



Hay, P. (2022) 'School Without Walls', *Education 3-13*, 50 (4), pp. 521-535.

This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis Group in '*Education 3-13*' on 18/4/22 available online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2022.2052236>

ResearchSPAce

<http://researchspace.bathspa.ac.uk/>

This pre-published version is made available in accordance with publisher policies.

Please cite only the published version using the reference above.

Your access and use of this document is based on your acceptance of the ResearchSPAce Metadata and Data Policies, as well as applicable law:-

<https://researchspace.bathspa.ac.uk/policies.html>

Unless you accept the terms of these Policies in full, you do not have permission to download this document.

This cover sheet may not be removed from the document.

Please scroll down to view the document.

Dr Penny Hay: School Without Walls

Abstract

House of Imagination works with educators, artists and creative professionals to develop a creative approach to learning and researching experimental sites for pedagogical innovation. In our partnership work, our creative methodology, with everyone an artist, drives the ambition for artistic excellence. House of Imagination's signature project 'School Without Walls', in partnership with the egg theatre Bath, manifests this approach. School Without Walls is a radical creative learning approach that challenges current orthodoxies and informs a shift in the culture of learning, placing children's agency and engagement in the arts at the heart of the process. School Without Walls offers a creative enquiry-based approach to learning, reconceptualising the whole curriculum with the city as a campus for learning. The experience of co-designing the whole curriculum prioritises children's agency in learning. In particular St Andrew's Primary School's Connected Curriculum engages children and educators in creative and reflective practice and a curriculum approach that places agency and dynamic relationships at the centre.

Keywords

Agency, voice, arts, creativity, relationships, pedagogy

Introduction

'The concept of student agency is rooted in the principle that students have the ability and the will to positively influence their own lives and the world around them.'

OECD Position Paper 2030

Our creative research through creative practice in schools is based on how children learn best. Our philosophy is to enable children to grow to be creative learners for life. Agency is at the heart of the creative process. Wyse and Manyukhina (2021) define agency as 'children's capacity to act independently and to make choices over matters important to them' '*giving students voice and choice in how they learn*' (Manyukhina and Wyse, 2019:224).

Manyukhina and Wyse assert that the exercise of pupil agency can only be fostered if curriculum design and pedagogy are developed simultaneously. Robinson emphasises the

need for pupil voice and agency to empower children to ‘lead their own learning’ (Robinson 2014:18).

‘If teachers are to work towards building a pedagogic culture in which pupils are genuinely empowered to act as partners in their own learning, there need to be spaces for pupils to engage in learning dialogues with teachers which encourage pupils to exercise agency and be active partners in decision-making about teaching, learning and other classroom practices’. (Robinson 2014)

The power of our imagination and creativity, our need for connection and belonging is at the heart of the work with House of Imagination and School Without Walls. The role of the arts is central in this process. In School Without Walls, we invite children and young people to co-design their learning alongside educators, artists and cultural professionals in a space of encounter and possibility. School Without Walls (2010-22) is a partnership between House of Imagination, the egg theatre, Bath Museums and local schools.

Figure 1: “School Without Walls: Children exploring the city as a campus for learning”

School Without Walls | Creative manifesto

1. Be free to follow your fascinations
2. Ask and explore your own questions
3. Trust in your own ideas and interests
4. Express yourself
5. Work independently
6. Create a safe space to take risks
7. Attempt without the fear of failure
8. Be ok with the unknown
9. Be kind
10. Remember all our ideas matter
11. Choose how you do things
12. Be creative!
13. Do things in a different way
14. Cherish everyone’s individual way of doing things
15. Think outside the bubble

16. Use your senses
 17. Create time and space to explore and learn
 18. Make real life choices
 19. Be happy, engaged and achieve your best
 20. Feel connected to your city and community
- (Hay et al 2020, Hay 2021)

School Without Walls, doing school differently

Figure 2: My first day at the egg theatre

‘School Without Walls is amazing because you take charge of your own learning and there’s no limits to your imagination’. Child, age 10 years

Our creative education project ‘School Without Walls’ (Hay et al 2020: 91-106) is living this out daily – it creates spaces to dream, to think, to explore and experiment – breaking down the barriers between cultural centres and schools. But it requires courage and purposeful risk taking - it is a creative disruption. Transposing ‘school’ to an arts environment prompts both teachers and children to interrogate and reshape teaching and learning. The aim is to understand how the arts can transform the learning processes and they can help to develop a more creative society. School Without Walls creates an opportunity for educators to think about teaching and learning differently - to inspire learning everywhere, beyond the school walls. This ‘environment of enquiry’ transforms learning for both teachers and children, connecting their learning with the real world and learning in relevant contexts (ibid).

Creative Co-enquiry

‘School Without Walls creates an opportunity for educators to think about teaching and learning differently - to inspire learning everywhere, beyond the school walls. This ‘environment of enquiry’ transforms learning for both teachers and children. The approach is underpinned by a clear set of principles developed with 5x5x5=creativity: essentially this process involves inspiration, immersion and invention. Children and young people are engaged in meaningful, creative enquiries in real life contexts alongside adults as mentors in the learning process. Children and adults are both involved in seeking and posing good questions to deepen thinking and learning.

Careful observation, documentation and analysis of these learning experiences inform shared enquiries with children and young people; negotiating different ways of expressing and communicating their ideas. The quality of attention of the adults is crucial in this process in order to make the learning visible (e.g. to parents, educators, Ofsted) and inform responsive planning. There is constant reflection, review and rigorous collaboration between the adult team (artists, educators, practitioners from cultural centres and mentors) who share their creative expertise. This ensures continuous high quality professional development for the teachers, developing practice through action research.

Giving children and young people responsibility for their own learning, as active citizens, develops a repertoire of 'learning to learn' skills and competencies, and deepens their knowledge and understanding of the world. This has shown increased motivation, purposeful engagement, authentic learning and social empowerment. As learners, they develop their capabilities to be effective and confident communicators, to cooperate and collaborate well. In summary, creativity, responsibility, reflection and relationships are at the heart of this process. Developing a high quality, inclusive pedagogy is key to the success of the work in order to embed creative and reflective practice.' (Hay 2019)

Creativity is a right for everyone. Everyone is creative and every child should flourish. Sir Ken Robinson (2015) argued that children and young people are natural learners and need time, space and quality attention to develop their interests and passions and to cultivate their curiosity, to be creative, and to collaborate with each other. They are instead trapped in a factory production line model of education which inhibits imagination, creativity and learning.

Children as agentic learners

Children as autonomous and agentic learners, having the freedom to make choices in their learning is key to the pedagogic processes in School Without Walls. The focus on agency and dynamic relationships illustrates how vital it is that learning is understood as an active not a passive process. Children learn best through play and exploration, through critical and creative thinking in interdisciplinary, multi-modal learning. Learning is always an interaction between what the child knows and what they experience, it takes place in the interactions

between people. Direct instruction can actually inhibit their exploration (Fisher 2021). Central to this is the concept of intrinsic motivation, and children learn better when they are driven to learn through pure curiosity, to follow their fascinations. When we put the child at the centre of their own learning ‘when children are seen as actors and inventors their motivations and interests explode’ (Edwards et al 1998). Play, curiosity and sociability are three elements which, as Gray (2013) argues, are the evolutionary driving forces that enable children to have agency in their own learning.

‘The artists and educators co-constructed a provocation in response to the underlying theme of place that had emerged. The children were invited to layer up their experiences of the city using different colours to represent their knowledge and ideas, memories and feelings. The children critiqued their representation: ‘We should put down more feelings.’ Their explorations of where they lived and the expertise and sensibilities the artists lent the children allowed them to share their perspective of the place in which they lived and gave them a sense of ownership and citizenship’. Liz, mentor

A Creative Learning Ecology

Sir Ken Robinson also talked extensively about the power of imagination and creativity as key to creating our future - our cultures and societies are as much created out of our minds (Robinson 2001). Creating the conditions for optimising learning is essential to our human flourishing and vital at a time when our education system has become instrumentalised and marketised. At the heart of any school is the relationship between children and teachers.

A systematic review of literature (Davies et al 2011) concluded that three key aspects of school culture are vital in nurturing children’s creativity: the physical environment, the pedagogical environment, and partnerships beyond schools. Key features of the pedagogical environment included adults who modelled creativity and valued purposeful risk-taking as co-participants in work of personal significance, and time and space for experimentation and uncertainty. These principles are at the heart of School Without Walls.

With these in mind, teaching for creativity and teaching creatively is a central focus of our work, placing concepts around creativity and collaboration at the centre and alongside the community. Subsequent research with the Open University discusses practices in creative

pedagogy in primary schools that highlighted the importance of co-construction of learning with children, real-life contexts for learning, high value placed on control, agency and ownership, and teachers' high expectations in children's skilful creative engagement (Craft et al 2013).

Children in residence

In School Without Walls the curriculum is co-designed alongside educators, artists and cultural professionals. The curriculum is framed around thematic approaches invited by 'being in residence' in a cultural centre and responding to the context through arts based and cross-curricular learning, always prioritising children's choices, agency and freedom to follow their fascinations (Hay 2008). Children are encouraged to draw on the everyday knowledge that they bring into the learning environment, with teachers inviting links across the curriculum. Children are central to this co-constructed learning environment where adults encourage creative thinking, problem-solving, collaboration and communication. This approach promotes agency, freedom and choice.

School Without Walls offers a creative enquiry-based approach to learning, reconceptualising the whole curriculum with the city as a campus for learning. School Without Walls a 5-6 week creative residency which involves teachers and children working with an artist based in a cultural setting such as a gallery, museum or theatre. The experience of co-designing the whole curriculum prioritises children's agency in learning. In particular St Andrew's Church School's Connected Curriculum engages children and educators in creative and reflective practice and a curriculum approach that places agency and dynamic relationships at the centre.

'One day we won't have timetables or people telling us what to do, we'll have to do it on our own. Why wait, let's start now.' Child, St Andrew's Church School, Bath

Figure 3: Children from St Andrew's Primary School Bath are involved in co-enquiries in inspirational cultural spaces

St Andrew's Church School Bath

We want to prioritise agentic learners, placing clear values of self-worth and connection at the heart of the curriculum, inviting a space for dialogue. Dialogue invites careful listening,

openness and a deep engagement with another. School Without Walls does exactly this and aligns beautifully with the ethos of St Andrew's Church School, co-designed with the parent community. The school motto is *Learning for Living - Life in all its Fullness*.

At St Andrew's Church School, pupil agency is integrated into every aspect of the school through high quality of teaching and learning. Positive relationships, making connections, wellbeing, meaningful, relevant learning and enabling environments are central to the process. In particular dynamic relationships underpin the way the educators work alongside the children and the parent community.

'I've never been to a museum before. This is amazing!'

'There's so much I love. I can't stop drawing.' Year 1 children

The focus of the curriculum is around three key themes: *Me and my relationships* - families and school; *Me and the city* - connections with museums and galleries; *Me and the world* - thriving through creative connections, with the community thriving together. An emphasis on Green Classrooms demonstrates the teachers' passion for the environment and sustainable education as well as inspiring the children's passion to create hope for the future through raising awareness of climate change.

Reflections from Jayne Rochford Smith, Headteacher St Andrew's Church School

'Through positive relationships we enable children to make connections with the world they live in and make it meaningful and relevant, and place the wellbeing of the child at the heart of that process. We know that if children don't feel attuned and they don't feel self-regulated, then they're not going to be able to work collaboratively, they're not going to be able to access the curriculum in the way that we want to. We want to offer enabling environments, for all of our children within the community. The power of relationships – with adults and children but also the relationships between the children themselves, and with the wider community. With School Without Walls we've introduced children to the world around them, taking them out into galleries, working really closely with artists and creative professionals.

We have focused on what children need to feel a sense of belonging and a sense of understanding of their city. Our big ambition is that a child would leave us in year six, having visited every museum and every gallery, every possible cultural centre in Bath, that they will be able to walk around the city and feel they knew the city – so that they can go to a museum and know that this is part of their heritage, and they belong here.

So that was our ambition and that was how we drew it out and started to frame our curriculum, so we created the curriculum that grows with the child - the curriculum grows with you as you grow through school. Our intent statements are very much focused around how we want our children to thrive and our strapline became that we believe that all children should thrive in our school. St Andrew's school is rooted in the living landscape, connecting us with the city and its cultural heritage and that's how we felt we wanted the curriculum to develop. Supporting the parents is equally as important and we try to involve them as much in what we do to enable them to feel connected'.

Figure 4: Every child has a reflective journal to document their learning

In developing a culture of empowerment, trust and collaboration, children are able to see themselves as competent and creative learners. In this learner-led environment of inquiry, children are central to the co-design of the curriculum, making connections as co-researchers in learning. Agency and inclusion are at the heart of the teaching process. The notion of co-agency prioritises teachers and children working together to co-construct a meaningful learning context. The 'pedagogy of listening' (Edwards et al 1998) is vital in ensuring all voices are heard which in turn develops a climate of trust, openness and mutual respect.

'I think trust between the artist and teacher is such an important thing. This relationship allows us both to take new risks and step into authentically new territories and try things out.' Lucy, artist

Co-design of the curriculum

Children's voice and agency contributes to the ongoing design of the curriculum and importantly engages parents and families in the children's learning through careful documentation and exchange. Children's interests and curiosities are woven into the design

of each School Without Walls residency, consulting children, teachers and parents - observing and listening to children in their play and learning is vital part of the process (Hay 2017). The teachers witness the children's interests and are able to follow this up with integrating a responsive learning environment. We need to give children opportunities to choose and exercise their agency, in order to develop their creativity and confidence as citizens who can make decisions, to encourage children to play, imagine, problem solve, create, learn and share.

‘It felt as if we were embarking upon an adventure together where learning was life sized and life wide.’ Liz, mentor

Creative Pedagogy

School Without Walls is an innovative creative pedagogical approach and has had a significant impact in schools (Hay and Paris 2020). Engagement with the creative pedagogical models for learning has transformed professional practice, improved teachers' confidence and increased learners' confidence, wellbeing, literacy and engagement (Hay et al 2020). The ongoing research explores the characteristics of a successful creative learning environment, and how educators can be supported to create such environments. The approach is integrated into the work of schools through ongoing continuous professional development. This has involved bespoke sessions with teachers, artists, mentors and cultural professionals.

The research has shown that learning and engagement in the arts can be fostered using the following creative pedagogical approaches and models with practising artists and cultural institutions collaborating with teachers, parents and children (Hay and Paris 2020). The approach is based on principles of co-construction, promotion of children's agency, integrated themes and topics, and a focus on exploration and process of learning rather than necessarily the final product. The work has also shown that teachers are more likely to engage in creative co-inquiry, and have their perception of children's capacities to be independent learners transformed through participation in Schools Without Walls (Hay and Paris 2020).

‘I've deliberately made myself sit and learn alongside the children throughout the project ... The biggest thing about this project is that it has just allowed me to relax and let the children have some ownership. For a teacher, I think that is quite hard but

you become an observer rather than trying to lead them the whole time. It's taught me that they don't need leading.' (Sam, teacher)

Action Research Enquiries

A defining characteristic of School Without Walls is flexibility and responsiveness to the needs and interests of the participating schools, mirroring the methodology applied during the residency. In the early stage of the project, meetings with the headteachers and staff, professional development sessions were used to identify the 'lines of enquiry' for the residencies. Embedding the arts and creativity in on-going action research enquiries is a key element of the success of this process. Each class that took part had a focus question to explore during the process, for example, what does the notion of belonging look like in our school; how can we nurture an ethos of inclusion?

In addition, the arts are an integral part of learning and understanding to work alongside others in a community of enquiry. In particular contemporary arts practices and pedagogies facilitate ways of knowing and understanding the world. The impact on learners highlights the importance of agency in learning. Children see themselves as active citizens, as protagonists of their own learning, making choices and taking responsibility. Children are respected as co-researchers in the process of learning. Emphasis on process not product or outcome allows for a more open space of possibility, a space for dialogue and co-enquiry. This in turn supports children to develop an understanding for how they can become agents of change in their community.

'My imagination is stronger so I can think more clearly with my imagination.' (Year 5 Child)

Figure 5: Children from St Michael's Junior School Twerton, Bath exploring their ideas in 100 languages of expression

'Students really grew in confidence and thrived from being able to use the skills they had practiced. I was struck by how clear it had made the meaning and relevance of the learning. Learning in the classroom can be very abstract but the ability and freedom to use and see learning in situations made the learning completely visible ... I found myself getting lost within my own journal, and again had a different working

experience. It felt very relaxed and collaborative; with me and the children sharing ideas. My role as a teacher developed into more of a role of modelling and encouraging the children through their learning.’ Matt, PGCE student

Figure 6: Students and teachers work alongside children in the process of co-enquiry

Key elements of School Without Walls

Children and young people as creative and active citizens

Creative and empowering environments

Residency in a cultural setting

Engagement in co-enquiry

Adults as companions in learning

Documentation of emerging themes

Access to live and real art

Working alongside creative role models

Multi-sensory learning in 100 languages of expression

Time, space and attention to creative processes

Personal growth and independence

Democratic, creative and reflective pedagogy

(Hay 2019)

Habits of Mind

In our work we demonstrate the benefits of developing creative ‘habits of mind’. Habits of mind are the individual qualities that a person can develop in order to learn effectively – they are dispositions or behaviours that help us learn how to learn. When these qualities in thinking and acting become habitual, young people can fully embrace lifelong creative learning. If young people are trusted and respected to have agency in their own learning, their aspirations, confidence, engagement and wellbeing increase. These dispositions include

creativity, critical thinking, complex problem solving, compassion, curiosity, creative resilience, imagination, intrinsic motivation, playfulness, valuing uncertainty, making connections and reflection.

In School Without Walls we talk about the 5 Rs at the heart of good learning: Respect, Real-life (contexts), Relationships, Research and Relevance - and also the 4 Is: Imagination, Inspiration, Immersion and Invention. At Bath Spa University we have redesigned our postgraduate certificate in education around the 4 Cs. creativity, critical thinking, collaboration and care. The first 3 are recommended by the World Economic Forum as the skills needed for future society. Intending teachers can see how creativity manifests across the curriculum, not just in the arts, prioritizing processes of co creation and immersive learning with social and environmental justice right at the heart.

Children's progress

‘The experiences I have had at School Without Walls are important to me because it has helped me to be creative and independent.’ (Year 6 child)

‘Our journals have inspired me because they are a true, honest and a beautiful record of our individual experiences. We can write and record our feelings without shyness or judgement. (Year 6 child)

Involvement in School Without Walls has resulted in positive effects on children's approaches to learning core subjects, particularly literacy, and their ability to work as a team, independence, engagement in learning, ownership of learning, sense of active learning, oracy skills, learning resilience and preparedness to take risks.

‘12 months later it was some of our SWW pupils who made the best progress in writing by end of KS2. And I think the two things are related!’ Chris, assistant headteacher

Teachers referred to breakthroughs with children who had previously been disengaged learners. Some children developed a greater degree of connection and sense of belonging in the cultural centres they engaged with as part of School Without Walls and were more likely to visit these independently with their families. This creative learning ecosystem is nourished

by the partnerships and conditions we can create, collaborate, inspire and explore together, with creativity and compassion (Hay et al 2020).

This points towards the need for both agentic professional development for teachers and in children and young people having agency in their lives. We need to take the coercion, fear and anxiety out of schooling (Fisher 2021) and focus directly on the nature of learning itself. We should be asking children what they want to learn, how they want to learn, who they want to collaborate with and how they want to record and share their ideas. We need to give children and young people the opportunity to act on their own agency, supporting their own self-concept and wellbeing as competent learners at this challenging time. Concepts such as self-regulation and meta-cognition become even more important for students learning how to learn most effectively.

‘It’s strange because I have been born already, but this feels like I have been born again. I hope my mum can see how SWWs has affected me. It’s changed me.’ (Year 5 Child)

‘School Without Walls is amazing because there are so many opportunities and things will sometimes change you as a person.’ Year 5 child

The impact of School Without Walls

Positive professional relationships were established between schools and cultural centres. Educators valued the access the children had to experience art works first hand and to learn within the cultural centre and with their staff who shared their expertise and enthusiasm with the children and teachers. Teachers and children commented on how this was a far more exciting and relevant way to learn. The relationship with the cultural centres gave the children opportunities to be immersed in high quality art which acted as a provocation to their learning. Schools also valued collaboration with artists and the different ways of thinking they brought enabling children and teachers to experience different forms or ways of learning and a focus on process. One teacher felt being able to see and experience different ways of working ‘opened the doors’ to the possibilities of working in and through the arts and of doing school differently. During the residencies, teachers were able to explore the process of co-enquiry. Another teacher felt the children had been able to develop their ideas as a continuous process through co-enquiry, not distinguishing between art forms or disciplines

but letting their ideas ‘flow’ from one to another which she attributed directly to working alongside artists.

Teachers felt that School Without Walls had raised the status of the arts in children’s learning providing them with the provocation to think differently and expanding perceptions of the arts as a way to bring creative and artistic ways of thinking to children’s learning and in several cases their pedagogical approach to core curriculum subjects. Some teachers tried out a different balance of structure and freedom in their approach to literacy giving the children more freedom of choice and less imposed structure for their writing. Another also reflected on how to create a balance within an arts based approach to learning valuing open-ended enquiry but also seeing a place for the teaching of particular skills. For St Andrews, the Head teacher felt they had a drive to make the arts a priority within children’s experience.

Schools also reflected on the risk and challenge required to embed learning through the arts. They identified an element of risk in supporting children in following their interests and balancing these with curriculum needs; felt it required school leaders who were prepared to take these risks because they valued arts-based work and recognised the challenge for schools to find the capacity and resources to embed learning through the arts.

The School Without Walls approach ensures pupils are actively engaged in arts-based learning by creating significant disruption. The lesson format, subject focus, learning approach, student-teacher relationships and, during residency, the learning space are all transformed. By introducing a new class structure, engaging artists as democratising collaborators and by situating children at the helm of a creative learning objective the focus shifts to the children’s engagement with the world, through the art form.

The focus of School Without Walls ensures children’s agency in learning. The artists and teachers work collectively as creative provocateurs, responding to ability and level and reflecting regularly on what adjustments must be made to ensure each child is appropriately supported and evidence of their progression recorded. The partnership between teachers, mentors and artists within School Without Walls, through professional development, reflection sessions and a shared professional skillset, is always focused on the quality of activities. School Without Walls sits within the existing school framework and the whole team is guided by the required outcomes for each child, albeit through a new and profoundly creative process.

‘House of Imagination has made an exceptional contribution to improving the quality and impact of teaching and learning in order to improve children’s life chances. Through School Without Walls whole schools are indeed transformed’. (Mike Young, former Director of Education, Bath)

Thinking about school differently

The current education system in England is perhaps obsessed with exams and results than ever before. As suggested previously, the narrative around the catch-up curriculum and levelling up poses a deficit model of education. Instead, focusing on the agency of children places the image of the child and young person as having a voice as active citizens, being engaged in their own learning rather than repeating errors of the past and perpetuating current orthodoxies around prescriptive and packaged learning - this is much more about the performance of schools rather than the individual child or young person's development.

However, post pandemic we have the opportunity to re-imagine education and create the conditions for every child to flourish and reach their potential. There has never has been more opportunity to think about this as creativity in a crisis and think about what we really value, especially around social and environmental justice for all children young people. Our work invites all children and young people to feel proactive in their efforts to learn, to be self-aware of their own learning dispositions and motivations to learn effectively by making these learning processes visible.

Children have the right to participate in the arts, culture and education as set out in the United Nations Convention of the Child:

article 12 (respect for the views of the child)

article 13 (freedom of expression)

article 28 (right to education)

article 31 (leisure, play and culture)

The Kids Rights Index (2021) is the annual global index which ranks how the 181 United Nations member states that have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child adhere to and are equipped to improve children’s rights and shows that the UK gives inadequate

priority for children's rights. Countries receive scores in five areas of children's rights 'life', 'education', 'protection', 'health' and 'enabling environment for child rights'. Iceland continues to rank first. The UK was near the bottom of the list at 169 out of 181. This is a worrying reflection on our image of the child.

The school is a system of relationships and learning is at the centre of this creative ecosystem. We are all interconnected and we are constantly shaped by our collective experience. Children develop and grow in relation to other people and places, their families and friends, their peers and communities. Our work is placing ourselves as researchers alongside children, we are researching ourselves, 'researching children researching the world' (Bancroft, Fawcett and Hay 2008). Co-designing environments of encounter is a creative and responsive way of ensuring relational and creative pedagogies and experiential learning. This process respects children as competent agentic learners and creative knowledge builders.

The 'catch up curriculum' proposed in response to 'lost learning' in the pandemic suggests a deficit model of learning. Instead children need a 'reconnection' curriculum, one that prioritises agency, creativity, nurture and wellbeing. Children's lives are diverse, complex and multi layered, even more so now than ever before. With the current crisis we have seen the need to focus on the future of children's learning in the post pandemic world. We need radical imagination for radical change. A participative, creative and democratic learning culture creates a more dynamic set of relationships between learners, adults and children making connections, being and becoming artists.

Figure 7: How I loved and gave my heart on this piece to show that I cared and took my very time to finish this. If I never gave such love it may not be here for you to see.' (Year 5 child)

Conclusions

'This research is creative and adaptable to circumstances and context, displaying innovation in learning that is leading the way in our understanding of the role and significance of the arts in the Primary and Secondary curriculum. (Professor Alf Coles, School of Education, University of Bristol)

School Without Walls requires courage – it involves reconceptualising the curriculum, placing the arts at the heart of learning in 100 languages, making meaning through all their senses. Creativity, real life contexts, learner agency, reflection and relationships are central to this process. School Without Walls has the potential to be adapted to a variety of different

contexts across phases. The magical transformations that have happened in Bath are due to the investment in time and space to make this happen and an unwavering belief in the power of the arts.

The arts manifest the possibility of a different kind of future. Especially in this time of uncertainty and trauma, we must prioritise a learning environment in all schools that embraces uncertainty, risk, failure and change. There is global recognition that creativity and the arts are vital to social movements, and change taking ideas into action. Anna Craft talked about ‘possibility thinking’ (Craft et al 2015), being able to imagine the best solutions for going forward, not only in response to climate change, but also the education system, very much around children people's personal, social, cultural identities and how they can make a difference in the world alongside each other. The arts particularly have the power to be transformational, especially now with the pandemic, and the ecological emergency then we can respond with these imaginative solutions together.

Through the explorations of creative practices and pedagogies we can make creative learning visible, to help us understand our world and empower us to change it. The future is uncertain for our children and young people but hope and imagination will remain vital for all our potential futures.

‘Every child should have access to arts and culture, and to the benefits that access brings. The arts are a positive force in society: children feel more confident in their ability to create, challenge and explore, to be part of society, and to make change happen. The arts empower children. They contribute to the development of all aspects of a child’s potential and personality: studying the arts fosters creativity, innovation, empathy, and resilience. The arts enrich young lives, making them happier and healthier. Access to the arts is access to our national life, and it is a social justice issue’.

Moira Sinclair, Cultural Learning Alliance 2019

Dedication to Sue East 1959-2018 | A Shining Light

The School Without Walls community dedicates this publication to Sue East, who prematurely passed away in December 2018. This loss impacts not only on her family and friends but on all those who advocate for children's wellbeing and creativity. It is unbelievable that Sue can no longer model her trailblazing approach to primary education on a daily basis, as she has for the past 30 years in and around Bath. Her dying wishes were to spread the 'fairy dust' – we will ensure that we continue the work she started. In this way, Sue is forever present in our thinking and in our practice. We will remember her in our efforts to make life better for children through their learning.

Sue was an extraordinary and inspirational person. Her vision allows for the transformation of both teachers and learners by allowing them to be courageous, take positive risks and push the boundaries of possibility, thus enabling a truly research-full school and inspiring a new generation of teachers. Sue faces all challenges with courage and a passion for things being different. She touches the lives of many, fighting for every child's right to the transformational quality of the arts as well as a range of other life-long learning experiences such as the great outdoors, spirituality and philosophy, local history, modern languages and foreign travel - all with equality and inclusivity. The educational landscape is different because of Sue and her great capacity for possibility-thinking. She always has a Plan B. Sue, you will always shine.

Dr Penny Hay

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to all the children and adults involved in School Without Walls

References

Bancroft, S., Fawcett, M. and Hay, P. 2008. *Researching Children Researching the World: 5x5x5=creativity*. Trentham Books.

Craft, A., Cremin, T., Hay, P., Clack, J. 2014. Creative Primary Schools: developing and maintaining pedagogy for creativity *Ethnography and Education* 9(1):16-34.

Craft, A., Chappell, K., Cremin, T., and Jeffrey, B. 2015. *'Creativity, Education and Society: Writings of Anna Craft'*. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.

Davies, D., Jindal-Snape, D., Hay, P., Howe, A., Collier, C., Digby, B. 2011. Creative environments for learning in schools: A systematic review of literature

Edwards, C., Gandini, L., and Forman, G. 1998. *The Hundred Languages of Children – Advanced Reflections*. Greenwich, Connecticut: Ablex Publishing

Fisher, N. 2021. *'Changing Minds: How children can take control of their own learning'*. Hachette.

Gray, P. 2013. *The play deficit*. *Aeon Magazine*.

Hay, P. 2017. '5x5x5=creativity: principles, learning and our legacy.' In: Goodliff, G., Canning., N, Parry, J. and Miller, L. eds. *Young children's play and creativity: multiple voices*. Routledge

Hay, P. 2019. *'School Without Walls 2019'*, 5x5x5=creativity

Hay, P. and París, G. 2020. '5x5x5=creativity: art as a transformative practice.' *International Journal of Art and Design Education*. Volume 39, Issue 1

Hay, P., Sapsed, R., Sayers, E., Benn, M., and Rigby, S. 2020. *'Creative activism: learning everywhere with children and young people.'* *FORUM*, 62 (1). pp. 91-106.

Hay, P. 2021. School Without Walls <https://www.creativityexchange.org.uk/ideas-hub/school-without-walls> (accessed 1 October 2021)

KidsRights. 2021. KidsRights Index <https://kidsrights.org/research/kidsrights-index/> (accessed 20 October 2021)

Manyukhina, Y. and Wyse, D. 2019. Learner agency and the curriculum: A critical realist perspective. *The Curriculum Journal* 30(3): 223–243.

OECD Position Paper 2030. 2018. *The Future of Education and Skills*, OECD

Robinson, C. 2014. *Children, Their Voices and Their Experiences of School: What Does the Evidence Tell Us?* York: Cambridge Primary Review Trust.

Robinson, K. 2001. *Out of our Minds; Learning to be Creative*. Capstone Publishing

Sinclair, M. in *Cultural Learning Alliance Briefing Paper No. 5*. 2019. The Arts for Every Child *Why arts education is a social justice issue*. <https://culturallearningalliance.org.uk/> (accessed 30 September 2021)

United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/> (accessed 31 August 2021)

Wyse, D. and Manyukhina, Y. 2021. Children's Agency and the Curriculum <https://theeducation.exchange/childrens-agency-and-the-curriculum/> (accessed 20 December 2021)

Biography

Dr Penny Hay FRSA, FHEA is an artist and educator, National Teaching Fellow, Reader in Creative Teaching and Learning, Senior Lecturer in Arts Education, School of Education, Research Fellow, Centre for Cultural and Creative Industries, Bath Spa University and Director of Research, House of Imagination (formerly 5x5x5=creativity). Signature projects include School Without Walls, House of Imagination and Forest of Imagination. Penny's doctoral research focused on how we support children's learning identity as artists. Penny is a member of the RSA Innovative Education Network, Crafts Council Learning Advisory Group, Visiting Lecturer at Plymouth College of Art and Co-Investigator on the AHRC Global Challenges Research project 'Rethinking Waste' in Mumbai.

<https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/our-people/penny-hay/>