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# Creative Futures Exchange

Report 3 – Approaches to Creative Industries Pedagogies

## Introduction

This report outlines and reflects on learning and teaching approaches used in creative industries related higher education degree programmes. The “creative industries” is a broad and encompassing umbrella term and, as such, there is considerable diversity in the learning and teaching approaches and spaces that could be included in this report. For example, studio-based learning and teaching associated with art design, music and media; lab-based learning and teaching associated with video games and computing; and classroom-based learning and teaching that relate to aspects of many programmes. In addition to campus-based activities and spaces, there are forms of experiential learning associated with work placements and live briefs.

The meeting point that the Creative Futures Exchange (CFE) project creates between the creative industries, internationalising the curriculum (report 1), and Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) (report 2) provides the specific direction for this report. Whilst giving some coverage to the diversity of learning and teaching approaches, the focus for this report and the workshops is how students can (re)engage with and develop learning from the degree programmes at their university within this new, international learning context. This requires opening up the distinctive possibilities of online learning and recognising that it is not possible or appropriate to try and recreate other learning and teaching approaches common to creative industries related programmes (e.g., use of studio environments; work placements).

This report is structured into four parts. Firstly, some of the definitional complexities and challenges of the “creative industries” are identified. This helps to underpin the project rationale for using thematic workshops linked to overarching issues that can relate to a range of creative industries sectors and education programmes. Secondly, the ever-changing relationship between higher education and the creative industries is considered. Thirdly, a number of topics/themes

and learning and teaching approaches which are specifically relevant for CFE outlined. Fourthly, insights from these sections are brought together into a set of considerations for CFE.

## The (cultural and) creative industries/economy

As the grammatically busy subheading for this section alludes to, there are number of interconnecting and overlapping ways of defining and framing the “creative industries”. The “creative industries” is an umbrella policy term often associated with the 1994 *Creative Nation* report produced by the Australian government Department of Communication and the Arts, and the 1998 *Creative Industries Mapping Documents* produced by the UK Department of Culture, Media and Sport (now Digital, Culture, Media and Sport). These documents hold a significant place in the history and development of the creative industries concept (Gross, 2020). The DCMS mapping documents (1998; 2001) set out thirteen creative industries groupings or segments which have subsequently been revised into nine groupings that consistently feature in reports, infographics and other materials presented by advocacy and sector support organisations. Of most relevance for CFE is the Creative Arts Council in Ghana’s (2018) encompassing definition that includes music, fashion, theatre, architecture, visual arts, and design, and the nine groupings from the Creative Industries Federation in the UK:

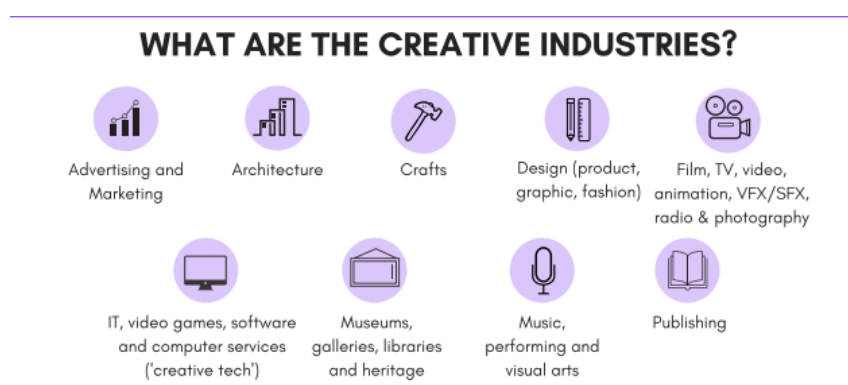


Figure 1: What are the creative industries (Creative Industries Federation, 2019).

There are a number of approaches and interventions which can add nuance to broad-brush mapping exercises. Firstly, there is the need to address **definitional complexities** relating to the creative industries, the cultural industries, and the creative economy. A range of commentators have considered the significance and implications of what these terms mean and how they are used (Banks and O’Connor, 2009; Comunian, Rickmers and Nanetti, 2020; Flew, 2019; Garnham, 2005; Galloway and Dunlop, 2007; Kong, 2020; O’Connor, 2000). Of particular

importance for CFE is De Beukelaer's (2014) argument that issues of classification have implications for "developing" countries and considerable care is needed when employing definitions. Secondly, by exploring the **global specificities** of these definitions and industry structures at international, national, regional scales and in terms of urban and rural contexts (Anwar and Graham, 2022; Bell and Jayne, 2010; Cunningham and Swift, 2019; Hracs, Communian and England, 2021). Thirdly, by exploring the distinctive features of **different industry sectors** and the different policy contexts and experiences of work within and across those sectors (Brook, O'Brien and Taylor, 2020).

These complexities also come through when positioning the creative industries within higher education institutions and the organisation of research, education and enterprise. The creative industries are examined through a range of disciplinary perspectives including: business and economics; geography; media and cultural studies; organisational studies; sociology. Within the CFE this is evident with the multidisciplinary team of researchers from Art, Media and Communications, and Sociology and the diversity of guest facilitators from Geography, Fashion and Marketing, Film and Media. Alongside disciplinary diversity, CFE involves a number of practitioner-academics whose insights are developed through working within a range of contexts (see Dickson, Fowler and Griffiths, 2020, for a general discussion of "pracademics"; see Ashton, 2013a; Myers, 2017; Clews and Clews, 2009; Mateer, 2019 for specific discussions relevant for the creative industries).

An insightful approach for exploring how creative industries relate to higher education learning and teaching is to review topics and areas of coverage addressed in "cultural and creative industries" books that participants might engage with. Hesmondhalgh's *The Cultural Industries* is a well-established resource for researchers with the first edition published in 2003 and the current/fourth edition published in 2019. Chapters in this fourth edition cover: policy and copyright; policy and creative cities; ownership; digital divides; digital networks; working conditions; internationalisation; diversity and social justice. Davies and Sigthorsson's (2013) *Introducing the Creative Industries* covers: ownership, entrepreneurship, financing, business models, and work routines; research and development; marketing; client and commissioning. Whilst only briefly noting two sources, the above gives a broad indication of the topics and themes that could be covered within a broad "creative industries" focused project.

A final note on definitions comes with Flew's (2019) research into creative industries programmes. The absence of an agreed definition is a key finding from Flew's (2019) study

charting the significant growth of creative industries programmes since the 2010s in the UK and Australia through nine interviews with those involved in programme delivery. For some participants in Flew's study, the "creative industries" was used in scare quotes and regarded with scepticism as a marketing or lobbying concept. In particular, Flew (2019, p. 169) notes concerns with the 'often additive and "boosterish" nature of arguments about the creative industries (e.g. they create X number or per cent of jobs, but this tells us little about the types of jobs).' Flew (2019) however goes on to question the extent to which definitional clarity matters with other participants in the study putting the emphasis on the specific themes and content areas rather than dedicated investigation of conceptual definitions. Whilst definitional complexities are significant for exploring the politics and contexts of how the creative industries are named and framed, the necessity for CFE is to move directly to the themes that enable the exchange of experiences and analysis.

## The creative industries and higher education

In the UK, the growth in creative industries programmes (Flew, 2019) is closely connected to the increasing importance of employability within HE (Ashton 2011; 2013b). The emphasis on employability and vocational outcomes connects with changes in the programmes offered by universities and how they are named and marketed (see for example, Pettinger, Forkert and Goffey, 2016) and standing debates around the status and perceived relevance of arts and humanities subjects (see Ashton, Bennett, Bulaitis, and Tomlinson; forthcoming; Baldacchino, 2013). Of particular relevance for CFE are several edited volumes exploring the relationship between the creative industries and higher education (Ashton and Noonan, 2013; Comunian and Gilmore, 2016; Comunian, Hracs and England, 2021a; Hearn, 2020).

In the introduction to *Cultural Work and Higher Education*, Ashton and Noonan (2013, p. 2) argue that the intersections between cultural work and HE are:

[...] enacted at a macro level through government policy interventions and employer-led demands for "industry-ready talent", and at a micro level in the work placements, professional accreditation, critically reflective modules and creative practice simulations which have increasingly become part of the everyday curriculum.

Contributors to *Cultural Work and Higher Education* examine: career transitions; quantitative data from graduate surveys; precious mobility of international students; work-based learning; entrepreneurship; identity; industry practitioners; networks and social capital; critical

multicultural pedagogy; and work placement and gender. In the afterword, Ashton and Noonan highlight themes from the volume and signpost potential agendas to shape higher education, policy-making and employer practice under four headings: critical conversations; theory and practice; methods and methodologies; competition and co-operation. Each of these can be usefully summarised to set out some of the broader questions and interventions relevant for learning and teaching with, for and about the creative industries.

### Critical conversations

This section opens with Matheson's (2006) point concerning the virtuous cycle of growth that connects higher education and the creative industries. Ten years on, the importance of education for the growth and success of the UK creative industries is strongly asserted by industry organisations (Creative Industries Federation, 2017 in the UK and Creative Arts Council, 2018 in Ghana). This narrative of growth and connecting higher education to a range of creative industries has been examined in academic studies in a range of geographical contexts, including Ghana (Bello, 2020) and the UK (Comunian, Faggian and Jewell, 2011).

Ashton and Noonan (2013, p. 255) suggest whilst this relationship of growth is regarded as desirable by government and higher education institutions, it is important to ask, 'how can dialogues about change take place and is there a "safe" way to have these conversations?'. They highlight some of critical issues addressed within *Cultural Work and Higher Education*, including working conditions and pay, inequalities relating to gender and race, and social mobility. Also, the idea of growth which underpins the virtuous cycle and measures of success that drive higher education and the creative industries has come under question (Banks, 2018). Of course, many of the contributors to *Cultural Work and Higher Education* and a much wider range of researchers and educators and activists have been pursuing these questions across a range of academic and public fora. Indeed, academic analysis of inequalities (Brook, O'Brien and Taylor, 2020) and wellbeing (Gross and Musgrave, 2020) are growing in visibility and public prominence. Likewise, initiatives jointly funded by research councils and arts and cultural funding bodies have played a significant role in making research more accessible (Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC); Centre for Cultural Value).

A vital, ongoing point of exploration and reflection flagged under 'critical conversations' is the challenge for researchers and teachers of how to balance students' enthusiasm for their current and future careers with an engagement with some of the 'uncomfortable realities of the industry' (Ashton and Noonan, 2013, p. 256 with reference to Noonan, 2013). This issue has been addressed in several articles reflecting on learning and teaching initiatives. For example, Ashton

(2016), Grant-Smith and McDonald (2017) and Phillipov (2021) explore how issues of working conditions and working for free relating to work placements can be examined in learning and teaching within the context of higher education employability agendas. A recent case study of the ‘Culture and Social Innovation’ module on the MA in Arts, Enterprise and Development at University of Warwick (UK) by Vickery (2019) explains how the module ‘aims to develop student skills appropriate to the creative and cultural industries, while maintaining an emphatic radical dimension in raising the students’ social consciousness on the urban context of their skills development.’ The blending of learning and teaching to prepare students for careers in the cultural and creative industries with the embedded and connected critical investigation of those industries is a compelling challenge for educators and students to explore through CFE.

### Theory and practice

This section in the afterword explores the changing status of vocational programmes within higher education. In brief, there is a notable shift with vocational programmes that were once regarded as a poor relation to theory programmes due to their instrumental and limited focus on training and skills (see for example Durant, 1991 on media education) being lauded for employability, graduate outcomes and economic relevance (Flew, 2019). Ashton and Noonan (2013) emphasize the meeting point, overlap and blurring of ‘theory’ and ‘practice’ and summarize a number of contributions which create conversations, for example, between career aspirations and social justice. The extent to which theoretical perspectives are used to examine and reflect on industry experiences and aspirations is an important dimension of CFE to explore and reflect on.

### Methods and methodologies

Reflections in this section consider the diverse sets of methods that are employed by researchers undertaking statistical and qualitative research studies. The overall emphasis is on combining large-scale, longitudinal studies which explore career pathways over a number of years with small-scale, qualitative studies in which detailed accounts and reflections are generated exploring different circumstances and experiences. This section also notes the possibilities for exploring methods, including students as researchers (see: Jenkins and Healey, 2009 for an overview; Pedagogies for Social Justice, a project in which staff-student partnerships address coloniality and anti-racist practices). Both the focus on lived experiences and students as researchers are approaches which CFE can explore through international exchange.

### Competition and collaboration

Noting ideas of “over-supply” of graduates, Ashton and Noonan (2013) identify the theme of competition, particularly in relation to work placements, and how students might be advantaged or disadvantaged through social capital (Lee’s chapter) and gender (Allen’s chapter). In turn, they highlight co-operation as an important theme raised by contributors in several chapters. Co-operation can include: international cohorts understanding hierarchies and inequalities of global cultural production and developing potential forms of solidarity; professional networks of support; and the continued support for alumni as they navigate under-representation in the cultural workforce (in particular, see Luckman’s chapter). The focus on co-operation, international cohorts, and networks of support all resonate with CFE and, again, indicate how the project can connect with and develop existing creative industries pedagogies.

These four headings and sections provide a starting point for over-arching discussions around the ever-changing relationship between higher education and the creative industries. They highlight points of concern and some of the related initiatives and interventions.

## Creative industries learning and teaching approaches and themes

With the four headings/discussion areas from the previous section as the backdrop, this section addresses more specifically, firstly, learning and teaching approaches and, secondly, themes, that are relevant for CFE.

### Learning and teaching approaches for CFE

In terms of learning and teaching approaches, the first task is to connect creative industries learning and teaching with internationalisation (report 1) and COIL (report 2).

#### *Internationalisation*

Flew (2019, p. 178) concisely addresses the tension in creative industries higher education relating to internationalisation: ‘if the creative industries have claims to being a global discourse, it requires a wider frame of reference than that provided by the predominantly UK-based focus of many of the debates.’ This issue of limited theoretical and conceptual frames of reference and cases studies has come under increasing scrutiny (Alacovska and Gill, 2019; Comunian, Hracs and England, 2021b; De Beukelaer, 2017; Cunningham and Swift, 2019). Flew (2019, p. 178) goes on to note the experience of students from China who can often form a large percentage of cohorts in creative industries higher education programmes in the UK and Australia: ‘students from China [...] could rightly feel that debates internationally about the relationship between culture and economy are not being captured in a curriculum largely framed by experiences in the

Anglophone world.’ Explicit efforts to go beyond Anglophone experiences can be seen in several recent volumes including, most related to this project, Hracs, Communian and England (2021). Moreover, Alacovska and Gill (2019, p. 195) argue for an ‘ex-centric perspective’ on creative labour studies that ‘does not merely aim at multiplying non-West empirical case studies.’ Alacovska and Gill (2019, p. 196) suggest that internationalisation, ‘requires a more critical, inclusive and “cosmopolitan scholarship” that will actively incorporate and develop an “ex-centric’ perspective”, the perspective outside of the Anglo-American orbit, that will challenge mainstream theory-building.’ For CFE, the idea of exchange should extend beyond exchange as the sharing of (more) examples to engage with, using Alacovska and Gill’s (2021, p. 195) terms, ‘destabilizing, decentring and provincializing’ creative industries learning and teaching.

### *COIL*

Detailed examination of the connections between COIL and creative industries learning and teaching is relatively new. Katre’s (2020) evaluation of a project between universities based in the USA and China is particularly relevant for CFE. As explored in the above, the definitional complexities and different disciplinary perspectives can mean programmes have different areas of focus. This is evident when comparing CFE to the project Katre (2020) outlines. In bringing together programmes relating to cultural entrepreneurship, the project Katre (2020) evaluates focuses on ‘creative product development processes.’ CFE is also concerned with how participants can understand the development of creative services, products and experiences. Moreover though, echoing the above point from Ashton and Noonan (2013) on critical conversations, this is done in dialogue with wider range of “critical” perspectives. Further to the differing focus in content and topics, CFE also differs to the project to Katre (2020) outlines because it is not embedded within specific modules. The project Katre (2020) outlines has identical courses that mirror each other across the two participating universities. As report 2 explores, the framework of module structures, credits and assessments are beyond this first iteration of the CFE, but is something to explore in the future.

### Topics and themes for CFE

In terms of topics and themes, the survey of creative industries related introductory books highlights the extensive range of topics that could be covered in workshops. The decision to have four topics and workshops is largely informed by the time available for CFE during an academic year (as noted in report 2, there were significant issues with aligning academic calendars). Four themes were identified as relevant due to their alignment with wider University strategies (University of Southampton, 2021; University of Ghana, 2014) and has having a general “creative industries” framing that can connect with the range of programmes and



students within Winchester School of Art (University of Southampton) and School of Information and Communication (University of Ghana):

:

*1. Civic roles and relationships*

Explores spaces and places of creativity, including why and how creative businesses and practitioners locate in a particular place and create relationships with local communities, government and other businesses.

*2. Sustainable business models and practices*

Explores some of the transformations in how creative business and practitioners can start-up and generate sustainable income.

*3. Platforms and technologies*

Explores the impact of digital platforms and technologies on how creative business and practitioners create new content, products and services and engage with their audiences and consumers.

*4. Equality, diversity and inclusion*

Explores issues of access and representation for creative business and practitioners through an intersectional approach (including race, gender, disability and sexual orientation).

The four themes are overlapping and the workshops should take an iterative approach. These themes/workshop titles are intended as a starting point to open up conversation and can themselves be the focus for investigation and critique (for example, see Pathak, 2021, on moving from the terminology of “equality, diversity and inclusion” to “equity and belonging”).

## Next steps for the Creative Futures Exchange

CFE is a timely contribution that firstly, engages with ongoing concerns around how internationalisation and global perspectives are integrated within and can disrupt creative industries curricula (Alcovska and Gill, 2019; Ashton and Noonan; 2013; Flew, 2019), and secondly, engages with ongoing debates around online teaching (Ross, Bayne and Lamb, 2019).

Reflecting on the above sections of this report and the connections with reports 1 and 2, the following considerations emerged as most important for CFE:

- Themes for the future: Four themes were selected that were broad enough to engage participants from across a range of disciplines and industry sectors. Whilst each workshop has a specific thematic focus, the intention should be to make connections across the workshops and explore how specific issues are embedded within each other. The selection of themes was made with reference to wider academic, activist, industry,

and policy debates relating to the cultural and creative industries and to the strategic priorities of the universities of Ghana and Southampton.

- **Voices to inspire:** CFE's emphasis on exchange means creating ample time and resources for discussion. In turn, having prompt materials is an effective way to focus the discussion. To this end, guest facilitators were invited to create short (5-minute) videos shared in advance and then participate in the workshops. Framing these contributors as facilitators (rather than presenters) and sharing materials in advance helps to promote the workshop as a space for discussion - rather than as a space defined by a one-way speaker to audience flow using presentations and Question and Answer interactions. The pairing of researchers from the two universities is intended to align with the theme of exchange, to help encourage wider engagement from colleagues from the universities, and to broker further connections that might lead to other projects, for example, guest facilitators might develop links to specific modules they are involved with.
- **Technologies to enable:** As an online exchange, the selection and use of platforms for CFE is very important. The features, or affordances, of the learning technologies used needed to promote accessibility and interaction. By using only two platforms (Zoom and Padlet) that are free-to-access and do not require registration, the aim was to reduce barriers to entry as much as possible. In addition, guidance videos will be created and circulated to participants to support their participation.
- **Challenging Hierarchies:** pursuing the importance of exchange, CFE will explore non-hierarchical approaches. This relates to knowledge with invited guests coming in as facilitators and participants rather than experts, and to the range of participants' experiences being welcomed from undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral study positions and industry and academic perspectives.

The ways in which these considerations feed into the workshop planning and activities will be evaluated as part of the Curriculum Resources output.

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