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Author/s:

de Bruin, L;Burnard, P;Davis, S

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1. CONNECTING CREATIVITIES IN THE ARTS

Exploring Diverse Creativities in Arts Practice and Arts-Based Research

INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that the arts and diverse practices of creativity provide powerful platforms for realising the change being called for in classrooms and communities. Research and practice occurring within and at the intersection between the diversity of creativities of contemporary arts education practice and arts-based research provide the means for bridge-building and boundary-crossing work that is required to enable a revisioning of practice in education. This work matters for the arts, as well as other educational learning contexts, addressing the need for radical reform in education.

Contemporary arts practices can offer new ways of knowing, being affected and new intra-actions between bodies. Systems of affect, kinaesthetic economies of relation, established through, or in response to, physical discourses effect pedagogy through intra-action. (Anna Hickey-Moody & Tara Page, 2016, p. 17)

This statement by Hickey-Moody and Page demonstrates how inter-related systems, materials and the relationalities of power, may be constituted, reproduced and remade through arts practices and our openness to change. The changing shape of arts education requires learning and teaching approaches that embody the principle of intra-action which operates between bodies and matter, how we exchange ideas and learn with each other as with the plurality of forms of authoring creativities that nurture adaptable, innovative learners within interconnected, yet diverse global societies.

As the relationship between creativity and the arts becomes more intricately explored, so to do we discover the complex and dynamic ways human intelligence is illuminated by and through arts practice and learning, and the ways the arts promote fluidity, fluency, malleability and transformability of thoughts and actions, inviting creative thought and learning into and through other domains (Harris & de Bruin, 2017).

Much of human experience and knowing is expressed through sensory and emotional forms of knowing. The arts concern themselves with expressive forms, symbol systems and intelligences engaging our visual, musical, gestural and kinesthetic modes – predominant modes of communication and experience in our

increasingly media intensified world. Asserting why arts education and processes maintain a special role to play in creativity education offers windows into the ways creativity fosters learning constructs that maximise inquisitiveness, collaboration, adaptability and complexity of processual knowledge deemed essential for 21st century learners.

The ways learning processes, pedagogies, activities and creativity are interwoven and embedded in learning and teaching are of paramount importance to igniting, fueling and maximising creativities (de Bruin & Harris, 2017). By critically evaluating innovative and dynamic practice and research, this book points to the pedagogical and organisational praxis that promotes creativities, creative cultures, and the diverse creative ecologies that foster and promote it.

Critical discourses in arts education are being effected that offer new creativities, new ways of knowing, and new intra-actions which are fluid not fixed, and that urge us to rethink and revision the way we prepare to practice, to teach, to research those who teach and lead in a world of fast changing specialisms and diversities. However, while creativities research affirms that creativity is an intrinsically pluralised human trait, it often seems to be resolutely trained out of learners through many current education systems and practices dominated by standardisation and teacher-proof approaches to teaching and learning. And yet there are still artists and arts educators and researchers who have found the keys to ignite, enliven, excite, risk-take and foster wonderment and epiphany in their classrooms and learning contexts through locating arts-based creativities as central to learning experiences.

This book argues that creativities in arts practice and arts-based research – as with arts-based learning – are essential to fostering innovation and adaptation, and act as the fulcrum through which imagination rich activity can coalesce with domain specific functional analysis and makes wider learning visible, malleable, and doable. Emerging practices, research, and practice as research, along with arts-based research methods challenge existing localised beliefs and ideals, blurring boundaries, challenging old assumptions and forging new opportunities for innovation that signal a reflexive turn from nation-based approaches and understandings to more globally-networked ones that dynamically transform social, cultural and educational landscapes.

The chapters that feature in this book, canvas key ideas and literature that are threefold. First, they explore, identify and illuminate understandings of particular creativities in the arts including diverse arts-based creativity and creativity models that understand creativity as situated within ecologies and systems approaches to creative teaching and learning. Second, they interrogate local, regional, national, and global challenges for artists working in education sectors and for arts education. Third, they advance arts research around the creative/innovation imperative in relation to diverse agendas including the economic, environmental, personal and spiritual, with the implications for future learning and teaching enabled by the arts.

All of these chapters contribute to the assertion of the need for a new paradigm of multiplicities, from creativity to creativities, from knowledge to knowledges,

from learning to multiplicity of ways to approach 21st century teaching and learning through critically synthesizing, integrating and coalescing information and knowledge transfer from the local to the global, and back to local learning communities, through examples drawn from education, practice and research.

IDENTIFYING AND CONNECTING THE CHALLENGES

Expanding the literature on Creativities in Arts Practice and Arts-based Research, Part 1 chapters adopt disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and meta-level analysis of the ways arts creativities can be fostered in and across the arts disciplines and beyond. For example, in Chapter 2, Mark Selkrig and Christine Bottrell, focus on the central issue of the creation of a space for reflection through which we can consider whether certain creativities and how this can be promoted in and through the visual arts in ways that it is not possible to do in other curriculum areas.

While arts practices are seen, and can offer, new ways of knowing and ways of being, their culturally and socially embodied histories are less understood as facilitative of differently authored intra-actions between material culture of objects and persons, intercultural dialogue and participatory spaces and inclusive journeying. Even the transdisciplinary spaces that we simultaneously inhabit and move away from – what Barad calls the in-between bodily spaces (Barad, 2007) – participate in/with these relationships. Yet, even with the embodied histories which differentiate creativities, such the forms of authorship that underpin the contemporary arts space and place of collective arts practices (see www.klub7.de; www.artberlin.de; www.liquidskyberlin.com) compared to the matter and meaning of and enabled by studio learning in the university art or secondary high school, arts education is not neutral.

In Chapter 3, Megan McPherson focuses on artist-students and their art practices in the ecology of the university studio, envisaging the embodiment of being and becoming artists. The entanglements and intra-actions of theoretical bodies (i.e. the analytical purchase of Elizabeth Grosz and Elizabeth Ellsworth views), and the materiality of place (academia and the real world) reveal how bodies participate in/with the relationships that respond and act differently in creative practice.

While there is strong evidence of systematic research in the field of ‘arts-based research’, much of the research in the area of artist-led arts pedagogies has focused on identification of the characteristics of learning experiences that are thought to be effective in supporting student learning (Thomson et al., 2012; Denmead, 2015). Findings from arts-based research foreground qualities of enjoyment, inclusion, engagement, transformative thinking, deep knowledge (knowing the central, crucial ideas of a topic and establishing complex connections) with deep understanding (of the topic in a systematic way), plus substantive conversation (interactions on the topic among students and with teachers) and agency (Robinson, 2013). Plausible mechanisms for the development of these educationally positive aspects are: (i) increased motivation, (ii) making the abstract concrete, and (iii) the enhancement

of group work. However, the lack of theorisation means that any extrapolation to general claims needs to be treated with care.

This theorisation concern has been addressed in Chapter 4 by Amy Mortimer who employs an Arts Informed Inquiry – involving an aesthetic form which engages with a “plurality of voices” and “multiple meanings”. This is achieved as well as new understandings and creativities research advancement on how to promote further dialogue on the role of creative writing in primary education.

Arts-based research require, and are characterised by, arts-based methodologies, artistic processes, artistic discourses, artistic expression, artistic tools and materials, often with the development of a performance or presentation (a performative outcome). The learning journey is often driven by a creative impulse to the finished product making the processual and procedural aspects of immense importance to the students (Marshall, 2015). While art is the medium for cultural and social transformation, for facilitating dialogue, for participatory, inclusive journeying, exploration, and discovery, in trans- and interdisciplinary spaces (Guyotte et al., 2015), the challenge in doing so is making new discourses come to matter.

In Chapter 5 Robyn Heckenberg using an interdisciplinary lens and an Indigenous standpoint. The discourse opens a dialogue of convergence and common understandings, which brings together Indigenous ways of being and seeing. Using metaphors for connection to cultural values; and star clusters to represent metaphysical aspects of cultural knowledges and cultural creativities, this chapter elaborates on how Indigenous ways of doing (ontologies) have much to contribute in ethical collaborations of creativity and innovation.

Arts-based research situate art at the centre of the learning journey: arts materials and artistic processes enable abstract, personal, and literal dialogues about ideas and the role of arts in life. Arts-based research facilitate the exchange of knowledges, of stories, of histories, from different perspectives, disciplines and contexts and provide an understanding of different artistic learning processes. Projects are often completed with site-specific performances or presentations – ‘spaces’ and modes in which students’ emotions, are integral to the learning (Myers, 2012). Artistic practices are essential aspects of art-based methods.

In Chapter 6 Sarah Jane Moore focuses on developing deep learning outcomes for students. She maps the transformative opportunities present in the sharing of Chamorro and other islander perspectives for educators. She presents collaborative story building as a way to share learning and strengthen knowledge and perspectives. The work of Chamorro activist teacher and learner Kisha Borja-Quichocho-Calvo breathes life into this compelling chapter with yarns from a living and ancient story based culture.

There are several meta-analyses which have consistently found academic benefits for arts participation. However, pooled effect sizes range widely and are not consistent. There are some indications of patterns of effect, such as a higher impact for younger children and for music studies, but these are not consistent. The quality of evaluation designs used by studies of arts participation has been criticised

as insufficiently robust to draw causal inferences in recent reviews (Fleming et al., 2016). This remains a significant challenge.

Autoethnographic studies of artists' pedagogies have generated similar and valuable insights into the conditions or 'platforms' that can be modelled for, and facilitate in, education. Thomson et al. (2012)'s study drew upon eight case studies. They identified the value of sociality and relationships, including valuing, and modelling interactive, collaborative and cooperative ways of working in which individuality features, and where choice and agency are enabled. They noted the creation of a space, physical and symbolic, in which the institutionalising influence of the school can be suspended, and where the absurd, carnivalesque and large-scale ambitions are possible. Cunningham (2015) and Denmead and Hickman's (2014) year-long study of a similar scale drew on the practice of eight community artists. Their study echoed similar points about how artists create conditions for open-ended enquiry across: space, time, material, body, and language.

In Chapter 7 Susan Wright identifies one of the big challenges for creativity-focused work which concerns defining what we mean by creativity, which type of creativity we are referring to, and elaborating on how diverse creativities are identified. She also addresses the crucial and too often dismissed role of epistemology and ontology in creativity and in arts-based practice and research.

What these chapters show as a collection is some of the ways the materiality of contemporary arts practice and arts-based research – one exists in relation to the other – and emerge through intra-actions between people and matter in processing of creating, making, engaging with the arts in significant ways.

CONNECTING THE LOCAL AND THE GLOBAL

The diverse ways arts activism, practice and performance continues to evolve exemplifies the myriad subjectivities and performativities of creative knowledge and actions emergent in arts practice. Creativities embedded within improvisation, composition, intercultural, multi-ethnic and interdisciplinary approaches address histories, traditions, memories, feelings, unspoken imaginaries, and liminal emergences that come into play. Just as musicians engage, respond, challenge, and advance their own and others' dialogue and expression by addressing their personal 'sounding' in music making, so to does the arts-music domain grapple, examine, explore, articulate and reflect on these actions, to better understand and advance the characteristics of these multiple synchronic and dynamic aesthetics of creative musicking amongst wider social contexts.

Part 2 of this book explores creative music making, teaching, interdisciplinarity, intercultural and feminist ecologies, and assessment in music education, investigating the co-dependence of creative thought and actions which makes us human as well as musical.

This section explores how in the shaping and developing of musical creativities and literacies, we are concerned with establishing groundings of self in relation to

others. In understanding and asserting our own histories, knowledge and skills, we engage and reflect – as musically reflective practitioners (Schön, 1983) and commit to our creative acts, we challenge, critique and even dismantle indurated notions of the appropriate and socially responsible as a means of marking new creative outcomes. These research chapters of musical practices contribute further to understandings of the ineludible progression of our creative act, and the grappling with both affordances and encumbrances performers, educators, and practitioners endure in their lives in making music, and facilitating music-making in others.

Against globalised dynamics and homogeneity, glocal perspectives assert a world of localised, fluid borders of practice and transcultural exchanges and interconnectedness that recognises idiosyncrasy, complexity and diversity of knowledge and meaning making (Hannerz, 1990). Localised activities act as sites of synthesis, reconstruction, and metamorphosis acting as points of fusion and union that integrate race, traditions, and genres. Localised music making shapes the dynamics and flow of globalisation, transmitting powerful ways of being and knowing, and asserting new, developing, and often unique music making communities. The glocal can situate how “fortress communities” resist global influence, and identify the flow of ideas and practices from the “periphery” to the “centre” (Hall 1991; Abu-Lughod, 1991). Glocal music making can offer global practices essential infusions and constructions of intercultural music interconnectivity and inclusive, non-racialised transformations of 21st century music and music education.

Investigating creativities in music, music teacher education, and the music industry, these studies navigate diverse collective and individualised circumstances. In Chapter 8, Leon de Bruin investigates a Creative Music Intensive, analysing creative music-making as a social practice that invokes, synthesises, and integrates Korean p’ansori, Australian Indigenous musicians with student instrumentalists and vocalists. Music that brings together affinities of multiculturalism and inter-culturalism organise as fluid mechanisms through which musicians as explorers cross borders and reorganise themselves into fluid, shifting, diverse communities. Improvising bodies coming together establish an intercorporeality of embedded cultures and tomes of knowledge that engage in music making that reinforce difference and rupture contiguities. This chapter captures how inclusive improvised music can allow for the fluid motion of traditions, can recognise multiple worldwide perspectives and afford an experimental and explorative multicultural, multi-ethnic base. As an improvisatory immersion and practice, freedom of expression emerges from finding new meanings outside of imposed conventions, discovering new vocabularies and shared histories, new tools for saying things differently, beyond conventional orthodoxies allowing a fusion of musical horizons to emerge (Gadamer, 1989).

In Chapter 9, Shari Lindblom’s study of primary aged children explores children’s immersion in musical landscapes including Javanese gamelan, Hindustani tabla and West African djembe. Envisioning Sternberg and Lubart’s (1996) confluence theory of creativity, data is articulated through child experiences of storytelling, confidence, motivation, improvisation, group dynamics, individualism, and environmental

affects upon young, musical learners. Positive benefits to creativity displayed through convergent and divergent thinking, fluency, flexibility, originality and problem-solving ability argue that multicultural world music education programs could become an important educational tool in promoting creativities.

In Chapter 10, Fiona King investigates Primary school creativities between mathematics and music are explored, positing the benefits of encouraging a holistic primary school curriculum focus towards creative learning experiences. King exposes the connections between music and mathematics and their inexorable interconnection through form, structures, notation and coding. Discussion of the current debate surrounding STEM/STEAM education and the way music/arts education can facilitate the ability for teaching for creativity and offers consideration of the myriad musical creativities that can enhance mathematics if taught in combination. King offers salient impetus for multi and interdisciplinary connectivity between music, the arts and other domains such as mathematics, and the advancement of more nuanced and sophisticated learning applications through STEAM education.

Martin Fautley's cautionary expose of the recent developments in English Music education is surveyed in Chapter 11. Music curriculum in the UK is outlined through the National curriculum authority via listening, composing, and performing, with direction in allowing teachers to develop and orchestrate holistic learning, teaching, and the attainment and demonstration of knowledge and skills. Fautley offers hard and compelling evidence of current practices informed by Ofsted's compulsion in measuring the progress of student learning over arbitrary and limiting timespans. Fautley discusses the constraints this causes to the core of what music/arts education can nurture and develop in students, and the damage caused upon existing sequential learning outcomes, and indeed its alarming effect on teachers in the UK. This chapter outlines dramatic curricular, pedagogical, educational and cultural value issues imbued within a neoliberalist agenda in governments, schools and audit inspectors that make the misguided conception that creative activity, nor procedural learning does not count as learning.

Sharon Lierse in Chapter 12 investigates the development of an online unit of work with an Australian university, and the transformative impact this had on effectively teaching creativity within an arts education course to pre-service early and primary years arts education undergraduates. The utilization of Participatory Action Research saw a cyclic development of planning, acting, observing, reflecting and re-adjustment. Innovative student feedback through online video, audio collaborate sessions, and emails revealed growing pre-service-teacher conceptualisations of 'art' and heightened confidence when attempting to be creative.

Elizabeth Dobson offers the concept of 'digital audio ecofeminism (DA'EF)' in Chapter 13, describing the ecofeminist priorities of these women's music-making groups, documenting how they enable learning, knowledge and power-sharing/shifting in ways that challenge capitalism across a range of music technology and production industries. Dobson shares insights into five DA'EF musical communities

and offers suggestions on generating knowledge that benefits grass roots communities, women and girls and especially women of colour. Dobson explores what inspires women to create, organize and develop feminist digital audio communities, investigating how they foster learning and creativities. This chapter advocates the benefit of incubation and development of safer spaces as powerful opportunities for personal and collective growth, networking and knowledge sharing. Dobson offers how practices are infused with diverse creativities that facilitate particular kinds of power and capacity to change our world through the arts in society.

CONNECTING CREATIVITIES WITH ARTS PRACTICE

As the point has already been made, creativities are lived and embodied, they are not abstract, cognitive processes that are disconnected from lives, living, action and also activism. Embodied learning recognises that learning is not a disconnected mental act, but is maximised through approaches, which synthesise sensory experience, action, thinking, feeling and interacting with others (Stolz, 2015). Learning and working through the Arts is always a physical experience of using bodies in action and interactions that occur through real time and space. The understanding revealed through the field of ‘embodied cognition’ demonstrates what artists and creatives have long known, and how cognitive functioning and perception is grounded in action and experience (Keifer & Trumpp, 2012; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999) and the ‘thinking and creating’ body is not only a vessel in which the mind is situated. Embodied creativities and pedagogies therefore “joins body and mind in a physical and mental act of knowledge construction” (Nguyen & Larson, 2015).

The particular qualities of art as experience were described by Dewey in 1934 who argued that through art creation processes individuals may have ‘an’ experience, which achieves a sense of consummation and significance, a unity and integration. The diverse characteristics and components of such experience and reflection goes beyond the sum of all the components to become something different, transformed or ‘transfigured’:

In art as an experience, actuality and possibility or ideality, the new and the old, objective material and personal response, the individual and the universal, surface and depth, sense and meaning, are integrated in an experience in which they are all transfigured from the significance that belongs to them when isolated in reflection. (Dewey, 1934, p. 309)

Through the experience of art and creativities materials, concepts, but also lives and ‘things’ within the outer and inner worlds may be transformed. The arts provide expressive forms and realisations that embody aesthetic and imaginative impulses and once realised these can have powerful impacts within the world.

In Part 3 some of the ways these experiences and actions may play out have been explored through artforms including drama and dance, but also through visual arts and multidisciplinary collaboration.

In Chapter 14 Davis the important of Indigenous approaches to creativity with a particular focus on ‘kinship’ and connectedness. Two case studies drawn from the artforms of drama and theatre explore ways that important stories may be told, including those concerned with imagined futures drawing from the most ancient of traditions. With a particular focus on Australian Indigenous arts, people, cultures, approaches to knowing, creating and learning are shared that affirm the value of these forms of embodied learning.

Chapter 15 features Cook’s work on creative approaches in Dance and Dance pedagogical content knowledge, situated within a wider discussion on Creative education for pre-service teachers. Drawing on his teaching practice within initial teacher education, he explores the benefits and challenges of creative approaches to analysing Dance. He argues that such an approach provides for making and responding to become an inter-twined artistic process promoting creativity in Dance education and reuniting creativity with arts education.

Chapter 16 also focuses on the experiences of educators. This time O’Grady investigates the ways early career drama teachers utilise, adapt, challenge, absorb and assimilate ‘big discourses’ of drama and creativity in the process of developing their identities and ideologies as new drama teachers. A key focus of this study is the ways in which five early career drama teachers, use language to talk about the work they do as teachers and the effect of their ideological predispositions on the way they recruit and teach creative pedagogy. The chapter also aims to provide an insight into how these early career drama teachers believe that drama pedagogy when taught and transacted in particular and specific ways, allows their students to know the world and to reveal their humanity.

Chapter 17 features the diverse creativities-in-arts practice shared by Burnard, Dragonic, Cook and Jasilek, demonstrating the power of arts practice for deepening human connection to nature and the living earth, inspiring activism. They present three activist enquiry practices which embody: (i) intercultural creativity through an activist choreographic practice involving a Greenlandic and Scandinavian dance company; (ii) transdisciplinary creativity through an arts-based environmental education practice inspired by an activist sculpture involving a primary school in the UK; and (iii) artistic creativity inspired by an artist activist residency practice in a Higher Education setting in the UK. Each practice features artist-researcher collaborations and arts as activism.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Throughout the chapters of this book, the authors articulate the multiplicity of ways creative skills and capacities may be cultivated across educational contexts, exploring applications within practice, pedagogy and curriculum. It draws and builds theory and research practices, offering educators and artists alike innovative practice and action that cognitively, behaviorally and socio-culturally activates creativities in learning, and how educators can shape designerly ways of knowing

and synthesising knowledge that interconnects domains and further extends the means for understanding and cultivating creativities in education. It reflects upon the potential for this ‘creative moment’ in education that we hope will contribute to enabling visions for action within turbulent global times.

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Leon R. de Bruin
School of Education
RMIT University
Melbourne, Australia

Pamela Burnard
Faculty of Education
University of Cambridge
Cambridge, UK

Susan Davis
School of Education and the Arts
Central Queensland University
Australia