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Original Citation

Williamson, Sarah (2010) Making is connecting... In: University of Huddersfield Research Festival 2010, 8-18 March 2010, Huddersfield University. (Unpublished)

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Making is Connecting...

This action research is the start of a project to investigate the value of 'making' to promote 'thinking'. The project aims to explore the benefits of integrating creative activity which involves 'physical making' into sessions for a range of learner groups in the post-compulsory sector. Questionnaires and focus groups will gather qualitative data on whether 'making' can improve knowledge construction, ideas generation, problem solving, review and evaluation.

'A longer stretch of thoughtfulness...'

Gauntlett (2010) suggests that thinking, making and then reviewing can lead to a longer period of thinking, 'a longer stretch of thoughtfulness', and that this will 'almost certainly lead to deeper thinking'. This echoes the view of Treadaway (2009:90) who discusses the value in the 'slowness of making' to free the mind and that 'hand making processes that are slow to perform facilitate thinking space'. (Wix 2008:219) also suggests that a focus on making helps to go deeper in talking, thinking and understanding of ideas, stating that 'I do best when I can see what I am talking about'

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A creative task can give time for thoughts and ideas to emerge and surface. Time can allow a period of incubation for unconscious thoughts to develop, the valuable thoughts which according to Csikszentmihalyi (1997:98) 'simmer below the threshold of consciousness for a time'

'Simmer below the threshold of consciousness for a time'

Conclusion

Initial findings suggest the process of 'making' does not need to be confined to those studying in creative subjects. Academic thinking and creative activity can be woven together to recognise the value of thinking through making. Making activities (involving the use of collage, modelling clay, Lego bricks, construction and craft material for example) may allow students in many subjects to 'communicate a landscape of thought in a way not always possible in linear language (Gauntlett 2010:5). As Eisner (2007:5) argues, knowledge comes in different forms, the forms of its creation differ and it 'is not always reducible to language'