

**'New Departures for a Learning World of Quality and Equality'**  
**22nd International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement:**  
**Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, January 4-7, 2009**

# **Creativity, Challenge and Change**

**Judy Durrant**

Canterbury Christ Church University, UK

**with Peter Thompson, Creative Partnerships Hastings and East Sussex**

Acknowledgements: Mike Cockett, Debbie Haffenden, Tracy Hind, Charlotte Rustin, Becky Smith

**Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January, 11.00am, Oak 2(11)**

## **Abstract**

This paper arises from research within Creative Partnerships, a government initiative in England whereby 'creative practitioners' work with schools to introduce creativity and transform learning. Five commentaries were commissioned to explore developments in 23 core educational settings in Hastings and East Sussex, using the following 'lenses': Every Child Matters; Learning Environments; Partnerships; Language Development and Pupil Voice. While demonstrating a rich picture of improvements in learning, the research raised questions about how outcomes and impact are conceptualised and measured. Broader, softer, unexpected and longer-term outcomes sometimes proved difficult to account for or justify using government standards and criteria. It was also suggested that restrictive evaluative frameworks might dent professional confidence and limit creativity, reducing the potential for positive outcomes. This challenges school leaders to take risks in maintaining proper accountability while transcending prescribed criteria and frameworks to develop professional and classroom environments where creativity and innovation in learning can flourish.

*This paper draws upon the Creative Commentaries research commissioned by Creative Partnerships Hastings and East Sussex, led by Peter Thompson and conducted by Becky Smith, Mike Cockett, Tracy Hind, Charlotte Rustin and Debbie Haffenden (Creative Partnerships 2008). The ideas in this paper arose from the discussions and deliberations within the research team and were endorsed in early draft. However, the author takes sole responsibility for the final contents of the paper, which should still be considered as a draft and must not be copied or quoted without permission.*

## **Creative Partnerships: a 'flagship' initiative**

This paper arises from research conducted in the third year of the Creative Partnerships programme in Hastings and East Sussex in the South East of England. Creative Partnerships is a government initiative, managed by Arts Council England "...to develop the skills of young people across England, raising their aspirations and achievements, and opening up more opportunities for their futures" by transforming teaching and learning. Creative professionals such as storytellers, artists and poets work with teachers, school students and other members of the school community to design and implement projects that bring creativity into the school curriculum. A strong theme is the participation of children and young people in planning, implementation and dissemination. Nationally, the initiative has involved over 2,400 primary, secondary and special schools, targeting 36 deprived areas of England (Creative Partnerships, 2008).

In a valuable exploration of some of the issues involved in evaluating Creative Partnerships, Sefton-Green (2007) argues that it cannot be compared with national programmes such as the Numeracy and Literacy Strategies and that there is something of a contradiction in terms in attempting to evaluate it by the same criteria as the standards-based approaches that it aims to complement and to challenge. He notes that it pulls against the continual requirements to evaluate impact in the short term. Factors like engagement, motivation, inspiration, creative potential and learning are difficult to measure or prove and need to be evaluated using longitudinal and qualitative indicators which have not necessarily been built into the Creative Partnerships methodology. Furthermore, the flexibility of the programme results in regional and local variations in experimentation and innovation, making generalisations and firm conclusions more difficult still. He concludes that Creative Partnerships' greatest legacy might be in generating "...enough accounts of practice which describe meaningful models of change" (p.8), through an ingenious process of weaving together evidence to form descriptions of the full influence and impact of the programme, which may also require new forms of theorising. This is the context in which this paper has been written, offering a contribution to the discussion and demonstrating an attempt to make meaning of some

'evidence-weaving' by a small research team over a period of a few months of investigation into Creative Partnerships activity in one region.

### **Creative Partnerships in Hastings and East Sussex**

Creative Partnerships was established in the Hastings area of South East England in 2005 and has operated for the past three years in 23 educational settings including primary, secondary and special schools. Analysis of project evaluations at the end of the first year (Durrant, 2006) suggested positive outcomes and some inspirational influences and achievements for pupils, teachers and schools. Although effects on whole school development were not yet particularly evident, headteachers and teachers saw the potential for this to build. A summary of the initial evaluation is included here in order to give a flavour of the Creative Partnerships programme in the region.

Across the projects there was generally a strong element of enjoyment, fun, energy, enthusiasm and inspiration that touched pupils, teaching staff and Creative Partners. There was also space, relaxation and unwinding. This reached out into the community through conversations, displays and activities and was reported positively in the media, helping to raise morale in a deprived area.

Both teachers and pupils reported a feeling of physical and intellectual freedom, using new spaces, being able to generate and respond to thinking and questioning, "...turning over ideas faster and faster". Teachers in particular relished this flexibility and developed confidence in experimentation. There was dispersal of energy into new learning environments and through cross-curricular experimentation.

In most cases, relationships within the partnerships were extremely fruitful, with teachers, teaching assistants and creative partners at the heart of the collaborative process. Mutual respect, support and trust developed over time. A recurring theme was that adults and young people appreciated the opportunity for their voices to be heard and felt their views were respected. Nevertheless, there were challenges in making the partnerships work; teachers, teaching assistants and partners had to invest time and

develop complementary roles in coping with class dynamics and children's behaviour patterns in response to new environments, experiences and ways of working.

Teachers and support staff became used to working in a much less prescriptive way, more discursive and more open, with "no brick walls". They felt "released" and learnt to let go. Clearly there was no blueprint; a great deal of planning is needed, yet risk taking and evolution of ideas are essential to creativity and some felt that "...plans are there to be broken".

For many teachers, creative partners and support staff, the partnerships in this first year fostered profound professional and personal learning. They had been refreshed, enhanced their cultural awareness and understanding, acquired new skills and challenged their perspectives. They sometimes had more time to focus on 'moments' that would otherwise have passed them by, such as stopping to listen to a child's idea and talk it through. Many teaching staff and creative partners had frequently been moved by children's positive response - their spontaneity, ideas, mutual support and willingness to volunteer. Rapidly growing self-esteem, confidence and emotional literacy were evident across most projects. Positive effects on behaviour and confidence had been noticeable, including very significant changes for some individual children. Long-term work had been initiated, with small groups sending 'ripples' out into schools and communities. Some projects took longer to decide on their direction and some schools and teachers struggled to prioritise their projects amidst competing pressures and agendas, but most were encouraged and many felt at the end of the first year that Creative Partnerships had exceeded expectations.

### **Creative Commentaries**

In autumn 2007, Hastings and East Sussex Creative Partnerships commissioned five commentaries to reflect the work it had done in the 23 core educational settings over the three years 2005 – 2008 (Creative Partnerships Hastings and East Sussex, 2008). The five 'lenses' through which the work was reviewed were decided in conjunction with East Sussex School Improvement Service (the District / Local Authority) as areas of particular

interest to education professionals and policymakers. Five independent researchers were employed to carry out the reviews under the following headings:

- Every Child Matters\*
- Learning Environments
- Partnerships
- Language Development
- Pupil Voice

\* see Every Child Matters: Change for Children (2008)

The researchers were appointed to investigate the ways in which their individually designated themes were emerging in the work both directly and indirectly, to examine the issues arising and to write a critical commentary. The remit was to undertake a creative exploration rather than a comprehensive evaluation, within a very limited timescale allowing only a few months to gather evidence and write up the commentaries. This was based on secondary data gathered by schools through action research and using national planning and evaluation frameworks, documentation and artefacts from the school projects, interviews with a range of stakeholders including students and a small number of observational visits to schools where possible. Researchers found that visits and conversations with participants were particularly valuable in investigating processes of creativity and change and testing emerging understandings. The research team met several times during the process of the study, to ensure rigour and maintain connection across the five themes, discussing methodological issues, comparing interim findings, subjecting the emerging evidence to critical discussion and identifying generic patterns and themes arising. Given the restrictions in the scope of the research, considerable discipline and clarity was required in presenting the final commentaries for publication (Creative Partnerships Hastings and East Sussex, 2008).

While carrying out the independent research for their respective commentaries, the researchers found their collaborative discussions increasingly valuable. The research became reflexive across the team despite the limitations of time and scope and some powerful shared understandings developed, based on the accumulating evidence and tested as the research progressed, which give the basis for this paper. The study raised questions about improvement, accountability and decision making in school

improvement activity. The research showed that broader, 'softer', unexpected and longer-term outcomes identified and evidenced by the researchers were sometimes difficult to account for and justify using government standards and criteria, despite the current policy rhetoric championing innovation, creativity and personalised learning.

While demonstrating a rich picture of a range of improvements in learning, the research has also raised questions about how outcomes and impact are conceptualised and measured, contributing to debates already raised within Creative Partnerships and echoing Sefton-Green's arguments (Sefton-Green, 2007). The Creative Commentaries evidence suggests that the restrictions placed upon schools by prescribed frameworks and criteria for change may be in danger of denting professional confidence and limiting creativity, thereby in themselves reducing the potential for positive change. The research therefore challenged the normal ways in which outcomes are measured and valued in education, and the standard definitions of terms and concepts. If we looked for what fitted within standard evaluation and accountability frameworks we did not see, or devalued, much of what was good and successful.

### **Challenging our assumptions**

As the creative commentaries developed it was clear that while we could use the current frameworks, models and notions of successful outcomes, additional discoveries would be made by looking beyond them. Drawing the five sets of evidence together, we were challenged to re-conceptualise the outcomes, boundaries, timescales and partnerships in school improvement. These are explained and illustrated below.

#### **a) Re-conceiving outcomes – what do we value?**

Outcomes are inevitably planned for even in creative projects where unexpected outcomes and 'travelling' are part of the picture. We considered whether 'success' is about distance travelled or about products: where is the learning revealed? Products were clearly important to participants (students and their teachers) as well as to evaluators, but we concluded that process should be thought about and evaluated as well.

*Examples:*

Partnership: Children made their own personal boxes into which they would collect a 'creative toolkit'. The product was not only beautiful boxes but also the valuing of the children who made them amongst the people working with them. Product and process were each part of the eventual outcome.

Language development: Teachers, schools and external agencies are compelled to value what can be measured. It is more difficult and less justifiable to evidence what cannot be measured, therefore it has less value. Teachers convinced that pupils were more motivated to learn and whose language they felt had improved, struggled to demonstrate evidence of language development that had external validity.

Every Child Matters (ECM): the outcomes framework had to be used to frame the research and commentary and was familiar to headteachers particularly, but it was felt that this might obscure what was actually happening or what might happen in relation to the broad intentions of ECM. The 'tick box' mentality was in danger of devaluing and even undermining the work.

#### **b) Re-conceiving boundaries - challenging practice and interpretation**

Where assumptions are made about what an aspect of education is, and about what it is not, without debate or clarification, interpretations are made based on assumptions which can narrow the possibilities.

*Examples:*

Pupil voice: Teachers and head teachers may tend to categorise pupil voice into particular activities that carry its banner, such as an annual questionnaire for school self-evaluation or participation in the School Council. They may overlook the many examples of voice in the classroom (e.g. children expressing themselves in poetry) or on the playground (e.g. participation in a buddying scheme). The research demonstrated a spectrum of choice and engagement considered by teachers as 'pupil voice', from choosing the design for a mosaic planned by the teacher, through to primary school children (age 10-11) having the autonomy to run their school's arts centre including full control of the budget and administration.

Learning environments: This involved moving out of 'comfortable' spaces and seeing environments afresh. It was important to recognise that this involved not only schools and classrooms but also moving beyond these boundaries, including a consideration of children's learning in family and community environments. One project involved young people opening adults' eyes to their families impoverished home environment and then working with the local council on its redevelopment. Other students redesigned school classrooms, corridors and playgrounds.

### **c) Re-conceiving timescales for long-term improvement**

League tables and targets and the 'shaking' of schools (and thereby individuals) who do not meet the required standards can lead to emotional damage. Teachers generally recognise that it is motivational levels in the long term, rather than National Curriculum sub-levels in the short-term, that are most important, yet it is short term performance indicators that schools are called upon to prioritise. The evidence from the Creative Commentaries pointed to the importance of dealing with a broader view of learning, for the whole child and in the long-term, a view which is not absent from national policies but which tends to lose prominence in practice.

#### *Examples:*

Language development: again it was difficult to find quantitative evidence for improvement and teachers were anxious about when and how the 'results' of improved motivation would show. When qualitative indicators were used, including experienced teachers' professional judgments, the beneficial effects of the work could be clearly seen but were difficult to measure and it was impossible to isolate the influence of Creative Partnerships in order to establish cause and effect.

Every Child Matters: Projects were not planned with specific reference to the ECM five outcomes and their outcomes extended beyond these, both in substance and over time. The boxes were too simplistic to capture the richness of the activity. The outcomes framework therefore proved to be a blunt tool for analysing impact. Interestingly, other recent research (National College for School Leadership, 2008) shows similarly that the schools that demonstrated most effective progress with ECM were those where the framework legitimated what they were already doing, in accordance with deeply held values and beliefs, as opposed to initiating change in order to meet the specified outcomes in the framework.

### **d) Re-conceiving partnerships – the value of dissonance and conflict**

Good partnerships might be expected to sound positive, supportive, smooth, predictable and planned, but the Creative Commentaries research found the opposite. The most creative of partnerships often emerged through dissonance and conflict of practices, values and ideas and the culture clash of contrasting professions. Teachers and creative partners and agents talked about learning from the insights gained into one another's professional cultures and the challenges this presented.

*Examples:*

Partnerships: a development day making dragons was planned to enable teachers and creative partners to challenge each other about successful learning. Some teachers arrived early so that their dragon would be of a sufficiently high standard. They saw the product, rather than the process, as the goal and were highly competitive. While valuable discussion did materialise, the day was an 'awful' experience for some and placed people in situations of acute discomfort.

Pupil voice: a film made by pupils was challenging and critical of aspects of the school, which led to conflict with the school's leadership and governors. When permission was eventually given for the film to be shown, it demonstrated pupils' abilities and raised their own and teachers' expectations. This was reinforced when pupils not only led a training day for their teachers based on their film but also took the film to regional and national conferences, to great acclaim. It was recognised that the film making process and students' promotion of the film to different audiences was more important than its actual content; nevertheless it had raised important issues for school development.

These two contrasting perspectives are summarised in the table below in relation to the five Creative Commentary headings. 'Inside the box' refers to the evidence derived using prescribed frameworks and evidence assumed by teachers to be valid and relevant for external evaluation. 'Outside the box' refers to evidence revealed when using broader concepts of outcomes and impact and more holistic approaches to data gathering.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Inside the box</b>	<b>Outside the box</b>
Every Child Matters	The ECM outcomes could usually be ticked by headteachers in retrospect, but was this meaningful or contrived? Planning did not take into account the ECM outcomes explicitly.	A holistic view of the extent of integrated learning and support was determined, avoiding separation into subjects, curriculum boundaries and the discrete services of health, education and social care.
Learning environments	Classrooms had been changed to improve standards of pupil performance. There was concern about risks when taking children out of the classroom.	There was evidence of using new spaces and using spaces in new ways; conceiving learning and learning environments differently; learning in the community; changing of both community and school environments. Participation, ownership and voice featured strongly in the projects.
Pupil voice	Many schools reported limited development, in the form of	It could be said that 'voice' is enhanced in most projects as

	questionnaires and school councils. There was a linear view that if pupils are consulted and this is not acted upon, this means that their voice is not heard.	children and young people have engaged in learning, expressed feelings and articulated views, developing confidence and self-esteem. Students' involvement has raised expectations and increased perceptions of their capabilities. There is evidence of democracy and agency in action (which does not necessarily mean ideas and opinions are acted upon).
Language development	No measurable change in standards was determined.	Long-term development cannot be evaluated yet but teachers clearly saw links between improved disposition, motivation and language learning. A problem emerged about what we measure and what counts as evidence: how do we evaluate qualitative progress using 'hard' and 'soft' indicators?
Partnerships	Preconceived ideas and rhetoric of partnership are that people work well together, people share, it is a smooth process and a planned relationship with clear roles and purposes.	Conflict and dissonance were recognised to be essential for creativity, learning and change for organisations and individuals, professionally and personally. It was important to expect and look for this in people's narratives rather than avoiding these aspects in favour of a 'success story'. Partnership is about forging relationships which depend on personalities and change over time.

### Thinking and evaluating inside and outside the box

A myopic view that focuses on evidence 'inside the box', conforming to standardised outcomes frameworks and prescribed success criteria, may miss or devalue what is already happening, as demonstrated in the third column, 'outside the box'. This runs the risk of missing new opportunities for learning and limiting change. Dialogue around the Creative Commentaries evidence and the consequent reshaping of the research process has demonstrated the limitations of using of prescribed frameworks and existing criteria as the sole benchmarks for evaluation of progress and impact. In identifying the genuine

range of outcomes and impact of the Creative Partnerships projects on pupils' learning, motivation and behaviour, professional learning, school structures and cultures and the wider community, a wide-ranging, organic and eclectic process of data gathering proved more valuable to give an authentic picture. A comparison of evidence 'inside' and 'outside' the box demonstrates that without this methodological flexibility, much of what was good, interesting and successful might have remained unrecognised, or would have been devalued in the analysis. The research team concluded that outcomes, boundaries, time-scales and partnerships may need to be re-conceptualised in evaluating the impact of creative learning projects, and indeed in planning the intended school improvement outcomes. It is important to ensure that participants and stakeholders understand and agree with such evaluative frameworks, processes and criteria, preferably by helping to shape them from the outset (Durrant, 2007).

### **Avoiding 'domestication': taking risks and developing trust**

The research team returned repeatedly in discussions to the ways in which we saw initiatives and interventions in schools being restricted, becalmed or stifled as they were 'tamed' by teachers, partners and evaluators to fit to the required outcomes, limiting learning and putting the lid on change. This might result in stagnation or even regression, yet funding through a government programme usually depends on planned and approved outcomes and the meeting or prescribed success criteria to achieve "transformation as improved performance" (West-Burnham, 2003, in Durrant and Holden, 2006: 18). Schools' achievements are less formally recognised if not expressed in terms of existing models and government requirements. Schools unable or unwilling to meet rigid planning requirements may lose funding, but may still continue with their creative projects. If real change depends on creative approaches (and it is likely that it does, particularly where current approaches have habitually failed), we need to find ways of stepping outside imposed boundaries to challenge how outcomes are measured, to adjust timescales, remove restrictions and re-conceive our normal ways of working.

This is difficult within the existing models and frameworks. Creativity thrives where boundaries are challenged and redrawn. It resists measurement and planning. Where

schools are working within models requiring measuring and planning, it may therefore be difficult for creativity to flourish. Creativity is needed in conceiving innovation and intervention in the curriculum and in our conceptions of learning, in teaching and leadership as well as in learning. This need not be radical in concept and seismic in scope, it may involve an incremental, evolutionary process of change as confidence is built and direction is found, reinforced by evidence and self-evaluation, leading to systemic transformation towards optimum effectiveness (West-Burnham, 2003, in Durrant and Holden, 2006:18). Eventually, it embraces unexpected outcomes (not previously considered), boxes that will not be ticked (because the wrong ones were there), new liaisons (defying traditional boundaries), exploded timeframes (where targets no longer drive activity) and a great deal of dissonance (viewed as a good thing). Improvement depends on the building of trust and the acknowledgement that learning through process defines success as much as creating a successful product. It results in “transformation as profound change” (West-Burnham, 2003 in Durrant and Holden, 2006: 18-19), requiring us to revisit and reshape our notions of school improvement.

### **Creative ingredients for real change**

While it is important for school leaders to give proper attention to current accountability frameworks, they need to balance this with support for the richness, diversity and quality of learning that the freedom of creativity and real innovation can bring to school improvement. Yet tensions and conflict arise where creativity is subsumed by the pressures of performativity. This is accentuated in the most challenging schools in England where there is unrelenting pressure, particularly on those schools judged to be least effective, to improve standards of student performance. Embracing these challenges requires school leaders and policymakers to take risks in working beyond existing models and frameworks, requiring considerable confidence, moral courage and a climate of ‘two-way trust’ (Bottery, 2004) to provide professional and classroom environments where creative and innovative approaches to learning can flourish. Suggestions emerging from the Creative Commentaries research include the following:

- Develop new models
- Work in different shapes and spaces
- Own the success criteria

- Let projects define timescales
- Re-conceptualise outcomes
- Welcome and use conflict
- Take risks
- Learn through process
- Connect across boundaries
- Challenge ideas as well as practice.

Schools have demonstrated the benefits of adopting such approaches and teachers were confident and enthusiastic about these benefits when outcomes could be conceptualised broadly. However, inability to demonstrate improved short term attainment sometimes led teachers and school leaders to be more cautious, anxious and even apologetic about the benefits, to devalue them and therefore to question investing time and energy in developing the kinds of approaches listed above. The relationship with the Local Authority (District) was important in this respect. Schools and Local Authorities experience the tension between the policy argument for greater flexibility and creativity in the curriculum and the 'standards agenda' pervading our schools, where success is rigidly and narrowly defined (Wrigley, 2003). This is an uncompromising and relentless regime within which the most challenging schools, usually in the greatest areas of social and economic deprivation, can be trapped in a spiral of demoralisation and decline (MacBeath *et al.*, 2007). Under-performing English schools have been threatened with closure by 2011 if they fail to meet short-term targets for mathematics, English and science (DCSF, 2008), although some have already been subject to huge investment and 'reinvention' in the last few years, including investment in the Creative Partnerships programme. As demonstrated by the Creative Commentaries research, tensions arise where narrow, finite measures of success are applied to innovative development and creative learning. Practitioners, school leaders and policymakers are challenged to steer a course between these apparently contradictory emphases within the improvement agenda.

### **Values, purpose and the creative agenda**

The clarification of the values and purpose behind creative initiatives such as Creative Partnerships clearly needs to be examined and debated. Education practitioners have learnt to express planned and achieved outcomes in the terms that are recognised by policymakers, namely standards of academic attainment and other measurable

phenomena. Recent research by the National Foundation for Educational Research (Kendall *et al.*, 2008a; 2008b) has found that the Creative Partnerships programme has "...contributed to improved levels of attainment" (Creative Partnerships, 2008). Students involved show statistically significantly improved progress compared with similar students nationally with regard to test results in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 3 and their points score in GCSE examinations. The National Director of Creative Partnerships, Paul Collard, addresses this agenda explicitly with regard to the NFER research:

This research shows the impact that creative learning can have on pupils' exam results. For many of the schools we work with, tackling truancy and poor pupil behaviour is the first step to improving results. This research confirms that using artists and creative professionals can inspire children to turn up to classes and motivate them to fulfill their potential in class.

(see Creative Partnerships, 2008)

If schools are to be transformed through innovative and creative approaches to learning, legitimating outcomes in terms of measurable student attainment and attendance rates begs the question as to the educational purpose of such initiatives. Do they aim for a broad range of innovative and creative outcomes, or to meet attendance targets and improve examination results in 'core' subjects. Has the school improvement agenda been subsumed by targets for effectiveness as Wrigley (2003) suggests? Obviously there are close and complex relationships between attendance, motivation, behaviour and learning, attainment and achievement. However, the Creative Commentaries research suggests that if we limit the way in which we conceive *acceptable* outcomes, epitomised by approaches that 'value what we can measure' (MacGilchrist *et al.*, 2004), we might fail to recognise the full range of positive outcomes. More seriously, in planning explicitly to raise attainment through creative learning, with emphasis on core subjects, particularly those most significant in school league tables and international comparisons, might we limit *possible* outcomes and thereby risk closing down opportunities for children to learn, develop and achieve more broadly and deeply?

West-Burnham's learning framework for the National College for School Leadership 'New Visions' programme (West-Burnham, 2005) provides an interesting analysis in this respect. He suggests a continuum of learning where the shallowest forms involve

memorisation and replication of information, requiring compliant and dependent approaches. Deeper learning further along the continuum involves independence in reflection and interpretation to develop both knowledge and understanding. Both shallow and deep learning can be measured to a degree in standardised tests. West-Burnham identifies profound learning in terms of intuition, meaning, authenticity and creativity within relationships of interdependence. Significantly, he suggests that the outcome of profound learning is 'wisdom'. While it is possible to understand these attributes in terms of someone's personal capacity, it is much more difficult to understand how they might be measured numerically, compared or assessed. Approaches to curriculum design and the planning and evaluation of learning and schooling need to reflect our understandings about more profound levels of learning. This requires us to recognise the more complex outcomes of profound learning and to reconceptualise what we mean by impact, both for individual students and organisationally and systemically in terms of school improvement. If creative approaches are conceived by policymakers merely as vehicles for a narrow, standards-based improvement agenda limited to measureable outcomes, then these profound learning outcomes are likely to be devalued, overlooked and limited by school leaders, teachers and learners.

### **Creativity and ownership**

A further challenge concerns the ownership of creativity, calling into question the continued need for initiatives such as Creative Partnerships. In Hastings and East Sussex, the Creative Partnerships 'Change Schools' programme (2008-10) "...selects schools with significant challenges to engage in an intensive 3-year programme that supports creative development of the whole school". Expansion into new areas (Brighton and Hove, West Sussex and Surrey) with the 'Enquiry Schools' programme enables schools to investigate creativity in learning through short term projects of 1-3 terms' duration. As a 'flagship' government initiative funded by the Arts Council, Creative Partnerships has explicitly employed practitioners or partners from the "creative" professions which traditionally include artists, storytellers, musicians, dancers, film makers and so on. Evidence from evaluations in Hastings and East Sussex and nationally has shown that this juxtaposition of professionals with different values, backgrounds and ways of working challenges teachers culturally, pedagogically and

professionally, breaks down prejudice and enhances learning and teaching (Creative Partnerships, 2006; Durrant, 2006). However this calls into question whether creativity should be considered as the preserve of certain professionals, groups or subjects. If creative learning is to be encouraged across the curriculum, as has been demonstrated in a range of Creative Partnerships projects, then should it not also be modeled across the professions, for example by accountants as well as artists, by managers as well as musicians, by production engineers as well as poets? We need to develop more inclusive definitions of creativity, in which it is envisaged as innately human, accessible to everyone, normal and essential to all learning. This has important implications for the ways in which professional learning is conceptualised and valued, placing responsibility on school leaders to enable creativity and innovation to flourish amongst the whole school workforce. While projects, programmes and initiatives linked to the professions traditionally designated as creative might provide an important focus and guidance for schools, a catalyst for development and essential resources, it is vital that we move from attempting to find time for creative projects as 'slots' in the timetable, as a deviation from the 'standard' curriculum, as 'something else for teachers to do', towards approaching learning as a creative process that brings the curriculum content alive and is accessible to everyone.

### **Developing creative learning across the curriculum**

If creativity is acknowledged as an integral aspect of learning, its aims, purpose and ownership should be clarified so that it can be acknowledged as a vital consideration for school improvement contributing to a broad range of outcomes, rather than a project-based option for certain schools, subjects, students and teachers to raise attainment. Thus the tensions and limitations revealed by the Creative Commentaries research might be reduced, while the benefits of creative learning, now better documented and evidenced through research associated with programmes such as Creative Partnerships - including deep learning, critical thinking, ideas, confidence, motivation, enjoyment, aspiration, attainment and voice - might be accepted more readily and enjoyed more widely across the curriculum for all students.

### **References**

Bottery, M. (2004) *The Challenges of Educational Leadership*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing

Creative Partnerships (2006) *'This Much We Know...'*, *Creative Partnerships Research Digest 2002-6*, available from <http://www.creative-partnerships.com/> (accessed 2008)

Creative Partnerships (2008) website <http://www.creative-partnerships.com/> (accessed December 2008)

Creative Partnerships Hastings and East Sussex (2008) 'Creative Commentaries', Hastings: Creative Partnerships Hastings and East Sussex

DCSF (2008) National Challenge <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalchallenge/> (accessed October 2008)

Durrant, J. and Holden, G (2006) *Teachers Leading Change: Doing Research for School Improvement*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing

Durrant, J. (2006) *Creative Partnerships, Hastings and East Sussex: Evaluation of the First Year*, Creative Partnerships Hastings and East Sussex

Durrant, J. (2007) Improvement matters: an integrated approach to the question of impact, *Professional Development Today* (10:2) pp.6-12

Every Child Matters: Change for Children (2008) website: <http://everychildmatters.gov.uk> (accessed December 2008)

Kendall, L., Morrison, J., Sharp, C., Yeshanew, T. (2008a) *The Longer-Term Impact of Creative Partnerships on the Attainment of Young People: Results from 2005 and 2006*. National Foundation for Educational Research, available from <http://www.creative-partnerships.com/> (accessed December 2008)

Kendall, L., Morrison, J., Sharp, C., Yeshanew, T. (2008) *The Impact of Creative Partnerships on Pupil Behaviour*. National Foundation for Educational Research, available from <http://www.creative-partnerships.com/> (accessed December 2008b)

MacBeath, J., Gray, J.M., Cullen, J, Frost, D., Steward, S, Swaffield, S. (2007) *Schools on the Edge: Responding to Challenging Circumstances*, London, Paul Chapman

MacGilchrist, B., Myers, K., and Reed, J. (2004) *The Intelligent School*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing (2nd edition)

National College for School Leadership (2008) The ECM Premium Project: identifying links between Every Child Matters and improving school standards NCSL Leadership Direct website: [www.ncsl.org.uk/ecmleadershipdirect](http://www.ncsl.org.uk/ecmleadershipdirect) (accessed 2008)

Sefton-Green, J. (2007) *Evaluating Creative Partnerships: the challenges of defining impact*. Creative Partnerships thinkpiece available from <http://www.creative-partnerships.com/> (accessed December 2008)

West-Burnham, J. (2005) Learning to Lead, National College for School Leadership paper available from <http://www.ncsl.org.uk/> (accessed July 2008)

Wrigley, T. (2003) *Schools of Hope: a new agenda for school improvement*. London: Trentham Books