



CREATIVE EDUCATION

TOWARDS A MORE **CREATIVE** FUTURE

'TOWARDS A MORE CREATIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM' (SEPT 2018)
INTERIM EVALUATION OF OUTCOMES (APRIL 2019)



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BURREN COLLEGE OF ART



WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID

"The symposium reignited ideas and passions that have lain dormant or had faded over the years" (Professor of Education)

"The symposium has allowed me the skills to get into my school and collaborate with the board on a development plan to transform our school into an environment of academic and individual excellence." (Student)

"Real action towards positive change"

*"A greater insight into the shared sense of a desire for change in Irish education"
"Fellowship with like-minded others to really make things better." (Parent)*

"Absence of young people's voice in education decisions"

"Teachers themselves are depleted/burnt out by the constraints of the system and can become agents for change."

*"We need to listen to the student voice -
there is great value in stepping away from the system to reflect."*

*"You created a creative atmosphere of curiosity
and celebration underpinned by respect and rigour."*

*"It's imperative that we keep the conversation going.
Create a space for all to get involved and try to expand as much as possible."*

*"Thank you. In my 30 years as an educator working with educational disadvantage,
it is the first time I have spent an extended period of time with like-minded people
who think outside the box."*

IMPORTANT TAKE-AWAYS

- There is widespread consensus on the scale of change required in education to match the challenges of the world ahead (and reflecting **OECD 2030 Learning Framework**);
- Initiatives can come from anywhere in the system;
- Students have a key role to play in the change - their voice must be heard;
- **Burren College of Art** has an important role to play as a facilitator of safe, respectful conversations and a source of expertise on creative process.



INDEX

1. Introduction – purpose, summary and thanks	1
2. Theory of Change	2
3. What did we discover?	4
4. Emerging prototypes	5
5. The Six-month Evaluation –	6
Questions asked and responses received	
Q1. Lasting Benefits?	7
Q2. Most important learnings	9
Q3. Did the Symposium succeed in its aims?	11
Q4. Advice for furthering the work?	14
Q5. Impressions and after-thoughts	16
6. What happens now?	18



1. INTRODUCTION

There are three main purposes to this document:

- (i) To provide an interim evaluation of the impact of the Symposium process for funders and others;
- (ii) To point to the potential of such a process for future events and
- (iii) To help inform continuing developments in the field.

It is in the nature of this work that its full impact may not be visible for some considerable time as new ideas are sparked, connections made and actions are triggered. This six month summary evaluation is thus a snapshot of what is apparent at the time of writing and we would welcome ongoing feedback from those who have been inspired to action, however modest, by the Symposium process.

EVENT SUMMARY

The trajectory of the unfolding symposium from intention to realization is to be found [here](#). In particular, here is the **Symposium Report** and a **short video** which conveys a flavor of the processes at work.

SUMMARY REPORT

The Symposium was preceded by a survey of opinion, taking the pulse of the system at a point in time which reflected the many real challenges and the sense of overwhelm that were pervasive, but also a palpable sense of optimism that now was a good time for transformative change to happen. **'Voices from the Field'**

Over three days of creative process in an art college, four streams of conversation unfolded as sixty participants from across the education system from the policy-makers to students and parents excavated the macro dynamics of the system, the micro climate of the teacher/student coal-face, the unspoken assumptions lying below the surface and deployed kinaesthetic and visual media to access a knowing deeper than the conventional.

The four 'streams' flowed together in plenary sessions as music created a context in which the common elements were distilled into recurring themes:

- Of a system arrested in patterns of stuckness, seeking to transcend difficult thresholds; the forces of fear and control that were inhibiting progress;
- The need to break open the system without breaking the people in the system;



- The desire for a simplified agenda, creating ‘a common vision for an uncertain future’ that would state what we value and what we imagine the purpose of education to be at this time;
- The challenge to be vulnerable and address taboos; the courage to confront entrenched power structures and vested interests and prioritise discretionary resources towards the under-privileged even at the expense of our own privileges.

A series of fifteen prototypes emerged from the ferment of creative process of which four have gathered forward momentum beyond the Symposium with the potential to cause significant systemic impact. These are elaborated later in this report. The latent harvest of the Symposium on the practice of each of those who participated can only be imagined.

Fulsome thanks are due, in particular to the Tomar Trust, the primary funder without whose support the event would not have been possible; to artist, Anne Madden, for her material and inspirational support and to the skilful design and facilitation of Chris Chapman (lead facilitator), Joan O’Donnell, Valerie Jackman, Paul O’Gorman (facilitators), Ester Boldau (Graphic harvester), Martin Hayes (musical alchemy) and Paul Collard (keynote listener).

2. THEORY OF CHANGE

As organisers, we clearly had a plan for how we thought change (towards a more creative education system) might happen.

We had conducted more than 40 conversations with diverse stakeholders in advance of the Symposium, which gave us good insight into both people’s perceptions of the current state of the education system and their experiences of how change does and doesn’t happen.

We saw a system where there seemed to be greater consensus about the desired direction of travel than most people realised and where that consensus represented a more radical departure than most people thought possible. (And happily, that departure was broadly aligned with developing policy in the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and with thinking in the OECD 2030 Learning Framework)



OECD 2030 LEARNING FRAMEWORK VISION

We are facing unprecedented challenges – social, economic and environmental – driven by accelerating globalisation and a faster rate of technological developments. At the same time, those forces are providing us with myriad new opportunities for human advancement. The future is uncertain and we cannot predict it; but we need to be open and ready for it. The children entering education in 2018 will be young adults in 2030. Schools can prepare them for jobs that have not yet been created, for technologies that have not yet been invented, to solve problems that have not yet been anticipated. It will be a shared responsibility to seize opportunities and find solutions. **OECD 2030 Learning Framework**

The questions that occupied us were not so much ‘Where should we be going?’ but, rather, ‘What will it take to get us from here to there?’ - working in a system widely seen as conservative, better at policy than implementation and not always good at reflecting upon itself.

In essence our approach was to:

- Invite a microcosm of the system - including students, teachers, principals, parents, artists, government, relevant agencies, teacher education colleges, unions, managerial bodies etc. - into one ‘room’, away from day to day limitations and pressures;
- Ensure sufficient safety that people could be honest about their perspectives and vulnerabilities, where mutual understanding could grow and productive dialogue regarding possible ways forward could take place;
- Enable the system to be more fully visible to itself;
- Use creative facilitation methods based largely on **Theory U** and deploying music to facilitate insights, relationship building and breakthrough thinking;
- Create the conditions in which co-created initiatives could emerge.

This creative approach meant that neither we nor our funders knew exactly what would happen. We focused on creating the conditions for possible breakthrough change, rather than specific changes. In terms of creating conditions, we had the stunning landscape of the Burren, the creativity of an Art College, an experienced facilitation team and warm hospitality to work with!

There is more to the ‘theory’ behind what we were doing – if you would like to know more please ask Chris: (chrischapmaninireland@gmail.com)



3. WHAT DID WE DISCOVER?

A Creative Conversation Process opening Perspectives and enabling movement towards a More Creative Education System

OPENING UP PERSPECTIVES

- Recognizing young people as key drivers of change
- Education of the heart - not just from the neck up
- Moving beyond silos, connecting perspectives
- Arts as an enabler
- Trusting teachers and schools
- Removing unnecessary structures
- The system as scaffolding, a supporting structure within which creativity can happen
- Tuning in to a uniquely Irish way of doing things - 'Tá dóchas sa dúchas'
- Need an overarching vision/purpose for education - not just economics
- Less initiatives - more simplicity and space
- Needing to include the alienated and to prioritise resources
- Creativity includes risk of failure and fear
- "This is it"

HOW?

- Time
- Spaciousness
- Hospitality
- Openness and curiosity (we don't have all the answers)
- Collaboration
- Diversity
- Linking margins and centre
- A willingness to go deeper and face realities and ask questions
- No more complicated than necessary
- Making the system visible to itself
- Valuing / not judging
- Attention to the process and changing consciousness
- 'Tobar' and 'Sos'
- Listening and doing
- Prototyping - not having to have everything 'right'

LEARNING BY DOING EMERGING PROTOTYPES

- Citizens' Assembly for Renewal in Education (with substantial young people involvement)
- Wild Atlantic Way of Education (WAVE) - a network of places for 'cracking open' conversations
- Burren College of Art - A sane space for personal and professional development
- Re-imagining Teacher Education
- Teaching through mentoring
- Teaching and Learning for an unknown future
- AI-based learning
- School is out for now
- Life of the Heart
- Vulnerability
- Students' Year Survey
- Re-designing school spaces / architecture
- Whole-school reflective space
- Online learning for greater opportunities
- Place-based learning (PBL)
- Advocating for the less-heard voices
- **Continuing conversations!!**
- **Need to keep movement connected**



4. EMERGING PROTOTYPES

Fifteen prototype initiatives were explored.

We are aware that the four outlined hereunder are being actively progressed and we feel confident that other ideas hatched and/or inspired by the Symposium will emerge and bear fruit in due course.

- 1. BEACONS (renamed from original WAVE):** a network of places for cracking-open conversation between teachers, students and parents in local contexts using the creative, open and safe protocols deployed in the Burren;
- 2. Citizen's Assembly for Renewal in Education:** an initiative to secure a commitment in the next programme for government for a citizens assembly process to explore the big themes of reform and renewal that will allow the education system to adapt to the requirements of the 21st century world;
- 3. Burren College of Art – a sane reflective space :** The potential of the Burren College of Art as a 'Sane Reflective Space' for nurturing the personal and professional development of education leaders is being progressed while its capacity to show-case innovative work in education has been further actualised in conjunction with **Social Innovation Fund Ireland**
- 4. Place-based Learning (PBL):** PBL, already a reality in the Burren region, entails preparing students for life by engaging in learning in their native place, using the world as an outdoors classroom and addressing the sense of alienation from the physical world. The next step is to seek to integrate PBL into the JC curriculum supported by teacher training about PBL methodology.

The Annual 2019 Inspectors' Conference was also clearly influenced by the Burren Symposium, including young people who had been present in the Burren as facilitators of break-out sessions, as well as other participants.

A re-union gathering is planned for 19th/20th September 2019 to review progress, consolidate next steps and encourage the progressing of other prototypes.



5. THE SIX MONTH EVALUATION

A five question survey was sent to some 60 participants in March 2019. Twenty responses were received and are summarised below.

The five questions we asked were:

1. For you and/or your work, what have been the lasting benefits from the Symposium? (Examples might include new insights/perspectives, new or deeper relationships, new projects or an impact on an existing project etc)
2. What have you learnt that it would be good to share more widely? What do you now know that it would be helpful for more people to understand?
3. In convening the Symposium 'Towards a More Creative Education System', our intention was 'to bring together a microcosm of the education system ... to help surface initiatives designed to move the system in the direction which public policy and most observers feel is necessary to position Ireland's education system for the 21st century.' What's your sense of how we succeeded in this ambition? (Who else would it have been good to have had in the room? Was there a clear enough sense of a desired direction of travel? Did we get to the places we needed to get to? - and if not, what did we miss?)
4. What recommendations or advice do you have for us as we continue with our work 'Towards a More Creative Education System'? (We are keen for the Burren College of Art to continue to develop its role and are currently looking at possible initiatives in the fields of Continuing Professional Development, Leadership Development, the convening of further gatherings and supporting greater creativity within 3rd level)
5. Is there anything else you want to say to us? Any impressions you want to leave us with (or with those who sponsored the event)?

A summary of responses is given in the following pages.



QUESTION 1

*For you and/or your work, what have been the **lasting benefits** from the Symposium? (Examples might include new insights/perspectives, new or deeper relationships, new projects or an impact on an existing project etc.)*

CORE RESPONSES RE LASTING BENEFITS:

- Involvement with group / deepening relationships / growing networks
- Fresh insights and perspectives / reignited passion / challenge
- A sense of one's own place within a bigger change process

Involvement with a group committed to looking at issues in education with a view to progressing same.

Insights into different perspectives and approaches as to how best to proceed.

The symposium reignited ideas and passions that have lain dormant or had faded over the years. It also provided a welcome set of connections with people who had similar dispositions. (Professor of Education)

I have definitely been blessed with new insights and perspectives coming from the symposium. To be present in such a complex conversation at such a developmental stage in my life has definitely contributed to how I've gone about my life since and certainly will have a lasting impact on me in the future. To have gained the ability to pause in the moment and look at a situation from every aspect, from the macro to the micro, on the surface and deep in the core, has been invaluable and has remained a crucial tool in my decision making strategy. To also be able to take an idea and see possibilities generally seen as too irrational or rogue becoming very achievable is still something that impresses me. The symposium has allowed me the skills to get into my school and collaborate with the board on a development plan to transform our school into an environment of academic and individual excellence. (Student)

It was my first opportunity to vocalise a vision I had been working on to a group of people similarly motivated. The process of vocalising provided me and my project with valuable feedback. In addition I received the benefit of individual feedback, challenge and insights. It was a great environment to build connections. I hope relationships continue to develop, a collective effort toward much needed change in education. (Parent)

I found the whole experience deeply moving and to see Theory U in practice has provided a great sense of motivation for my own use of it. I have deepened relationships with some participants and made new relationships also that may manifest in new projects soon I hope.



Greater understanding of the impact some students can have on decision making and a greater appreciation of the influence creative thinking can have on a system. (School Principal)

Involvement in a few prototyping ideas bringing real action towards positive change. Exciting & empowering.

Acknowledgement and validation (Teacher)

The Citizens Assembly project. Focus on young people

Certainly a greater insight into the shared sense of a desire for change in Irish education, and particularly a sense of change towards a more open and creative system. New relationships have also emerged for me, and I follow the resultant projects with great interest.

Developing or strengthening network and connections. Paying more attention to where our work fits in the broader education context. (Education NGO)

The Symposium illustrated how we can come from our different positions within the educational world and collaborate to create a more equitable system that benefits all. (Professor of Education)

Inspiration - Martin Hayes' words:" to find the maximum freedom in something and give it to others" has been present in my mind most days. Fellowship with like-minded others to really make things better. (Parent)

Meeting people from different educational settings, getting their insights and building relationships and connections. I particularly liked the student facilitation and learned a lot from this in terms of their insights about the importance of vulnerability and trust. (Social Entrepreneur)

Connections with a diverse group of people who share and challenge my values. I've also challenged myself to practice what I experienced in the Burren within my own teaching and learning

The challenge for educators in balancing the need to encourage creativity while at the same time ensuring that students, especially young students at primary and secondary levels, learn the fundamentals.

Engaged with Creative Ireland so seeing some impact there for initiatives with schools

Deeper relationships with new and existing colleagues. A sense of community and knowledge that there are like-minded people working in all sectors with a shared vision (makes me confident positive change is to come)

New insights on the different perspectives on the purpose of Education and schooling.



QUESTION 2

*What have you learnt that it **would be good to share more widely**? What do you now know that it would be helpful for more people to understand?*

CORE RESPONSES RE 'LEARNINGS' TO SHARE

- Problems are more clearly defined;
- There is a necessity to shift mind-sets;
- There is great value in coming together and listening to each other;
- Good processes help us.

THE PROBLEM

- How angry and frustrated young people are with the system;
- That our education system is badly broken at 2nd level;
- There is a need to examine how best we might adapt our senior cycle curriculum to better suit the needs of Irish society. It is good to create opportunities for groups to meet in an environment where outside the box thinking is possible.
- Absence of young people's voice in education decisions;
- That the teachers themselves are depleted/burnt out by the constraints of the system and can become agents for change.
- No one model fits all re: children's education, creative pursuits like learning chess and doing poetry in an engaging way does benefit a lot of children. Off curriculum pursuits can only be beneficial to all.

THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGING HOW WE THINK

It's important to realise that we are often subject to thinking within the realm of normality, and to take that step outside the box (no matter how cliché it may sound) is crucial in terms of innovation. Collaboration, communication, compromise and criticism have all become key aspects of any project I have undertaken since and I feel they should be understood by everyone in how they can greatly benefit any task.

I have learnt (again) just how problematic the idea and concept of creativity is, and how it is ideologically 'filled' by people with differing perspectives in many different ways.

The need for a holistic approach to education - from the micro to the macro.

That education does not need to be shaped in current format; that there is a need and indeed, an interest, in diversifying the methods and choices and offerings we can create



for children and young adults in particular. I think Martin Hayes was simply a wonderful contributor to the event - his creative thinking and provocative observations as a musician with the wider conversations was remarkable and I would love to see his ideas shared widely.

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER AND LISTENING

That there is within the broad sphere of Irish education a diverse but compatible set of people and ideas ready to challenge embedded systems and structures - and to do this in a constructive and realistic manner, rather than as a superficial and emotive gesture.

We need to listen to the student voice, there is great value in stepping away from the system to reflect.

The courage and wisdom of the young people in our education system as exemplified at the Symposium - their voices need more airing

The value of a multiplicity of voices, including students and others outside the system

PROCESS / METHODOLOGY

How the process worked was a big thing for me and to see how others responded to it. I am trying to 'drip feed' its use into my work.

The power of facilitating diverse voices over a 3-day intensive session to discover a common goal at the heart of the matter.

Understanding the application of Theory U has enabled me to gain greater insight into how to address systemic change which is very relevant for my work.

The process was impactful. I know we (the alumni) are still wrapped up in projects that have arisen and it may be too early for us to share widely, but the process we are using is the same as that used in the Burren. I feel this is worth sharing with others

The power music has to play in mediating creative processes (very hard to communicate that beyond the experience itself)

LEARNINGS ABOUT POSSIBLE WAYS FORWARD

How Citizens' Assemblies work and how they can be used to further and safeguard our democracy.

The OECD framework is itself inspirational and could be shared more widely perhaps as people move towards purposeful change.



QUESTION 3

*In convening the Symposium 'Towards a More Creative Education System', our **intention** was 'to bring together a microcosm of the education system ... **to help surface initiatives designed to move the system** in the direction which public policy and most observers feel is necessary to position Ireland's education system for the 21st century.' What's your sense of **how we succeeded in this ambition?** (Who else would it have been good to have had in the room? Was there a clear enough sense of a desired direction of travel? Did we get to the places we needed to get to? - and if not, what did we miss?)*

CORE RESPONSES RE SUCCESS OF SYMPOSIUM:

- Initiatives were co-created;
- A diverse microcosm of the system was brought together;
- A creative atmosphere of curiosity and celebration was underpinned by respect and rigour.

I had no agenda when I attended the symposium nor did I have any particular expectations. I came to listen. As with any creative session if one idea in one hundred is workable that is a good outcome. The Citizens' Assembly is the one such idea for me.

For me it was completely immersive from day one. Once we got into the correct mind-frame it was as if we were no longer held back by any constraints, as if anything was possible in theory. I feel like everyone necessary was in the room, especially considering I was unfamiliar with the majority of peoples' roles for quite some time.

Unfortunately I was unable to stay beyond the first 24 hours, so I missed much of the dynamic and growth of the full event. Perhaps more involvement with non-formal education (as distinct from 'the education system') - and also maybe some more teacher voices from the classroom, beyond and behind the formal teacher union structures.

I think the event was a good start, beginning a process that will involve a lot of consultation. The fact that there was no one desired direction was a good thing.

The symposium certainly brought together a microcosm of the education system - this was from my perspective courageous. The format generated initiatives towards what could be done to bring about the necessary changes. I don't feel that finding consensus was necessary or even desirable.



I thought it was a great start. I need to follow up on where threads of action have led to, but I believe there was action and that is always good. I think people would be willing to convene again and maybe that should be looked at. I would have liked to see government representation

There was a great mix of people from all areas of education, I feel most were the success stories of the education system but then the disaffected are hardly going to sign up for a Symposium on Education? Over the course of the weekend it became clearer what we were about and all ideas were given a chance which was good but it was clear some might be “runners” while others were less useful or likely to go anywhere. System change of course is not easy but it was a good opportunity to refocus on the future of education. I think the forum idea is probably one of the best routes forward.

I think the symposium achieved very well what it set out to. Only through the intensive process did it emerge that perhaps other players could be included, and they will be involved in the numerous prototype ideas emanating from the symposium.

Yes. You created a creative atmosphere of curiosity and celebration underpinned by respect and rigour. It would be interesting to do a similar one for young people!

Yes I think the direction is there but maybe focus on the core idea is needed.

I thought that the room was as varied and representative as it ever might possibly be - it is an impossible task, in many respects. In terms of the desired direction of travel, I found that the varying understandings of a ‘more creative education system’ pulled us in many varied directions; which was not necessarily a bad thing, but may have inhibited us collectively moving deeper into conceptualising what that creative education system might look like.

I think the intention was realised in terms of bringing people together and facilitating conversations. It’s difficult to quantify the subsequent ‘movement’.

The development of prototypes have the potential to effect lasting change within how our education system is understood and educational policy and practice can be reconceptualised. The involvement of local young people was very beneficial for all the ‘big people’ in the room. More business representatives would have been helpful. Great to have the artists and their unique perspectives.

The Social Presencing Theatre “tableau” of the system facilitated by Joan, is one of the most powerful things I have ever experienced and I have shared my sense of this with others.



From my perspective the symposium achieved what it set out to do - how you quantify “success” may take years to measure in the exponential effect, which is often so slow as to be barely discernible. The group as it was constituted was far too diverse to have a completely unifying “direction”. CARE (Citizens Assembly proposal) is a good example of channelling some of this energy fruitfully- as are the other core pieces that have emerged. I am patient by nature so do not seek immediate clarity- nor do I believe that we are in control. As such I could not be more satisfied with both the experience itself and the thought provocation and actions that have emerged.

A strength and weakness was that there was very different understandings of how education currently works and the directions which it is taking. Some of these are positive and will lead to more creativity. The preparatory papers circulated however were excellent and set the context. I think we need to broaden the conversations and demonstrate new ways of thinking about education and its purpose both for the young person, parents making decisions around education and to education bodies. This conversation needs to be broadened.

We had a wonderful and diverse community, in terms of job roles, career stage, disposition. I think there are many who may have been interesting to have along (mindful that it can get out of hand). These include: student teachers, more younger people, parents, and retired teachers.

It was a great first step, but to take it forward we need to focus. I suspect that the agenda of the symposium was too big. Education is ‘an elephant’ and the only way ‘to eat an elephant is one bite at a time’!

Government Officials, Department people I believe are fairly out of the loop and difficult to engage with.

I think this was an excellent start and it framed the discussion in a perfect setting and “space”. But I think this is still the start of a journey. It might have been good to have provided more time to establish working groups around project before departing, with explicit short term actions assigned to individuals (voluntary). I feel some of the momentum died when we all went back to our daily work/lives.

More diverse range of the student voice, including those from third level and recent graduates. New entrants in the workplace - include both people who appreciate or feel let down by their education experiences



QUESTION 4

*What **recommendations or advice** do you have for us as we continue with our work 'Towards a More Creative Education System'? (We are keen for the Burren College of Art to continue to develop its role and are currently looking at possible initiatives in the fields of Continuing Professional Development, Leadership Development, the convening of further gatherings and supporting greater creativity within 3rd level).*

CORE RESPONSES RE CONTINUING THE WORK:

- Continue, keep the conversations going;
- Support the Citizen's Assembly proposal;
- Convene an annual symposium / other combinations of people.

Continue to support the idea of a Citizen's Assembly to look at issues in education. Then perhaps work on the proposals that derive from that.

It's imperative that we keep the conversation going. Create a space for all to get involved and try to expand as much as possible.

As a former (and currently 'emeritus') staff member of an art college, I believe that art making and art education provides a really rich model of pedagogy. The studio process, the 'crit' and the student-led process of learning has much more potential for general education than has been recognised to date. I would be happy to contribute to the development and articulation of that perspective through an art college-led programme.

Keep up the good work immediately springs to mind. I'm looking forward to participating in the May event which I hope will explore the topic further.

From my view the 3 greatest assets the Burren College of Art has to offer - are the power of place, a context in courageous leadership, and connection with the arts. I would build forward from these assets.

Keep going. Look at how the outputs and things are disseminated. Email is losing power rapidly I feel and video is the way to go. The video produced was excellent.

You have a great location, excellent facilitators so in many ways it is an ideal location to start change from. There is no shortage of great minds and wonderful suggestions but to put these ideas into practice and bring the ideas to fruition requires some hard working



dedicated people with time on their hands, they might not be so plentiful. Third level and Industry might be the power drivers who can influence the education system from the top down so that might be a group to work with now.

An annual symposium? To continue to build on what started in Sept 2018? BCA to be very involved in mini-symposia nation - wide.

I think it might be interesting to bring together the Heads of Faculties from 3rd level to experience the same creative engagement that we did. Then perhaps work with Principals and Deputy Principals, recognising that few of these people will have had the kind of exposure to the arts in education that the group that has been with you has had. The conversations would be more of an awakening of their creativity and an opportunity to reimagine how they might lead and scaffold teaching and learning through creativity

Use the work going on in DICE and generally in DEV Education to build new ideas for mainstream Ed. Bring Art and heart to the centre

As ever, I applaud the College for taking the initiative in leadership in this area, and I welcome the ongoing commitment. I think that there might well be some consideration given to breaking this topic down a little more, for example into: creative modes of teaching & learning; teaching creativity; creative learning communities; and fostering creative systems. All, to my mind, are different, but equally important

I think different personalities respond differently to the approach (the level of discussion, theory U etc.). For me a more action-focused approach might be preferred.

Think Burren School of Art can become an inclusive learning space that encourages creative thinking.

Continue to be a beacon of light and host (where feasible) gatherings that require a liminal and creative backdrop. One of the teacher trainers present last year had thought of bringing beleaguered art teachers to the Burren for a retreat - this is an excellent example of smaller scale but meaningful initiatives. I noted the Executive Leadership retreat isn't advertised this year? This would be a loss as it represents a unique opportunity for business leaders to taste a different energy.

I would like to see more conversation about the impact of 3rd level on second level education, i.e. the alignment of the Leaving Cert with the entry system. It is, in my view, too limiting for students and educators.

I would fully support looking at creativity at 3rd level. Given the conversations had last Sept around 'education as a preparation for college', the purpose of higher education was left unquestioned (understandably). It could, of course, be discussed separately, perhaps with people who could attend both



I believe that leadership is a big challenge in all areas of education. By default the teacher unions have assumed a de facto dominant voice. I believe we need to encourage the development of leadership and management skills among teachers and lecturers.

A meeting with Department on findings to date would be helpful for the BCA and also with Creative Ireland - Tania Banotti who did the attend the initial few days of the Symposium

Look at European funding (H2020/Horizon Europe) or Erasmus +.

Continue as you are doing... listening and gathering different voices and perspectives on creative education

QUESTION 5

*Is there **anything else you want to say to us?** Any impressions you want to leave us with (or with those who sponsored the event)?*

FINAL CORE MESSAGES:

- Gratitude;
- Hope.

No. One project at a time is sufficient. Thanks for this opportunity.

I am not able to put into words how utterly impressionable and valuable the symposium was to me. I can say with certainty that it will remain a key part of helping me become the best version of myself in allowing me to approach every situation with an open mind.

This is a very positive initiative and some of the spin-off paths that have opened up are highly constructive. The challenge is to keep radical ideas alive while working for achievable solutions.

Moving the conversation to a safe space was a key part of the success of the event for me.

When is the next one, and can I participate?

Thank you

I am very grateful to Tomar trust and the sponsors for getting the opportunity to attend and in particular for the students of the CBS to attend. 'A' has already been given a wonderful opportunity to attend and speak at the Inspectors conference in Athlone this year as a result of the conference in the BCA. This was something he relished and really appreciated.



I felt treated very well. Valued for my input. The facilitation team comprises a good mix of personality and leadership styles. To me it was money well spent by Tomar Trust. These types of transformative experiences best happen in places of exceptional beauty.

Thank you. In my 30 years as an educator working with educational disadvantage, it is the first time I have spent an extended period of time with like-minded people who think outside the box. You chose your participants well. Or did they choose you?! Thank you for your generosity and kindness and faith in the process.

To deepen this work we need funding. It takes time to research to network to plan and to meet.

The spirit of the gathering has long remained with me. It has given me hope, and offered fuel, camaraderie and thoughtfulness at a time it was needed. Thank you.

The power of place was evident at this event - particularly for those that were less familiar with the Burren.

It was evident that changes were already beginning to occur by the close of conference. At a local level the engagement by the young people with their school principal to discuss how they could become more engaged in leading initiatives in their school. At the system level valuable networks have been created with potential to initiate meaningful change. Also, great to really see people and the human dimension which was so ably facilitated.

It was outstanding and unforgettable.

I would like to thank the organisers and sponsors for organising such a wonderful event. Every aspect of it was well designed and thought-through. I am very grateful for the experience.

Thank you so much. I gained so much from my few days in the Burren, Shane Bergin

The original event was really well organized and at a distance of nearly a year - still resonates with me as a novel and awarding approach to a very complex and difficult problem.

This was an excellently run event. Creativity is such a difficult, yet important, topic to tackle. Having years of experience designing active and creative learning experiences, this event did not disappoint. Although there is always room for improvement (hindsight is 2020), very well done to everyone involved!

Keep widening the focus and building dialogue on the emerging key questions that will inform future thinking and action



6. WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

We can all play a role in bringing about an education system that matches the challenges of the world ahead, in being the change that we want to see in the world.

Burren College of Art will continue supporting the initiatives outlined above and other new initiatives that emerge. We are delighted with the progress that has been made already. We will be convening a re-union gathering for participants and other key stakeholders on the 19th/20th September 2019 to review progress, take stock and prepare for the next phase of the work.

If you are sitting with a prototype idea from the Symposium and feel it could benefit from the input of a group of supporters do let us know. BCA stands ready to support you to making creative change happen.

Working on this event has helped us to deepen our appreciation of the core elements of this work that enable it to be successful, in particular:

- The benefits of having many different perspectives and no expectation of 'one right answer' emerging;
- The importance of creating a fellowship of peer support with as much diversity as possible within it;
- The value of applying creative process to questions of how to engender more creativity;
- The necessity of supporting a move to action and not just talking about things;
- The critical importance of the student voice being centre stage;
- Focusing on student and teacher wellbeing as pre-requisites if we are going to grow student and teacher agency

Burren College of Art recognises it is uniquely well-placed to support such work, integrating its heritage as an enabler of creativity with the gift of a wonderful landscape and rigorous methodologies. The College's motto for many years has been 'Time, Space and Inspiration'. These elements become increasingly important as we forge a path, within a context of change that can often feel overwhelming, towards a more creative education system.