

# **Creative Methods: problematics for inquiry and pedagogy in health and social care**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This article provides an overview of initial discussions emerging from the Creative Methods Network, an informal organisation concerned with the use of the creative arts in research, teaching and practice in health and social care. Key issues are presented and contextualised with regard to the current conditions in which health and social care research and education is practised. Our own discussions have come to question the seeming dominance of governance within professional education programmes in which there is a primary focus on developing technical skill and capacity. Such governance often extends itself to the measurement of the implementation of these technical skills and this is set against concerns about the absence of creativity and the humanities in the educational programmes of caring for human beings. Consequently, the article reflects a view that the use of the creative arts and humanities in the education of the human caring professions is being eroded away in favour of technical-rational reasoning. It is argued that this then presents an important problem manifested in an emphasis on established and quantifiable knowledge transfer which inhibits other forms of knowledge generation. For the purposes of this discussion we have viewed this problem through the lenses offered by Foucault and Bourdieu.

## **Introduction**

Drawing on the work of the Creative Methods Network and a series of reflective conversations, this article is in essence a discussion on the nature of the way in which knowledge production appears to be directed in the early part of the twenty-first century. As part of this it explores some of the dominant principles around current ideologies of epistemology and teaching and learning, which could be argued to be overly pragmatic and inherently risk averse. These ideologies exert power in such a way that education can be seen as little more than instrumentalist exposure to learning only what is required to be learnt. As such, philosophies of education and what it means to be an educationalist – for example, as being catalysts of transformation – are under threat. The question of where transformative practices and reflexive methodologies now sit in relation to knowledge production is an important one. At the heart of this question are matters of power, of ethics, and of aesthetic in the production of knowledge. Although Foucault may be criticised for a lack of specificity in his work, he does provide a clear frame for a discussion of power, ethics, and aesthetic – and it is through these lenses that the problematics of creative methods for inquiry and pedagogy in health and social care are examined.

## **The Creative Methods Network**

The Creative Methods Network (<http://www.creativemethodsnetwork.leeds.ac.uk>) was formed in 2006, emerging from the Homerton International Mixed Methods Conferences (<http://www.mixedmethods.leeds.ac.uk/>). It was originally comprised of a small group of academics from Anglia Ruskin University, Homerton School of Health Studies, and University Campus Suffolk. Initially set up to explore and extend what could be construed as mixed methodology, the primary aim of the network has been to examine the role of the creative arts in health and social care as a vehicle for research. Very quickly this aim broadened to encompass the use of creative methods in professional education and practice. Alongside this, the network also hoped to bring together like-minded colleagues with a view to forming a critical mass to more effectively promote alternative approaches to research and inquiry in health and social care. This has seemed increasingly important in response to a dominating technical-rational culture that upholds the 'what works' agenda (Fish, 1998; Davies et al, 2000). Evidence-based practice is, of course, of value; however, our persistent question is 'what evidence?' It is our view that the evidence has to take account of the 'messiness' and

complexity of experience, knowledge and meaning as lived by practitioners, learners and service users.

Between May 2006 and June 2007 the network hosted three symposia. These were led by keynote speakers but also offered participants the opportunity for 'hands-on' engagement with a variety of creative practices, including: creative/fictive writing; working with imagery and metaphor; drama and narrative. The events were developed around three respective themes: transforming experience through creativity; representation and analysis; and performing data. Out of these materialised the critical, reflective discussions reported and developed here, through which two predominant discourses are traced. The first analysis focuses on matters such as the application and ethics of creative methodologies in the production of research or in the search for knowledge and understanding. This analysis includes a questioning of the legitimacy of creative reproductions and representations for the purposes of research or inquiry. The second analysis centres on reflexivity as questions arise about the researcher-practitioner as a generator of knowledge, the researcher-practitioner as a subject of inquiry, and the researcher-practitioner as a learner and ultimately transmitter of knowledge. Although some of this analysis may seem familiar, the discussion and ideas below are critical for us as they occupy a still highly contested ground in the disciplines and practices of health and social care.

### **The Discourses Uncovered**

Perhaps not surprisingly, part of our endeavour has turned out to be a re-examination of the very basic practices of how data are collected, and the ways in which meaning can be generated and also reproduced. We have been concerned not to journey into some 'methodological drift' away from the practice of practical and applied research and into a world of theory, so it has been important to establish some theoretical discussion to the work undertaken. This is of primary importance. Eisner (2008) suggests that it is not sufficient for the outcome of arts-based research to be purely aesthetic but says that it must also have utility, purposefulness and applied value. But who is to judge what is purposeful or of value, and on whose account? Although rhetorically of central concern in the worlds of governance and evidence-based practice, judgements of utility remain conceptually slippery, as we witness when science is unravelled in the face of political expediency. This is where the power relations within knowledge production perhaps become more clearly evident and where the work of Foucault can help us think through some of the implications.

In discussing issues of power and knowledge production in his essays 'Truth and Power' and 'Governmentality' (Foucault, 2000a), he suggests that as a science, psychiatry is 'dubious' due to a low epistemological profile and that it is linked to a range of institutions, economic requirements, and political issues of social regulation (Foucault, 2000a, p. 111). It could be argued that circumstance of educational research is not fundamentally different to this. Bogdan & Biklen (2009) illustrate this well in relation to the early sociological research in education in terms of its quantification and the later recognition of school as a social world in which human beings exist. This recognition formed the need for a more qualitative engagement, but a question of the most valid type of inquiry arose, leading to conflicts within the educational research community. The problem for educational research ultimately, coming back to Foucault's observation of a low epistemological profile in psychiatry, is in the apparent lack of practical application of findings from ethnographic, phenomenological, or symbolic interactionist studies. They may uncover previously unseen or unconsidered aspects of educational life, but often, as Bogdan & Biklen (2009) discuss, are not perceived to add to the practical 'science' of teaching. It is its lack of a solid and singular epistemological foundation that constantly leaves education at the behest of both accidental and purposeful power relations.

Second to this is Foucault's (2000a) notion that the nature of government is to reduce the state to a certain number of functions, such as the development of productive forces and the reproduction of relations of production. This creates a paradox, in that such mechanisms render its processes liable both to attack and to a need to jostle for privileged positions to be occupied. Forms of governance are cascaded down through educational and professional regulation of provision where a position of privilege is gained through instrumentalism and

conformity. This is of course tied in with economic and political benefit to institutions who 'play the game of truth' (Foucault, 1998a, p. 460).

Given the fate of science – and arguably educational research – how is the purpose or value of creative methods for inquiry and pedagogy in health and social care to be understood? In its purist form – for example, as expressed through the construct of the randomised control trial – the evidence-based practice (EBP) culture is likely to struggle with the validity of images, symbols, and three-dimensional objects. Such evidence and representation is highly problematic in its explicit rendering of the potentially refutable; a refutability, although equally present, less apparent in the sciences. This problem is anxiety-provoking for it forces a move from a reductionist mode of thinking into one of a future of limitless expansion, and therefore of difficult and perhaps unanswerable questions. To create 'new knowledge' from visual, fictional, or performative data presents us with a challenge in how we express its intellectual value and usefulness because its potential for interpretation is vast, depending on the viewer or listener's interpretation of it. Whilst this effectively places what is uncovered in Donald Schon's (1991) 'swampy lowlands', where he asks of the professional practitioner, 'shall he descend to the swamp where he can engage in the most important and challenging problems if he is willing to forsake technical rigor?' (p. 42), it also facilitates debate and dialogue from which questions and ways of seeing the world from different perspectives emerge. Infinite ladders rising out of the swamp provide ways into new landscapes to be discovered. The challenge is in how we intellectually extract ourselves from its sticky mess and the way in which new thinking and ideas are formed.

This is not unproblematic because, as Foucault reminds us, 'discursive practices' – which might be the ladder out of the swamp – carry their own peculiarities. He notes:

Previous research had made it possible to recognize a peculiar level among all those which enable one to analyze systems of thought – that of discursive practices. There one finds a type of systematicity which is neither logical nor linguistic. Discursive practices are characterised by the demarcation of a field of objects, by the definition of a legitimate perspective for a subject of knowledge, by the setting of norms for elaborating concepts and theories. Hence each of them presupposes a play of prescriptions that govern exclusions and selections. (Foucault, 2000b, p. 11)

This commentary is followed by a complex discussion on the nature of discursive practices that begins to uncover the difference between 'will to knowledge' and 'will to truth'. The problem that Foucault (1998b) lays out is one of how something is considered as a possible object of knowledge through a particular set of subjectivations. In other words, considerations of truth exist only within the subjective conditions in which the object has been considered as having potential for knowledge. In the 'game of truth', if one changes the subjective conditions applied to the object, then one changes the potential for knowledge within it. The issue for Foucault (1998a), then, has not been one of truth or verification or how it is constituted, but has concerned the various 'truth games' formed through which the subject becomes an object of knowledge (McIntosh, 2010). While Foucault was concerned with 'transformation' on a grand scale, research and education are transformative as well, for both aim to make the 'invisible' 'visible'.

In these analyses, the search for truth, if that is what we are about, is certainly competitive as well as a possibly psychologically fragile enterprise, perhaps located on the edge of an imminent madness. Faubion (1998) suggests this might be the case in his introduction to Foucault's work on aesthetics. Here he describes the quest for experiential and expressive frontiers in literature as a journey of discovery that leads beyond referentiality, imitation, and 'reason' – indeed, to the edges of 'coherence and interpretability just short of madness' (p. xviii). Faubion argues that such works have been consigned to a neutral space in preference for what can be read and interpreted as literal. It may be that expressive and experiential forms of knowledge gained through aesthesis, as explored below, find themselves in a similarly neutral space at the perceived boundary of coherence and interpretability: A form of madness perhaps, but no more so than a reliance on the often dubious science of technical-rationalism.

Foucault's concerns with the validity and ethics of knowledge production, with regard to both process and purposefulness, can be traced through the discourses that emerged from the Creative Methods symposia. As noted, in effect two discourses seem to arise out of the collective deliberations – an ethical discourse, and a reflexive discourse.

The ethical discourse has three main aspects in terms of:

- *Methodology*: a consideration of the relationship, or tension, between creative methods approaches and more positivistic approaches to inquiry; responding to and taking account of the 'what works' agenda; remembering that methodology is a matter of concept, not merely the practical application of a model and tool kit;
- *Data representation*: scoping the challenges in securing the authenticity of data, and of representing that data in non-standard forms;
- *Validity*: managing the challenges of subjectivity as a researcher to ensure transparency in the research processes of data collection and analysis. This also applies to pedagogy – the validity of sharing accepted knowledge in ways which extend into new understanding for learners through transparent and reflexive thinking.

The reflexive discourse has two main aspects:

- *Making the 'invisible' 'visible'*: noticing where a creative methods approach makes explicit again things that very often seem to end up hidden in the usual research process; this has the potential to occur where a more rigorous case has to be made for 'alternative' methods of data collection, analysis and representation.
- *Amplification of the reflexive experience*: occurring as a consequence of the highly interpretive and subjective nature of a creative methods approach, and the public defence that has to be made of its legitimacy, validity and authenticity.

Whilst these discourses initially arose out of an exploration as to how an inquiry-focused use of creative arts could generate new knowledge in health and social care, we are aware that similar conceptual concerns are of relevance within education. From our perspective this is most particularly so where we are concerned with the education of professionals.

### **The Ethical Discourse**

It is not necessary to travel far to come across examples of technical-rationalism in our professional and everyday lives which are not dissimilar to the prescriptive governance to which Foucault (2000a) alludes. In health and social care there is a growing body of literature around evidence-based practice (Stewart et al, 1995; McSherry et al, 2002; Dawes et al, 2005). Generally the aim of evidence-based practice has been to secure the most appropriate services or interventions to meet the needs of the greatest number of people in the majority of circumstances. A critique of this approach might be that phenomena have been reduced to auditable and generalised data through which practice is applied uniformly for purposes of cost-efficiency. Equally it might be seen to undermine professional autonomy and the exercise of professional judgement – even though such judgements should always take account of available evidence. It is the apparent bureaucracy and lack of contextualisation that is a cause for concern. It is a similar concern with bureaucratisation of the human experience that exercises Kemmis (2008), who notes:

In a situation of substantially declining resources for higher education, costs are being cut to the point where teaching and learning, and university research, are under threat in terms of the values traditionally associated with teaching and research. Their work is also increasingly juridified – brought under the control of university-wide policies and administrative procedures aimed at achieving greater control and uniformity of work across departments, faculties and universities. (p. 102)

This is clearly pertinent to teaching methods in terms of engagement in practice and participation in learning. If these assertions and observations are held to have any validity then there are also implications for qualitative research and non-clinical care. Approaches to these may be increasingly required to become uniform in their conduct, and such movements

would see a pervasive depersonalisation of knowledge and care as a result. Such an outcome would be at the least ironic in the face of a current political rhetoric that emphasises the 'personalisation agenda' in both education and social care provision.

### **Ethical Discourse: the research case**

The realms of health, social care and education are the largest domains of public activity, driven and led by a plurality of competing agendas, ideologies and practice wisdoms. Yet qualitative inquiry and knowledge have often laboured to establish legitimacy or usefulness in documenting, representing and articulating lived experiences in this arena. The authoritative account of business and practice within these sectors is dominated by a positivist-quantitative frame of inquiry and analysis (e.g. audit; customer satisfaction surveys; measurement of outputs against performance targets, or in response to interventions). In this context the adoption of something as apparently 'loose' as creative arts-based methods becomes even more challenging. Where qualitative research itself has been variously described by critics as 'journalistic', 'only exploratory', 'entirely personal' and 'atheoretical' (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), creative arts-based methods stretch the boundaries of methodological limits even further.

A number of authors have begun to explore what happens when qualitative inquiry practices are extended to include methodological applications of the creative arts and humanities in research (see Denzin & Lincoln, 2003) and for the purposes of teaching and learning. Some, such as Higgs et al (2007), are developing creative methodologies which forge more radical territories in research and practice development through the formation of a paradigm of *critical creativity*. Whatever form the creative inquiry takes – e.g. photo-ethnography (Freire & Shor, 1987; Pink, 2009); memory-mapping (Warner, 2004); psychogeography (Sebald, 2002, Steadman & Self, 2007); documentary-drama (Wajda, in Falkowska, 1996); mental imagery (Thomas, 1999); reflective writing (Winter et al, 1999); metaphor (McIntosh, forthcoming); dance and movement (Bagley & Cancienne, 2002); or books such as *Brick Lane* (Ali, 2003) and *Akenfield* (Blythe, 1999) as examples – a focus is essential. Central to this focus is the thorny issue of the practical use of creativity. The practical use and methodological underpinning of the creative medium itself cannot be divorced from each other, for one provides the means to accessing data, whilst the other provides the theoretical foundation to *that particular* human inquiry. There is no doubt that we need to be cognisant of the 'what works' (Davies et al, 2000) agenda, for over the last 10-15 years it has been of significant in the knowledge-creation industry. However, there are dangers in privileging one way of knowing and practising over another, as Barnacle (see below, 2001) reminds us. This is illustrated in the following example taken from McIntosh (2010, p. 22) on the tension between evidence-based practice and practice-based evidence:

A woman in her late forties is the unfortunate victim of early onset dementia. She is prescribed a particular drug that will maintain her current status but due to her mental state she refuses to take it. Through the work of her care staff she eventually begins to take the drug and her current status is maintained.

At first glance an evidence-based approach has been applied: a diagnosis made, a drug prescribed and an outcome measured. What has not been measured is *how* the care team facilitated the taking of the drug so that a positive outcome was achieved. The ways in which the team worked with the woman are invisible, unmeasured, and in auditable terms, irrelevant – but may be key to the success of the whole enterprise, without which the potential efficacy of the drug is immaterial. The balance of deployed knowledge is, for Barnacle (2001), of real importance, for as he writes through his discussion of Husserl:

For Husserl, then, it was not that the objectivising, theorising and measuring practices of science should be abandoned, but rather, be re-situated in, and informed by, the world of perception and interest, valuation and action that constitutes our everyday experience of the world.

In our discussion, it is suggested that we neither abandon the use of the 'science' as one form of evidence, nor overlook the importance of human interaction through a diverse range of methods as another. It is a question of making the invisible visible.

The example above is a simple illustration of an inquiry gap that could be explored from both the care team's and the woman's perspective alongside the cognitive and behavioural evidence of the drug treatment. Any further or deeper investigation would require the formulation of methods that take these various angles into account. As we have made clear, methodologically using creativity for its own sake is not an option. An aspect of creativity's validity is in its capacity to counterbalance the privileging of evidence-based practice and, arguably, creative approaches achieve this through the 'long-burn' development of practice-based evidence. In other words, the ways in which our practices as forms of artistry are thought of is in ways in which we, as Della Fish (1998) suggests, think more like an artist.

### **Ethical Discourse: the education case**

It is possible that the same case as that described above could be applied to education of whatever type – compulsory, further, or higher education – for the issue of numeric power of results is the current defining measurement. This is despite the implicit knowledge in all of us, including those in power, that education provides us with the capacity to learn throughout life and at different stages in our life. This again is different to the policy-driven phenomenon of 'lifelong learning', currently a form of learning applied to adults specifically for the labour market to enhance economic capital rather than as a philosophy of learning through the whole lifetime to create better social capital (Alheit, 2009.) Much of our learning is not recognised or is invisible at its point of engagement. What we learn or how we learn is not always immediately measurable, but may suddenly make sense and be of use in later life.

These issues require the acceptance of a differing human inquiry process – indeed, perhaps more than just acceptance: For what is really required in the educational process is recognition that there are alternative truths and manifestations of them as to what constitutes an experience or evidence. In this we return to the 'what works' question, but from a different perspective. The question of what happened in the basic case of prescribed drug therapy for dementia described above becomes much more complex and involves an intellectualising of the event, the behaviours exhibited, the words used, the empathising, the cajoling, the reasoning, and the contextualising of our self in the process. All of these factors are inclusive of complex psychological interactions and apply across the pedagogic spectrum. The ways in which they can be understood can vary, leading to a range of possible interpretations which should be seen not as its weakness, but as its strength, for they lead us into ever deeper human inquiry and reflexive forms of questioning. Applying creative arts and humanities methodologies as an educational technology can enhance the qualitative repertoire with which we are already familiar by offering or suggesting new or alternative frames through which educators can conduct inquiry or interpret and disseminate 'findings' in collaboration with learners. Using the creative arts opens up the possibility of being a creative educator.

### **Ethical Discourse: the case of 'real' data**

Within the ethical discourse, the representation of the data forms a second problem. The culture of health and social care has come to rely upon text. Oral narrative is transformed into text, and what is written becomes real. Voices are transient; the literal written word is concrete. Images are 'pleasant' on the eye, or disturbing in some visceral or psychological way, but within the disciplines of health and social care are not commonly understood as forms of authoritative communication in the way that written words or numbers are. There is no room, for instance, for fiction or floral language in reports written by health and social care practitioners, let alone coherent narratives of a patient's journey. So many case files are a collection of seemingly unconnected 'facts'. In ordinary life theatre can be thought of as engaging but not generally understood as empirical. And yet forms of representation such as ethno-drama or forum theatre (Boal, 1992) are formed out of empirical experiences and activities. The authenticity of the 'data' presented in these forms in the current 'knowledge' culture is questionable in that it is not objective or removed from human transcendence. In fact, its opposition is its strength; it is *meant* to be transcendent. Its power and value lies in its capacity for transcendence.

Arguably, the current healthcare culture in particular suggests that the immediacy of representation available through creative arts-based methods cannot be defined as research

or something learned. These approaches fall outside the more traditional forms of research and pre-existing knowledge which the healthcare services appear reliant on for reasons of instrumentalism. The science of research - its technical foundations; its clever use of jargon, unknowable even to those who have been the subject of its scrutiny; all the typology that classifies it as 'research' – is not evident in arts-based work, despite the way we feel when we receive it – its power, its discomfort, its resonance.

Yet these experiences are part of our literal world. They form part of the system of the literal world, but we experience them differently as symbols or signifiers within it - for instance, in the way that metaphors exist to express experiences or understandings within literal speech and text systems (McIntosh, 2009). As Freire (1977) suggests, to 'exist humanly is to name the world, to change it. Once named, the world in its turn reappears to the "namers" as a problem and requires of them a new "naming". Men are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection' (p. 61).

From this emerges a question as to who or what decides whether the learning process or the 'data' is/are authentic. From this other questions follow, such as what are the qualities that decide its authenticity and reliability? The issue may be in the term 'data' itself, for it represents scientifically collected and scientifically analysed phenomena; something we can grasp as literal, or as a fact. Such data are a commodity which the commissioners and consumers of learning increasingly demand. The commissioning of research in health and social care – because of its dependency on rational information at a strategic level – does not easily conceive of 'data' or learning as being something which can be artistically created or performed. This becomes apparent where even the validity or the perceived usefulness/purpose of narrative data is called to account in the 'Game of Truth' (Foucault, 1998a). As such, the validity of ethno-drama or forum theatre which can manifest itself as a form of research or as a learning activity is unfortunately further diluted when viewed from a reductionist perspective, for it can be viewed by commissioners as neither pragmatic nor of instrumental value.

Should authenticity of data and learning be considered in different ways? It is the words that are used in poetry (Sparkes, 2002, Ch. 6) or the images in paintings or films that provide the framework for representations which create an authentic understanding. These are unique authenticities that exist within both individual and collective consciousness which are no less real than those found through experiments or randomised trials, though they are experienced or viewed through a very different lens.

The answer to 'who decides?' is, in its most simple sense, the audience. By audience we refer to those who are both the commissioners and the receivers of the research and the learning itself, for they have a specification for the work conducted and the way it is presented. This may be further compounded by the audience that they themselves are responsible to – in effect, the gatekeepers to what is acceptable to that particular discipline (Czikszenmihalyi, 1997), which includes the educators and the researchers themselves.

### **Ethical Discourse: the case of validity**

The final problem identified in the ethical discourse is that of validity. In the case of creative methods, we refer equally to validity in the construction of the research approach, its data collection, its analysis and, as discussed earlier, its representation as research. For the purposes of learning and teaching, validity is concerned equally with the rigour in which knowledge is constructed and presented and with the way in which it can be delivered through creative arts-based teaching technologies. Validity in this sense is to do with the potential for opening up differing forms of knowledge and understanding.

Concern for validity is amplified in creative-methods research where the subjectivities of the researcher (as inquirer, teacher, subject, participant or learner) are made explicit and are clearly to the fore in the frame of inquiry, methods of inquiry and subsequent interpretation and learning. Effectively the subjectivity of the researcher is more evidently transparent in a creative-methods approach than may be the case in other types of research. In this it is similar to action research with its fundamental grounding in reflection. The inherent and

required subjectivity within the approach can be addressed in at least two ways: Either the research process is left to find its own level and remains raw, experienced uniquely by those who interact with it; or it is constructed systematically, drawing upon existing theory whilst keeping its subjective essence. In this way it balances theoretical underpinning with innovative design so that it is able to be generalised to existing knowledge. Arguably the validity of a creative-methods approach can be upheld where it aligns itself with, or makes clear its relationship – be that oppositional or consensual – with the world of established theory, order and rigour. On the other hand, more iconoclastic practitioners may view such an alignment as a giving way to the forces of managerialism and audit in the health and social care field.

The issues of validity, if they exist, can be overcome by, for example, transposing one set of validity terminology with another in the way that Stephen Kemmis (1995) and Kemmis & McTaggart (1986) do in their work on action research. In this sense, as we have indicated above, validity is constructed through the methodology, the conditions of validity accurately conformed to through the research process engaged in. This does not necessarily have to be contained only in approaches to research. The conditions of validity can also be applied to education through conforming to the teaching and learning process implemented at the point of delivery.

### **The Reflexive Discourse**

One of the areas that we have found in engaging in creative processes within teaching and research is, first, the making explicit things that seemingly get hidden in the usual research and learning processes. In order to 'validate' the creative process, as already noted, researchers or teachers have to work harder in their thinking to establish the basis for this approach and how it is presented to others (see Czikszenmihalyi, 1997, for example). It forces an intellectual engagement with the subject and how it can be presented accessibly to its audience. In essence, it causes researchers/practitioners to critically engage personally in the process, opening both *themselves* and the process *itself* to critical appraisal. A by-product of this process is the uncovering of practices that otherwise occur subconsciously in the research process, such as those described by Percy (2007) in his identification of counterpoints and resonance occurring in the research process. If observed carefully there are nuances and ways of doing that are unique to the practice of that research or a particular methodology employed for learning and teaching. They may or may not be connected to thinking, for they may be distinctly behavioural or subconscious, but they will exist, and if the process is explored critically, they will be uncovered.

This 'uncovering' can apply equally to the researcher/practitioner and to those participating in the research or learning experience. In one sense it cannot be disassociated from the ethical discourse, for it has the potential to set people along a track of individuation, as Carl Jung (2005) would define it, a journey of discovery of self. But perhaps it is necessary, for human inquiry is inevitably fraught with questions of how knowledge is generated and how it affects others and ourselves.

Then there is the reflexive experience gained through engaging in the process. Though this is arrived at through reflection, the reflexive properties are distinctly different, for we arrive at our findings through uncovering what we know of our self from being outside what we know and inside what we don't. Being reflexive forces an exploration of self as an outsider whilst being inside phenomena with which we are unfamiliar. This may relate to concepts such as gender, culture, or age; or to those as complex as cognition, perception, phenomena, or language. Reflexivity asks us to consider the reality of what we see because such 'realities' are limited to our own socialisations and understandings, and because of this, findings can only be presented on the basis of one's reflexive understanding. This degree of reflexivity and its potential for transformative insight (that can be shared with others) is dependent on us knowing about our self. The point is not only to reproduce an image of our self, it is to see beyond and inside the reflection – to discover what lies beneath and how this influences what is observed and reported in the research.



Reflexivity is also a key feature of the writing of Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1990): he examines the effect of one's internalised structures and of one's position, and looks at how these may distort objectivity and prejudice. Whilst this is of absolute importance to researchers and scientists involved in *any form* of inquiry, it is also of real importance to the governance and practice of education. In pursuing activities of reductionism in order to present education as a science or to counter possible refutation of the way it is delivered, there is a risk of becoming detached from the social world, mistaking, as Bourdieu (1990) suggests, 'the things of logic for the logic of things' (p. 61). It is equally 'dubious' a science as a result.

Reflexivity, then, has the potential to subvert the 'game of truth' by disrupting its rules – by asking challenging questions of technologies that promote 'teaching' at the expense of 'learning', and methods by which 'teaching' can be assessed and 'learning' cannot. Arguably, the mechanisms to ensure 'quality' of education employed by institutions are iterative, but not necessarily reflexive. The same issue is at stake in the use of creativity for inquiry, for methods of inquiry are gate-kept in the way in which Czikszentmihalyi (1997) describes.

A creative process can augment the reflexive experience, for its level of engagement forces a critical view of self to take place. Returning to the work of Carl Jung (2005) and his approach to archetypal psychology, the development of images and of stories is crucial to the uncovering of self, of ways to create knowing, and of the pathway to individuation. The use of theatre, film and music can be seen as further reflexive developments that can be added to the repertoire of Jung's images and stories. For those participating as researchers or teachers there is equally the potential for an 'archetype' of sorts to emerge – not one of Jungian proportions, but one of realisation of an aspect of the soul, as James Hillman (1992) would describe - in other words, an uncovering of part of our psyche previously not known to us.

If this is the case then there are a number of things of which we need to be mindful: first, we have to regard what we find insightfully, as an anthropologist should – that is, understand that the findings can only be viewed from the individual's perspective based on their own upbringing, culture, exposure to others, etc. (Reinharz, 1997). The way that such findings are interpreted can only be from this view. Second, as Sartre (1996) notes, any reflection is different to that reflected on. The moment we choose to reflect, that which is reflected upon alters, for we do not recall or re-imagine in an objective-linear form. Each time, that which is reflected upon changes. It is its nature to do so.

When these ways of being collide – the anthropological, the phenomenological, and matters of social construction – they have the power to open the view of the self ever wider, for they raise questions as to why what is found should be the case. The things that move us - film, music, stories, dance, theatre, poetry, images - when presented as non-fictional creative replications of data, can act on these ways of being. Facilitating these internal discourses, which in turn can move into the domain of external discourse, opens up a further dialogue of perspective, questioning, and understanding. In a way they are a by-product of the data but are also enmeshed in the data because once the data are engaged in, the two live out both a parallel and a combined existence. This is possible because the mind is able to both step back from itself whilst at the same time entering into something else (Sartre, 1996), forming, as Daniel Dennett (2001) suggests, an echo chamber of voices out of which one will be dominant. Recognising this occurrence is the reflexive experience. Sharing it with others opens up its possibilities.

## Summary

This article has attempted to outline a number of considerations which have emerged out of presentations, discussion, and deliberation undertaken in the course of the three Creative Methods Network symposia. It forms an early position paper on our thinking about the application, appreciation, and utility of the creative arts and humanities in health and social care research and education. The thinking has emerged messily from the Creative Methods events and is a representation of personal interpretations and concerns rather than a reflection of the collective voice of the network.

The ethical and reflexive discourses we have outlined are fundamentally connected. We have only tried to sift out some discrete differences which ease an understanding of the contributions that both of these concepts make to a consideration of a creative-methods approach for inquiry and pedagogy. The next stage, of course, concerns where this leaves us in terms of the future of such approaches, both in their methodological construction, and as applied research and teaching and learning methods.

Regarding education specifically, the issues for us are born out of a frustration with an apparent trend to marginalise the creative arts and humanities within professional education in health and social care. The increasing reliance on factual information derived, for example, from systematic literature reviews and other evidence-based sources leaves little room for alternative knowledges and ways of knowing. The worthwhileness of alternative or broader knowledges also comes under more critical scrutiny on programmes of study where participants themselves adopt largely instrumentalist strategies to their completion. This is perhaps understandable in an arena where the terms of engagement for all parties – students, academics and future employers alike – are ever more market-driven. Although not approaching the debate from quite this standpoint, Bourdieu & Passeron (2000) may best summarise the functionality of the educational endeavour described here and its underlying power relations in their assertion that:

Pedagogic Action is, objectively, symbolic violence first insofar as the power relations between the groups or classes making up social formation are the basis of the arbitrary power which is the precondition for the establishment of a relation of pedagogic communication, i.e. for the imposition and inculcation of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary mode of imposition and inculcation (education). (p. 6)

Although we offer it for discussion, in its most acceptable form the analysis above illuminates a functional pragmatism at the core of professional education. In its least acceptable form it leaves the vulnerable recipients of care and social policy directives in the hands of a techno-rationalist enterprise that cannot hear or see in any real way the human story with which it should be concerned, and to which it should respond.

From our perspective, an understanding of and engagement with the visceral human experience is critical to effective professional education. This education itself is, and needs to be informed by, credible research. Here we have tried to make a case that 'creative methods' inquiry is a valid methodology and can bring an extra empathic or transcendent dimension to our theoretical comprehension and ultimate praxis.

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