

Title: **Creativity as catalyst for change**

Presenters: **Louise Naylor and Jan Sellers**
University of Kent

Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Understand how creativity can be used as a catalyst for change, using case studies from Creative Campus that demonstrate ways of:
 1. Engaging students as partners
 2. Promoting experiential learning
 3. Supporting creative professional development
- Appreciate the impact, and barriers, of using creativity as a catalyst for change
- Consider the transferability of the concept to their own context

Session Outline

Launched as a Change Academy initiative in 2008, Kent's Creative Campus project has been running for five years and has produced transformational change at all levels within the University. Inspired by work originating from the University of Alabama, the project has embedded creativity in University-wide strategies and policies and provided new opportunities for student and staff development (Jackson et al, 2006; Tepper, 2004). Starting with limited resources, collaborations have thrived through 'unlikely partnerships' across academic disciplines (Coon and Donovan, 2007), with professional services and external practitioners delivering a wide variety of arts, cultural and environmental activities that have enriched the cultural landscape at Kent. Students have engaged through the curriculum or internships to create novel learning and social spaces on campus, and gained new practical as well as academic skills. This includes fully realised architectural projects; outdoor teaching and learning space such as the Canterbury Labyrinth, woodland classrooms and trails; with student publications ranging from bus posters to arts catalogues. In turn, projects have attracted attention and funding from internal and external stakeholders for collaborative projects that have supported professional development of staff and promoted wider community engagement. For example, the award winning arts-led collaboration across 13 HEIs that delivered a dynamic programme of cultural events and artworks in response to London 2012 (Podium Awards).

We plan to share the background, context and stories that have shaped this project since its inception. Barriers to creativity have included a lack of communication between the disciplines, difficulties in coordinating opportunities across stakeholders, and insufficient

recognition or celebration of creativity. Despite the emerging obsession in HE with metrics and outcomes, Creative Campus has sustained its image as a source of energy and ideas by bringing fresh perspectives on implementing change at Kent: perspectives that add quality and educational value.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

Introduction – 10 mins – including an exploration of Creative Campus with slideshow

Case studies x 3 – 5 mins each; discussions about (1) student internships, (2) multidisciplinary staff engagement, plus (3) community-based projects

Discussion – 15 mins; participants will be encouraged to work in groups to explore creative practice at their own institutions using the questions below

Summary – 5 mins – exploring the impact of using creativity as a catalyst for change in HE

Questions –

How is creativity promoted within your own institution?

What barriers preclude creative approaches to change?

What aspects of this work do you think could be transferred successfully?

References

Coon, A and Donovan, S (2007) Unlikely Partnerships. Presentation at: Improving University Teaching Conference, Jaen, Spain, 2007. See www.rit.edu/cla/ciwg/index.php *

Jackson, N, Oliver, M, Shaw, M and Wisdom, J (2006) Developing Creativity in Higher Education: The Imaginative Curriculum. Abingdon: Routledge

Sewell, R, Sellers, J and Williams, D (eds) (2013) Working with the Labyrinth: Paths for exploration. Iona: Wild Goose.

Sellers, J (2013) The Labyrinth: A journey of discovery. In: McIntosh, P and Warren, D, eds. Creativity in the Classroom: Case studies in using the Arts in teaching and learning in Higher Education. Bristol: Intellect.

Tepper, S. (2004) 'The Creative Campus: How do we measure up?' in Background Reading from the 104th American Assembly on 'The Creative Campus: The training, sustaining and presenting of the Performing Arts in American Higher Education'. Ch.8, pp.1-8. At: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/curbcenter/?project=articles-and-research> *

University of Kent (2008-13): <http://www.kent.ac.uk/creativecampus/> *

Podium Awards (2012) - <http://www.podium.ac.uk/news/view/743/creative-campus-initiative-wins-creative-cultural-project-at-podium-awards> *

*(All accessed 17.07.2013)