

GLAD-HE 2024 Post-Conference Publication

"Gathering Pace"

Editorial



"To gather means to come together, assemble or accumulate (often from scattered sources), to collect, to harvest, to increase in force or to summon up."

Group for Learning in Art and Design (GLAD HE)

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Drawing on the success of the 2023 Symposium "Gathering Ourselves" and the subsequent post publication (*Innovative practice in higher education*) we invite you to join us to explore a rich new learning and teaching space packed with innovation, digital enablement and novelty. Together we have harnessed the seeds within our creative practices, shared experiences of lockdown learning and combined innovative pedagogies to drive forward new perspectives. The creative sector is "Gathering Pace".

The Group for Learning in Art and Design in Higher Education (GLAD-HE) annual conference was held from April 10-12 2024, hosted by Ulster University, Belfast. This gathering brought together educators, researchers, and practitioners from across higher education to discuss and share innovative practices and challenges specific to the creative sector. The conference was framed around four key challenges ...

1. Climate Emergency: Exploring how educational institutions can address and integrate climate action into their curricula.
2. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: Discussing strategies to promote inclusivity and diversity within higher education.
3. Artificial Intelligence: Examining the impact of AI on education and how it can be leveraged to enhance learning experiences.
4. Evolving Student Experience: Sharing insights on adapting pedagogies to meet the changing needs and expectations of students.

Professor Susan Orr, Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Equalities at De Montfort University opened with a thought-provoking keynote outlining the value of studio tutors within creative education and facilitated a conversation on future directions in student creativity and learning. The studio, sticky campus and messy spaces for joyful learning are themes that are connected throughout our publication. The keynote preceded five parallel strands of 39 presentations, workshops and panel discussions

in addition to many posters. This was in the presence of the sensory aroma from a beautiful display of herbs and spices adding a sense of wellbeing and psychological safety connecting us to the moment, enabling us to pause and think with clarity. There was over 130 creatives present to share, connect and water the fertile ground of our learning. Through critical and supportive nurturing, we basked in the glory of creative future facing pedagogy in the beautiful city of Belfast. This publication presents a vibrant collection with floral overtones organically connecting the conference environment with the themes explored. A glorious combination of artistry and mastery as our seeds gathered pace, ideas grew, were harvested and displayed with pride representing springs finest bloom.

We present six interconnected pedagogical stems which scaffold this year's creative sector growth. These are... playful learning, inclusive learning, connected learning, relational learning, digital learning and studio-based learning.

Our first bloom is **playful learning** we draw on the works of Ashton and Brown; and Wales, to bring the joyful experience to the forefront of learning. Here we demonstrate value and pride of achievement drawing out cross themes from the studio culture, messy spaces and creative narrative Alessandrini; MacLeod-Iredale; Steele; and Power, Thomson and Whitnall. Ashton and Brown explore play and joyful learning through what they describe as a curious pedagogy within the context of global challenges. Their approach embedded the UN Sustainable Development Goals providing a framework to initiate inspiring workshops to ignite creativity. Within this environment there is a surprisingly distinct move away from digital into the physical space "Curiosity Incubator". This physical oasis provides a messy space to enable collaboration through play. Wales, builds on these solid foundations. She presents a conceptual experimental approach, which evolved the process of fashion pattern making building on the lived experience and prior knowledge of those that engaged. She discovers through this practice that most participants developed a deeper understanding of the subject matter through learning by doing. In addition, communication skills improved through a flipped use of the technical and academic team developed deep learning. This work enabled a vibrant learning community within

the studio to emerge through experiential learning, providing a more playful, explorative experience to knowledge development.

Vibrant novel approaches continue within The University of Salford's creation of their learning and teaching enhancement centre (LTEC). Here Power, Thomson and Whitnall present a rich visual narrative which joins learning through play with academic practice. This is achieved through exploring narrative within in different mediums to communicate, develop and enhance learning and teaching. Other examples of playfulness are woven through many contributions in this special edition for example, Alessandrini used specially designed matchboxes containing blank sketches to create an intentionally playful pedagogical approach. This was designed to illustrate the intrinsic value inherent in mind-body practices as accessible pathways to enhanced creativity and cognitive performance. Furthermore, MacLeod-Iredale focused on play through co-institutional games jams designed to enrich the learner experience, and Steele draws out the improvised madness of the joyful studio aligning to the wackiness of balls in bingo.

The second bloom in our floral bouquet is **inclusive learning**, this brings examples of self-organised activity to redistribute epistemological power, building deeper collaborations with people and places within and beyond the boundaries of traditional learning (Schlim and Britton; Cox and Paul; Bhagotra; Alessandrini; and Wales). Initially, social justice through open access education is explored by Schlim and Britton. Their Autonomous syllabus showcased various approaches to redistributing epistemological power within learning. This was achieved through opening curriculum online, enabling anyone with an internet connection to access the course. Thus, not only breaking down barriers in the HE sectors but in society at large. This was expanded into sub-threads to enable people and place, care and curiosity to be woven into an intricate tapestry to empower learning. Building on the empowerment theme, Cox and Paul share the narrative of New Wave. This creative agency at the University of the West of England was established to drive equity in arts professional practice to underpin the B3 metrics which compare outcomes of different demographic groups of students. This work presents positive interventions to support students with multiple

intersectionality of protected characteristics. It is founded on the principles of trust and respect. It enables students to develop confidence to navigate through closed networks, communicate professionally and expand reflectivity; thus, enabling fair opportunity for students who are less socially connected. Bhagotra, in contrast captures the silence voice through their audio podcast initiative. This work combines virtual and physical spaces, providing meaning to the unspoken and undocumented silences. It enables the problematic of silence to be explored through collaboration and community providing a unique inclusive learning lived experience.

Other approaches are presented as central features of our floral display. Sinek's golden circle emphasizes the purpose of teaching; presented by Alessandrini as the rose, adding depth and meaning to pedagogical practice and learning. She presents a compelling argument for reimagining creative education through combining insights from neuroscience, psychology, and educational theory. This provides a more integrated, intentional, and holistic learning experience. Combining the idea and the intention with yoga principles and breathing was found to impact profoundly on the feeling of living in the present and fostered pleasure and joy within the pedagogical path. Roles are merged along this road, for example Wales changed a typical western approach to pattern construction to enable a more holistic approach. Students leverage their prior knowledge and life experiences to inform the construction of artifacts based on empirical knowledge. This approach encourages students to take on the role of expert, with the academic/technical team providing the supportive scaffolding. Evidence shows that this results in a more holistic inclusive approach to knowledge construction.

Our third stem provides the evergreen which enriches learning through **community and collaborative learning** (Power, Thomson and Whitnall; Schlim and Britton; Hoeritzauer; Ashton and Brown; Bhagotra; Connolly and Smith; and Ashton and Brown). The University of Salford (Power, Thomson and Whitnall) presents community within the third space. The newly formed learning and teaching centre shares how it established a creative community to support academic practice. The centre is grounded in the concept of the authentic practitioner, leading the academic

community, by creating a brave new approach to authentic, innovative, inclusive, digital enablement to enhance the scholarship, practice within teaching and learning. Power, Thomson and Whitnall presents LTEC's journey through the lens of visual artistry, purposeful narrative and authentic voice to create a powerful bold bright entity to connect and enhance learning and teaching within and beyond the university.

Other's (Schlim and Britton) invest in new modes of learning to make curriculum accessible through collaborating with the local neighbourhood providing an enriching sustainable civic model to learning. People and place local to the university's physical environment were enabled, flipping the power balance of learning through collaborations with libraries, practitioner, community groups and local businesses to explore the wider learning eco systems which culminated in an archive for learning demonstrating care, curiosity and inclusive approached. Design thinking whilst threaded through many of the outputs in this special edition is firmly embedded in Hoeritzauer's contribution. This work uses a five-phase approach to foster creative problem solving to enhance inclusive, dynamic teaching. Another approach to collaborative problem solving is presented through Ashton and Brown challenge led approach, bringing students together to conceptualise global challenges providing unconventional and seemingly infeasible solutions.

Bhagotra contribution captures an education audio podcast initiative that spans community-oriented learning, collaborative learning and embodied pedagogy. It connects students and staff to co-created artifacts in relation to subject specific skills, wellbeing and academic practice within the context of arts education. The work creates a sense of connect within on-line disembodied spaces with collective, sonic and live forms of pedagogy within the virtual and physical. This work was found to enhance digital skills within the learning environment. Other sub themes emerged from the work of Connolly and Smith (studio manifesto) and also Ashton and Brown (curious pedagogy), creating community through collaborative working in studio or other spaces creates identity through a sense of togetherness.

The fourth floral delicacy details a collection of papers and poster connecting **relational learning pedagogies**. These are designed to enhance psychological safety within our learning spaces. Whitaker; Cox and Paul embed somatic pedagogies to enhance wellbeing within creative art education. Others Ashton and Brown; Hogan, Creighton and Hanratty, bridge the divide between mind and body, embodied practices offer a pathway to more inclusive, reflective, and innovative design education. The care classroom studio provides a community of practice to promote belonging and psychological safety. Whitaker uses relational pedagogies to enhance student wellbeing through opening conversations relating to trauma which can impair the student's ability to fully engage. Her poster identifies tensions between the university capacity to meet student needs and the student adapting to the standardization of learning environment. Powerful narratives of lived experience are brought to the forefront of the learning experience through a collaborative outlook to personalised learning. Thus, building communities of trust to enable deep and sustained learning expressed through the different mediums of creative arts. Cox and Paul continue with this theme, building a sense of belonging through breaking down societal, sector, institutional and personal barriers within professional development. Thus, increasing psychological safety to empower those with multiple intersections of protected characteristics.

This theme cumulates with Alessandrini's, and Hogan, Creighton and Hanratty papers which use somatic pedagogies to underpins the requirement for holistic approaches aligning body and soul. Alessandrini work combine mindfulness, yogic principles, and somatic practices to serve as a powerful tool to enhance wellbeing in creative arts. Through sensory experiences such as visual detoxification and mindful breathing, she increases cognitive presence and student engagement thus, promoting inclusion by design. In contrast Hogan, Creighton and Hanratty brought somatic experiences into studio practice through interactive workshops which are intended to bypass cognition and enhance embodiment. This work uses four core transition points to solve wicked challenges. The workshops enable learners to explore their inner experience to articulate their experiences in visual and verbal form via body mapping, automatic writing and discussion. This approach was found to nurture inner wellbeing through

focussing on the sensitivity, depth and ethical awareness in relation to the creative scenario challenge.

Our bouquet would not be complete without **digital learning**, this is the area that has had the most profound impact on education within the last decade. Lewis; Bugliolo and West; and MacLeod-Iredale bring AI and digital enablement to the forefront of learning using multi-model approaches. Lewis, from the University of Sunderland's illustration case study, presents a multi-model approach to enable students to utilise design knowledge and skills, such as composition, colour theory, and perspective drawing. His work found that the utilisation of AI automation for some tasks (ideation and 3D model creation) enabled students to broaden the scope of their projects and prepared them better for the commercial sector (who have already embedded much of the new technology as standard practice). This work raised important questions such as, the dilemmas of tutors keeping pace with the speed of technological change and latest software's available in the commercial sector. Bugliolo and West also used a mixed method approach to explore AI and digital technologies but within the rapidly growing area of games and animation. Their work recognised the transformative nature of AI whilst recognising and advocating the advocacy of human agency as the central pillar to creative thinking. Their approach was three-prong: creative enhancement, ethical awareness and industry relevance. It recognises that transformation happens at the interface of awareness, integration and collaboration which at best can bridge the gap between education and the commercial sector. MacLeod-Iredale continues with the gaming thread, he presents an example of embedding the live experience through co-creation within game making. This work is presented in the stages of ideation and multi cycles of game making and play testing. He captures success through observations and photographic evidence, whilst early days in terms of analysis the work provided a valuable source of reflection on the value of this mode of delivery.

Our final ribbon binds our creative floristry together, learning through the theme of **studio-based learning**. Here we explore space and place through several lenses, placing the studio as central to the holistic art experience Connolly and Smith;

Mckie; Ashton and Brown; and Steele. In this paper Connolly and Smith explore the art studio in relation to its perceived pedagogic value. This participatory workshop was held at the 2025 GLAD conference, the key theme was the "Studio Manifesto" which aligned beautifully to Orr's keynote. The workshop explored the creation of messy space to learn through play and exploration as a community, to enhance a sticky experience through togetherness. The authors defined the pedagogic studio to be creative, comfortable, ethical, safe, inclusive, generous and considered to empower and ignite passion and joyful learning. Ashton and Brown continued with the concept of messy spaces but within the context of challenge led learning. Their Curiosity Incubator reinforced the value of the physical presence to learning. In person experience was drawn out as essential to supporting engaging and inspiring pedagogies.

Moving from place into the space, Mckie presents a reflective narrative from the academic development perspective. We of course know that reflective practice within the context of arts education is deeply rooted. Mckie brings a new perspective to ponder practices, processes and identities within this space. The discoveries from this work suggest that within creative arts, academics are inherently reflective in their teaching through the lens of personal identities as dual practitioners but recognises that this might be at the expense of pedagogic constructs. This work surfaces the uneasy relationship of creative arts disciplines with organisational policy and procedure and encourages dialogue within institutional processes and systems, by promoting a teacher reflectivity which utilizes socio-cultural, relationship-based contexts. Our final poster of this special edition reflects a participant perspective of transitioning a residential arts experience into an immersive online experience. Steele identify a tension between online V's traditional creative education. This work identified five motivations for learning within each environment to ground an online pedagogical approach. They conclude that whilst digital enablement was key, the studio was recognised as the fundamental pedagogy for communities and practice providing an oasis of place, space and people.

Together the seven papers and nine posters present a visual bouquet of how the creative sector has gathered pace and grown. Our collection clearly illustrates that the seeds planted at "Gathering Ourselves" in 2023 (synthesized in the GLAD Special Edition 2024) have been nurtured to prompt growth and vibrant blooms across six key themes to support the innovation and development of academic practice within creative arts. The work presented in this special edition demonstrates far reaching benefits across the creative sector but has applications which could span many discipline boundaries within education and beyond.

We will leave you with a quote from Alex Clegg "the arts are not a frill, but a fundamental part of education that nurtures creativity, critical thinking, and emotional well-being". Amongst the messy crazy bingo balls of the studio there is an oasis of tranquillity within arts education that is not surpassed. It is this visual delight combined with the aromatic scent of the Belfast Bouquet that we present in this special edition. We hope you enjoy our narrative as we are "gathering pace" and continue to grow.

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The editors would like to thank all the contributors to this special edition for their dedication to disseminating their scholarship. We also are grateful to those who contributed to supporting the reviewing process: Danielle Barrios-O'Neill (Royal College of Arts), Natalie Brown (Nottingham Trent University), Ivan Garcia (University of Salford), Jenny Holt (Manchester Metropolitan University), Mandy Jandrell (Falmouth University), Jessica Longmore (University of Staffordshire), Philip Kennedy

(National College of Arts, Dublin), Catherine Smith (University of the Arts, London), and James Ward (Morley College London).

GLAD, established in 1988, has a rich history rooted in fostering discussion, debate, and innovation in learning and teaching within higher education for the creative sector. The group is dedicated to promoting the sharing of best practices to enhance the student experience. This special edition post-conference publication features practitioner-led studies from the 2024 GLAD Conference, "Gathering Pace". Following the symposium, Jess Power, Louise O'Boyle, and Davina Whitnall hosted a writing retreat to support presenters in developing their work into papers or posters, contributing valuable knowledge related to art and design practice and the transformative nature of creative disciplines. The selected practitioner narratives in this publication showcase a diverse range of evidence-informed approaches, deeply grounded in practice-based scholarly work. This collection of papers and posters builds on previous special editions, extending pedagogical approaches and reflective narratives for future practitioners within creative arts and beyond.

This special edition is arranged into six interconnected pedagogies which scaffold the pedagogies for the creative industries. These are playful learning, inclusive learning, connected learning, relational learning, digital learning and studio-based learning. The value of creativity and free thinking is the nutrient within the soil on which our seeds have gathered pace, together we present sixteen individual outputs as an interconnected collection of artifacts, unified by shared values. Looking forward, the creative education sector must continue to explore frameworks that embrace free thinking pedagogies that align body and soul.

Thank you,

The Editors x