

## **Creativity in the Primary Curriculum**

This day seminar on *Creativity in the Primary Curriculum* was held at The Open University centre in Camden Town, London on 19<sup>th</sup> June . It was organised by Professor Teresa Cremin (The Open University) and Kerry Chappell (University of Exeter), with earlier contributions from Professor Anna Craft. The day was also supported by the BERA Creativity SIG which Teresa coordinates with Pam Burnard (University of Cambridge.) 71 people attended including international and national speakers, teachers and head teachers, researchers, PhD students and a number of independent consultants all of whom travelled from afar to join in the debates and listen to the keynotes.

Following welcomes from Professor Teresa Cremin and Dr Paul Latham, Professor Keith Sawyer from the University of North Carolina commenced with a keynote on How to Foster Creativity in the Primary Curriculum. Scoping a wide frame Professor Sawyer set out the challenges to shaping a Creative Curriculum and focused in particular on group creativity and the key elements of a creative classroom, including collaboration, conversation and flow. Drawing on his own work he also highlighted teaching as an improvisational act and reminded delegates of the need for structure and improvisation –a finely tuned balance. Professor Sawyer also set out what he saw as the four challenges for teachers in establishing active, creative and collaborative teaching and learning.

Dr Kerry Chappell from the University of Exeter, England and Jo Trowsdale from the University of Warwick then led a session on the tensions and possibilities of creatively combining the arts and sciences in developing STEAM education in the upper primary years. They drew on two projects. The CREAT-IT project at University of Exeter which is developing and supporting teacher skills in science education by integrating creative, cultural disciplines and social media tools in science courses, engaging students to participate in collaborative, project and case study based activities. And the Imagineerium which is project developed by a partnership of artists, engineers, educators and the University of Warwick. This engages children in authentic cultural and engineering production processes. The former presentation offered a rich examination of the literature underpinning the CREAT-IT work on creative pedagogies and the latter offered a rich instantiation of such practice with fabulous visuals of the Imagineerium work.

After an excellent lunch and much engaged networking, Dr Vlad Petra Glaveanu from Aalborg University, Denmark, offered an alternative yet richly complementary view of creativity. His more conceptual argument foregrounded the key role of difference, multiple perspectives, and reflective practices for creative expression in the case of both teachers and children. He drew on examples from educational experiences from across the world, including Denmark and Colombia, to argue that we need to develop pedagogies that are not only creative, but critical and capable of reflecting on their own construction and application and the way they promote or reduce participation, diversity, and creativity within and outside the classroom.

There followed small group discussions on aspects such as ‘pedagogy’, research’ and curriculum consequences’ centred on key connecting questions and delegates’ own experience/expertise. The day concluded with a very lively and focused plenary with the panel responding to statements and questions from the groups. Key themes across the day were identified including recognition of collaboration, group creativity, the significance of difference and cross curricular teaching and learning and the need for a more coherent professional understanding of the key elements of creative pedagogies.

Professor Teresa Cremin (OU)