



## **Evidence for Enhancement:** Improving the Student Experience

# **Nine Dilemmas for the Skills Agenda**

**Representing a Summary of Key Observations  
from the Creative Disciplines' Collaborative Cluster  
Activity 2017-19**

**June 2019**

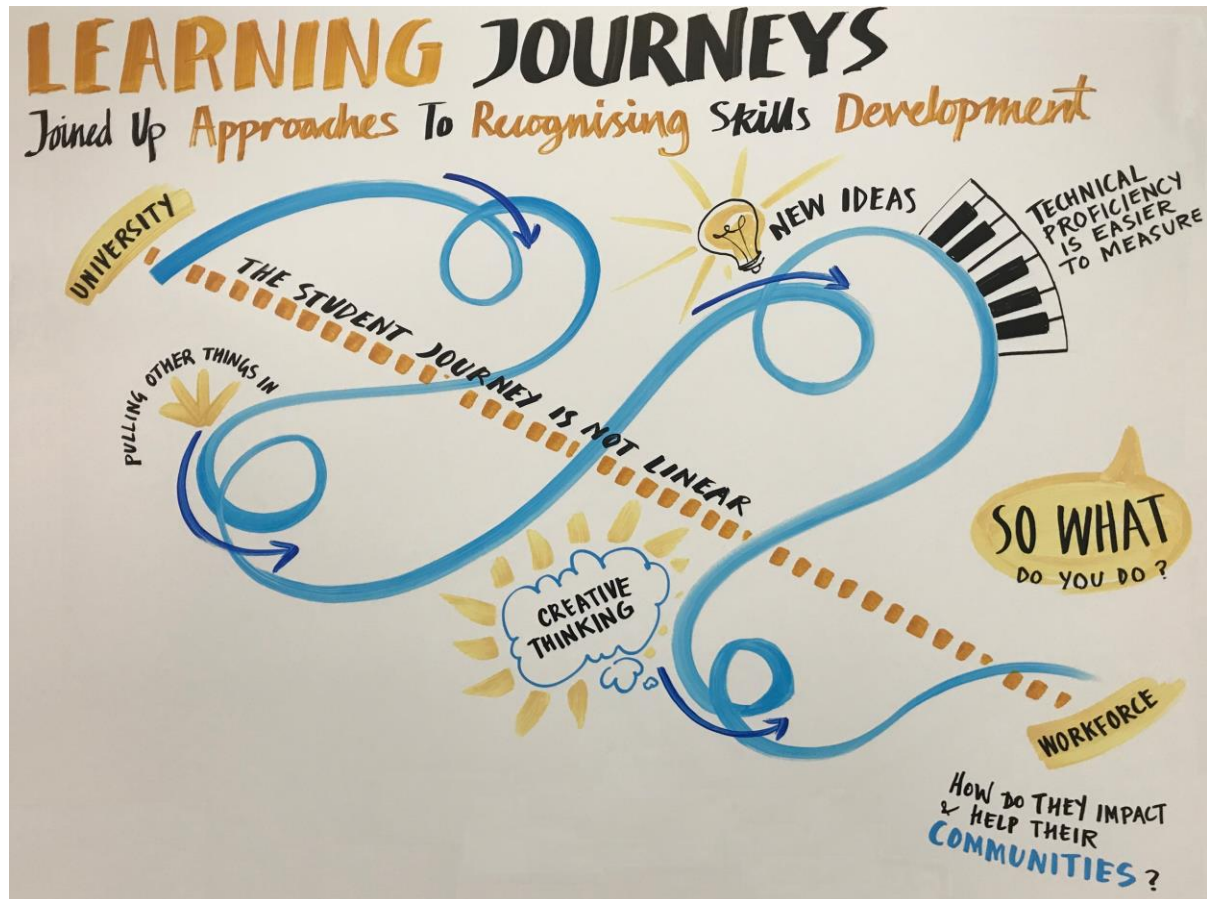
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## Dilemma 1

Pipelines into the creative arts and associated enterprises are not straightforward graduate employment pathways. The learning journey is more one of deviant gyrations than horizontal or vertical lines (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1: The deviant gyrations of the creative learner's journey**

(produced by Claire Stringer at 'Focus On Graduate Skills: Sharing Practice', June 2019 © [morethanminutes.co.uk](http://morethanminutes.co.uk))

## Dilemma 2

These pipelines are, nonetheless, vulnerable to changes in educational, cultural and economic policy. They are also vulnerable to fragmentation in policy agendas. Arts higher education institutions need to work collaboratively across policy agendas and with policy designers from across policy arenas.

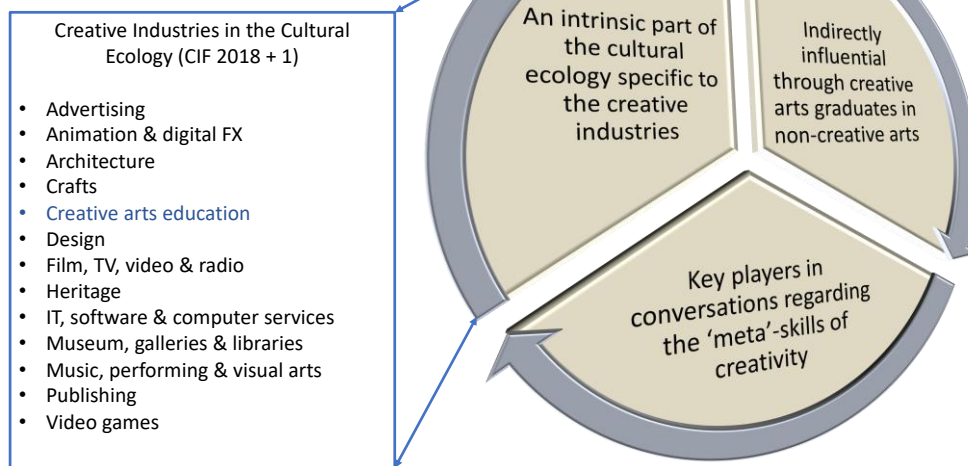
## Dilemma 3

Creative arts higher education graduates do not just stay within the creative industries or within self-employed creative practice to make a living.

## Dilemma 4

Even with the explicit development of both work-related and work-based learning activities within creative arts programmes, apparent time lags connected to making a *registered-in-the-data* living remain tenacious.

### Creative arts disciplines in Higher Education in the bigger skills picture



**Figure 2: The 12 sub-categories of the creative industries and creative arts disciplines in the bigger skills picture**

## Dilemma 5

Diversity in access to resources, investment in, and growth of each of the 12 sub-categories of the creative industries (see Figure 2) affects the ways impact can be measured. Equality of access across the twelve is also problematic.

## Dilemma 6

Current instruments for measuring impact need to be rebalanced so as not to over emphasise a linear pathway through education and training. Rather, we need more nuanced ways of assessing and valuing the impact of learners who are engaging in the cultural ecology (and the creative industries, enterprises and activities that are components of it). This needs to be done while they are studying and then in the range of postgraduation situations in which they find themselves (which may not always be ones attached to economic gain). If our instruments dominantly value postgraduation income, this will miss the value co-created socially, culturally, healthwise and educationally. How can we measure these other categories of value? To do justice to the skills agenda, we need to understand how best to measure outcomes relevant to impact arenas (Figure 3). At the moment, we are dependent on pre-existing, unaligned forms of measurement.

## Dilemma 7

Current conversations regarding creativity as a meta-skill need to adequately map onto how creativity is learned, how it functions in different contexts, and the difference between creativity as a holistic expertise and creative approaches to problem-solving. We need ways of identifying how innovation emerges through a critical dependence on translations of 'creative field' holistic expertise. This does not negate creativity as a metaskill, but does qualify it into two categories - holistic creative practice expertise, and creativity as a way of thinking which is part of a coherent 'package' within adaptive resilience. These two categories are both parts of the same whole and distinct within the needs of the skills agenda.

## Dilemma 8

Dilemmas in the creative disciplines' skills agenda are as much a result of technological advances in measuring outcomes as they are a result of educational failings. Key to this is: how is technological and algorithmic sophistication both opening and closing skills gaps at the same time as making some forms of creative work and production extinct/obsolete? What does this mean for creative disciplines as the skills agenda rhetoric fluctuates between knowledge economy, creative economy, and craft economy graduate employment narratives given that each require slightly different indicators of success?



**Figure 3: Impact arenas: Finding the value of our teaching and learning and that also of our students whilst learning with us and beyond us within impact arenas**

## Dilemma 9

Higher education creative arts programmes provide not just a pipeline into creative industries at multiple geographic levels (Scotland, UK and international), but also act as place makers and support providers for creative arts enterprises within the pluralism (regional and national) of Scotland's cultural ecology. Their impact as actors in the cultural vitality of place also needs to be addressed in conversations about the skills agenda.

## Further information

More information about the Creative Disciplines' Collaborative Cluster can be found at [www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/current-enhancement-theme/defining-and-capturing-evidence/the-creative-disciplines](http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/current-enhancement-theme/defining-and-capturing-evidence/the-creative-disciplines)

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