interview, 11 May 2006)

Sub-theme Three: Selective positive experiences

The two remaining students in the study reported a generally positive overall response to creative visualisation and guided imagery, but they were not as active in applying the approaches to their course outside the module. They did, however, apply them positively within their module and to their own personal situations. Sarah found the light visualisation helpful to becoming more relaxed and able to cope with pressure situations in her study, personal and professional lives: 'I do use it to shut my brain down, and as a relaxation tool which I find really useful' (Interview, 6 February 2009). Anna initially experienced some difficulty in accepting the concepts, but over time and through class activity and application outside the workshops she embraced the thrust of creative visualisation: 'I find myself, when I think of things that I can't achieve, I think "no", and then think of the different steps I could take to making that possible' (Interview, 11 January 2012).

As a composite, the data show that most of the students were either strongly for or strongly against creative visualisation and guided imagery as an approach to learning and stimulating creative thought. These polarised positions were an

extension of their experiences with creative approaches to learning in general, reported earlier in this chapter. They were seen as manipulative or highly profitable at the extremes, and as occasionally or specifically useful to those whose response was conditional. In short, the polarisation demonstrated by experience of creative visualisation clearly reflects the boundaries and comfort zones of individual students. Some are not prepared to test or experiment at all with the approach and retreat into withdrawal from the activity and criticism of the methodology. Others, who are prepared to take risks and who have a visual inclination, actively engage and indeed demonstrate a strong streak of independent application and learning in this area. A third group of students is prepared to engage with the concepts of creative visualisation but within a more limited framework of application, which reflects a more limited desire to stretch their study comfort zone. These three sub-sets of the research students provide appropriate groupings of individuals from which thematic consistencies and occasional inconsistencies can be deduced and discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

Theme Two: Intensity of feelings - negative experiences

This theme relates to the intensity of feelings of the three students who responded with strongly negative reports of the experience of creative visualisation and guided imagery. The possible reasons for the strong reactions, issues and implications for practice are addressed further in the concluding chapter.

Carl and Peter both reported strong negative feelings towards the visualisation workshops and towards the techniques themselves. They reported no benefit whatsoever from the session and were vocal in interview in their criticism of the inclusion of the topics in their module curriculum. Mark took part in the pilot study and described how he detached from the visualisation exercises. Although he reported a negative overall experience of creative visualisation, or at least not a positive one, he admitted that the 'Beach' visualisation was instrumental in helping him decide to change his undergraduate studies to another university and another discipline.

Sub-theme One: Perception of creative visualisation and guided imagery and personal outlook

Carl and Peter's perception of the visualisation techniques were wholly negative from the outset. Carl talked of 'manipulation' that 'overshadows the [module] as a whole (Interview, 14 December 2011), and Peter called it 'foul play' when asked to use his imagination to reflect on the history and experiences of the pebble in the 'Beach' visualisation. (Interview, 23 March 2012). Mark's criticism, however, was not as trenchant and he confined himself to saying that 'it [visualisation] wasn't the easiest thing to do' (Interview, 9 May 2006).

Each of the three students explained in interview their view of the world and each independently discussed rigidity in his thought process. Carl, from the outset, did not accept the validity of visualisation in the creative process and said he had 'no problem generating ideas myself, so I don't see the need to use [visualisation] particularly' (Interview, 14 December 2011). Peter talked of his thinking which he described as always 'rational', 'logical' and 'pragmatic' (Interview, 23 March 2012). These views reject the generally accepted notion of idea generation. This involves an initial creative phase, where a number of ideas are produced then subjected to a logical or analytical approach to produce a 'best fit' idea. Peter's views ignored the initial creative idea generation phase and moved straight to logical analysis. The difficulty with this approach in a creative setting is that the individual creates few ideas to then be subjected to logical analysis and scrutiny. Mark also highlighted in interview that he 'works quite logically and academically rather than with "alternative" methods' (Interview, 9 May 2006), echoing both Peter and Carl.

One aspect in each of the interviews of the students with a negative view was that, although visualisation was not for them, they acknowledged that it could be beneficial for others. Peter explained, 'I did understand why it [visualisation] can work... I recognised why [it] would be useful... but you just develop a preference for certain things' (Interview, 23 March 2012). From Mark's point of view, 'I can understand why you did such a thing... I can understand how it could be helpful [for other people]... but for me, with my way of thinking, it wouldn't have been helpful or relevant' (Interview, 9 May 2006). Carl, however, could not talk about his

recognition of the possible benefit for others of imagery pass without a criticism of the approach:

I'm sure that for other people maybe it **was** useful [his emphasis] but I put it more in the sort of hokum that 'this will help you visualise' and I think that it shouldn't be necessary for people. I think that as humans and as university students we should be... above such techniques. (Interview, 14 December 2011)

The distrust was paramount.

Carl and Peter also showed a sense of a passive-aggressive response. Both stayed in the room for the session, participated and were not disruptive. They thus put themselves in a position to provide meaningful data for this analysis. Carl kept his pebble from the 'Beach' visualisation and carries it in his computer case to remind himself how much he disliked the imagery workshops. In the same visualisation, Peter put down the stone, both in his imagination and in real life in order to detach and create a physical separation from the activity and other members in the group.

Sub-theme Two: Approach to imagination and the abstract

Each of the students reporting a negative experience rejected the notion of visualisation as a possible tool to help generate ideas for their university work. As discussed above, for these students, concepts need to be concrete and there was little scope or appetite for the abstract or for stretching the imagination. Peter recoiled at the concept of trying to imagine what a pebble fifteen thousand years old could have lived through: 'humans are sentient beings, they recognise things. A stone is not. It's not even alive, it's absolutely inanimate, there is no reason to believe it can think' (Interview, 23 March 2012). Carl incorrectly identified the visualisation as an anchoring technique used with him by a psychologist when he was in his early teens, developed Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and had to be removed from school to receive tutoring at home. Anchoring is intended as a therapeutic psychological tool where a specific, positive and remedial feeling is linked to a specific object or touch point on the body. The 'Beach' meditation with

the holding of the pebble invites the listener to explore their own thoughts, feelings insights and intuition, as opposed to being told what to think or feel. This is a crucial difference. Anchoring is a practitioner-directed therapeutic concept; visualisation is developmental with a non-therapeutic intention and interpreted individually by the listener. Carl's erroneous connection served as a definite but understandable block to any positive experience of visualisation: 'it was anchoring... I really disliked that because people would get this false association with the rock, because it's not their friend, it's an inanimate object'. (Interview, 14 December 2011).

Peter, too, defended his logical stance towards the pebble element of the visualisation, albeit incorrectly. He argued that the stone, which was between fifteen and twenty thousand years old in its present form, could not have been that old and then made geological statements to try to refute the age of the pebble. The pebble, in fact, was correctly dated. By taking this stance, Peter tries to dismantle the credibility of the exercise in his eyes by casting doubt on an important factual point. Students who took a negative view towards the activity attach themselves to a factual element of the activity, the psychological approach for Carl and the age of the stone for Peter, and interpret this in a way that served to invalidate visualisation from their point of view. As indicated above, the assertions made by the students in both these cited examples may have been their perception, were factually incorrect, but served their purpose.

Both Carl and Peter specifically stated that the stone was 'inanimate' and did not allow their imagination to embrace an element of the fantastic, as this would be in conflict with their previously stated approaches to thinking that are 'level-headed' and 'rational', respectively. Similarly, Mark stated that he took 'an objective look back' and regarded the pebble as 'just a stone' (Interview, 9 May 2006). Carl made a useful distinction between approaches likely to be of use to him and those which were not, by contrasting illuminative art with imagery and creative visualisation. He argued that illuminative art is a form of visualisation, which of course it is, in translating mental feelings and images into a permanent visual form, whereas creative visualisation and imagery is auditory and in the mind. To analyse Carl's observation further, illuminative art is based on a personal reality and the

individual's perception of that reality, and situated in the past and present, whereas creative visualisation and guided imagery have a focus on future states such as gaining a degree or stretching the imagination such as the use of the pebble in the 'Beach' visualisation.

Peter and Carl produced treasure maps following the Great Smoking Mirror exercise but, for Mark, the most eventful visualisation was to do with 'Graduation'. In this guided imagery exercise, the students were talked through their graduation ceremony. They imagine themselves walking onto a stage and receiving their award and hear the applause of the audience. They are asked to identify their feelings while this is happening. The intention is to generate pride in having achieved a substantial academic goal.

For Mark, who had come from a high-achieving family, this did not turn out to be the case: 'that was the exercise which made me realise that I want to change university'. He had achieved B, C and D in his Advanced Level examinations and he had been convinced by his parents that he should follow a practical business undergraduate course. This was not, however, what Mark wanted to study for a degree. The visualisation sessions came in the second semester and 'Graduation' helped him make his mind up to leave the course. There was a dissonance between the tone of the visualisation, which was positive, and his own feelings:

you were mentioning how proud we'd be and I thought to myself, to be honest, I won't be proud. There's nothing wrong with the Uni but I will not be proud of the degree and I've got and I want to be proud of the degree I've got. (Interview, 9 May 2006).

Mark successfully completed his year at university and then transferred to another university to study Music. He subsequently communicated with me, 'it was 100% the right decision for me and I came out with good grades' (Personal e-mail, 29 January 2013).

Carl and Peter's treasure maps contrast in many ways. Both these students had followed graphics BTEC courses to gain entry to their undergraduate course and

map contains text equally far from typical in the maps produced by other students in the cohort. Elaborating in the interview, Peter said that he was able to participate without negative feelings in the 'Great Smoking Mirror' visualisation preceding the drawing of the treasure map, but, looking in the mirror in his imagination in this exercise, he could not conjure up a picture of himself and reflected that: 'looking forward, my problem is a personal problem in that I don't really have ambition... I'm really a passionate person but I don't have ambition'. Peter also talked of 'forcing' thoughts and images into his mind to put onto paper: 'I had to think things through' (Interview, 23 March 2012).

He also identified a tension between recognising what lies outside his comfort zone, the uncertainty of life, and what lies within, fact and certainty. Peter understood that the world around him contains ambiguities, complexities and is full of uncertainty: 'everything is tentative to me, nothing is absolute, no matter what, actually, to be honest with you', yet his comfort zone required him to analyse fully situations that present themselves: 'I've had more people say to me that I over-think things than any other thing that they've ever said to me' (Interview, 23 March 2012). For Peter, the treasure map did seem to have served a useful purpose in that, like illuminative art, it provides a visual catalyst for further verbal articulation. The learning from the treasure map exercise, for Peter, came not from the process of drawing but from the development of thought triggered by the process of drawing.

To sum up, students who reported a negative perception of visualisation were characterised by declaring a predominantly logical or rational thought process. They totally rejected the notion of using their imagination to attribute emotion or memory to an object such as a pebble and that one could develop a rapport with such an object. They did, however, recognise that there could be benefit in the approach for others, while they argued that they could develop creative ideas using other techniques. Although the students did not report positive experiences, they took part in the activities and learning on their part was achieved through reflection and development of the reasons for their dislike of visualisation. Equally, unintended outcomes such as a student deciding to leave a course as a result of a visualisation can serve as a source of reflection for the tutor. While he or she may

sense that the activity has failed dismally for that student, in effect it has been a success in that the student has reflected and taken control of and action towards an aspect of his or her life as a result of the visualisation.

Theme Three: Intensity of feelings - positive experiences

This theme explores the intensity of feelings regarding the experiences of the students who reported a highly positive engagement with the creative visualisation and guided imagery workshops. Simone and Mike formed part of the main research group for this study and were the two students who were followed longitudinally throughout their three years of undergraduate study. As well as engaging positively with creative visualisation, they both adopted an enthusiastic approach to the other creative learning methods within the module. Stephanie and Angela both took part in the pilot study and also reported a very positive experience of creative visualisation and guided imagery, but for different reasons.

Sub-theme One: Perception of creative visualisation and guided imagery and personal outlook

All four students reporting a wholly positive experience of visualisation and guided imagery stated that using their imagination and visualisation was central to their successful study habits. They all enjoyed drawing and, although they had actively developed this side of their study regime whilst taking the module, before starting they already had an inclination towards visual learning. For Simone creative visualisation was important and powerful because, as she said 'you have something in your mind and when you put it down on paper and you realise you want to follow it, you go for it!' (Interview, 9 January 2009). She discovered that articulating her drawings brought a new depth of analysis to what she had put on paper:

I discover things like, even now explaining to you I'm like 'hey, if I hadn't drawn these things I wouldn't really think what is inside'. Once I put it on paper it's like shouting back at me 'this is what you do now'. (Interview, 28 May 2010)

Since childhood Mike used to make what he called 'mental movies', moving pictures in his mind of what he wanted to do and places he wanted to visit. He also had a pilot's licence and regularly carried out the mental rehearsal of flying his plane:

all the switches and knobs that you have to turn and switch, I do that as if I was sitting in the cockpit and I do it in my mind. I actually move my hands when I do it... if I think about it I can feel them. (Interview, 13 May 2009).

Angela had no prior experience of visualisation, but became immersed in the concept and this proved central to successfully completing her degree: 'I just think about the moment when I did it [drew the treasure map] and... it made me more prepared and more excited' (Interview, 8 May 2006). Neither did Stephanie have any prior visualisation experience, but the concept made sense to her straight away: 'because you believe in yourself, and if you want something good you set goals' (Interview, 11 May 2006).

Some of the visualisations described in Appendix 4.5 proved more difficult to follow in class than others, such as the initial 'Great Smoking Mirror' both for Mike – 'I wasn't really concentrating because I had a bad eye that day' (Interview, 13 May 2009) – and for Stephanie – 'I thought it would be natural for me but it didn't come all the time' (Interview, 11 May 2006). But both students independently went home and visualised the scenario again successfully.

Sub-theme Two: Approach to imagination and the abstract

Each of the negatively responding students made many positive references to creativity, its importance and their attachment to it, and the use of their imagination in their interviews. In her first interview, Simone showed a creative approach to life fundamental to her outlook: 'creativity is imagination, invention, endless thinking, freedom, risk, style and a way of letting your mind stream through its hidden possibilities' (Interview, 9 January 2009). Mike reflected on the fact that he had been encouraged to use his imagination since childhood: 'it's been a lifetime of imagining things brought me to now, today, where I am a more creative person

than a lot of the people I meet' (Interview, 13 May 2009). For Angela, a visual and creative outlook was what enabled her to make and recognise incremental steps and progress in her studies: 'it's one step further, it's like everything I do is one step further' (Interview, 8 May 2006). For Stephanie, using her imagination helped her plan her future: 'that's a good way of focusing' (Interview, 11 May 2006).

All these students demonstrated a willingness and openness to embrace the abstract concepts of creative visualisation and guided imagery. The 'Beach' activity, with the use of the pebble that had proved problematic for the students with a negative overall perception, and the 'Great Smoking Mirror' visualisation were full of possibilities for the students with a positive outlook towards imagery. The contrast between the two groups is marked.

Simone regarded the 'Beach' visualisation as the one that affected her the most: 'I was totally in the scene because I was holding the stone and after that I still have the stone and I can explain that it has so much meaning' (Interview, 9 January 2009). In contrast to students in the 'negative' group, Simone saw it as natural to imbue the pebble with a range of positive properties and attributes:

you can actually put so much meaning into it. It's all about your mind and what you put into it [the stone]. If you have the sea, the background and you're holding a stone, it's interactive.

Even though Simone decided to leave her stone at her home in Spain, she could access what she viewed as its beneficial properties wherever she was: 'you just feel that you have the stone in your hand and everything's still there and it's so heavy because it has so many meanings'. She was able to sense the visualisation throughout: 'it was so strong, I felt the stones on my feet when I was walking barefoot and then sea splashing on me and the waves and everything, the sun' (Interview, 9 January 2009). Stephanie, too, kept her pebble from the visualisation as it affected her deeply:

that really struck me... because I very often go to beaches and like to enjoy the sun and to just walk along... and I collect the rocks and pebbles. I have so many at

home and this one [is important] because I can relate this material thing [the pebble] to what I believe in and the day that I had there and the feelings that had, and it was a good experience. (Interview, 11 May 2006)

Mike was able to engage positively with the 'Beach' visualisation because the activity allowed him to exercise his imagination to the full: 'I had all this nice imagery, it was really abstract, I am always thinking about abstract things'. In picking up the pebble he was readily able to perceive different qualities and attributes:

I started to rub it in my hands and I felt it was kind of smooth and nice and as I rubbed it the feeling of the roughness of the surface went away and because you said this stone represented something maybe I transferred the image in the stone so that stone represents the reaching of my goals and I like to think that when I hold the stone that it does something good for me (Interview, 13 May 2009)

The 'Great Smoking Mirror' visualisation is the activity that leads to the production of the students' treasure maps. For all four of these students, this exercise was a source of personal reflection and development. Simone found transferring her feelings and images from the visualisation to paper was the most effective part of the session: 'that [visualisation] wasn't as powerful as drawing it down. That [treasure] map meant so much more than seeing myself in the mirror'. For her treasure map, included in the previous chapter (Figure 5.12), Simone identified the river as her life path. The objects in the river represent obstacles and opportunities. Simone described and interpreted various elements of the treasure map as the interview progressed. The vague and faint illustrations on both sides of the map are key goals for her: playing guitar, getting a first class degree, being creative and getting a graduate level job when she completes her course. The paper is crumpled up to represent an old treasure map. Simone had it on display in her room to maintain her focus:

I actually have it on my wall. It shows me when you visualise things and want something then you can get it. Maybe you don't get everything straight away but at least you go for it. (Interview, 9 January 2009)

Angela, too, displayed her treasure map, examined in Chapter Four (Figure 4.1), in her room to remind herself of her goals and to maintain motivation: 'I just look at it and I concentrate myself, it gives me trust and security'. Her map is designed to help her study and concentrate more effectively: 'sometimes I forget about why I am studying or why I am doing what I am doing'. Angela recognises her main difficulty was becoming demotivated if she earned a low mark. She uses the map to keep herself on track: 'It's preparing myself for the future... I know that I'm going to go through bad phases and when I feel like that I'm going to look at this and I'm going to be more motivated and that's what it does' (Interview, 8 May 2006).

Stephanie was unable to see herself in the 'Great Smoking Mirror' but produced a multi-coloured vortex (Figure 4.2) to represent her experience of that visualisation: 'I've chosen yellow because I think it's bright, it's really lively... and here is some red and blue and positive colours'. The colours are abstract representations of the 'positive experiences to come'. She drew a spiral with herself at the bottom, where she could not see herself in the mirror. The graphical whirlwind is a means to escape being unable to see in the visualisation and to take her to a viewpoint where she can see her future goals: 'I drew this spiral with more colours, up here where [the colours] get looser to make the mirrors make me see things' (Interview, 11 May 2006).

Mike's treasure map (Figure 6.11) represents big plans and big projects for the future. It represents his desired future lifestyle, with an island and a financial district where he is employed: 'I really want to be really, really successful in life... I want to become rich by doing what I love'.

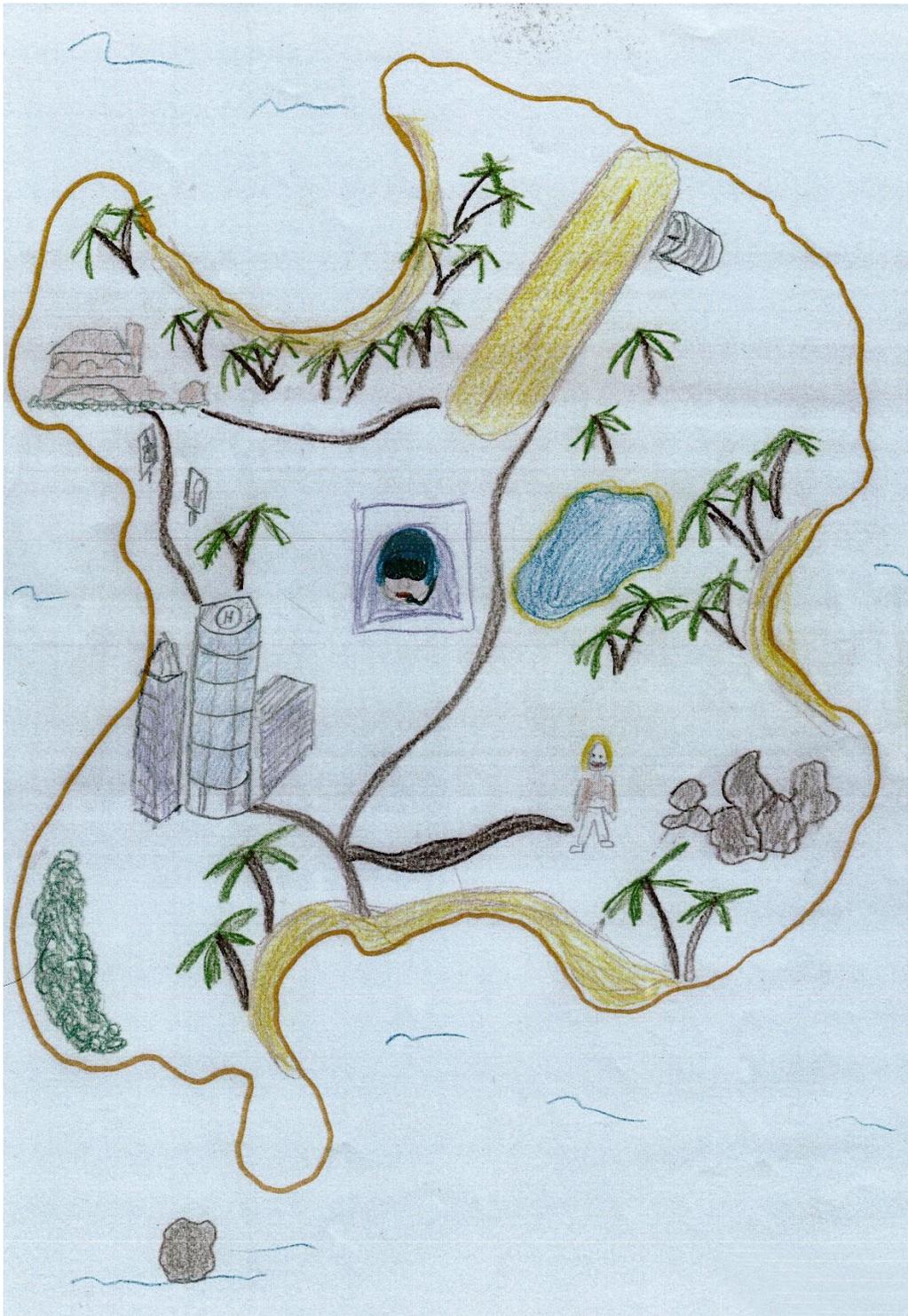


Figure 6.11: Mike: 'Treasure Map' from in-class work

There is no representation of his degree course in the treasure map because, for Mike, his course is just doing what he loves: 'it's not a course to me, it's learning to become better at what I love'. The three treasure maps illustrate that there is no consistency in the way students who engage fully with the activity interpret the task. Angela's map is strongly focused on study, whilst Stephanie's is totally

abstract. Simone's map follows the course of a river, similar to the visualisation itself, with a range of readily identifiable medium-term goals on the periphery. Mike's map represents the long-term future but gives a vague picture of the success he seeks.

Sub-theme Three: Application

A factor that unites all four students who expressed positive feedback on creative visualisation and guided imagery is the extent to which they were able profitably to apply these concepts independently to their studies. For Simone, visualisation or guided imagery that she created for herself was essential in helping her produce targeted advertisements and other marketing material to clients, real or simulated, in her undergraduate course. She used visualisation to imagine the various attributes and reactions of the clients to determine the most effective promotion:

It's really important to realise how your audience feels which is basic if you want to market something to someone. You have to know that someone, and that's the most important thing, visualisation. (Interview, 9 January 2009)

She reinforced this concept a number of times within the interview and stressed it was the main way for her to generate ideas for her creative work: 'visualisation is so important and you can reflect this in your adverts' and 'because it's [visualisation] powerful, it shows you can take any situation for creativity because you can invent so much' (Interview, 9 January 2009). In a later interview, as she came towards the end of her final year, Simone reflected that she had used visualisation not just to develop targeted ideas and concepts for her coursework but to plan independently her personal development path and progress that she had started with the treasure map exercise in the first year: 'because if you picture yourself in the future it will help you now... it is important to see the reason' (Interview, 17 March 2010).

Stephanie was in the final year of her course, so there were few opportunities to apply the concepts of visualisation in a broader context outside her module, but

she was keen to work with the ideas in her own way and in her own time to experience the effects more fully:

it was just natural for me to sit because this activity of meditation has struck me and it made me think very often 'how will I be in the future?'... [visualisation is] a good way of focusing. (Interview, 11 May 2006)

Angela, too, independently developed and worked with her treasure map extensively and used it regularly to keep herself focused on her desired academic success as illustrated in the treasure map: 'I did it for those moments' (Interview, 8 May 2006).

Mike enjoyed experimenting with new concepts and visualisation gave him the opportunity to seek out established courses in visualisation and creative thinking such as the CD-based 'The Gateway Experience', which uses a series of tones to focus the listener's attention and to allow the imagination to wander. Mike also enjoyed drawing and constructing and took time to construct a colourful cardboard box in which, at least metaphorically, to hold his creative thoughts and ideas. This idea came to him in his final year after listening once again to the 'Great Smoking Mirror' visualisation and deciding to produce a different treasure map. For Mike, the box moved his concept of storing his ideas from two-dimensions to a three-dimensional form:

I can feel it, it's in my hands, it's the first time ever that I've given a physical shape that I can hold to all these things that I know. Now I've got a box and I can hold them in my hand and if I try to imagine there's something in there, it's there. It's really heavy and can become really precious. (Interview, 28 May 2010)

The students who reported a very positive perception of visualisation and imagery were characterised by their willingness to engage with these concepts, which were new to them in an educational setting. All enjoyed drawing and working with visual output and were readily able to translate the images and feelings they had within a visualisation into permanent visual form. They were able to use the treasure map or by storage of the experience, such as the 'Beach' visualisation, for personal

inspiration and subsequent detailed articulation in interview. These students could readily connect with the pebble in 'Beach' and they kept their stone to act as a permanent reminder of the activity and as a motivator. Some only needed to imagine the stone in order to feel a motivating force. All the students with a positive perception also actively used the concepts outside the class independently and in a way which was relevant to each of them.

Theme Four: Intensity of feelings - selective acceptance

This theme collates the experiences of the two students who demonstrated a more selective acceptance of the application of the concepts of creative visualisation and guided imagery. To say that Sarah and Anna were ambivalent towards these concepts would be incorrect. They did not have a disinterested attitude. Neither voiced rejection of visualisation and imagery and both saw its merits. What emerges from analysis of this sub-group of the students is that they started the module with abstract concepts outside their comfort zone but, over time, this zone expanded to encompass the new topics being covered. However, this group of students was more selective than the extremely positive students in the way that they had used and would subsequently use the approaches.

Sub-theme One: Perception of creative visualisation and guided imagery and personal outlook

Sarah had experienced visualisation before as a former student of Drama at GCSE level: 'I did the same sort of thing when the drama teacher made us lie on the floor and we had to shut our eyes imagine that we were somewhere' (Interview, 6 February 2009). For Anna, this was a new approach to using the imagination and she had initial doubts as to its efficacy: 'I didn't take it seriously, in all honesty [at first] because you can visualise something but you didn't think it was going to become real and I think that's something that I always had in my head'. As Anna experienced imagery and visualisation she started to change her view and talked of having 'broken down that barrier': 'actually seeing yourself doing something, for instance graduation, it just makes it more realistic and like you can do it' (Interview, 11 January 2012).

Sub-theme Two: Approach to imagination and the abstract

Both Sarah and Anna identified that they were not confident at the start of the module. Anna noted that she had been worried in the past about working extensively on her own initiative: 'I'm someone who needs quite a lot of guidance'. Individual scaffolding in the form of formative feedback on the part of the tutor helped her gain confidence and extend her comfort zone: 'we had support along the way... I knew I was at least on track' (Interview, 11 January 2012). Sarah, too, reported a crisis of confidence at the start of the module and beforehand: 'I was quite apprehensive about it at first because I'm not really that creative'. She also sought formative feedback that allowed her to expand her comfort zone and embrace new concepts in her undergraduate course, such as visualisation: 'we were really encouraged to talk about our thoughts and opinions and that was really good' (Interview, 6 February 2009). An apparent need for tutor support to move students towards a more independent learning style is one element that characterises this sub-group, which is selective in the use of visualisation and imagery. The ability of these students was masked by an initial reluctance to move out of their study comfort zone.

It is problematic to treat visualisation and guided imagery in isolation when identifying a general shift in approach and attitude to study on the part of the student, as these topics formed just two weeks' teaching of the module as a whole. Taken in conjunction with the delivery and supportive ethos of the broader module, however, these diffident students gained confidence as the module progressed and were able to engage more effectively with the visualisation and imagery concepts that were alien to them at this level. Anna talked of her 'bravery' at tackling this abstract module and moving outside her comfort zone: 'as we got more into the [module] and the different things we were doing your confidence grows and my confidence in my ability to do my own research and follow my own path was a lot better' (Interview, 11 January 2012). Sarah moved away from a polarised view of academic work where answers were right or wrong:

I was really worried about the module because there wasn't really a right or wrong which is a really good thing in terms of learning but it did scare me because I'm much better at black and white rather than grey areas. (Interview, 6 February 2009)

Initial fear of a change in approach to study and a subsequent willingness to address this was, therefore, a second factor characterising students who were selective in their acceptance and subsequent application of visualisation.

These two students were able to expand their comfort zones for the module as a whole, as described above, which facilitated an open approach to visualisation and imagery when it was delivered in the curriculum itself. For Anna, who was totally new to visualisation, the 'Graduation' exercise was something that made the forthcoming completion of her studies real and gave her a deeper motivation to target the upper second classification she was seeking: 'Actually seeing yourself do something, like graduation, it makes it more realistic and like you can do it... it gives you a kind of confidence in yourself that it is achievable, that you can reach it'. Using the pebble in the 'Beach' visualisation also broadened her horizons:

even though I thought 'I'm not sure about this' because we were then asked to think about that, I did think more about doing it and it made me more open minded to doing it. (Interview, 11 January 2012)

Anna also had a positive experience of the visualisation in 'Great Smoking Mirror': 'it forced me to have a good long look at myself and to look at my flaws as well as my strengths'. The act of transferring mental thoughts, images and insights to paper in visual form was important: 'instead of just seeing it [in my mind] today we put it down on a "treasure map"'. In her journal, Anna added that her treasure map (Figure 9.11) was 'simple', because it 'focused on the basics of what I need and am concentrating on'. The treasure map exercise helped her identify her short-term goals and to start reflecting on longer-term objectives: 'What is the pot of gold for me at the end of the rainbow?' (Reflective Learning Journal).

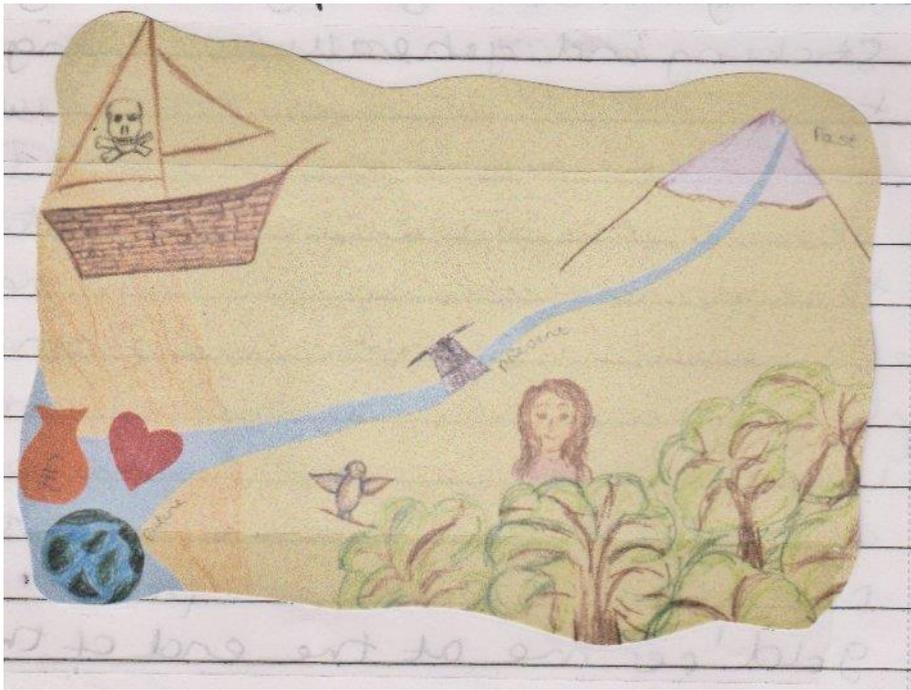


Figure 6.12: Anna: 'Treasure Map' from in-class work

Anna's treasure map has her goals flowing from a mountain-top downstream with the mortar board for graduation in the near future and riches, travel and love in the future. The pirate ship represents the danger of Anna not reaching her goal if she goes off track. In the map, Anna recognises the challenge of the final year: 'there I am, stuck in the trees/forest trying to battle out'. This example shows the student with initial doubts as to the use of the treasure map – don't get me wrong, I love drawing and cutting, but at Level Six!' – being convinced at the level of her reflection and articulation after drawing:

I'm glad I did it because it gave me the opportunity to stop and think 'what have I done in the past' and 'what is on my mind at present' and 'where do I want to go in the future?' (Reflective Learning Journal)

Sarah experienced a positive impact in two of the imagery sessions. The first was the 'Great Smoking Mirror': 'It forced me to have a good long look at myself and to look at my flaws as well as my strengths'. The second, like Anna, was 'Graduation':

I imagined what it would be like to have your friends there and all your family and how you'd feel getting your certificate... it did focus me because it was towards the end of the semester and everyone was really gunning for the finish line. That really helped us focus on why we were in our third year, why we were doing all this work and why we'd been working for it. That's the goal (Interview, 6 February 2009)

This module came in the final year of their course so there were limited opportunities to apply visualisation and imagery to further study, but each was able independently to use one of the visualisation topics to help, both in their study and subsequent career. Sarah has subsequently used creative visualisation as a means of career development and progression: 'there are lots of things that I want to achieve and experience and... if I visualise me getting it then that will help me work out a route and refocus my mind on these' (Interview, 6 February 2009). Anna used visualisation techniques at times in the remainder of her course and has done following completion, but has adapted the format of the workshops to suit her own needs: 'I've not sat down and gone through it all but I find myself, when I think of things that I [think I] can't achieve I think "no" and then think of the different steps I could take to make that possible'. She describes sitting down quietly and allowing ideas to find different ways to address the matter flow into her mind: 'Maybe not on the scale where you sit down and do a real story... it was personal steps to get to that goal and it makes it more like you can achieve it' (Interview, 11 January 2012).

These students showed initial scepticism of the approaches but then went into the workshops with an open mind and were able to apply the visualisation techniques both in the workshops and subsequently. They are characterised by showing a sense of fear at the start of the module, using approaches outside their comfort zone but facing up to their individual fears and completing the module successfully with marks of first and upper second category. Both students had issues of self-confidence at the outset that were also addressed throughout the module. Scaffolding in the form of formative feedback in group and individual settings was beneficial in tackling these matters. The 'Graduation' visualisation was a strong focal point for both students as they were in their final year and this made the imagery more real and served as motivation to continue. They were also selective

in how they used visualisation subsequently. Each took the approaches used in the workshops and adapted them to be less formal and was able to apply them out of class and after graduation in a way which fitted their lifestyle.

This cross-case thematic analysis has allowed a synthesis of the profile student data in a form that permits a deeper understanding of student engagement with creative learning approaches in general and creative visualisation and guided imagery in particular. It has enabled the development of pedagogical models based on analysis of the data and provides a springboard to more generic applications and models contained in the concluding chapter.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

Introduction

The purpose of this research has been to investigate the efficacy of creative learning approaches in a specific, business and communications industry-centred undergraduate setting. The research also has a strong focus on the enhancement of creative output and thinking of students, together with their own personal and academic development. The qualitative nature of this research has resulted in a thesis that is both data-rich and data-driven.

This conclusion synthesises the outcomes of the research specifically to address the research questions presented in Chapter One:

1. How might the use of multiple creative learning methods enhance undergraduate education?

and

2. What is the role of creative visualisation and guided imagery in this process?

How might the use of multiple creative learning methods enhance undergraduate education?

This research has shown that multiple creative learning methods can play a significant and positive role in enhancing undergraduate education. However, the level of this effect varies depending on the individual student and their approach to such learning. Students have different strengths and it is not appropriate to suggest that one model fits all: the classroom or seminar group is a heterogeneous group and the nature of the work in these modules encourages reflection of experience, which reinforces individuality. One challenge, addressed

later in this chapter, is how to maximise effectiveness of the learning for all students. In short, this means developing a range of inter-related learning and teaching strategies covering the varying approaches and stances for the different students within the class.

Essentially, the make-up of student attitudes towards creative learning falls into four main categories:

1. **Active Positive Engagement:** students who actively and enthusiastically participate in class and report a very positive overall learning experience to all, or virtually all, the creative learning sessions held.
2. **Active Engagement:** students who actively participate in class and report a generally positive overall learning experience to more than half of the sessions held.
3. **Passive Engagement:** students who participate in class but report a generally negative learning experience, or their positive reports relate to less than half of the sessions held.
4. **Non-engagement:** students who have poor attendance and therefore have limited experience of the experiential learning sessions.

The data generate fuller understanding of these student groups:

Active Positive Engagement: Students showing this response arrive in class with a strong creative bias and approach and belief in their capabilities in this area. They bring with them a keenness for design, drawing and the abstract. Their formative home environment has encouraged their individual creative expression and exploration. In essence, they are already positively motivated to try new creative techniques and they do this independently following the workshop sessions. Students in this category can also find that such workshops provide a theoretical construct around their personal creative views and individual output throughout their school years. These students have no fear of extending their comfort zones to include new learning approaches. By stretching their comfort zones, what was unfamiliar and creative becomes familiar and creative and can be integrated into their overall approach to learning and personal development. These students see

creativity as a natural process in learning and are able to readily demonstrate this. They see the link between the creative activities and their degree studies and wider education without difficulty. Of the students, Simone, Mike and Stephanie are in this category.

Active Engagement: Students who actively engage arrive in class with doubts as to their own creative abilities. They express these, explicitly making reference to themselves not being creative. Creative abilities are present but the students have difficulty in openly expressing them or even inwardly recognising them. Their previous experiences may also present a barrier to their learning. These students recognise their comfort zones and are initially reluctant to push the boundaries in this area without consulting the tutor as to whether their output is 'right' or 'wrong'. They initially display a polarisation of views, thinking in terms of 'black and white'. Over time, this diminishes and they begin to express themselves creatively and independently start to meld their creative output with reasoning to provide well-argued creative answers and solutions to business, communication and creative-type assignment briefs and case studies. These are also students who initially need more support, tutor encouragement and scaffolding in this and other modules.

Such students experience an epiphany at some stage during the module and are able to work effectively and independently once they discover that their ideas are valid and that they are capable of expressing themselves and their arguments effectively through creative and justified output. They approach the module with some trepidation but are able to stretch their comfort zones to encompass new learning methods. These students are ultimately able to incorporate many of the creative methods into their learning, but are selective when faced with some of the less orthodox creative approaches. These students are able to move to a more creative and effective approach to their studying through creative learning, but need scaffolding and guidance to assist this broadening of approach to study. They need to have the link between the creative activities and their degree and the module explained and understand and accept this connection. Of the students, Angela, Sarah and Anna are in this category.

Passive Engagement: Students in this group start the year with a commitment to attend class regularly and participate and they continue with this, but they have difficulty in seeing the relevance of the workshops and the majority of methods employed to their chosen degree course. For these students, there needs to be a clear and explicit link between class and coursework activities with their named degree. Aspects of their home and previous educational experiences may be detrimental to their learning and they admit to a polarisation of views. Answers, for them, are 'black and white'. Learning is perceived as factual and logic is valued. Nonetheless, although they do not appreciate the gains for them they reflect for their assignments and journals when encouraged to do so. They contribute views in class discussion which are generally not supportive of the approaches, but these reflect their views and they are evidenced from their perspective. They are not malicious comments in any way, but a reflection of their feeling. The tutor needs to manage such contributions in order to encourage valid debate yet to ensure that the lesson and learning is not undermined.

These students have reached university by relying on a series of core study skills and they rely on these for their undergraduate study. These students like to stay within their comfort zone. They will accept a few of the more conventional creative approaches to learning as there is a strong link, for them, with their existing learning approach. However, these students will not accept, for themselves, the possibility of benefit from the less conventional creative learning methods. Reflection is, however, a skill which is much in evidence for these students. As long as their comments and arguments in assignments, which are reflection-based, are supported by evidence the student can pass the module. They show great difficulty in seeing the relevance, for them, of the creative learning sessions to their undergraduate education. Of the students, Mark, Peter and Carl are in this category.

Non-engagement: No students were interviewed who would appear in this section. There are inevitable methodological difficulties in gaining meaningful contributions and data from students who would appear in this group as they would be difficult to reach and they will have had little experience of the module. Continued absence in one module is typically reflected by absence in others. The non-attendance may

therefore relate to a general disinclination towards university study rather than a view towards the creative module. The purpose of this thesis was to focus on students who had experienced the learning, rather than those who had not. It is, however, an area that can be researched separately at a later date.

Having identified the different engagement groups to which students belong, the specific question must be addressed of how creative learning methods might enhance undergraduate education. From the data it is evident that those demonstrating Active Positive Engagement benefit the most from creative approaches to learning. Their personal characteristics are described in the above summary. The approaches give permission to these students to explore their approaches in a manner that suits them. The teaching and workshops validate their existing beliefs towards learning, and students in this grouping display an independent motivation to explore, develop and actively apply their own forms of creative learning. These students can readily link these approaches in both academic and personal development settings.

For the student demonstrating Active Engagement with the approaches, there can be a reluctance to admit that they are 'creative'. There is a desire on the part of these students to move towards a position of Active Positive Engagement, but motivation can show some instrumental elements such as limited application outside the workshops and assessment within the module. One strategy to enhance engagement for students in this grouping involves making explicit the link between creative approaches and their degree course or pathway and subsequent employability. Other methods include the development and application of scaffolding, such as different models of reflection appropriate to the chosen degree course and individual or small group intervention and discussion with the tutor with a view to supporting and reassuring students. Students who display Passive Engagement do benefit from the creative learning approaches from the activities they carry out such as reflection and the specific methods with which they can connect. Active reflection by students in this group as to the reasons for their limited engagement can be profound and this is a beneficial output in itself. It can serve as a catalyst for student change, if desired by the individual, or

recognition of a particular learning stance at a moment in time which the student can take into account when considering future learning and working environments.

What is the role of creative visualisation and guided imagery in this process?

Creative visualisation and guided imagery is seen by students as an unconventional method for learning. As identified above, some students are more inclined to accept and apply more unusual learning approaches than others. This was the case with creative visualisation and guided imagery. The individual students broadly corresponded to the groupings outlined above but their views on creative visualisation and guided imagery became polarised either strongly for or strongly against the method.

Active Positive Engagement: Students in this category regard visualisation as a positive tool to assist their own academic and personal development. They are able to follow readily the imagery sessions and scenarios in class and they actively apply and adapt these outside the classroom for their own specific purposes. They fully engage with the visual aspects and produce artefacts that are personal and relevant. They display these prominently to provide a visual reminder of their individual goals or as motivation to achieve those goals and to plot their progress. For these students, visualisation may be a new approach but they are able to readily extend their comfort zone to take in and apply the concept both in class and independently in wide-ranging ways and linked to personal requirements. They are able to allow their imagination to drift and focus, as appropriate, to address creative briefs and assignments which had been set. Simone, Mike, Stephanie and Angela are in this category.

Active Engagement: These students strongly overlap with those who display Active Engagement with multiple creative learning methods. They are more selective in their adoption of visualisation and imagery than students who show Active Positive Engagement. Students in the Active Engagement category discriminate between the various aspects and scenarios offered and are questioning in their approach when it comes to assessing the usefulness of the

methods and applying them independently. They are able to identify a specific purpose for a visualisation scenario and apply it in these circumstances. Their comfort zone extends to encompass a situation with a specific goal and one that readily fits with what has already been taught, for example, relaxation and 'Graduation'. They benefit from these specific activities in class and so can re-live the experience in their own time. They are not as adventurous as the Active Positive Engagement students in application and are content to stay within their newly extended comfort zone. Sarah and Anna are in this category.

Passive Engagement: Students in this group are unable to apply these methods actively to their study and are highly critical of the approach. They may view the activity suspiciously, as 'manipulative'. They overlap with students who are passively engaging in multiple creative learning methods. Their earlier home life experiences influence their response. There is no positive aspect of visualisation for any of these undergraduates. Students in this category do not accept the possibility of a link between the method and their chosen degree discipline, despite being shown published work and research on the matter to validate this. Instead, they develop a negative attitude towards the approach that they argue from their experience and their view of the world, which they link to their views on logic. They do not profess a willingness to disengage the logical thought process to allow their imagination to follow the stories or their own flow of thoughts. These students reject visualisation and imagery as possible tools for use in their learning but readily accept that the approaches could be beneficial for other students. Carl, Peter and Mark are in this category.

Contribution to knowledge

Much has been written about creativity in education, particularly with regard to primary and secondary education. In recent years there has been more research published concerning creativity in higher education, as evidenced in the literature review. This research builds on that knowledge with regard to creative learning in the undergraduate curriculum and specifically addresses creative visualisation and guided imagery as a creative learning method in higher education. This section of

the thesis clarifies the contribution that this research and the findings make in extending, challenging and refining existing knowledge in this field.

A number of models to explain the various levels and characteristics of student engagement with creative learning in general, and creative visualisation in particular, are contributions from the data. The first overarching model relates to student engagement and is introduced in the cross-case analysis chapter as Figure 6.5. This is specifically related to student learning engagement and does not relate to the institutional quality enhancement procedures as contained in the student enhancement section of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Quality Code for Higher Education (2012). Trowler (2010) proposes a model based on behavioural, emotional and cognitive factors, but focuses on negative attitudes to learning in her categories rather than differentiating between attitudes of students who do engage with the learning. Trowler's categories are 'positive', 'non-engagement' and 'negative engagement'. They do not adequately reflect the more nuanced differences in student approach and behaviour shown by students in this research and they would be an inadequate description of the diverse student responses.

The model of student engagement proposed in the preceding chapter (Figure 6.5) has been developed with the incorporation of various discrete elements of learning engagement with specific reference to creativity (Figure 7.1) and creative visualisation (Figure 7.2).

Student Engagement in Creative Learning			
	Active Positive	Active	Passive
Participation	Active and very enthusiastic	Active and largely enthusiastic	Actively participate in task but approach task mechanistically
Reported learning experience	Very positive overall 80-100% positive	Positive overall 50-80% positive	Some positive aspects but generally negative 0-50% positive
Attendance	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Stated belief in own creative capabilities	Explicit in verbal and written statements. Confident in execution of tasks	'Not creative' verbal statements but inherently keen to display and capable of displaying competent creative work	Say they are creative and don't need additional methods to help them
Attitude to taking creative risk	High risk takers	Moderate risk takers	Low risk takers
Independent application of creative learning methods	Frequent	Moderate	Low to nil
Level of tutor support requested/required	Low	High	Low
Sees connections between creative learning methods and degree course	Easily	Needs explanation then can recognise connections	Difficulties in seeing connection
Visual output and pleasure in drawing	High	High	Low
Motivation	Intrinsic	Intrinsic/Extrinsic	Extrinsic

Figure 7.1: Chart to illustrate student engagement with creative learning methods

Student Engagement in Creative Visualisation & Guided Imagery			
	Active Positive	Active	Passive
Participation	Active and very enthusiastic	Active and largely enthusiastic	Actively participate in task but approach task mechanistically
Reported learning experience	Very positive	Positive overall	Very negative
Attendance	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Description of approach	'It's really powerful'	'It gives you confidence'	'Manipulative'
Can recognise merits of approach	Yes	Yes	Not for themselves but recognise possible merit for others
Initial perception of approach	Very positive	Initially dubious then selective acceptance	Very negative
Reasons	Previous experience, fits with own philosophy, 'abstract'. Loves drawing	Change in approach to study, fear of 'failure'	Previous experience, does not fit with own philosophy, student is 'logical' and 'rational'
'Comfort zone'	Keen to expand	Tentative expansion	Restrict to 'personally tried and tested' creative skills

Figure 7.2: Chart to illustrate student engagement with creative visualisation and guided imagery

Two additional and inter-linked models that have been developed through this research are the student journey of self-discovery, included as Figure 6.6, and the journey for students who hold a negative view of creative approaches to learning, Figure 6.7. These are fully discussed in Chapter Six and are flow charts of experiences from the profile students who do and do not engage positively with creative learning methods. These are especially relevant to practitioners, as the individual phases that students in the two categories have reported experiencing are identified with the implications for practice and scaffolding. Developing the model for students who engage positively with creative learning allows the creation of a further model, which can be termed the Creative Learning Cycle and is a refinement of Kolb's learning cycle (1984) with particular relevance to creative learning methods (Figure 7.3).

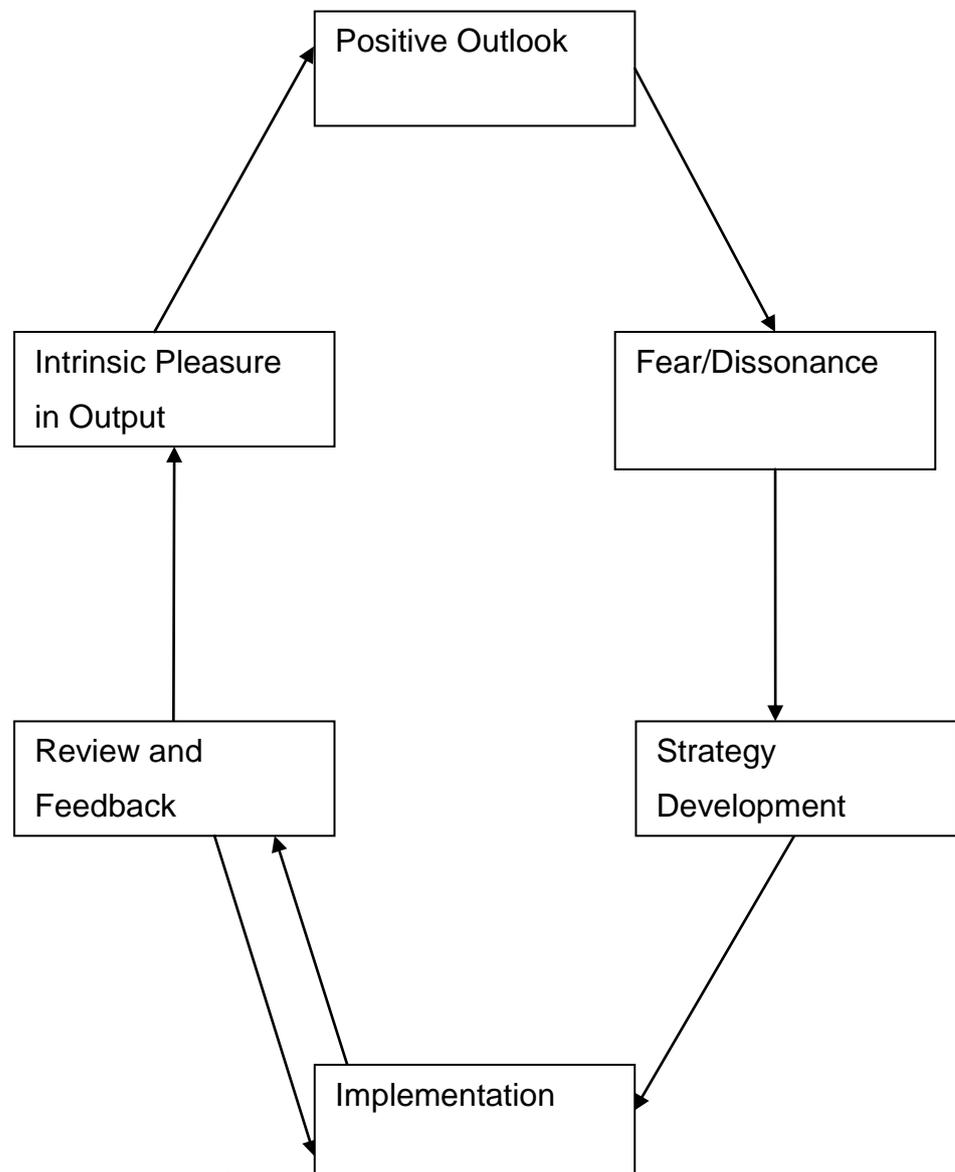


Figure 7.3: Creative Learning Cycle

This model highlights the way that learning is a continuous process, as argued by Kolb, and that the end of one learning journey is the start of another. It incorporates the notion of fear reported by students when starting the module, together with dissonance in that the learning methods used were new and the fear originated in trying out new methods of learning. This element is not contained in Kolb's work. Students develop their own strategies to overcome any fear and to incorporate creative learning methods into their approach to study, which is then implemented in formative and summative coursework. As students complete successive creative learning cycles, fear and dissonance can be reduced as their comfort zones increase and new methods of learning or applications tend to become incremental and based on previous positive experience rather than on feedback. Students move towards an intrinsic pleasure in the coursework, as evidenced by comments of the students who displayed Active Positive and Active Engagement approaches to their learning in the modules and greater independence in the application of the approaches and others. Those who show an Active Positive Engagement approach move more readily towards intrinsic motivation, whilst those with an Active Engagement approach move towards intrinsic motivation less rapidly.

New knowledge is also evident in the polarisation of student engagement with creative visualisation as a method of creative learning. One element of new knowledge is contained in the diagram Figure 6.9 in the cross-case thematic analysis chapter, which explains how the less conventional the approach to creative learning, the more polarised the student engagement.

The visualisation and guided imagery scenarios themselves provide a base of new knowledge when applied in undergraduate courses. Whilst the basic concept of imagery is not unfamiliar with programmes in drama and creative writing, the use of these techniques in courses based in creative industries and business is not reported in the literature. For these students, as is evidenced in the thesis, these approaches can provide the stimulus for creative thought and action in a student's academic and professional life and space for meaningful reflection and action with regard to personal development. The limitations are acknowledged, as shown by

the negative responses to imagery by some students and illustrated in previous chapters, but these matters are addressed elsewhere in this conclusion when considering implications for practice.

The visualisation and guided imagery scenarios and narrative overviews are detailed as Appendix 4.5. Their proposed direction and purpose are included in the intended outcomes chart in Figure 7.4.

Creative visualisation and guided imagery: Purpose and intended outcomes	
Scenario/Narrative	Purpose and outcomes
Guided Relaxation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to guided imagery • Experience of words on imagination and physiology • Use of all the senses in the imagination • Recognition that the experience is personal and not homogenous • Recognition that the individual experience is valid • Observation of ‘the moment’ and greater personal and physical awareness • Relaxed state achieved • Future independent use
Beach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of basic visualisation skills and reinforcement of ‘Guided Relaxation outcomes’ • Introduction of independence in imagery by meeting a friend on the beach & pebble– self-directed • Tangible link with an object (pebble) • Specific link with business/marketing/branding, emotional attachment to an inanimate object
Skiing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of music on senses and physiology • Self-generation of imagery within a framework

Great Smoking Mirror	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basis for reflection • Use of metaphor in life and stories, river mirror etc. • Greater self-awareness • Identification of personal goals, strengths and achievements, path to reach goals
Treasure Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translation of goals from 'Great Smoking Mirror' to permanent visual form • Use of colour, positive emotion in treasure map • Verbal articulation and reflection in learning journal • Basis for ongoing reflection and adaptation
Place/s where learning is pleasant and effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection on positive learning environments for individual • Identification of changes which can be made in learning environments and where learning can take place to enhance studying for the individual: home, university, other place e.g. garden centre • Implementation of changes e.g. lighting, seating, place, sounds/music/silence
Graduation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience future intended reality • Focus for ongoing study and motivation – light at end of tunnel • Identify and experience anticipated emotions of self and others

Figure 7.4: Creative visualisation and guided imagery-purpose and intended outcomes chart

Dissemination of research

There is a general acceptance in the academic community that it is incumbent upon the producer of research to seek out avenues to disseminate the work. During the course of the research I have presented aspects of the work at an international conference. I have also co-organised and presented at a Higher Education Academy national teaching and learning day on creativity and an article on creativity in the undergraduate curriculum has been published by the Higher Education Academy. In recent years, I have deliberately focused on completion of the research and writing up of the thesis, in the knowledge that there are opportunities to disseminate the work after completion.

Knowledge generated from the research that can usefully contribute to the body of published literature includes the use and effectiveness of creative visualisation as a method for undergraduate creative learning, as this topic has not been covered in the literature to date. Also meriting further dissemination is the analysis and categorisation of student engagement. The quality of student reflection and accessing deeper learning through the visual is another theme that has emerged from analysis of the data and warrants further development. The new knowledge is likely to contribute in the areas of qualitative inquiry, innovation in higher education, pedagogy in higher education and applied practice.

Lessons learned from the research process

The PhD process is generally regarded as a journey by students and supervisors alike (Stracke 2010). There have been high points and low points during my period of part-time study. Proposed research, timings and analysis did not go according to plan but, ultimately, these obstacles were overcome and contributed to a more robust and appropriately focused thesis. Reflecting on my research journey gives me an opportunity to recognise that when obstacles needed to be addressed and overcome, this happened. I also recognise the learning that took place together with the academic and research growth that I experienced in addressing the various problematic issues. In other words, to the extent that the PhD process is intended to be a journey, I would not change my approach. The journey has not

been a direct point-to-point trip, it has been circuitous and sometimes took me up cul-de-sacs and required various reversing manoeuvres and doubling back on myself. It demanded various consultations of academic research maps along the way, but the journey is now complete. I have learned through experience. Without the obstacles, little (or perhaps different) learning would have taken place. The following section of the thesis identifies the main elements of the research, which have influenced my own pedagogical practice and will form part of my research approach for future projects.

Time management proved to be a major obstacle in keeping on track for the project. In early years this was not a problem but halfway through the registration period I was required to take on a different role at my employing university that took away time that had been allocated for my research and ate into my personal free time, which I also used for the research. This has continued since and has made writing up the thesis and revision longer than had been anticipated. Certainly, moving forward to future research, I will ensure that realistic estimates of time are made to perform the various research tasks effectively, in particular, transcription, data coding analysis and writing up. These took considerably longer than I had originally anticipated. As I am employed as a programme group leader, a balancing act needs to be performed between the operational and strategic requirements of my post and dissemination of this research and the design and management of future projects.

Data analysis on a cross-case thematic basis caused difficulties as I was initially unable to achieve an appropriate level of abstraction from the data. There was a temptation to retreat into a cosy world of drawing from and repeating the profile student data on themes with a lack of cohesion. This was overcome by extensive re-coding of the data as discussed in Chapter Five. I have found that the revised manual coding approach provided greater insight into the data, enabling a more coherent cross-case thematic analysis to be produced.

The project required reorientation after the pilot study. Naturally, this justifies the use of a pilot study to identify such issues and to signal remedial action. This experience highlighted the need to reflect fully on proposed plans for research and

methodology at the outset in order to minimise revisions, costly in terms of time and effort. This will impact on my future research practice in that I will take particular care to establish a solid starting point and appropriate research questions but, following revision, to reframe the project if necessary, after a pilot, in order to achieve an appropriately rigorous research output.

Implications for research and practice

This final section of the thesis considers how the findings of the research can be utilised by teachers and university educators. Understandably, this section concentrates on and applies the new knowledge section of this conclusion in a practitioner setting. It also highlights reflections on the practice element of module delivery to provide a focused toolbox of creative thinking and guided imagery techniques that can be applied across a range of undergraduate settings. The research has implications for my own practice in that the findings can be incorporated into my own teaching in these specific modules and elsewhere. In particular, visualisation can be usefully employed in creative writing-type modules within my own programme group together with the 'Graduation' visualisation, which has a broader application across undergraduate courses. The outcomes of this research can be shared at a local level within the faculty through research seminars and, more broadly within my own institution, at my university's annual learning and teaching day. The completed research can also serve as a topic for a conference paper, in particular at the National Association of Writers in Education annual event, which is based in my subject area. One future area of research related to this thesis is a new focus on passive and non-engagement in creative learning and how to improve engagement.

Calculated, positive risk-taking by tutor: Higher education can present a conservative approach with regard to new approaches to learning in the classroom. From 2013 KIS (Key Information Set) data have to be made available by universities to students on websites and in prospectuses with regard to course satisfaction. In many institutions this published dataset extends to module level, certainly for internal review and increasingly for prospective student inspection. The results from this research show that some students will have difficulty in

engaging with the less orthodox creative learning approaches. There is an issue for the tutor of whether to ignore the more unusual approaches such as creative visualisation and to concentrate on more mainstream approaches that provoke a less polarised response. The implication is that the tutor has to gauge the balance of the workshop on an ongoing basis to determine what techniques to introduce and when. Naturally the scheme of work will be reviewed and updated annually, but the issue remains as to the level of risk the tutor is prepared to accept in the light of the support that the tutor is likely to receive from university administrators and managers.

Argyris and Schön's 'espoused theories' and 'theories in use' (1974) are of particular relevance here. The university's espoused theory may be to encourage creativity in teaching, but the theory in use can be that it is unacceptable to deviate from a centralised dictat of module or course delivery. This is particularly relevant with undergraduate courses accredited by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB). The professional body will frequently demand that each module has a specific linkage to the discipline which the body represents. The Creative Personal Development module, for example, has received positive feedback from external examiners, students and Skillset, the professional body for media education. But because it has a student-development focus rather than an explicit and industry-specific output, the module has had to be dropped from the options on that industry-based course.

Tutor support and scaffolding: A related issue in this regard is managing the expectations of the students and the range of engagement within the class. It is important to support students in determining their own stance in relation to the creative learning methods and to encourage them to reflect on their position. Referring to the categories identified earlier in this chapter, a low level of tutor support was needed for students whose engagement was described as Active Positive. These students were able to apply the module elements independently and effectively. They were happy to work outside their existing comfort zone and therefore to extend this. A high level of tutor support is needed for students displaying Active Engagement. This is because these students would like to move outside their comfort zone, but have limited confidence in doing so. Tutor

scaffolding and formative feedback can support these students to engage more fully with creative learning and visualisation.

Students who display Passive Engagement may not actively request tutor support. Instead they may display a generally negative view of the approaches and articulate this, for example in a reflective journal or class discussion. The issue here is whether the tutor should actively intervene to isolate issues and to 'draw them back in' or devise another method of letting these students change their views without loss of dignity. One of the aspects of creativity is that it is experienced differently by each individual. It is more important for the student to reflect and to determine why they do or do not find a technique useful than merely stating that they like a method or describing a workshop activity. All the students in the research included in the category of Passive Engagement recognised how the approaches could be useful for other students. Asking these individuals to reflect on this aspect is a tangential way of engagement that could lead to them taking a more positive approach.

Calculated, positive risk-taking by students: The research shows that some students can find it difficult and problematic to move outside their comfort zone and this can lead to Passive Engagement and Non-engagement. The formative feedback scaffolding already mentioned can support students who have issues in stretching their comfort zones to provide them with the necessary confidence to apply the concepts and creative learning methods in a meaningful context.

Creative visualisation and guided imagery in the undergraduate curriculum: The visualisation scenarios and narratives as described in Appendix 4.5 and Figure 7.4 have been used in the classroom and are effective for many of the students, as per the analysis chapters. Such methods are of particular relevance to higher education practitioners concerned with student personal development and *in* courses with a specific creative focus. Whilst visualisation is used in a different sense in engineering and science, practice of the fundamentals of creative visualisation and guided imagery may also be of use in these fields.

Transferability of the learning: There is scope for transferability and application of the learning outside the narrow confines of the curriculum in my own university taught courses. In the undergraduate and postgraduate arenas the approaches can be readily transferred to programmes with a broad creative output. A number of the techniques can be readily used in creative writing programmes for idea generation and development. Equally, a creative approach is increasingly being sought in many practice-based writing and production courses such as journalism and media production. There is further scope for use of these approaches outside vocational university programmes. English programmes, for example, frequently require the student to analyse the motivations of different characters in set texts and the options available to them. Use of a number of these techniques such as visualisation and challenging assumptions can be transferred to that arena together with student reflection which can be developed over time. The introduction and literature review chapters have already cited the need for creativity approaches to learning in courses for medical students and engineering.

These techniques have further application outside the higher education arena. I have already run a series of visualisation workshops for a national mental health charity to equip clients with skills for positive relaxation and reflection, which attracted the attention of the Chief Executive and received very positive feedback. I have also recently run an equally successful staff development day incorporating a number of the approaches for administrative staff within my own faculty on creative ways of thinking and acting in the administrative workplace. The possibilities for application by teachers of English as a second or foreign language are also manifold. The use of direct visual stimuli such as picture cards and picture dice or indirect visual stimuli such as guided imagery could be potentially developed. I see myself moving into these areas independently in the coming years. There are therefore numerous areas within teaching for application in practice-based and non-vocational courses and transferability for application in industry through consultancy.

This research has reinforced my commitment to creative learning approaches and their value in the undergraduate curriculum. It has also allowed me to understand more fully the student experience of these techniques from diverse perspectives. I

have been able to refine and develop my own practice and influence that of others. Above all, the research has enabled me to think more creatively in my own work. It is my hope that more undergraduates experiencing creative learning approaches and creative visualisation will be able to incorporate these profitably into their own studies while at university and enrich their future personal and professional lives.

With the project now completed I can stand back and reflect on the full impact of the lessons I have learned from the research. This thesis is evidence, without doubt, of my own journey as well as that of the research participants. I have learned to plan, implement and manage a meaningful academic research project from the initial seeds of interest to completion in a form which is important to me intrinsically but also the start of a new journey as I transfer the findings from thesis to action in the workplace and possible consultancy. As a part-time PhD student I have learned to battle against the odds to balance my PhD research demands with those of employment and family life. I have broadened and deepened my own understanding of research, which has helped me deliver more effective undergraduate supervision in addition to a piece of academic work that will transfer to publication in various forms. I have become confident in justifying the inclusion of creative approaches to learning in the undergraduate curriculum and seeking out opportunities for academic dissemination and consultancy through professional workshops. I have been able to reflect on my own strengths and values through my own 'I's, as I have recounted in the introduction chapter to the thesis. I have seen these become more pronounced as the research has progressed. The research has also shown that as one journey finishes another one starts. Completion of the PhD is the beginning of the next stage of my professional life as I build on the originality, timeliness and relevance of this work to a world beyond my own teaching.

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Appendix 1.1

Creativity in Action Module: Scheme of Work

Semester One

Week 1 Introduction to Unit

- Unit Learning Pack
- Week One Powerpoint Slides:
 - 'Get set for some creativity and doing things differently!' (Lateral thinking, reflection, learning journals, learning from experience).
 - Linking and Creative Thinking: Short exercise briefing sheet on one random stimulation technique
- Suggested format of workshop review to serve as a basis for reflection in learning journals

Week 2 Thinking in context

- Visual, Auditory, Rearing/Writing, Kinaesthetic (VARK) Questionnaire
- VARK article, relevance to learning, preferred learning styles and need to be aware of and to develop others
- 'Talking Pictures': student briefing sheet
- 'Talking Pictures': OHP briefing master
- Illuminative Art article: 'Talking Pictures' as a focus for reflection and 'conversations with self'.
- Suggested areas for student reflection on this week's activities for journal inclusion, especially visual entries
- 'A tricky set of circumstances for you to resolve...': puzzles

Week 3 Using visual means to access your creativity

- Some Lateral Thinking Puzzles

Week 4 Aspects of Creativity

- Week Four Powerpoint Slides:
 - What is creativity? (Some definitions, create own definition, characteristics of creativity, Innovators and adaptors, left brain, right brain theory, divergent and convergent thinking)
 - Steps in the creative process (Preparation, incubation, illumination, verification, obstacles to creativity, furthering the creative process, principles of idea generation)

Week 5 Reflection, reflective writing and student self-efficacy

- Some examples of student reflective writing (one not so good and one good)
- Reflective writing examples and debrief: The park, (The Presentation for reference)
- Poems as a catalyst for reflection: a short selection
- Week Five Powerpoint Slides:
 - ‘Levels of Writing’ (Bloom’s Taxonomy, 2001 revision, what do I do?)
- ‘Self-efficacy and student self-efficacy’ (Definitions, student potential, locus of control, relevance to unit and creativity, barriers to achievement, ways to overcome these, origins of beliefs, resilience, feelings when overcoming difficulties)
- Johari Window model: outline and relevance re. self and creativity & self-efficacy
- ‘See what I mean’ article: Background article as another visual means of reflective thought/action

Week 6 Directed Learning and Writing Week

- ‘School creativity ‘needs support’’. How creativity is ‘stifled’ in schools and ‘Checking in to the Bangkok Hilton’. Visiting Britons in jail in Thailand.
- Articles for reading, reflection and discussion in week 7 workshop

Week 7 Lateral Thinking and Provocation

- Week Seven Powerpoint Slides:
 - Principles of Lateral Thinking (Overview, lateral v. vertical thinking, lateral thinking complements vertical thinking, uses)
 - Concept of Provocation: one approach to lateral thinking (Examples, movement of thought, ‘stance’ holding people back, using ‘old’ or ‘discarded’ ideas to solve new problems, escape routes and stepping stones)

Week 8 Creative Visualisation and Guided Imagery: awareness and imagination – 1

- ‘Guided Imagery as a Trigger for Creativity: creative visualisation in a higher education setting’. International Creativity Conference Paper by Tim McClellan, Unit Leader
- Week Eight Powerpoint Slides:
 - ‘Guided Imagery as a Trigger for Creativity: an initial evaluation of visualisation in an undergraduate setting’ (Ongoing PhD research by unit leader: relevance to students of creative industries in Higher Education, pilot survey research methodology, results and discussion)
 - ‘Creative Visualisation and Guided Imagery: introduction to these approaches to creative learning’ (definitions, how the

approaches can be applied in creative learning , relevance to the course, notion of 'stance' and open-mindedness and link to reflection and knowledge of 'self')

- 'Meditation and the Process of Learning' book chapter for student consideration and reflection/journal material

Week 9 Creative Visualisation and Guided Imagery: awareness and imagination – 2

- Week Nine Powerpoint Slides:
 - 'Taking Guided Imagery and Creative Visualisation further' (identifying academic/work/personal goals and obstacles to achieving the goals, 'Treasure Map' of personal goals, 'Treasure Map' Guidelines.
- Article: Action Research and Creative Visualisation in a Higher Education Setting

Week 10 Challenging Assumptions

- Mountain Pass Hospital Conundrum: Student briefing sheet
- The Sinking Ship Dilemma: Initial student briefing sheet then more details
- How you see other people (and how they see you)
- Week Ten Powerpoint Slides:
 - 'Things are not always as they seem!: An introduction to Random Stimulation' (ways of bringing about random stimulation, basis for the approach)
- Hints and tips to increase creativity and idea generation at work (and studying)

Week 11 Journal Reflection

(Individual/small group student tutorials regarding journal writing and reflections to date, questions on learning to date)

Week 12 Generating and Organising Ideas: concept fan and mind maps -1

- Week Twelve Powerpoint Slides:
 - 'Mind Maps, Dreams and Daydreaming' (Dreams, daydreaming, association, mindmap techniques, uses of mindmapping)
- Codes: a visual shorthand: OHP and brief for mind map class activity
- Exercise: generate alternative (divergent) approaches to a specific problem
- Example of Mind Map
- 'Introducing the Dream World' Extracts from book 'Teach Yourself to Dream' Use and control of dreams to access personal creativity
- 'A toolkit to help you make sense of your dreams': Adaptation from 'The Dreamworker's Toolkit'.

Week 13 Generating and Organising Ideas: concept fan and mind maps – 2

- Concept Fan description and example.

Semester Two

Week 1 Generating Alternatives: More on random stimulation

- Tutor Briefing Sheet: student exercises, dividing a square
- Every picture tells a story (visual stimulus)
- 'British Day': different perspectives of different groups, young people's apathy towards voting: generating alternative possible solutions
- Generating Alternatives Overhead

Week 2 Object of Desire, Plus/Minus/Interesting

- Overhead: Concept of PMI to apply to object for plenary debriefing
- Student debrief notes for object of desire

Week 3 Six Thinking Hats

- Six Thinking Hats overview and meanings of coloured hats
- 'Fit the right hat' exercise
- Workshop outline

- Week 4 Independent/Directed Learning Week**
(Individual/small group student tutorials regarding journal writing and reflections to date, questions on learning to date)
- Week 5 Buzan's Intelligences-creative, emotional, physical, traditional IQ. Haiku as an approach to creativity**
- Week Eighteen Powerpoint Slides:
 - 'Buzan's Intelligences' (Creative, personal, social, spiritual, physical, sensory, sexual, numerical, spatial, verbal)
 - Haiku: poetry ancient and modern - extracts
- Week 6 Journals Feedback Week**
Handback of assignment 1 with individual, small group debrief, feedback, reflections for study period two assignments
- Week 7 Gardner's Multiple Intelligences: capabilities and perceptions. Individual learning styles.**
- Week Twenty Powerpoint Slides:
 - 'Multiple Intelligences: Howard Gardner' (Background, linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, bodily-kinaesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist)
 - Speech transcript : 'Howard Gardner: the myth of Multiple Intelligences'
 - 'Multiple Intelligences in Practice': student exercise
 - Buzan/Gardner Mapping Chart
- Week 8 Emotional Intelligence: elements and criticisms**
- Exercise on Goleman's work
- Week 9 Music and Learning, Radio Advertisement**
- Book Chapter: 'Music and the Mind'
 - Week Twenty-Two Powerpoint Slides
 - 'Radio and radio advertising' (Characteristics of radio, audience profile, research and targeting)

Week 10 Creative Problem Solving

- Task Outline Overhead

Week 11 Application of Unit Elements in Context

- Map of creative learning approaches used within Unit and linkages
- Map of how the approaches, knowledge and skills incorporated within the unit are applied to further study and the workplace

Week 12 End of year illuminative art and unit review

Week 13 May Bank Holiday

Appendix 1.2

Creative Personal Development Module: Scheme of Work

Semester One

Week 1 Introduction to module and assignment, sources of Creativity, Learning Journals.

- Week One Powerpoint Slides:
 - 'Sources of Creativity, Learning Journals and Action Learning' (thoughts on the creative process, learning journals, using dreams as a creative resource, action learning)
- 'Introducing the Dream World' Extracts from book 'Teach Yourself to Dream' Use and control of dreams to access personal creativity
- 'A toolkit to help you make sense of your dreams': Adaptation from 'The Dreamworker's Toolkit'

Week 2 Illuminative Art

- 'Talking Pictures': student briefing sheet
- 'Talking Pictures': OHP briefing master
- Illuminative Art article: 'Talking Pictures' as a focus for reflection and 'conversations with self'.
- Visual, Auditory, Rearing/Writing, Kinaesthetic (VARK) Questionnaire
- VARK article, relevance to learning, preferred learning styles and need to be aware of and to develop others

Week 3 The Self

- Book Chapter: 'Music and the Mind'
- Week Three Powerpoint Slides:
 - 'The Self' (Your personal truth, self-concept, the past feeding the present.... and future?, locus of control and beliefs)
- 'Portraits of my assets': framework for visual representation of personal strengths

Week 4 Self-Efficacy part 1

- Week Four Powerpoint Slides:
 - 'Self-Efficacy and Student Self-Efficacy': (key concepts, resilience, relevance to course and individuals, barriers to achievement, beliefs, personal potential)
- Johari Window model: outline and relevance re. self and creativity & self-efficacy

Week 5 Self-Efficacy part 2

- Week Five Powerpoint Slides:
 - 'Self-Efficacy 2' (Perception, self-image, negative statements, self-talk)
- Personal SWOT chart
- Defining moments and defining people

Week 6 Assumptions

- Mountain Pass Hospital Conundrum
- The Sinking Ship Dilemma
- How you see other people (and how they see you)

Week 7 Guided Imagery

- 'Guided Imagery as a Trigger for Creativity: creative visualisation in a higher education setting'. International Creativity Conference Paper by Tim McClellan, Unit Leader
- Week Seven Powerpoint Slides:
 - 'Guided Imagery as a Trigger for Creativity: an evaluation of creative visualisation in an undergraduate setting' (Ongoing PhD research by unit leader: relevance to students of creative industries in Higher Education, research methodology, results and discussion)
 - 'Creative Visualisation and Guided Imagery: introduction to these approaches to creative learning' (definitions, how the approaches can be applied in creative learning, relevance to the course, notion of 'stance' and open-mindedness and link to reflection and knowledge of 'self')
- 'Meditation and the Process of Learning' book chapter for student consideration and reflection/journal material

- Week 8 Creative Visualisation**
- Week Eight Powerpoint Slides:
 - 'Taking Guided Imagery and Creative Visualisation further' (identifying academic/work/personal goals and obstacles to achieving the goals, 'Treasure Map' of personal goals, 'Treasure Map' Guidelines).
- Week 9 Individual (or pairs) Tutorials**
- Two journal papers issued, both to be read and prepared for discussion in Week 10
 - In Search of Subjectivity – One's Own (Peshkin)
 - It's about Time: Narrative and the Divided Self (Bochner)
- Week 10 Journal Paper Seminar Discussion**
- Peshkin and Bochner
- Week 11 Application and monitoring of 'Self' in the workplace, industrial and managerial applications of self-'discovery'.**
- **Talking Pictures revisited**
 - Workshop activity: relevance of 'self' to workplace
 - Second Illuminative Art piece for comparison
- Week 12 Final Reflections and Guidance**
- Individual/small group student tutorials regarding Personal Reflective Documents and reflections to date.
 - Questions on learning to date.

Appendix 1.3

Conference Paper: Guided Imagery as a Trigger for Creativity

Creativity or Conformity? Building Cultures of Creativity in Higher Education

A conference organised by the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff in collaboration with the Higher Education Academy

Cardiff January 8-10 2007

Guided Imagery as a Trigger for Creativity: creative visualization in a higher education setting

Tim McClellan

Abstract

This is an interim report on PhD research that I am conducting which attempts to stimulate imagination and creativity in two groups of Year One undergraduate students. The research uses 'sound pictures' as one of the ways to trigger student imagination. The project aims to introduce Year One undergraduates to creative learning techniques in general, and guided imagery in particular. It increases the toolbox of creative idea generation skills at their disposal and allows them to become independent in their application. Following a pilot study, the research also identifies some student resistance to new techniques and addresses the question of student stance in relation to innovative teaching methods. The research is being conducted with students on a course specifically connected with the creative industries, but the techniques are generic and are therefore not subject specific. No underpinning student knowledge experience is required, only an open mind!

Keywords: Creativity, Imagination, Guided Imagery, Creative Visualization, Creative Learning

Guided Imagery as a Trigger for Creativity: creative visualization in a higher education setting

Introduction

Creativity stretches far beyond the obvious sectors such as the media and the world of art and design and is embedded in all areas of business and industry through idea generation and development. It often involves new ways of thinking. This paper focuses on one method of tapping into a student's creative abilities using the power of sounds, music and the imagination. Guided imagery and creative visualization are techniques used here with two separate groups of Year

One undergraduates to help them discover and increase their ability to create unique mental representations of events and scenarios, real and imagined: in other words, to spark their imagination.

Whilst using the imagination can be both fun and challenging, in the educational setting it does need to have both a purpose, (clear in the mind of the teacher and made clear to the learner) and recognition that the use of 'new' learning techniques may meet with student resistance. Assessment of a pilot study has thrown up a number of issues in relation to student stance with regard to learning which have been addressed for the main study, currently in progress.

It must be stressed that the current research project is not subject-specific and the purpose is both to increase the quantity and quality of learning techniques available to undergraduates and to allow them to apply these both within specific learning situations and in their overall approach to being a student.

Creative Visualization and Guided Imagery

Creative Visualization and Guided Imagery are known as transpersonal techniques, or ones which can facilitate a 'deeper' understanding or experience. They use an individual's imagination to create a mental image. The image is triggered either by a scene or situation which has been described orally (guided imagery) or which has been created in 'the mind's eye' through a less detailed and less directed stimulus (creative visualization).

The Research Context

Two separate research projects have been carried out. The first was to assess the usefulness of guided imagery within a specific learning context of radio and audio production and the second was a development of this into a subject worthy of MPhil/PhD study by linking the creative visualization process to student self-efficacy and the appropriateness of creative learning techniques in general in a Higher Education setting. This paper includes details of the first study and the pilot of the latter.

My PhD work focuses on three research questions:

1. Does an awareness of student self-efficacy contribute to undergraduate motivation to learn?
2. How might the use of multiple creative learning methods enhance undergraduate motivation to learn?
3. What is the impact of creative visualization in this process?

Methodology

In the first research project with approximately fifty Year One radio production students, there were three separate visualization and imagery sessions to 'experience the power of sound and words'.

They were:

- A progressive guided relaxation, designed to introduce students to the notion of guided imagery and to propose a readily tangible and beneficial use.
- A multi-sensory guided and calming experience walking across a beach using metaphor to reinforce personal empowerment.
- An invigorating, non-guided, experience involving skiing down a mountain slope, to promote confidence in independent use of the techniques and to contrast with the previous 'relaxing' exercises

In the second study with a different cohort, around forty Year One students on an introductory creative learning module, relevant to any number of undergraduate programmes, experienced the 'sound pictures' described above together with some additional scenarios directed at specific learning goals. This was carried out as a pilot study for the main research currently in progress.

These additional visualizations were:

- A place where the student enjoyed learning. This visualization identifies the criteria for each person's successful learning environment and suggests that in undergraduate studies they should try to replicate the environment and these positive learning factors from the past.
- Looking into a large mirror which shows the student, through reflection, what they really want to be. This recognises the individual talents and desires of each student and sets in their mind an achievable goal. It also leads to prompting ways of achieving this.
- Producing a colourful 'treasure map' of what the student wants to achieve in academic and life terms and focusing on this individually.
- The Graduation Ceremony. This visualization takes the student through their graduation. Students reflect on their own locus of control and responsibility in the learning process.

Results

A relaxing experience

The majority of students reported that the visualisations had provided them with a positive experience:

'It gave me time to think not just about what you're saying, but about life in general. I think it made you analyse a bit more about yourself.'

The skiing activity proved to be a successful catalyst, with the students opening their imagination to a common theme:

'It's like a rush really, the cold of the wind going past you. You can just feel yourself at a speed and it makes you just motivated somehow because you're rushing down and you can imagine yourself going over the ground, which is uneven, and the coldness as well.'

Wider student creative application

One aim of the project is to assess the transferability of imagery skills to a broader academic and creative undergraduate programme. Student evaluation suggests that this is entirely realistic but that the techniques need reinforcement throughout the curriculum.

'It gave me confidence that I have imagination to come up with certain things and it made me realise the influence of music.'

Difficulties encountered by students

It would be wrong to imply that every student reported a positive response to each session. In the first study, each student reported at least one positive workshop, most more than one. But some students had difficulty in visualising or imagining smells of the sea and recalling the sound of waves, preferring to concentrate purely on the imaginary pictorial image.

In the second (pilot) study, there was greater polarisation. Whilst some students enthusiastically embraced the concepts, a small minority did not accept their usefulness. This could be due to the question of student 'stance' or a closed (or less open) mindset as proposed by Donald Schön and others. Just under a quarter of the cohort were non-committal, but around half of the participants with the pilot reported a positive and useful experience. A further quarter of the pilot group were particularly enthusiastic and cited ways that they had used and were continuing to use the techniques independently. Some related to focusing on specific academic goals, others related to associated life goals such as achievement in sport and overcoming perceived personal obstacles.

Conclusion

The research projects set out to establish the extent to which the imagination and creative functions of a group of undergraduate students can be activated by a combination of spoken words with sounds, music or contemplative silence. Initially this was to assess the usefulness of the technique as an additional creative learning tool but subsequently to merge this and other learning techniques to consider whether these can contribute to undergraduate academic self-efficacy.

In the recent pilot study, students generally report positive feelings towards the visualisation activities *per se*. A number continue to actively use them but many have failed to pursue these independently by applying them to other study

modules. The shift of locus of control and responsibility to the student appears problematic at the pilot stage.

A number of techniques have been introduced to current unit delivery to address this relevant issue of student perception and independent application. In particular, closer integration, highlighting and reinforcement of links need to be made between visualization on the one hand and student self-efficacy and the subject-specific curriculum on the other. This has been made explicit and regularly reinforced in current delivery. At the transition to Higher Education at Year One, some students need clearer signposting of linkages. Of course an appropriate balance will need to be found to achieve student support to promote progressive independent learning in contrast to 'support' which can maintain a culture of dependency on the tutor.

A number of other 'creative learning techniques' such as illuminative art, use of packs of 'creativity cards', random stimulation cards and objects are now used as a regular input and could remove the concept of visualisation being perceived as an unusual technique. I feel that the more visualization is perceived by students as being one of a wide range of 'different' learning techniques rather than one of a few, the more it can be accepted by them.

In response to the issues of stance raised by a small number of students within the pilot, it is anticipated that modification of course delivery, described above, with students participating in the main research project will lead to a greater shift towards acceptance and integration of visualization within the student approach. If continued over the course of the degree, visualization may be a factor which leads to greater undergraduate maturity and independence of study and self-efficacy which contribute to a positive final academic outcome.

Appendix 1.4

Professional Journal Article: 'Sound, music and radio in the creative curriculum'

McClellan, T. 2009, Sound, music and radio in the creative curriculum: perspectives on undergraduate study. *Networks-HEA-ADM*. 07:13-15

Sound, music and radio in the creative curriculum: perspectives on undergraduate study

Author's name: Tim McClellan
Institution: Southampton Solent University
Keywords: Curriculum design, innovation, learning styles, radio, media, podcasting

Abstract

The appreciation of the impact of sound in our lives and our learning is ignored in many undergraduate programmes. Whether focussing on sound as a different learning style, putting together a podcast as an alternative to written coursework or listening to radio broadcasts with a more critical ear, creative students need to recognize how sound plays a major part in the way we interpret the world and how we present ourselves. Embedding basic radio production skills and an appreciation of sound and music into a creative undergraduate curriculum can help access an individual student's own creativity for exploration and growth academically, personally and professionally.

The starting point!

Listening to the backgrounds and previous learning experiences of freshers each October, you could be forgiven for thinking that radio does not exist as a medium at all. For students having taken A Level Media Studies, most will not have had the chance to work with sound recording equipment or put together a sound podcast. Whilst most boards allow audio production as a medium for assessment, many Sixth Forms and Colleges do not offer this opportunity, often through limited resources. Video production appears to be the order of the day! To suggest that an appreciation of the nature of sound is covered by incorporating sound into a video piece does tend to sideline the power and

special impact of radio and using the sense of hearing and listening. Students taking performance, art and design courses as post-16 qualifications generally fare better in understanding how they can use music, in particular, to help them forge their own creative direction. They are usually introduced to music as a stimulus for creativity, which is then portrayed in a different medium through dance, drama or design-based artefact.

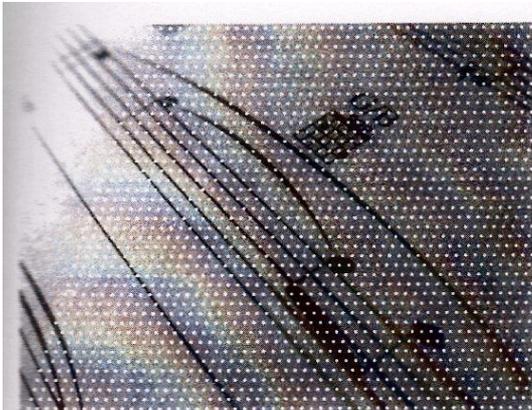
But it is a letter from a schoolgirl in Huddersfield written to a 'Children's Hour' radio producer nearly sixty years ago which pinpoints the real creative possibilities of sound. The girl wrote to the producer, Trevor Hill, after watching a television adaptation of Frances Hodgson Burnett's children's classic 'The Secret Garden'. Hill had produced the work for radio a year earlier. In his book 'Over the Airwaves' (2005) he recounts that the girl had written 'whilst I am enjoying 'The Secret Garden' on television, I enjoyed it even more on radio because the scenery was better'.

It is the power of the sound medium which allows the stimulation and creation of individual mental images and the associated emotions which allows students to tap into and harness this capability and to assist in the development of their own creative faculties.

Getting students involved

The need for greater creativity in schools was highlighted in a report in 2007 from the Commons Education Committee. It stressed that creativity needed to be extended across, and embedded within, the whole curriculum. It also clearly stated that appropriate resource in all its forms had to be committed to this end.

Getting first year students in HE to tap into the wider range of their own creative faculties can often need a kick start. A reluctance for them to move >>



Students at the radio desk

away from their tried and tested methods of idea generation and output towards a more structured approach like those suggested by de Bono (1990), van Gundy (1988) and others can mean a shift outside their comfort zone. But study and thinking at University is designed to push students' boundaries to try new approaches in a supportive environment and to become confident in tackling structured and unstructured problems and creative tasks in new and challenging ways.

Getting first year undergraduates to examine their world of sound by actually listening to what is going on around them (often for the first time) in the classroom, outside the building, in their own homes and even in a quiet room is an interesting learning experience for both tutor and student. Identifying and cutting through different layers, intensity, levels and positions of sound (or silence) and its movement is one thing. Thinking about how these sounds can change and transform our emotions is another. Hearing words being spoken professionally in a radio play or through poetry usually evokes a completely different response to the student simply reading them silently off the page. Asking students to identify and read a poem which has moved them can be problematic. Many will not identify a poem at all. But ask them to find lyrics from a song which has moved them and that is a totally different proposition. The words are readily found, eagerly dissected and the link with emotions easily voiced. It is the sound of the words, the aural context of the song and an identifiable, personal link which are important in accessing the students' analytical abilities.

Music in the non-musical curriculum

Music is a powerful tool. What types of music do students like? What does music do for them at a club or in their room? If music can change their emotions, maybe they can use music to change other people's emotions too. The usefulness in performance, art and design courses is clear but the relevance for taught courses to do with advertising, retailing, public relations and communication, for example, is also evident as these involve persuasion using a variety of senses. Students in this latter set of courses will typically produce considerable written and visual output but nothing or very little in sound. Students who are musicians at any level will readily testify to the effect of their musical creative outputs on themselves as individuals and how this impacts on their mood and other work.

Working with classical and contemporary music can help access students' creativity. Used either as a specific stimulus or background music to create 'mood' in a creative workshop students report a positive experience. The vast majority will have some sort of music running when they are working at home in a positive study environment. Replicating this in some way in the classroom can help produce a more motivated approach on the part of the student to the in-class group work or individual task.

Nina Jackson (2006) advocates the use of music in the secondary classroom for three main reasons. 'Listening to music in lessons helps pupils concentration and study skills ...[it] makes pupils feel happy, relaxed and ready for work...[and it] helps pupils achieve more'. My own experience in the undergraduate classroom, in a variety of settings, echoes these points. Students also report that there is a 'different' and 'positive' atmosphere in these seminars. Adding to the learning environment with music, they say, treats them as adults and allows them to interact as a group more effectively

in tackling a task as it reproduces an aural environment which they are used to when working at home. Current student favourites are albums by John Meyer (Continuum) and Jack Johnson (In Between Dreams). Naturally, this selection will change over time. Both CDs set a calming, acoustic, reflective background for student working and learning. For their seminar work, students can also bring in the CDs which 'work' for them and it exposes the rest of the group to other musical tastes.

Visualization

Another approach using sound, music and words as a focus is visualization. Generally it is students who have taken previous courses in art, design or performance who have come across this approach before. I call this technique 'guided daydreaming'. The approach involves using the imagination to create images, sounds, emotions and other sensations in the mind. By using music or sounds such as waves on the seashore or sounds of the countryside in the background, an atmosphere is created which can allow the student to let his or her mind legitimately wander during a set time during a seminar towards a desired and specified creative end. It could be imagining a picture, a walk across a beach, a meeting with a friend or a chance to ask themselves or someone else a particular question and to listen to the response. It helps reflection and allows the student 'time out' and space to permit and facilitate the creation and flow of creative ideas; to give voice to their imagination. Grace (2001) regards visualization as a potentially positive tool in a creative learning environment. She argues for its inclusion in the curriculum for student self-empowerment.

Closely linked is the concept of self-efficacy or the belief that we are able to bring about and sustain positive change in our lives. Student self efficacy relates to balancing academic work with the other demands, pressures...and temptations...of student life. By using music or natural sounds and a gentle verbal push in a particular direction students can begin to identify and set their own goals in various aspects of their life. They can focus on particular coursework briefs to mentally go through the various possibilities and take a critical position on their work and that of others.

Radio

Introducing radio production, recording and thinking in sound into the creative curriculum, even at a basic level, can help students to recognize the auditory learning style and to broaden their awareness of the requirements and capabilities of different media. A sonic narrative, for example, when a story is told as a linked and logical sequence of sounds with few words, is a challenge in which students are forced to think in auditory terms as opposed to the written word. Just as in the earlier example of 'The Secret Garden' students can create pictures in the listener's mind. Topics such as 'a day in the life of...' give scope for a range of sounds that can be integrated. 'A day in the life of a pound coin' demands the personification of the coin through a voice. How would the voice of the pound coin differ from that of a ten pence piece? Thinking creatively can lead to a greater critical awareness of sound in the wider environment and a general enhancement of creative thinking skills in different contexts.

A different form of assessment could be for students to submit work in the form of an audio podcast. In practice this is an audio file placed on a University server and/or submitted by students on CD. Cane and Cashmore

(2008) ran a pilot study in 2007 with a group of students studying genetics. The students were required to submit an assessment in the form of an audio podcast. Feedback on the process was positive. The acquisition of transferable skills in producing the podcasts was highlighted and regarded as motivating by students since they were doing something different.

As a potential marketing tool for courses, students could be paid to put together one or a series of podcasts which could be put on university and course websites or issued to UCAS applicants via CD. Competent students could use their radio production skills to gather material for 'an insider's guide' to their university or course. It makes sense for potential applicants to hear the true voices and experiences of real students in a form and using technology with which they are familiar (i.e. a downloadable audio file) with those students' perspectives. Extracts from seminar group work, interviews with students and staff and examples of extra-curricular activities could all form part of such a podcast, mixed together professionally by the student with guidance from audio-based teaching staff.

Changing technologies

Students can get their own voices - and those of others - heard both cheaply and simply. In most universities equipment will be available for recording through a media resources service but for some, the bug may bite and the student will want to get his or her own gear.

Basic but adequate software such as the open source sound editor 'Audacity' can be downloaded, both for Mac and PC, free of charge. Other paid-for software is available, offering more effects and easier operation such as Adobe Audition (Versions 1.5 or 3 for PC only). Flash card or hard disk digital recording machines capable of producing good quality sound can be bought new from £150 upwards whilst older technology in the form of minidisc machines can be bought online for around £15. Minidisc machines are perfectly acceptable recorders but transfer of the audio file to the sound editor needs to be done in real time. A 20 minute recording takes 20 minutes to transfer. Hard disk machines transfer files in seconds. Invest in a good quality microphone. This will make all the difference to the sound quality of the recording. You can easily get kitted out with good quality equipment and (free) software for under £100.

The changing job and media market

Students who are not following radio production or journalism based courses will probably not be looking for jobs working in radio stations as presenters or journalists. A typical local commercial radio station is run with around ten people! But to look at radio stations as the only employment avenue for students with radio skills is also missing the point. Podcasting either for fun or for profit (or both) is an important potential opening for the student to disseminate their work online and a freelance employment source. Skills needed for a good podcast are precisely the same as those needed for a good radio programme or feature. The only difference is that the distribution of the output is by a different means. One is via a transmitter, the broadcast is transient, the other is via the web, it is there as long as you want it to be.

Conclusion

This article has considered several ways by which generic sound, music and audio production techniques and skills can be incorporated into any

imaginative and creative curriculum. The approaches described are not intended to be a panacea. Indeed, some students may be reluctant to embrace new ways of learning and will wish to stay with what is familiar. What is clear is that a range of approaches in learning and teaching is required to create and support a future curriculum that is both motivating and relevant.

This outline of several auditory-based approaches can provide some food for thought in the design, development and operation of courses and modules to kick-start the creative thinking process. In encouraging first year students, in particular, to try new approaches to learning in a supportive and exploratory environment, the transition between Sixth Form or College and the demands of Higher Education can be made smoother. •

Contact info

Tim McClellan



Biography

Tim McClellan is a Principal Lecturer at [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He is a broadcaster and a former senior journalist in the commercial radio sector. Tim also organizes and runs bespoke courses in media training and podcasting for a range of professional organizations. He is co-author of 'Schools in the Spotlight', a guide to media relations for headteachers and governors and is currently completing a doctorate in approaches to creative learning for undergraduate self-development. Tim is a Chartered Marketer and a member of the Committee of the Radio Academy South. He was also a judge for the 2008 Nations and Regions awards for The Radio Academy

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Appendix 3.1

Completed Ethics Review Checklist

**University of Southampton School of Education
Ethics Review Checklist: Student Research Project**

This checklist should be completed by the researcher (with the advice of the research supervisor) for every research project which involves human participants. Before completing this form, please refer to the Ethical Guidelines in the School's Research Student Handbook and the British Educational Research Association guidelines (<http://www.bera.ac.uk/guidelines.html>).

Project Title:

Creative Learning Approaches for Undergraduate Self-Development

Researcher(s): Tim McClellan

Supervisor: Professor Helen Simons

Part One

	YES	NO
1. Does the study involve participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent? (eg children with special difficulties)		✓
2. Will the study require the co-operation of an advocate for initial access to the groups or individuals? (eg children with disabilities; adults with a dementia)		✓
3. Could the research induce psychological stress or anxiety, cause harm or have negative consequences for the participants (beyond the risks encountered in their normal lifestyles)?	See extra sheets	
4. Will deception of participants be necessary during the study? (eg covert observation of people)?		✓
5. Will the study involve discussion of topics which the participants would find sensitive (eg sexual activity, drug use)?	See extra sheets	
6. Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing or physical testing? (eg the use of sport equipment such as a treadmill) and will a health questionnaire be needed?		✓
7. Will the research involve medical procedures? (eg are drugs, placebos or other substances (eg foods, vitamins) to be administered to the participants or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind?)		✓
8. Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses or compensation for time) be offered to participants?		✓
9. Will you be able to obtain permission to involve children under sixteen from the school or parents and the children themselves?		✓
10. Are there problems with participants' right to remain anonymous, or to have the information they give not identifiable as theirs?	See sheets	
11. Is the right to freely withdraw from the study at any time made explicit?	ditto	
12. Will the study involve recruitment of patients or staff through the NHS?		✓

If you have answered NO to all of the above questions and you have discussed this form with your supervisor and had it signed and dated, you may proceed to develop an ethics protocol. If you have answered YES to any of the questions, please complete PART TWO of this form below and adopt a similar procedure of discussion and signing. Please keep a copy for your records. Only in exceptional circumstances will cases need to be referred to the School's Research Ethics Committee.

Part Two

For each item answered 'YES' please give a summary of the issue and action to be taken to address it.

For responses to the items not ticked on page one, please see attached sheets

Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary

Signed
(Researcher)

Tina McClell

Date: 11 January 2006

To be completed by the Supervisor (PLEASE TICK ONE)

- Appropriate action taken to maintain ethical standards - no further action necessary
- The issues require the guidance of the School of Education's Ethics Committee

COMMENTS: The question did not always respond precisely to the candidate's research. However he has nevertheless responded to them as relevantly as possible to ensure good ethical practice

Signed (supervisor): *Helen Simons*

Date: 11 January 2006

**University of Southampton - School of Education
Ethics Review Checklist: Student Research Project
'Creative Learning Approaches for Undergraduate Self-
Development'
Researcher: Tim McClellan**

Part Two – summary of issues and actions taken to address items in 'Part One'.

3. It is not intended that issues which could induce psychological stress or negative consequences for participants be incorporated into the research. However, any research requiring human participants to adopt a creative, reflective and reflexive approach may give rise to certain reflections and reactions which do cause such stress. Participants will be formally briefed verbally and in writing of this possibility and acknowledgement obtained through an initially signed consent form and ongoing informed consent sought and obtained throughout the duration of the project.

The initial response, should such a negative reaction occur, is for the researcher to discuss the issue individually and in private with the participant. Any discussion takes place within the boundaries of the researcher's professional expertise as a tutor with specific responsibility for pastoral and student support issues and as an accredited lecturer in Higher Education. If necessary, mutually agreed referral of the participant to the counselling or other support services of the researcher's university or other support agency will take place.

5. The study does not explicitly involve discussion of topics such as those mentioned in this question. However, given the nature of the study, participants may encounter personal issues which they may find sensitive. This may be in a reflective journal, spoken as a member of a group or being present during discussion of a topic. In the case of the journal, the participant may choose to write an entry and opt not to show or discuss this with the researcher. This is entirely permissible and made explicit within the project.

Discussion within the plenary participant group will be open but managed by the researcher. There is a balance to be recognised and established between a lively and probing discussion and stifling thought and debate.

Issues which may emerge as being particularly problematic for individual students will be discussed individually with the researcher and referred, if appropriate, as detailed in the response to question 3, above.

The researcher's experience in previous and related undergraduate self-development teaching and research has shown that a policy of group confidentiality and individual explanation and reassurance to participants on this matter is a sufficiently robust procedure.

10. The participant will remain anonymous or given pseudonyms within work-in-progress, the thesis and any resultant published research at all times. It is possible that a reader may choose to try to identify participants through knowledge of the researcher's teaching institution and courses involved. Strenuous efforts will be made to protect the identity of participants and the linkages of the research to individual students or cohorts will not be publicised. Students who wish to be identified within the research will generally only be allowed to do this through pseudonym.
11. The right to withdraw from the MPhil/PhD research is made explicit at the outset of the project both verbally and in writing. Ongoing informed consent is obtained from the participants throughout the project. The research takes place within a timetabled class of a module for an undergraduate programme. As such, the content of the classes will be largely prescribed and therefore obligatory. Participation within the research programme, however, is voluntary.

One of the modules/units is team-taught. In this case, the marker will be my colleague in order to avoid potential conflict of interest. I am the sole lecturer on a second, but similar, unit. In this unit, I will work with my colleague mentioned above, or another, so that they are able to first mark the formally required academic output of these students.

Appendix 3.2

Ethical Protocol and Rationale

Researcher: Tim McClellan
Department: School of Education
Thesis Title: Creative Learning Approaches for Undergraduate Self-Development
Date: 11th January 2006

Ethical Protocol and Rationale

The BERA Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2004) form the basis of the ethical protocol and rationale for this research project. These are supplemented by the Research Ethics Framework (2005) from the Economic and Social Research Council together with the ethical guidelines from the Scottish Educational Research Association – SERA, (2005) and the ethical guidelines from the University of Southampton on the one hand and the university which employs the researcher on the other.

The ethical issues surrounding this project relate to the application of generic published guidelines, as outlined above, to a specific educational research context. This section explores the elements raised by the preferred methodological structure for the research within the framework proposed by BERA.

The Research Context

The research project and specifically data collection will take place between January 2006 and June 2008. During this time, a pilot study will be conducted with groups of undergraduate students who are taught by the researcher. The pilot study lasts from January 2006 until May 2006. The findings of the pilot study will be incorporated into the structure, operation and management of the main body of primary research initially from September 2006 until May 2007 and subsequently from September 2007 until May 2008. The participants will be self-selecting from seminar groups of undergraduate students enrolled on two separate creative-type degree programmes following either a compulsory unit of study (20 CATS) in their first year or an optional unit of study (10 CATS) in their final year. The unit of study relates either to creative thinking and reflective learning or personal development and creative management. A significant part of each unit relates to innovative ways of thinking with a particular emphasis on creative visualization.

In addition to the Year One seminar groups, a number of students who took part in the pilot study in the previous academic year may choose to continue with a

programme in creative thinking including visualization and guided imagery in their second year outside the formal curriculum but associated with this research.

It should be borne in mind that students in the initial pilot study and the main body of primary research are following compulsory units of study. As such, they are required to participate, reflect and submit work for formative and summative assessment as an integral part of their studies. However, they are not obliged to participate in the research programme. In view of this, the initial documentation issued to students advising them is twofold. The first document is an advisory handout given to all students. It details the nature and purpose of the unit academic content specifically from the perspective of course requirements and broad guidance. In short, it explains the requirements of the assessed unit. A second sheet is also issued to students who may wish to participate in the research project. It specifies in greater detail the differences between the requirements of the taught unit and the optional nature of the research programme. All students receive the first document. Students who wish to participate in the research need to sign receipt of and understanding of the second document which allows participation in the PhD research programme (see attached documents). Guidance is given verbally as well as in writing.

A number of ethical issues are immediately apparent within this contextual summary. These will be addressed individually below within the framework of the BERA Revised Ethical Guidelines.

Preamble

This protocol addresses the approach to be adopted with the three main groups of individuals or stakeholders identified in section 7 of the BERA document, namely research participants (undergraduate students), sponsors of the research (the researcher's home university) and the wider community of educational researchers. Given the nature of the research, it is not surprising that most comment in this section will relate to the ethical treatment of the participating and non-participating students.

The underlying ethos of this research project is one of respect for "the person, knowledge, democratic values, the quality of educational research and academic freedom". (BERA Revised Guidelines, section 6).

Responsibilities to participants and non-participants

Participants in this research have an active involvement as members of seminar groups within two undergraduate programmes in creative disciplines within a UK university. Participation in the scheduled workshops which form part of their course is obligatory, as is submission of work for assessment within that unit. However, enrolment on that obligatory unit does not imply a student obligation to participate in or contribute to the research. That is an entirely optional activity. Students make an active choice to 'opt in' with regard to the research project, or not.

Participants

The protocol specifically addresses the research process, the reasons for the research, participant involvement (both active participation and methodological rationale) and reporting in the form of thesis and interim submissions together with material published in the wider public domain. The PhD thesis and MPhil transfer document are envisaged as formal outputs. Journal and conference material emerges as the research progresses and opportunities for publication come forward. As such these prospective outputs are less clearly defined but the nature of potential future output is brought to the attention of the participants in the information sheet and consent form.

Voluntary and ongoing informed consent

All students taking either unit (module) are given a scheme of work outlining the proposed timetable for the unit for the academic year. Students are also given a verbal briefing and written statement (attached document 1) outlining the nature and content of the research, voluntary participation and right to withdraw and details of the support mechanisms available to address any perceived difficulties encountered in the research setting. Research participants within the student body have the choice to 'opt in' to the research programme. They do this initially by signing the research agreement (attached document 2). Signing this also includes acknowledging receipt and acceptance of the information sheet, as described above. Both researcher and prospective research participant sign two consent forms. One is retained by the student (participant) and the other by the researcher.

As this project involves an element of action research there is an issue of potential role ambiguity and role conflict between the role of the researcher and the role of the teacher, each relating to the same individual. This implies the possible perception or existence of a power differential between student the teacher when the roles of research participant and researcher are introduced. The voluntary research participants are also obligated students whilst the researcher is also the teacher/lecturer.

Emphasis is placed on providing an objective mechanism to minimise any actual or perceived role conflict or power differential. Essentially, this is achieved with the pilot study and one of the main research groups through a team teaching approach where a colleague, who is not involved in the research programme, will take 'my' seminar groups from time to time and I hers. The colleague will also be the primary marker of the assessed work produced by my allocated seminar groups. The colleague is not advised of those who do or do not participate in the research. In turn, I will mark the seminar group of my colleague. A ten-percent sample of submissions is double marked to ensure consistency in accordance with my university's marking principles and practice. I am the sole unit teacher on the second course in the main research group. The process of a colleague first marking the work of research participants will be employed on this course together with second marking procedures which are standard within the researcher's Faculty.

It can be argued that this process of marking can best ensure fairness and transparency in the assessment process and minimise any perceived or actual role conflict, ambiguity or power differential.

It is possible that students who participate or who choose not to participate in the research may be taught by me in subsequent years. To this end, the ethical obligation remains after the conclusion of the research. Equally, it is possible that students taking the unit where my colleague is the workshop leader may particularly wish to participate. In this case, where possible, transfer to the researcher's seminar group will be facilitated or my colleague will mark their work.

Deception

The use of deception is not employed within this research project.

Right to Withdraw

Participants are advised verbally and in writing of their right to withdraw from the research at any time and without prejudice to their existing and future studies. This is achieved through the initial information sheet and agreement to 'opt in' to the research. Participants in the pilot study are further advised of this if they 'opt in' to the developmental sessions in Year Two of their course. These further developmental sessions are not part of the set course curriculum and are conducted outside the timetabled course. A fresh consent form is completed by students who wish to take part in a second year of the study.

There is monitoring of participant involvement and feedback throughout the pilot and main body of research together with self-monitoring of the researcher through a reflective journal.

Active appreciation and reflection on both these data sets can assist in maintaining a high level of student involvement. As indicated elsewhere, participants have an absolute right to withdraw from the research. It should be noted that students do not have a right to withdraw from the unit as there is an academic (course) obligation for the student to participate and submit work as required. This issue is addressed by the 'dual' set of documentation issued at the outset of the unit and discussed elsewhere. The first document (Scheme of Work) is applicable to all students taking the unit and advisory. The second set of documents (Information Sheet and Consent Form- attached) is optional and requires formal student informed agreement to register eligibility as a participant in the research project.

Children, vulnerable young people and adults

All participants will be aged eighteen years or more. Given the fact that all potential participants are enrolled on an undergraduate programme of study at the researcher's University, where the research takes place, there is an implication that participants will be an adult who is intellectually able to form their own views and to provide fully informed consent, as per Article 12 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child. However, the researcher is aware of potential issues regarding vulnerable adults who may have been admitted to a course. Since the overriding criterion and spirit of the Convention (Articles 3 and

12) as per BERA Revised Guidelines paragraphs 14-16 is that the research should be in 'the best interest' of vulnerable adults, clarification will be sought in line with Data Protection and University confidentiality regulations. There may also be consultation with 'responsible others' to gauge whether participation of the vulnerable adult is appropriate.

It should be restated here that the basis of the taught unit and research programme is student self-development and not a therapeutic intervention. However, in any activity which involves reflection and introspection, uncomfortable, sensitive or distressing issues may arise. As identified in the initial Ethics Review Checklist, the first response, should a negative participant reaction occur, is for the researcher to discuss the issue individually and in private with the participant. This is within the boundaries of the researcher's professional expertise as a tutor with special responsibility for pastoral and student support issues and as an accredited lecturer in Higher Education. If necessary, mutually agreed referral of the participant to the counselling or other support services within the researcher's own University or other support agency will take place.

It is noted that much of the 'input' for this research is contained within the core taught undergraduate curriculum for the participants. The data collection partially emanates from the same work which will be subject to summative and formative assessment, for example reflective journals, and partly from research project-specific methods such as individual or group interview. As such, the additional bureaucratic burden on participants is kept to a minimum.

Incentives

No formal incentives are employed in this research. However, there is an implied intrinsic self-developmental incentive which may emerge from participation in the research project.

Detriment arising from Participation in Research

As explained elsewhere, students who are prospective participants are advised both verbally and in writing of possible effects of self-developmental and reflective/reflexive work. Such participants are advised of tutor and institutional support, should this be necessary, and means of accessing this.

A control group is not being utilised in this research project and students are free to participate or not. All students undertake the same teaching programme in which the material is delivered. Some opt to participate in the research, for example, permit use of their reflective journals in the thesis and research reports and they allow themselves to be interviewed. Others do not. Since the pedagogical input is the same for both participants and non-participants, and there is an option for withdrawal from the research, neither group can legitimately claim detriment from participation or non-participation in the research.

Privacy

Data obtained from participants will be anonymised throughout. It should be borne in mind that the right of an individual to waive anonymity may, by implication, assist in the identification of others who have not waived that right.

Contextual information in reporting needs to be given in order to assist understanding of any report of the research or the thesis but this will be restricted to endeavour to protect the identity of the University where the research is taking place, the identity of the courses and the units concerned together with the identity of individual students or groups of students. A potential tension therefore exists where the request for an individual to have their contribution identified as theirs is weighed against the right of others to remain anonymous. Whilst this is not envisaged as a likely issue, potentially, this dilemma does exist. As such, all data will be anonymised. Real names, including first names, will therefore be different from those chosen for publication.

Data will be recorded in compliance with the Data Protection Act (1998) and other relevant legal instruments. In particular, data is stored in a manner which does not lead to a breach of agreed confidentiality and anonymity.

Disclosure

It is possible that in the course of the research details containing harmful or illegal actions or behaviours on the part of a participant or participants may be brought to light. It is envisaged that contemporaneous notes will be taken and guidance sought from the project supervisor and/or the researcher's own university support services. Participant anonymity is preserved unless the severity of the issue ultimately requires formal named disclosure to a third party. Detailed records relating to any disclosure will be recorded by the researcher together with details of consultations between researcher/participant, researcher/supervisor and researcher/own university.

The initial findings and conclusions of the research will be made available to participants who are still students at the researcher's university. Debriefing will be in the form of group feedback with a written summary of the main findings. Participants unable to attend or who have left the University will be offered a copy of the main research findings by post or e-mail and offered an opportunity for verbal debriefing with the researcher, face to face or by telephone at a mutually convenient time.

Responsibilities to Sponsors of Research

The researcher is financially self-sponsored for the MPhil/PhD with a contribution made by the employing University. The researcher's university also facilitates the research by providing access to potential student participants.

The Ethics Committee of the researcher's University accepts the University of Southampton's ethical policy as being appropriate for the MPhil/PhD research and requires no further ethical compliance.

One paper relating to the preparatory (theoretical) stages of the research has already been given by the researcher at a University Teaching and Learning Conference ('Guided Imagery as a Trigger for Creativity – An evaluation of creative visualisation in an audio production setting' September 2005). The learning experience and research and training activities of the researcher throughout the period of PhD registration have fed and will feed into course and curriculum development and programme quality enhancement. The sponsorship

by the employing University does not lead to a conflict of interest, but rather an enhanced and mutually beneficial developmental relationship. Further research output is envisaged which contributes to an improved individual and institutional RAE submission.

Responsibility to Community of Educational Researchers

All elements of the research will be reported fairly, accurately and in an appropriate manner. A number of measures, as described elsewhere in this Protocol, have been employed to demonstrate transparency in the research. In addition to submission for a Research Degree, the purpose of the research is to bring the findings to the attention of a wider audience. Furthermore, the findings and conclusions will be used to inform my practice as a lecturer in Higher Education.

Conclusion

The researcher has drawn up this protocol and rationale in order to provide a protective framework which relates to and is for the benefit of all parties involved in the research. In keeping with the ethical guidelines of BERA and other bodies, this protocol promotes 'respect for the person, knowledge, democratic values, the quality of educational research (and) academic freedom'. (BERA Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research 2004). This protocol is based on the BERA Revised Guidelines (2004). In conjunction with the Ethics Review Checklist, this Protocol seeks to minimise potential adverse effects of the research and to maximise transparency of process.

Attachments

1. Participant Information Sheet (Appendix 3.3)
2. Participant Agreement Sheet (Appendix 3.4)

Appendix 3.3

Research Participant Information Sheet 2008-9

Creative Learning Approaches for Undergraduate Self-Development Research Project Information Sheet

Academic Year 2008-9

Thank you for agreeing to take part in my research project to do with creative learning. As you know, I am carrying out research for a PhD at the University of Southampton. This is in the School of Education and the project is supervised by a research professor with a special interest in this area. The purpose of the research is to examine how these techniques can be used with undergraduate students such as yourself with a view to you making the most of the study opportunities on your course. The concepts and the research project are also designed to help you create and focus on your future goals.

By taking part in this research I will ask you to talk about some of the creative approaches to study we have covered in your unit and invite you to take part in one or a small number of short interviews. I would also like to include some of your thoughts and experiences about the project or your experiences of the workshops and reflections on the unit. These may have also been recorded in other ways such as extracts from a journal or drawings. With your permission, I will record the interviews either on audio or videotape. This will purely be to make sure that your comments are correctly transcribed.

The research that I am conducting is primarily for inclusion in a PhD thesis and preparatory work. The final PhD is a public document and so can be viewed by anyone who identifies it as a useful work. The University of Southampton is moving to electronic submission and storage of theses and this is likely to make the findings more widely available than in the past.

In keeping with most research philosophies, anything you say or contribute to the project will be anonymised. Your name will not be used, although a pseudonym will be. The name of your course will not be included in any published work. PhD research frequently forms the base of articles for academic journals or papers at conferences. I seek your permission through the accompanying agreement form to include your contributions in journals and conferences on the same basis as the PhD

Your views, thoughts and reflections, together with those of other students, will be initially transcribed and then analysed to identify and evaluate the usefulness of creative learning approaches, visualization and guided imagery in undergraduate work and goalsetting. The reason I would like to hear your views is to help me assess your responses, to integrate your thoughts into the way I run similar units in future years and to pass this knowledge and your experiences on to other colleagues in Higher Education establishments in the UK and around the world.

If you have any questions about the research, either now or in the future, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the study.

Tim McClellan (Contact details removed to assist preservation of student anonymity)

Appendix 3.4

Research Participant Agreement Sheet 2008-9

Creative Learning Approaches for Undergraduate Self-Development

Research Project

Research Agreement

Academic Year 2008/9

I agree that I have read and understood the information sheet given to me and I have had the opportunity to discuss it with the researcher.

I understand that I only need to take part in this research if I want to and that I can stop taking part at any time and I don't have to say why.

I understand that the research forms part of a research training programme and project that is being undertaken by Tim McClellan.

I understand and agree that any research interviews may be audio or videotaped and transcribed for the purposes of accuracy. Other contributions such as extracts from a journal or drawings may also be included. Any contribution that I make will be made anonymous

I understand that my comments and other contributions may be included in a PhD thesis and preparatory work. This will be submitted in both paper and electronic forms. I also understand that my comments and contributions may be included in other scholarly work, produced by Tim McClellan, such as academic articles or a conference paper. These will be produced on the same basis.

I agree to take part in the above study

Name of Participant:

Signature:

Date:

Name of Researcher: Tim McClellan

Signature of Researcher:

Date:

Appendix 3.5

Research Governance Approval

	University of Southampton	Legal Services - Research Governance Office		
		University of Southampton Highfield Southampton SO17 1BJ United Kingdom	Tel Fax Email	+44 (0)23 8059 8848/9 +44 (0)23 8059 5781 mad4@soton.ac.uk ld7@soton.ac.uk

RGO REF: 5396

Mr Tim McClellan

17 October 2007

Dear Mr McClellan

Project Title: Creative Learning Approaches for Undergraduate Self Development

I am writing to confirm that the University of Southampton is prepared to act as sponsor for this study under the terms of the Department of Health Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care (2nd edition 2005).

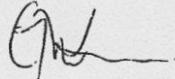
The University of Southampton fulfils the role of Research Sponsor in ensuring management, monitoring and reporting arrangements for research. I understand that you will be acting as the Principal Investigator responsible for the daily management for this study, and that you will be providing regular reports on the progress of the study to the Research Governance Office on this basis.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of your responsibilities under the terms of the Research Governance Framework, and the EU Clinical Trials Directive (Medicines for Human Use Act) if conducting a clinical trial. We encourage you to become fully conversant with the terms of the Research Governance Framework by referring to the Department of Health document which can be accessed at:
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/24/27/04122427.pdf>

In this regard if your project involves NHS patients or resources please send us a copy of your NHS REC and Trust approval letters when available.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any additional information or support. May I also take this opportunity to wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely



Dr Martina Prude
Research Governance Manager
cc: File

Appendix 3.6

Public Liability Insurance Certification

	University of Southampton	Finance Department - Insurance Services	
		M J Ace MA FCCA Director of Finance A S Grice BA ACA Deputy Director	
University of Southampton Highfield Southampton SO17 1BJ United Kingdom		Direct line Fax Email	+44(0)23 8059 2417 +44 (0)23 8059 2195 hrm@soton.ac.uk

Mr Tim McClellan

RGO REF - 5396

16 October 2007

Dear Mr McClellan

Public Liability Insurance

Project Title: Creative Learning Approaches for Undergraduate Self Development

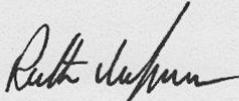
Participant Type:	No Of Participants:	Participant Age Group:	Notes:
Healthy volunteers	120	Adults	

Thank you for forwarding the completed questionnaire and attached papers.

Having taken note of the information provided, I can confirm that this project will be covered under the terms and conditions of the above policy, subject to written consent being obtained from the participating volunteers.

If there are any changes to the above details, please advise us as failure to do so may invalidate the insurance.

Yours sincerely



Ruth McFadyen
Insurance Services Manager

cc: File

Appendix 4.1

Week One – Creative Visualisation and Guided Imagery – introduction to these approaches to creative learning

Workshop Objectives

By the end of the first workshop students should be able to:

- Understand the meaning of 'Guided Imagery' and 'Creative Visualisation'
- Begin to apply these approaches to their individual approach to study and other areas
- Link these approaches with their idea of self-efficacy and to begin to reflect on their own stance in relation to the approaches.

Description

- The first two-hour workshop introduces students to the concept of guided imagery and creative visualisation. After a short introduction discussing the imagery and visualisation approaches and exploring their relevance on a creative undergraduate course, students experience a number of short imagery sessions.
- Students are briefed beforehand about the content of the visualisation in order that they are aware of the flow, pace and duration of the imagery exercise.

Imagery/Visualisation Scenarios

1. **'Guided Relaxation'**: The student imagines a calming light slowly passing through his or her body.
2. **'Beach'**: The student chooses a pebble from a selection at the front of the classroom and the student holds the pebble throughout the visualisation. The student imagines being on a beach before dawn and explores their perceptions using all five senses as they walk slowly along the beach and as the sun rises and the day goes on. The student notices a glow in the distance which turns out to be a stone to which the student is drawn. The stone is picked up and a bond is formed with the student. The senses are used to explore the size, shape and texture of the stone and its 'knowledge and experience', as it is 20,000 years old in its present form.
3. **Either 'Skiing'** - where a piece of vibrant and fast-paced music is played with the student asked to imagine skiing down a hill. There are no verbal cues during this piece.
Or 'Place where learning is pleasant and effective' – where the student is asked to imagine places where learning has been fun and effective in the past so the elements can be replicated in their learning environment at University
Or 'Graduation' – where the student imagines their own graduation, creating a tangible link between the learning on the course and ultimate desired outcome of an honours degree.

Appendix 4.2

Powerpoint learning material: Week One – Creative Visualisation and Guided Imagery: introduction to these approaches to creative learning

Creativity in Action and Creative Personal Development

Creative Visualisation and Guided Imagery: introduction to these approaches to creative learning



Objectives

- By the end of today's workshop you should be able to:
 - Understand the meaning of 'Guided Imagery' and 'Creative Visualisation'
 - Begin to apply these techniques to your individual approach to study and other areas
 - Link these techniques with your idea of self-efficacy and reflect on your 'stance'

Tasks



- Introduction
 - Definitions
 - 'Stance'
- Trying them out!
 - Several aspects of guided imagery and visualisation



Guided Imagery

This is a technique where you are led through a 'story' by someone's voice. You are asked to imagine the pictures of the 'story' in your mind. You will also typically use your imagination to create images with the other senses. There may be some musical or sound accompaniment. You are 'guided' through the images which you, yourself create.





Visualisation

This is where you use your own imagination to take yourself on a 'journey'. You identify what you want to 'explore' and let your imagination take over. Typically you would be in a relaxed state, you may have some music in the background and you will not have any 'prompts' from anyone else. You set the start of the journey and experience where it takes you..



Creative Visualisation



This is the technique of using your imagination to create what you want in your life. It is closely linked to guided imagery and visualisation. This can be particularly useful in helping you identify your goals and achieving them. These can be academic, social or employment-based goals. It can also help you assess whether these goals really are what you want to achieve.



Isn't this meditation?

No. The general aim of meditation is to allow you to clear your mind. This is usually done by the person concentrating on one set image, typically the breath, heartbeat or a flame. Visualisation and Imagery actively encourage a succession of 'sensory pictures' created by your imagination which allow you to tap into your creative faculties. Very much a right side of the brain activity!

What's the point of this on our course?

Creative learning techniques such as these can allow you to access ideas and thoughts which you might not otherwise tap into. Recognising emotions and how to create them in yourself (and ultimately others) is very helpful in the advertising field. Other techniques are useful as well. Add this to your toolbox !

It is closely linked to self-efficacy and belief in our own abilities. It can help motivate us and help us see a pathway through the assignments and look at the bigger picture.

It can help us assess and re-assess what we are doing and why. It can also be a fun way to come up with ideas.



Stance

How should you approach this? I would say with an open mind. These are techniques which can make a great difference in the outlook of people. It can require a 'leap of faith', i.e. to be open minded, and to not block out or prejudice because the technique may sound unusual.

Stance, as defined by Donald Schon, is to do with the way you feel about something. If you think it may be a useful technique, then that will allow you to experience visualisation more fully. If you reject it, for whatever reason i.e. you have a closed mind, then the rule of the self-fulfilling prophecy will come into play and you will probably not experience the benefits which you may have otherwise enjoyed.



Some other reasons for including it on the course

You will see how you can create a brand by personifying an inanimate object. You will give a living personality to something which doesn't have 'life' attached to it.

Marketers and advertisers use these techniques to help them experience different things and so translate their ideas into words, sounds and pictures which convey what they want to get across to their target audience.



Appendix 4.3

Week Two – Taking Guided Imagery and Creative Visualisation further

Workshop Objectives

By the end of the second workshop students should be able to:

- Identify some of the perceived obstacles to achieving their goals
- Produce a creative visualisation ‘Treasure Map’
- Recognise the positive qualities they bring to their studies and career plans

Description

- The second two-hour workshop develops the visualisation theme from the previous week and adopts a more personal and individual focus. The visualisation moves away from a state where students are dependent on the tutor’s voice and music to guide them from one part of the visualisation.
- This week, metaphor is used to help students become more aware of metaphor in their own life. The student is invited to see the person they really are and want to be.

Imagery/Visualisation Scenarios

1. **‘The Great Smoking Mirror’**: The visualisation starts in a woodland glade and as the student walks out of the glade they can see a river on their right. They watch the river flowing from the right and see it twist and turn which replicates their own life. As it passes in front of them, that represents the present and looking to the left, there lies the future with the river becoming wider and stronger and going out into the distance. They walk towards a house near the river and go inside where there is a mist in the hallway. They go into a room and walk towards a mirror and look into it. As the mist begins to clear they can see themselves with the positive qualities that they possess.

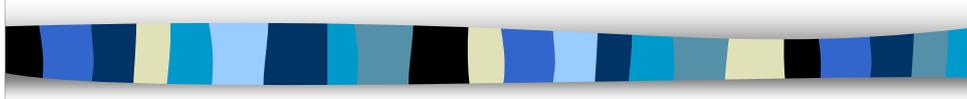
The students are asked to think about what they really want from their life and to imagine their academic, professional and personal goals. After a few minutes where they are asked to see themselves achieving their goals they see the mirror mist over again. The student leaves the house and walks slowly back to the place in the woodland glade where the visualisation started.

2. **‘Treasure Map’** Students are asked to draw their personal ‘treasure map’, based on the approach of Gawain (2002). Using paper of various colours, and felt pens and coloured pencils, the group members each create their own map. The treasure map can be used to remind them of their individual goals in visual form and, as illustrated in the Literature Review, this can be an important tool for personal development.

Appendix 4.4

Powerpoint learning material: Week Two – Taking Guided Imagery and Creative Visualisation further

Creativity in Action and Creative Personal Development



Taking Guided Imagery and Creative Visualisation further



Objectives

- By the end of today's workshop you should be able to
 - Identify some of the perceived obstacles to achieving your goals....and do something about it!
 - Produce a Creative Visualisation 'Treasure Map'
 - Recognise the positive qualities you bring to your studies and career plans

Tasks

- Review of last week's session
- 'Great Smoking Mirror' visualisation
- Produce your own Creative Visualisation 'Treasure Map' and empower yourself to achieve your goals
- Identify and appreciate the positive elements of how you interact with the world



Some obstacles to achieving our goals

- There can be many, everyone will have their own obstacles to overcome.
- Typical ones include:
 - Other people
 - How you view yourself
 - Core negative beliefs-these can be deep-seated
- Clear these by letting go of the beliefs which stop you achieving your goals and replacing them with positive ones



Goal identification



- Think of some academic and career goals you wish to achieve....these can be in the short, medium or long term, or all three.



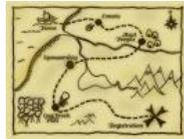
Treasure Map Technique

Creating a Creative Visualisation map is a very powerful process and one that is fun too. The Treasure Map is an actual physical picture of your desired reality. It is a clear, sharp colourful focus of your goals. Your perceived drawing ability is not relevant in this process. The important thing is that it serves as a permanent and positive reminder to you.



Treasure Map Guidelines (1)

- The Treasure map serves the same purpose as the architect's plans for a building.
- Think of one or more areas of your academic/professional life you would like to focus on, ones which you are happy to share with the class.
- The map can be any size - large or small – but for today's session we are using A4 and A3 paper.
- You can make another one at a later stage, perhaps on card, and smaller, so that you can carry it around with you.



Treasure Map Guidelines (2)

- Put yourself in the picture, at the centre. Draw yourself in today but you can put in a happy picture of yourself later on
- Show yourself having achieved your desired goal e.g. travel, job etc.
- Show the scene in its completed form as if it's already been achieved.





Treasure Map Guidelines (3)

- Use lots of colour and drawings, if you are happy to do this. Make sure they are happy and positive images
- You could make a collage or include a Haiku



- You can 'redo' these in your own time if you like
- Include some affirmations as well



Final Group reflection



- At the end of the session, we will sit together and reflect in our minds for a few minutes on our own experience of what we have done and the positive influences we have put out
- Please write down your initial thoughts and feelings, which may change over time, for your reflective journals.

Appendix 4.5

Guided imagery and creative visualisation scenarios used in the research

Before each visualisation, students were given a thorough oral briefing of what was to be said and what they would be asked to imagine. At that stage, before the activity, students also had the opportunity to ask questions relevant to the scenario and to seek reassurance, if necessary.

For each visualisation, the lighting in the room was dimmed and either natural sounds such as waves on a seashore or slow, calming music was played to assist the visualisation process. Students generally sat in a horseshoe shape on seats, their feet on the floor and their hands in a comfortable position, typically on their lap. They were asked to close their eyes for the visualisation process to isolate themselves and to prevent visual interference from other participants.

At the end of the visualisation a series of re-orientation activities was undertaken to ensure that the individual was fully awake and able to recall their experiences

Below is an outline of the various visualisations used during the research

Guided Relaxation

This guided imagery session was generally used as an introduction to the visualisation and guided imagery approach. It required the students to initially close their eyes and to become more conscious of their breathing, taking deep breaths in and out at a pace and intensity which was comfortable for them. That initial process typically took approximately one minute, but could be longer as it is regarded as a productive relaxation technique in itself. The students were then asked to imagine a calming light entering their head and, through progressive verbal cues, this light slowly travelled through the body, bringing with it an intended sense of peace and relaxation. Together with the spoken words, a piece of calming music was played in the background. At several times during the visualisation students were asked to make a mental note of their experiences and feelings. Were they able to imagine or feel the light? Were they able to focus on the directions without the intrusion of other thoughts? Did they experience any other sensations?

After travelling through the head, the light moved over the neck and shoulders and was held there and the students asked initially to concentrate on relaxing the throat and then to release tension in the shoulders. Moving down the arms, stopping briefly at the elbow and wrist joints. Students were asked to think of the light as an oil, calming, soothing and lubricating the joints and points of tension which it picked out in each individual. Reaching the fingertips, students were asked to visualise or imagine that they had taps in their fingers and thumbs. They were asked to feel any tension which had been 'washed down' by the light massing at the end of their fingers and they imagined the taps opening up and the light from the head, shoulders and arms flowing through and out of their fingertips.

This was intended to take the tension out of the body and a clean and clear flow of relaxing light flow through from their head to their fingertips. Students were asked to visualise the tension being transformed itself by the calming light into a relaxing light. The intention was that the perceived negative elements of the tension or stress, which had been ejected from the body, was not imagined as floating around the room to be picked up by the people taking part. On the contrary, it was neutralised.

With the light still travelling through the arms, the spoken imagery continued in a similar manner over the chest and abdomen, concentrating on soothing various organs as the journey moved on. Throughout the piece positive affirmations and encouragement were given

The light, which continued to be likened to a soothing and lubricating oil, moved down the legs, over the knees and ankles and finally out of the feet. The same imagery of taps was used in order to release the tension which had been carried down from the torso and lower body. With the students imagining that light was now travelling through their whole body and out of their hands and feet, they were asked to take note of what they were experiencing or imagining in sight, sound, feeling, taste and smell. After a short while, the students were asked to close the taps in their hands and feet and to feel their own 'glow'. They were asked to imagine a protective bubble begin to appear around themselves, which encased them, around a foot from their physical body. This could have a colour, which they could choose themselves. They visualised their hands touching the inside of the protective bubble, which let 'good' things in and repelled aspects which were harmful. They imagined the physical feelings of touching the bubble which was encasing them, sensing the membrane move forward on touch but not break, like a balloon. Students were reassured as to air supply!

To conclude the session, having created the bubble, the vision faded away, but the reality of the protection lived on. The suggestion was made that they could carry out this relaxation technique independently whenever they wished, provided it was safe and appropriate to do so i.e. not while driving, operating machinery or carrying out an activity which required their concentration. Students could have been left to reflect upon and to continue their experience, but they were gradually reoriented back into the actual learning environment. They were asked to become more aware of the people around them and the surroundings of the room. Students were invited to stretch, move and walk around and talk to each other. It was important that full reorientation was achieved so that students could safely continue with the class and other activities within the day. The visualisation would have typically lasted between fifteen and twenty minutes, although this can be shortened according to the time available.

Music Used : Crystal Healing. Antony Miles. New World Music. NWCD226. Track 1- Crystal Deva

Beach

The author developed this second visualisation from theories of metaphor and sensory perception with particular regard to kinaesthetics, positive affirmation, together with student self-discovery and control. The intention was for the student to gain greater confidence using their individual visualisation or imagination skills and so access inner strength, confidence and support. The purpose was also to give an example of how emotions can be influenced by advertisers through words and sounds to produce a positive feeling for an object. This is analogous to aspects of product branding or personification of an inanimate object. I found that by explicitly linking the activity to a specific aspect of the curriculum, that is to say aspects of marketing communications, the relevance of this 'unusual' activity tended to become more apparent to the students.

This visualisation was preceded by a statement saying that it was an example of how advertisers and marketers could access and work on our emotions. Whilst from a business perspective this tended to be aimed at changing attitudes towards a product, service or aspect of life, with perhaps an ultimate aim of a financial commitment on the part of the viewer or listener, the essence of this visualisation was to help the student identify, explore and develop their own creativity and self-efficacy and to leave the session with something tangible i.e. a pebble, which could be used to access these positive attitudes at a later stage. The student was also asked and given time to think of a friend, trusted individual or animal they would like to spend time with for part of this visualisation. Care is taken to ensure that this individual who is chosen by the student does not upset or otherwise disturb an anticipated pleasant state!

In this visualisation, a number of washed and wet pebbles were laid out on a cloth and the facilitator told a story about the age of the stones, which were between ten and fifteen thousand years old in more or less their present state. In the story, the stones had great wisdom and knowledge, having been in existence and witnessed historical events throughout that period, even experiencing the ice age. Students were asked to reflect on the knowledge that these stones had. The stones were typically eight hundred to one thousand times older than the students themselves. Such figures were made more tangible for the students by asking them to imagine eight hundred students and harnessing their knowledge and capacity. It is suggested that these pebbles had come to the session specifically to seek out their own individual student. Some pebbles were large, some small, some jagged, basically all shapes, sizes, colour and make up, just as we are. Students were invited to come to the table and collect their stone. It was theirs not just for the day but is theirs forever. In turn, they could pass on the stone in the future if they chose to hand on the 'knowledge'.

For this activity, students made sure that they were holding their pebble, although once this is checked at the outset, the 'pebble issue' was not raised until about ten minutes into the visualisation. This guided imagery scenario was based on a deserted

beach just before dawn. This was the student's own beach, one which they had imagined themselves but typically the beach would be one which was known to them. Natural sounds of gentle waves on the shore were playing in the background throughout. After closing their eyes and the preparatory 'calming breathing' phase described earlier, the student was verbally guided through the pre-dawn senses, looking out to sea at the sky and the horizon, feeling the coolness of the air, the surface beneath the feet, taking note of the sound of the waves, the smell of the sea air and the resultant relaxed state. The sky changed colour through a succession of lighter blues as the sun began to break through. The yellow and orange glow of the sun became more apparent. There were changes in air and ground temperature, sights and sounds.

A trusted friend or a positive figure could join the student on this part of the journey if desired. The friend spent a few moments talking with the student in their mind and then left the beach with a promise to meet up again later if they so wished. The student continued walking along the beach and they could touch the water or enter the sea, only if they wished, but there was no need for this. They were asked to notice a glow up ahead among the stones on the beach (to this stage no mention has been made of the pebble) and then asked to sense and realise that it is their pebble which was shining for and calling them. The individuality of this was intensified and the student asked to recognise this instant and clear connection. The student, who was actually holding the stone is guided to imagine or visualise picking up the stone and immediately feel its 'energy' - pulse/heart, warmth or whatever 'energy' - and above all its caring, connection and affinity with the student alone. The stone wanted to pass on its knowledge, support and encouragement – they were going to do great things together. This technique could be particularly strong with any sessional examinations in mind. The stone was the student's friend and this is one friend which could be officially taken into the examination room and be placed before them and which could be questioned (mentally only!) during the exam itself as it sits on the desk. They could also take the pebble to job interviews and it could be used for general support and inspiration in coursework and dissertations.

Time was offered for the student to get to know their new 'friend' within the visualisation, that is to say silence on my part. Students were invited to mentally exchange messages, both ways of course, and to get to know their stone.

After several minutes, students were told that the sun is beginning to set and that they could start to walk back to where they started. They were asked to reflect on what had happened within the activity and to know that they could return to their beach any time they wanted when it was appropriate, as described earlier.

At the end of the visualisation students were allowed to stay silent for however long appears appropriate. This could be for several minutes of reflection or longer if appropriate. I made them more aware of their real-life surroundings to allow them to reorient themselves, as described in the previous section.

This session would typically last around twenty minutes.

CD used (natural sounds): Relax with Nature 1: Ocean Waves at Sunset. NWCD230

Skiing

This visualisation contrasted with the previous sessions in pace and level of direction. This was a session designed to wake up and invigorate. Certainly, it was designed to activate senses and to generate a feeling of exhilaration. Furthermore, whereas 'guided relaxation' and 'beach' had strong guided imagery, that is to say spoken or directed progression of experience within the visualisation, what was encountered in 'skiing' evolved entirely from and was created by the student. After an initial briefing, exploring how the particular senses may be activated – for example, temperature, wind, ice, snow, glare, wetness, breathing, heartbeat, control, poles, muscles, ankles and knees - the participants closed their eyes and prepared their breathing as before. The music was started and the student set off down the hill or mountainside using their imagination.

The track chosen was 'Remind' by 'Orbital' and was a vigorous and powerful piece with a thumping beat. It had a 'hard' or immediate start, which grew in intensity and was fast-moving throughout with a strong and repetitive bass line. Part of the music involved a synthesised and rapid movement up and down scales. The end was also hard, it stops, but there was a gradual reduction in intensity over the last thirty seconds, which was a mirror image of the rising intensity of the beginning of the work. The piece lasted 7'57". In interpreting the music with regard to a skiing situation, the start of 'Remind' equated to a standing still start. The initial growth in intensity was analogous to picking up speed at the start of a run. The bulk of the piece related to high speed skiing with the up and down scalar elements equating to twists and turns on a slope. The end of the piece related to the end of the ski run. As the music gradually reduced in intensity, the visualized end of the run would be in sight. The music concluded with a hard stop, which equated to stopping at the end of the ski-run. It should be borne in mind that musical tastes and style change over time and this track, contemporary when first used, may become regarded as being less appealing as musical tastes change and from a time with which future undergraduate students may have difficulty in connecting.

Music Used: Orbital. Orbital. London Records. EW 808/LC02275. Track 6-Remind.

Great Smoking Mirror

(adapted from Berman & Brown (2000), pp. 111-113)

This visualisation invited students to reflect on their individuality and to 'see' in their mind's eye the person they really are. It used the metaphor of a river to denote the passage of life with small beginnings, twists and turns appearing in the flow and rocks in places in the river. It flowed into the far distance becoming wider and stronger.

The visualisation began in a wood where the student took note of where he or she was, using visual senses to do with the scenery and the brightness of the sun, aural senses hearing any animals and the nearby flowing river, the sense of smell by breathing in the air. The student could also safely touch (in their imagination) any nearby plant life or anything in the surrounding environment. The student walked along a path which ran alongside a river. Turning to the right, from where

the river was flowing, the student saw the river which represented times past. Twists and turns in the river represented growing up and any rocks in the river were a metaphor for obstacles which have been overcome. Looking straight ahead, the student saw the present and to the left as the river widens, that represented the future. After a few moments reflection the student walked to the large wooden door of a cottage, opened it and went inside. He or she turned to the left, walked along a corridor and went into a room which had a mist or a smoky atmosphere inside. The student was reassured that it was safe to go inside and it had a very pleasant smell. Seeing the outline of a mirror frame on the wall, the student made their way to the wall and the mist or smoke began to clear and slowly, looking into the mirror, their 'true' self was revealed. It may have been a picture, or nothing, or a feeling, the fact that an individual's experience is personal was stressed and that there was no right or wrong answer. Some positive aspects or character traits were invited to be shown to the individual looking in the mirror. Students had already been briefed to imagine some academic and personal goals and these were also evoked at this time.

During this phase, two short four line poems were read separately which emphasised personal empowerment, reflection on past success and success in things to come. Students held the positive images and impressions in their mind to transfer to paper in a 'Treasure Map' later in the session.

After a few moments the picture began to fade and the mist or smoke returned and covered the mirror once more. The student made their way out of the house once more following the same route through the door and along the path, noting any changes or feelings which may have changed. The person looked out at the river once again, to the left, to the future and was asked to reflect on the experience, finally returning to the place in the forest where the visualisation started and allowing their imagination to return to the classroom once more. This visualisation typically lasted for approximately fifteen minutes

Music Used: David Nagele. Temple in the Forest. New World Music NWCD312. Track 1-Temple in the Forest

Creative Visualisation 'Treasure Map'

This activity followed the 'Great Smoking Mirror' visualisation in the workshop and was designed to focus on a student's individual goals in academic learning, future employment and personal development. Although not a visualisation *per se* it was based on reflections from the previous week's session of 'Beach' and 'Great Smoking Mirror'. Using guidelines from Gawain (2002:147-151) and developed elsewhere in this Appendix the student created an image of their desired reality. They could use collage or draw themselves having achieved their desired goal. The student chose either white or coloured paper (or both) on which to create their treasure map. Using colour and affirmations, as appropriate, the student individually put an image of himself or herself (typically) at the centre of the A4 paper and developed the strands of achievement from there through drawing, words, collage or a mixture of techniques. There is no set of rules which has to be followed but there are guidelines to help focus thoughts.

The 'treasure' was personal achievement and goals which would be achieved. In reality, they were still to be achieved at the time of producing the treasure map but they were presented as having been achieved and served as a reminder to the student of the direction they were taking and why they were heading that way.

Typical Music used while 'Treasure Map' is compiled

- **Herbie Hancock. *Headhunters*. Columbia. CK65123**
- **John Mayer. *Continuum*. Columbia. COLB27967**
- **Jason Mraz. *Waiting for my rocket to come*. Elektra. ELKA62829**

Place where learning is pleasant and effective

(adapted from Berman & Brown (2000), pp. 14-15)

This visualisation was concerned with creating a personalised positive learning environment for each student. It required the student to imagine the places where learning had been fun and effective in the past and to note the elements of that learning environment so that they might be replicated in the undergraduate's Hall of Residence, house or home.

The imagery started off with the student being asked to let their mind wander and to see what images appeared in their mind's eye when asked to think of a good place for learning. No specific place was suggested in the visualisation but the student was asked to focus on aspects of the study environment which played a particularly positive role in their learning. Lighting, seating, tidiness of room, colours, music and access to natural light were some of the words which were suggested to the student to imagine as positive learning attributes. Multiple positive former learning environments were also possible and these traits allowed to enter and rest in the student's mind and written down after the visualisation.

This visualisation typically lasted for ten minutes. Generally, no music or sounds are used for this visualisation

Graduation

This visualisation was initially an impromptu guided imagery scenario after some students in a class mentioned they did not know what a graduation ceremony was like. It was subsequently developed into a more structured and longer format. The visualisation replicated a typical graduation ceremony but had some details included which are specific to the students' actual University and procedures.

The imagery started with the student being told about the building where the graduation ceremony takes place. Whether the student had been inside the graduation building before is not important. Thinking about possible feelings at graduation was central in this scenario. The student was asked to imagine himself or herself sitting in a large hall or theatre-type building towards the front left of the main hall. It was important for the identifying aspects to be established at an early stage. Unlike some other visualisations where aspects could be introduced in a rather vague form with the student imagining the precise nature, because some aspects of the hall and its environment would be specifically mentioned within the

visualisation, the scene had to be correctly and fully set before the 'action' takes place.

The student was asked to imagine themselves placed several rows from the front of the stage on a comfortable seat and with his or her colleagues from the graduating cohort, arranged in alphabetical order. The students were all robed and the colours described. The stage was lit with staff known to the student already seated on stage together with dignitaries and the vice-chancellor, referred to as 'the person in charge of the University', seated in the centre of the front row. He or she, in real life, was generally unknown to students either by name, sight or position. Their relevance on a practical and day-to-day level to students appeared to be obscure.

The atmosphere of the hall was breathed in with some chatter with student friends seated nearby, awareness of the lights, a lectern with a robed academic and over the student's left shoulder, friends and family who were seen and smiles exchanged. The student was asked to explore the feelings they experience at this stage.

The ceremony got underway and students at the front walked to the right hand side of the platform and were announced individually by the speaker at the lectern. They walked up the steps, shook the hand of the Vice-Chancellor, received a graduation scroll and walked off the other side of the stage, around the outside of the hall and back to their original seat. The ceremony for other students was recounted without much detail or time for reflection as the individual who was experiencing the visualisation was to get an in-depth, personalised and focused set of guided images in due course. The excitement was heightened as the individual saw his or her time to go up on stage approaching with a procession of students in front receiving their qualification. The student took their place below the right hand side of the stage and they heard their name called together with a classification. There was a pause while the student reflected on this and walked up onto the stage, noting the change of temperature with the stage lights, the act of climbing steps and walking across the platform, hearing applause for their achievement and seeing their friends and family at that moment. The individual shook the hand of the Vice-Chancellor, received the graduation scroll and silent time was given for this image and experience to 'sink in'. The student was encouraged to reflect on the work that had been undertaken to have reached that point and the difficulties overcome. The achievement for the individual and the pride of others in the hall was also mentioned for reflection. After a while, the student walked off the left hand side of the stage into the main hall using the aisle to their right, passing their friends and family on the way. Here the student could pause to sense the positive feelings and then return to their seat where further reflection could take place while the ceremony drew to a close. The visualisation concluded with the student meeting up with their friends and family and other graduands where a few moments were spent in a final reflection.

This visualisation typically lasted for fifteen minutes. Generally no music or sounds are used for this visualisation