LEARNING CREATIVITY BY STARTING FROM DIFFERENCE

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BACKGROUND

The aim of this evaluation is to build on the ongoing Arts Council-funded collaboration over the last two years between Cass Foundation and *The DisOrdinary Architecture Project* (of which Jos Boys is a co-director). This has involved disabled artists working with different groups of students and tutors to explore how investigating diverse forms of embodiment can underpin and then enhance their creative practice from the very beginning of academic study. This is part of a wider Cass Foundation and London Metropolitan University Diversity and Creativity agenda. The Head of Foundation, Chi Roberts, has worked with *The DisOrdinary Architecture Project* over the last two years to co-explore how we can open up the multitude of different ways of being-in-the-world to students, both as a potential design generator and as a key part of their personal development.

DisOrdinary is a platform bringing together disabled artists and built environment/design students, educators and practitioners for creative dialogue and action. It aims to challenge educational and professional practices that design for a 'norm': exploring instead how we can pay more attention to the full richness and diversity of bodies and minds, and to the potential of designing from what are often marginalised (or ignored) as 'non-compliant' and 'misfitting' identities.

The ACE-funded project – entitled *Moving to the next level: Disabled Artists Make Dis/Ordinary Spaces* and running nationally throughout 2018 – has enabled three different disabled artists (Joseph Young, Zoe Partington and Tony Heaton) to co-design and co-partner on teaching activities in the studio with foundation tutors for the academic year 2017-18.

This follows an ACE-funded pilot with Joseph Young for the academic year 2016-17. These initial activities were captured through observation and recording, but it has not been possible to do more in-depth evaluation or wider dissemination and debate, or to develop recommendations for diversity and creative practice in the Cass Foundation more generally. With the award of Cass pedagogic research funding, we have been able to valuably expand these aspects of the work.

Aims and objectives
The aim of this research is to review and evaluate activities to date; to make recommendations for future developments; and to disseminate and debate the issues raised more broadly. To undertake the research we will use a mixed methods framework, based on four elements:

1. Prototyping interventions (based on ACE funded activities as part of *The DisOrdinary Architecture Project*)
> Objective: implement co-designed activities across the two foundation programmes ('Soundmarks', 'Audio-descriptions' and 'dis/un/en/able').

2. Capturing and evaluating feedback from students and staff on enabling an inclusive curriculum at Foundation level;
>   Objective: critical review of artist, staff and student experiences of, and reflections on, the impact of the three current projects though focus groups and interviews with different groups and individuals.

3. Exploration of approaches to support embedding and scaling-up
>   Objective: development of recommendations for taking project aims forward, based on analysis of these interventions.

4. Informing wider debate and influencing Cass Foundation development where appropriate
>   Objective: communication and discussion of outputs and outcomes with a variety of audiences through presentations, publications and events.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was undertaken through 2 focus groups (one with each of the Foundation groups involved), offered to students who participated in the project; interviews with participating Cass staff; and reflective logs undertaken by the three disabled artists involved. In each case informed consent was obtained through consent forms, which give detailed information about the evaluation, and asked permission for use of data collected. This data was anonymised at source, and will be only stored in this form, to ensure confidentiality.

Data was analysed using a grounded theory approach, that is, by drawing out key themes as these arose from the data collected; and then testing and clarifying these themes through separate researcher analyses, and in relation to other relevant resources. Grounded theory is an approach with two central aims to:

- develop strategic themes and theories through the analysis of data;
- do this in a systematic way so as to enable rigor in dealing with qualitative data.

Rather than beginning with a hypothesis, the first step is the collection of data through a variety of methods. Key points in the materials collected are marked with a series of codes, which are extracted from the text. These are key words or phrases that summarize recurring points and issues in the data. These codes are grouped into similar concepts in order to make them more workable, and a first-stage report is drafted for discussion and review. Then the concepts are grouped into categories. Based on these general themes, explanations can be proposed for the research topic. These in turn can be reassessed by a wider audience or reviewed against relevant existing literature. Grounded theory thus does not aim for a general truth or "solution" but hopes to better conceptualize what is going on in any given context. By illuminating a situation, conclusions from an evaluation can enable more informed decision-making about future developments (as well as revealing any further questions that need to be investigated).

The Cass Foundation & *DisOrdinary Architecture* collaboration

As noted above, the 2018 collaboration has centrally been about developing co-designed learning and teaching activities to investigate what happens when you start from human difference as a creative generator. This is based on the belief that our many and various ways of being in the world - the extraordinary richness that neuro- and bio-diversity can offer – is a vital but often under-used creative force in artistic and design practices. By adapting and adding elements within existing course curricula, we wanted to offer educational 'moments' that explicitly foregrounded issues of diversity, difference and disability. This was to enable us to begin to explore some ways of both valuing students' own experiences and of developing an open-minded and thoughtful attentiveness to the world beyond themselves, as key initiating elements of becoming an artist or designer. This is part of a broader developing concern with what inclusive learning might look like, based on understanding creativity as growing *out of* diversity, rather than courses being created, with 'diversity' just being bolted-on afterwards. This approach, sometimes called the inclusive curriculum, aligns very much with the ongoing work of *The DisOrdinary Architecture Project*.

To explore some of the opportunities that starting from difference offers as a creative force, Tony Heaton, Zoe Partington and Joseph Young - three disabled artists from *DisOrdinary* - co-designed activities with tutors in the Art, Media and Design (AMD) group, and the Architecture and Interior Design (AID) group at Foundation Level. In each case, the aim was to start from disability (and other identities) as often invisible, marginalised or ignored aspects of human difference, as a way of opening up the creative potential that valuing our multiple and diverse kinds of embodiment can bring.

> *It is incredibly important to think about different ways of being in the world – this is vital to people's work. (…) Identity, difference, such a big thing to do and discuss about, such a big issue, so important in the current day*.
> Student feedback comment, May 2018

This work developed from a prototype project in Cass Foundation last year with Joseph Young, entitled Soundmarks (https://vimeo.com/215578237). In this academic year each artist collaborated with Cass tutors to co-create activities within existing modules that focused on starting from difference. Young made binomial sound recordings with students as part of the 'Mapping the City' project set by Luke Jones and Aleks Catina; with his sound walks forming one of a series of student exploratory investigations of urban space (Fig. 1). Young brings his own experience of hearing loss to his art practices, by engaging with the complexity and poetry of everyday street noise. That is, deafness actually enables him (and thus the students) to listen harder and with more concentration:

> *It made us focus on things that we would not really notice usually; and to analyse them in a different way. Going on the recording walk was very good; being in silence really amplifies your senses.*
>
> *It was very relevant to do 4 weeks of different kinds of mapping; made you have a better and more broad attitude to what you are mapping. Not just that, I feel like we get to look at architecture through our ears*.
> Students feedback comments, May 2018
>
> *By slowing down and focusing on the aural sense, they experienced a focused concentration and a new way of listening that was quite profound. I hope that this will influence their creative practice as architects and designers for years to come, so that they will consider sound as an integral part of the design process, by designing aural environments that are accessible and a pleasure to inhabit.*
>
> *[This time I] highlighted my own hearing disability as a catalyst for my creative process and this fact was readily absorbed by the students and referred to in later discussions. I hope that by being open in this way I was able to change perceptions of what it means to be disabled and to highlight how creative practices are often forged from the crucible of dis/ability.*
> Artist reflection, April 2018
>
> *The amazing thing about this project is how they become aware of things; makes their eyes open. So much data everywhere that you can draw from.*
> Tutor feedback comment, May 2018
>
> *Image: Creativity-difference-Joseph.jpg*
>
> *Figure 1: Architecture and Interior Design (AID) students and staff review their alterative mappings work, including sound pieces.*

Zoe Partington worked with Art, Media and Design (AMD) Foundation students to explore how creating spoken language descriptions of built space both enhances powers of detailed visual observation, and opens up other ways of experiencing the world beyond sight, such as touch and smell. As a partially sighted artist, Partington's practice centrally concerns how 'being different'

can enhance your creativity in engaging with spaces and objects; and how important it is for artists and designers to engage with disability and difference within their work.

> *[Working with] Tony and Zoe felt really fruitful and rich, that they led somewhere.*
> Student feedback comment, May 2018

If both of these interventions focused on starting from difference as a way of developing students' awareness beyond conventional ways of 'seeing' the world, the dis/un/en/able brief for AMD students started more explicitly from the personal. As the brief said:

> *'Thinking differently' is part of creativity and is generally regarded positively, i.e. imagination; thinking outside the box; lateral thinking, brainstorming; originality. Indeed, in many creative practices it is regarded as essential.*
>
> *'Being different' from what is considered 'the norm' on the other hand can often lead to physical and attitudinal barriers in society, or worse. What is the relationship between what is simply common and what is considered normal? Are there contradictory value judgments in what is unique/rare/precious and what is different/unusual/strange?*

Students were asked to make a piece that spoke to the space between their body-identity and the wider world (Fig. 2). Here Tony Heaton, a disabled sculptor, collaborated with Foundation tutors.

> *Tony brought out something in all of us about identity, something different – I moved well beyond my expectations. He brought out something in my project that I was not expecting. He helped us so much.*
>
> *I liked that Tony included discussions of power, who controls what gets said and how it gets said.*
> Students feedback comments, May 2018
>
> *Having Tony working with us literally modeled the pros and cons around choosing to claim his identity as a disabled artist (…) Rather than having lectures on diversity, or sitting in meetings talking about BME stats, here he was showing how diversity is a creative opportunity.*
> Tutor feedback comment, May 2018
>
> *It doesn't matter what I think my identity might be, whatever it is I cannot hide the fact that I am a wheelchair user, and in my interaction with non-disabled people the wheelchair is the first think they see. I know they will make all sorts of assumptions, many of them negative about that. My approach then has to be to totally own that identity, be explicit and unashamed about it, it's situation normal for me, they are the ones that will have to get over it… fortunately, I can help them with that…*
>
> Artist reflection, April 2018

Image: Creativity-difference-Tony.jpg

Figure 2: dis/un/en/able project, one-to-one studio tutorial

EMERGING THEMES FROM INITIAL CODING

The initial coding exercise drew out a series of themes, some suggesting strong congruence across students, tutors and artists; and some revealing potential variations in attitudes, experiences and perceived constraints: between AMD and AID students and staff around how identity and difference should or could be located within creative learning development, and between (some) students' understandings of the implications of inclusivity and that of their tutors'. The key shared themes - that is, where feedback across all participants seemed powerfully aligned were;

- valuing of difference: the importance of starting from what each student brings to their learning;
- taking notice; understanding the centrality to learning of close investigation, using all the senses, and connecting students at a detailed level to the world around them;
- locating creativity; that creative practices grow out of the development of both valuing difference and taking notice of what these differences can offer in interpreting and responding to given situations.

In this section, I will first outline how this centrality of difference was articulated by different participants, before going on to look at some of the tensions and complexities that this raised from the different perspectives of students, tutors and artists.

Creativity out of difference as a shared value

The most immediate feedback from students in the focus groups we undertook after the project, was a shared belief that thinking about identity and difference was central to their developing practices; that there should be more activities that foreground these issues; and that these should be embedded throughout their studies;

These issues are so critical to contemporary art – it is a forum that should be opened up early in the course, and be embedded by the end of the first term.

This 'opened my door', why doesn't this happen elsewhere?

This would have been good for all Foundation students.

Issues of diversity increasingly have a voice and are spoken about more widely.

We need more conversations about those broader things - and beyond disability, to cover the range and fluidity of identities.

Would also be good to explore through the work of relevant non-normative artists.
Students feedback comments, May 2018

It was clear in talking to tutors that they also recognized and valued the diversity of students coming onto the course, and already explicitly aim to build from each students' personal interests and concerns:

It's important to value what they (the students) are already.

With any of the things we do as staff, we try to respond and guide the student. They are the catalyst, and we try to find a way through into one final project that is very much 'theirs'.

Student can find their own awareness of space, and their own voice. So this is very personal. Even through projects are similar year to year, the outcomes are different because they come from student responses.

The cohort is very diverse (…) the way the studio works, the community of learners is already going in that direction (of creativity in diversity). This is a strength.

Identity is a central theme. This goes back to start of course, where I say that 150 individuals join us, that this is not a matter of everyone being the same, but having a sense of themselves and bringing that to their work. Learning is not about becoming someone else, but finding who you are and using that productively in your work/creative practice.
Tutors feedback comments, May 2018

Students also noted and enjoyed this emphasis:

To me that is very important (the idea of inclusive learning) these things only happen by doing new things…… this university is a great place for the freedom that you get. It opens you to anything you want to learn and gives you the possibility to actually do it.

This shared underpinning was also embedded in learning and teaching design and delivery. For example, AID students valued being asked to do different and unexpected kinds of urban mapping, and understood why they were doing this:

> It is so powerful to look at the same space in as many different ways as you can; keep discovering new things all the time, transformative.
> Student feedback comment, May 2018

> It was a lot about inventing ways of presenting information, students inventing their own codes.
> Tutor feedback comment, May 2018

For the AMD students' focus group, the centrality of identity and difference was vital; and definitely informed their creative development and production (Fig, 3). They saw Tony as offering a role model for the positive disclosure of disability (rather than as something to keep hidden) that enabled many students to start from their own experiences of difference, including issues of mental health, as well as other hidden impairments.

> Fig 3: examples of AMD students work

Here there was also a strongly stated preference for more learning through doing, through making:

> [It is best to have] communication through making work and then getting a response works much better. So you go away and do what you need, the process is more developmental. Drawing is our most important tool…
> Student feedback comment, May 2018

This could also have involved, for example, more direct making involvement from Tony Heaton, the disabled artist:

> Tony brought in really good material about being an artist, about being disabled, about his understanding of art practice which the students really responded well to. We didn't do anything directly with him as a sculptor. It would be really good to work with materials directly onto bodies, as a provocation and to discuss.

> We could have had a more explicit mechanism for students to deal with identity. If it was about doing an apparatus for the body, we would get something more closely related to dealing with identity; this might be the way forward.
> Tutor feedback comments, May 2018

Students also would have liked more direct workshop-based involvement with Tony (although there were also comments about some lack of clarity about what kinds of media should be used for this project, and what kinds of outputs were acceptable).

Some tensions and ambiguities

Thus the data suggests that there is a strong collective basis for building on diversity and difference across the foundation courses. However, this was not surprisingly, complicated by a variety of agendas and parameters. So there were potential tensions across what students wanted from their learning, what artists were aiming to communicate, and how tutors framed the creative teaching and learning process.

The sub-elements of these three themes across students and artists are outlined in table 1. It can be seen that both these groups' attitudes were strongly aligned across all three themes; with variations relating to students immediate experiences, and artists awareness of a bigger picture around disability awareness and equality.

Students' attitudes and experiences		
valuing difference	**taking notice**	**locating creative practices**
Explicit engagement with what students bring to their learning/ making space for students to tell their own stories	Way of focusing on otherwise ignored everyday experiences/ attentiveness to detail	Diversity and difference as a creative generator
Studio-based exploration of links between identity, difference and creativity/ enabling students experiences to be a reference point for their own creative practices	Enabling a form of discovery; closer engagement with senses and spaces	Challenging art and design educational and practice assumptions
Opportunities for students to get to know each other & feel safe about disclosure	Making connections across educational and real world experiences and contexts; investigating relationships between difference, everyday practices and social justice.	Value of outside influences/bringing in people from outside the academy
Artists attitudes and roles		
valuing difference	**taking notice**	**locating creative practices**
Explicit engagement with what students bring to their learning/ making space for students to tell their own stories	Way of focusing on otherwise ignored everyday experiences/ attentiveness to detail	Diversity and difference as a creative generator
Studio-based exploration of links between identity, difference and creativity/ enabling students experiences to be a reference point for their own creative practices	Enabling a form of discovery; closer engagement with senses and spaces	Challenging art and design educational and practice assumptions
Redefining disability and difference as positive and potentially powerful locations	Making connections across educational and real world experiences and contexts; investigating relationships between difference, everyday practices and social justice.	Awareness of tensions in bringing in people from outside the academy

Table 1: initial coding; students and artists

It should be noted that the students in the AMD focus group were well aware that they were not necessarily representative of the group as a whole:

> *The people in this focus group are here because they already know about the importance of identity, and the importance of giving it a voice, so it can influence other foundation students who may not have thought about it so much.*
> Student feedback comment, May 2018

This level of engagement is reflected in the third row of table 1; and the strong congruence between these students' and disabled artists' perspectives. That is, they would like to go beyond starting from their own personal identities, by connecting this to a broader ethical discussion, across intersecting identities beyond disability, and to issues of social and spatial justice. This was

both about valuing difference positively, and critically and creatively challenging assumptions about what counts as 'normal', in everyday life, in educational processes and in creative practices. Students gave many examples of how the project had opened up disability in particular for creative and positive investigation.

For the AMD students, a project that started from difference and identity offered valuable opportunities for students to get to know each other & feel safe about disclosure. However, it was also noted that with vulnerable issues such as trauma and mental health, individual feelings of exposure could limit possibilities of celebrating this identity, or acting creatively around it. This was in part about how the artists and tutors responded, to enable students to feel they could control what was revealed and how.

> *We don't usually deal explicitly with the identity of the student – so it turned up some difficult areas; whether they wanted to expose things about themselves. But good to think about, to become aware of how issues of identity might be valuable in the professional milieu. I believe that some really serious things can be introduced at level 3, including ethics.*
>
> *(Because) cases of trauma, are maybe too exposing, the framework should enable students to make choices about what they want to disclose.*
> Tutor feedback comments, May 2018
>
> (*There was) some 'policing' by tutors of what was acceptable.*
> Student feedback comment, May 2018

These comments open up some of the complexities of engaging with disability, difference and identity as a creative generator for learning and teaching.

Students also wanted to see diversity embedded throughout the whole course, represented by a greater range of tutors; by explicit engagement with difference in, for example, the Critical and Cultural Studies (CCS) module; and by having more non-normative artists as explicit models. One student felt that the project should have enabled more Foundation students to engage with disability awareness and accessibility more directly, noting for example that

> *Tony as someone using a wheelchair coming into the classroom – it is actually really rude to have studio as an obstacle; not to re-arrange the furniture etc.*
>
> *Accessibility issues in this building are just terrible (…) We should all take responsibility for this, not just make it disabled people's problem.*
> Student feedback comment, May 2018

Finally, there was the issue of the importance of bringing 'outsiders' into the academy. For some students this was explicitly about challenging normative practices in art and design education and practice, rather than merely to give variety or as a 'one-off' element added on to existing curricula. Difference was not just about access to a wider diversity of tutors (by bringing in a 'disabled' artist); it made a difference in what was 'sayable' in the tutorial context. It enabled AMD students to discuss disability and impairment (as well as other marginalised identities) in an open, engaged and positive way. And it enabled students to think about their own emerging art practices within the wider context of social justice and ethics.

> *It's about having the right language and knowing how to talk about it (disability), and not feeling like you are creating an awkwardness.*
>
> *Tony promotes the social model in a real way, letting people know there is proper theory that affects the everyday for disabled people.*
>
> *He talked so freely about his life and successes; amazing to be opened up to this world. Opened up stuff in my mind, how I was thinking about the work I was making*.

> *Tony spoke about other artist examples, but he was also not afraid to talk about the practical side of his work, how much he is paid. (…) Would have been great to use the opportunity to think more about the business side of work.*
> Students feedback comments, May 2018
> *Tony talked about his own work, but not as symbol of power/status or authority. Rather, he included discussions of power, who controls what gets said and how it gets said.*
> Tutor feedback comments, May 2018

For the artists this potentially created some tensions around what their role was in the educational context, as there were varying experiences of how much they were 'integrated' into the design projects, the extent to which their role was made explicit to and by other design tutors (this will be returned to later.) For students these tensions were most immediately reflected in the role of the artists in assessment. They appreciated having external critics in reviews, but wanted this to be followed through into formal assessment processes.

> *The crits were brilliant, with Tony, Jos and Peter (as external critics). This was our first proper crit with external critics. So good, although it would have been good to have more notice. (didn't know there were going to be external critics, might have made people do more work).*

> *People have misconception about what crits are like; expect to more gentle. Got to toughen up. Constructive criticism can be amazing helpful; Chi has showed us that.*

> *Tony didn't mark work, so in a way what he said doesn't matter. Either come in as a guest and do a presentation, or be a participant in assessment.*

Again, this raises questions of just how to manage the role of 'outsiders' as vital elements in both supporting and challenging conventional educational norms. Whilst The DisOrdinary Architecture Project believes that disabled artists should not be expected to come into educational settings as tutors but as *artists*, the extent and nature of their involvement in formal educational procedures remains varied from case to case.

Issues of time and resources

For the tutors, the most immediate issue opened up by this evaluation was constraints on their time and on resources, making coordination and integration of different elements across the teaching week difficult to manage. For the initial coding, this required an additional fourth column ('Time-resource constraints') to incorporate this feedback, whilst the third (horizontal) thematic line covering deeper and more strategic implications - that was shared across students and artists with some minor variations - was here missing; suggesting that tutors do not have time to engage with some of the bigger issues of what constitutes the 'normal' in educational and discipline-based practices. Table 2 thus shows both similarities and differences in responses to those from students and artists.

Tutors roles and attitudes			
valuing difference	**taking notice**	**Locating creative practices**	**Time-resource constraints**
Explicit engagement with what students bring to their learning/ making space for students to tell their own stories	Way of focusing on otherwise ignored everyday experiences/ attentiveness to detail	Diversity and difference as a creative generator	Teaching and learning needing to be done 'on the run'

Studio-based exploration of links between identity, difference and creativity/ enabling students experiences to be a reference point for their own creative practices	Enabling a form of discovery; closer engagement with senses and spaces	Additive model- adapting existing curricula, where feasible; as well as clear drawing of disciplinary boundaries	Lack of time for integration across participants and courses

Table 2: initial coding; CASS tutors

This was especially true for AID tutors, where Joseph Young's SoundMarks activity was slotted in, as one of a sequence, with other experimental mapping work.

> *Just because of logistics I was not ever able to teach with Joseph or be there during the mapping crit.*
>
> *Because Joseph has an invisible disability, his hearing impairment was not obvious to staff.*
>
> *I didn't know Joseph had a hearing impairment. Seeing the final sound pieces, I was pleasantly surprised, but don't know anything about it.*
>
> *The sound project was happening on Tuesdays/Wednesday not on Fridays. So, the following week we ran pretty separately, kind of intentional; integrated in the crit. Interesting because you could start drawing relationships between the two.*
>
> *I was not part of the sound workshop – which meant I was only introduced to the outcomes in the crit. For us it has been difficult to make sound a part of the mapping projects – it is one of the most difficult to map, especially because we are quite visually oriented. So it was good that we found a way to do this, and evident that this was influencing what they [students] were looking at.*
> Tutors feedback comments, May 2018

Some students also felt that the project was too short, and that there were some resourcing issues.

> *It would be good to do week extra to do some drawings out of the sound. We did connect across the mapping; drawing the sound. But time too short - actually only day a week, so not much time.*
>
> *I wanted to say something about the materials; there were not enough little sponges to go on top (of the mics), so some recordings destroyed because of the wind.*
>
> *We needed more time; time is always the biggest problem. And probably now that we have done it, we would have done it better because we have some understanding!*

For Joseph, this was partly a logistical issue where increased student numbers (compared to the pilot in 2017) meant he could give less tutorial time to each student. It was also about the difficulties in finding more time for forward planning:

> *I would […] emphasise the need for a decent amount of time for the planning – ideally 3-4 months ahead so that room bookings, technical support, availability of staff, accompanied by a thorough examination of the ways in which sound practice can be integrated into the learning process, so that each week of the project can be thought through and planned to maximize the creative outcomes.*
>
> Artist reflection, April 2018

From his perspective, despite these time and resource pressures, the staff team were extremely helpful (from technical support through to course leaders). However, he also noted that:

> *[F]rom the beginning it would have been good to meet with all of the staff that were leading the two "mapping the city" projects – one of which was visual and collage based and the other our sound project. Had we been able to do this at the planning stage, we could have designed a much more integrated process where both halves of the project, the visual and the aural were learning from each other. [….] if the sound module had been able to mirror the work of the visual model more closely so that these comparisons and divergences could be teased out during the learning process.*

> Artist reflection, April 2018

This, then, suggests some missed learning opportunities for students to critically and creatively explore who and what is being mapped; what alternative forms of 'architectural' mapping often leave out around disability and difference; and about the potential to more explicitly explore learning as a process of increasingly developed creative iterations (a view also articulated by other Foundation tutors.) More integration also had the potential to enable other tutors to understand more about sound, particularly in acquiring a critical language for assessing the various sound landscapes produced by students. Whilst the whole mapping project produced a rich variety and quality of work (Fig. 4) time constraints perhaps prevented more reflective learning about the resulting cross-connections.

> *I think that we can all learn from each others' practice [artists and tutors] and whatever we can do facilitate that exchange of knowledge would be beneficial to the creative process.*

> Artist reflection, May 2018

> Fig 4: examples of AID students work

Difference, disability and identity in a disciplinary context

The alternative mapping projects were very well received by the AID students' focus group participants; who showed a clear and positive understanding of what they were being asked to do and why. When tutors were asked to reflect on the impact on students' work more generally, the key emphasis was again on personal development and interests;

> *[The initial mapping projects were] time-based as much as spatial; so a task of mapping movement between people….then drawing in the same way, but around some ordinary action in their house or elsewhere. It was a lot about inventing ways of presenting information, inventing their own codes. [,…]The Explorer project was the next project after this mapping. [….] It is never a given what they [the students] are going to do; we react to what the student understands as the issue. For some sound became very important; but the same with all the aspects, depends on individual personalities and interests.*

> *Students may not necessarily have 'lifted' something (specific from the sound project), more that it will enrich their practice in the future.*

> *Students can find their own awareness of space, and their own voice. So this is very personal. Even through projects are similar year to year, the outcomes are different because they come from student responses.*

> *(in the Explorer project) there was one student who took sound of starting point and then developed. They were really interested in the noise and the crowd and the busyness of one person; so starting from the idea that when somewhere is so noisy, so we don't pay attention. But then the project took different directions.*
> Tutors feedback comments, May 2018

This was located within the wider educational aim of enabling students to move across scales, and to explore and interpret their surroundings. Here, there was a clear difference between how learning and teaching the disciplines of art and architecture were articulated. If the AMD student

participants were committed to personal identity as a key factor in their learning as artists, that is, on valuing diversity (and with it, issues of social and spatial justice) the AID students were much more focused on alternative mapping, and on Joseph as a disabled artist enabling them to take notice of aspects of the ordinary that might otherwise be missed. AID tutors also emphasized this perceived difference between the disciplines of art and architecture/interior design.

> *Architecture is about designing for others. At the foundation level this is about small, extensions of the body, then it gets a bit more site specific. Even if the complexity of designing for other people remains in the background at Foundation level. […] [This means] bringing yourself [the student] in, but not from the point of view, that this is me. This is how you identify the context. I think that that is the difference compared to the artist. In AID, it is about how to read and then respond to a context. You put yourself there through a reading of something external.*
>
> *Once you are aware of what is going on [in the context] this is about identifying it, then acting with and for it. Always negotiating….*
>
> *The Explorer project does become more personal; we all bring what we already know, so this brings a different reading from our different backgrounds. There are different reasons why people are drawn to certain spaces rather than others.*
> Tutors feedback comments, May 2018

Whilst for AMD students there is an explicit desire to start from difference and embed identity both personally and in terms of engaging with others (through ethical and social justice concerns) in their practice; in AID there seems to be something of an implicit tension between starting from where students come from, and analyzing space as 'out there', as beyond the personal. Based on the experiences of *The DisOrdinary Architecture Project*, this is a common and complex issue for the disciplines of architecture and interior design, which thinking about difference and diversity can potentially help to unravel.

DEVELOPING KEY THEMES

From this initial coding, it is possible to propose both a set of conditions (some of which already exist in Cass Foundation) that can enable diversity and creativity to flourish; and some questions around tensions and ambiguities for art, design and architectural education, both at Foundation level and beyond, that need further exploration.

The central conditions might be outlined as follows:

- A diverse intake, bringing and sharing a rich range of perceptions and experiences;
- The valuing of, and building on, different kinds of knowledges, histories and identities;
- Introductory learning centred on taking notice, both as a detailed focus on all the senses, and as investigations into different (and differential) social, spatial and aesthetic practices;
- Developmental learning that builds on the personal, connecting it to the wider world;
- Educational, conceptual and material 'spaces' that enable the development of creativity that starts from difference;
- Explicit embedding of resources in support of diversity throughout courses.

There is already a growing literature (See for example Austerlitz, 2008; Hockings 2010; Bhagat and O'Neil 2011; Morgan and Houghton 2013; Richards and Finnigan 2015) as well as guidance materials (Appendices 1 and 2) on embedding diversity and inclusion into the curriculum, including in art and design; although less that deals explicitly with relationships between this and the enhancement of creativity. Here, the project and its evaluation have illuminated some of the factors that can make this relationship clearer; outlined here through four key themes.

Theme one: difference as a creative generator beyond diverse sensory experiences

First, many participants found the explicit engagement with personal identity and difference to be a valuable creative generator. There was a shared recognition of the value of starting from

difference through working with disabled artists, centrally by beginning from immersive and embodied experiences. In addition, the artists demonstrated how disability and impairment can offer creative design opportunities, rather than be a 'boring' problem to be solved. The fact that having a visual impairment made you 'see better' (Zoe Partington), or having a hearing impairment make you pay much more attention to sound and how it works (Joseph Young) can be a powerful way of shifting tutor and student assumptions about disabled people. For the AMD students in particular it allowed them to find positive creative resources out of their own perceived vulnerabilities. For all students, it was about making personal and creative discoveries through an attentiveness to detail, and by using unexpected and emergent analytical methods.

However, it also suggested that educational interventions like this need to do more than just raise students' sensory awareness (that is, increase their notice of all their senses in space). Rather, a core theme is to enable them to reflect on both their own 'being in the world' and that of others; and how this affects the act of creating as well as the expression of the created object or spatial map. We need to explore more ways of enabling students to translate their developing awareness and understanding of difference and diversity into art and design based not just the personal but that also enables some reflection and discussion of wider issues of social, material and spatial justice. At Foundation level this may best concern exploring what comes to count (in studio practice, in contextual studies, and in other aspects of the curriculum) as of value, and what gets ignored or downplayed.

In addition, we need to find ways to make productive and open-ended spaces for students (and tutors) to feel safe enough to take personal risks - exposing aspects of themselves, and learning to pay attention to the multiplicity of others - in order to develop creatively and critically.

Theme two; challenging normative art and design practices
At Foundation level, whilst students are new to a subject, they may also be ready to engage with learning as a critical practice that includes reflecting on what and why they are learning.

What is the value of bringing in outsiders, and how can they be best integrated into existing curriculum processes

Theme three; making time for making connections

Making connections across educational and real world experiences and contexts; investigating relationships between difference, everyday practices and social justice.

Better integration of *DisOrdinary* elements

More explicit engagement with disability and diversity issues (Explicit Curriculum)

Theme four: embedding diversity for creativity across the programme

Integrated engagement throughout module and course

Conclusion: moving to the next stage
This evaluation has highlighted that, whilst the key aim of enabling students to build on their differences and identities as a creative generator for their own practice was met; opportunities to embed and reflect on that learning, so as to inform on-going creative development were much less developed, and so reduced the educational value. From the feedback this was because activities were not adequately scaffolded pedagogically for students; the role of the 'outsider' disabled artists were not clearly enough defined; there were not opportunities for tutors to work in a more integrative way with the artists; and the overall intended learning outcomes were not explicit to all participants. This has led to the following research questions:

1. How can curriculum content be more explicitly supported to better enable student learning about creativity from diversity?

2. What is the role of an 'outsider' to the academy in learning about diversity as a creative force?
 3. How can in-house tutors have opportunities be more involved in the design and implementation of activities that centre on creativity and diversity?
4. Can learning outcomes better reflect the importance of diversity and creativity in the Foundation programme curriculum?

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