

Editorial: 'On Creativity'

In this inaugural issue of *Cornucopia* it seems fitting that some time should be spent revealing its' incipience and the inspiration behind it. Year on year, both myself and Wendy are overwhelmed by the level of engagement by students of education; given that many of them are undertaking a professional qualification and so therefore must spend many hard-working days in the classroom, it is a testament to their diligence and commitment, that they should remain enthusiastic and lithe of mind to further commit to scholarly endeavour of the quality found in this journal. In this commendation lies the first inspiration: That such endeavours of excellence deserve celebration. Indeed, when the process began the sheer volume of potential pieces for inclusion was bountiful, hence the extremely apposite choice of title.

The second inspiration was equally student led, yet more a response to a seemingly perennial request. Simply put, it was often felt that students, as authors, lacked confidence in writing as they did not know what an outstanding essay looked like. It is hoped therefore that the submissions within *Cornucopia* will provide an insight into how an exemplary essay might be constructed, and the degree of refinement that is necessary for each level of assessed work at the undergraduate or postgraduate stages of academic writing. Needless to say, no one assignment or essay ever looks, reads, or constructs arguments in the same way as another. But as exemplars or models of writing, those included here (we as editors at least feel) are worthy of note, in that they: explore; create argument; reflect; or critically analyse; in a manner which may illuminate these skills for the author who wishes to further hone their craft. It is also worth mentioning at this point, how this particular inspiration led naturally to the organization of the journal itself. It followed that if we wished to model excellence in academic writing that we should do so at the varying levels that students will invariably work through and towards: Starting at level 4 with a first year undergraduate submission, then a level 5 with a second year undergraduate's essay; a level 6, third year's work and finally a level 7 postgraduate submission. In the interest of future collaborations, and sharing good practice, both academically and professionally, we also felt that it was too good an opportunity to miss not to celebrate the scholarly work of education students from other institutions and so also decided upon inviting an honorary submission to be included each issue. This time we have the pleasure of including the work of Emily Elsworth from Leeds Trinity University.

Finally, the decision to make each issue of the journal monothematic also demands a brief explication. This would perhaps be best done through the apocryphal epiphany of another colleague within the faculty (whose passionate reasoning – it should be noted – is symptomatic of all involved at Chester). The person in question was deliberating upon the topic of creativity, how crucial it was to teaching and learning, indeed how it could be considered the lynchpin of pedagogy, when the realisation that time, space, and the affordance of making mistakes must actually be hard sought after, if creativity was ever to flourish in what seemed to be an ever-increasing technocratic working environment. That if one did not take the stance of a

self-prescribed 'activist' in the promotion of those attributes that allow an environment of creativity, then we would never have it: In a momentary exclamation of creativity, the portmanteau noun 'creactivist' was coined.

In further discussions with Wendy, I wished to bring this notion to the page, and we even considered naming the journal 'creactivist', but it only served to engender more discussions such as the arguably equal importance of reflection in the development of a professional; or criticality: 'The Critical Creactivist' perhaps? But if we were to focus upon all such attributes at once there lay a concern that readers might become distracted by them or spend time unravelling them for the sake of comprehension, when in actual fact we hoped for the reader to merely revel in the elegance or sophistication of how a theme or topic was dealt with. Therefore a monothematic journal would allow us to focus each issue upon an attribute deemed widely as important to pedagogy, while highlighting the academic worthiness of each submission in line with our aforementioned inspirations. Within these submissions, the reader will find submissions that deal with creative pedagogies, those subjects often thought to be creative (an idea which is debatably erroneous), through to creativity itself.

In deciding upon creativity as the journal's first theme, the first limitation of the enterprise has though also been discovered. If this issue was truly cornucopic it would be a different forum or medium entirely: it would allow submissions of equally brilliant quality yet not in the form any essay, equal veneration: Submissions imbued with the creativity we wish to celebrate such as reflective journals as wikis, interactive resources with orally presented justifications... and much, much more. It is this rich, fruitful assessment palette that indeed encourages creative responses. Alas, it is beyond the scope of this humble beginning but certainly an inspiring motivation for the future.

Simon Poole – Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education and Children's Services and Programme Leader for the Masters in Creative Practice in Education