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## Valuing Risk in the Creative Campus

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## Introduction

Lee S. Shulman indicates to us directly why risk concerns us as design educators: “Without a certain amount of anxiety and risk, there’s a limit to how much learning occurs” (Shulman, 2005a).

And yet contemporary societal discourses of risk equate it predominantly as the likelihood of disaster (Pelling & Wisner, 2012), (Shaw et al., 2009), (Wamsler, 2004), (Wamsler, 2014). This tension is underlined by even Donald Schön’s multifarious application of the term within ‘Educating the Reflective Practitioner’ (Schön, 1987): that “a predisposition toward rationality, reflectivity, and cognitive risk-taking seems essential for students” (Schön, 1987) whilst simultaneously maintaining in the same volume that the learning studio offers “freedom to learn by doing in a setting relatively low in risk” (Schön, 1987).

In this paper we will travel the creative campus unpacking perspectives and tensions around risk, to argue that far from risk being a malevolent natural omnipresence to be mitigated and protected against, that as design educators we have a responsibility to those who trust us with their learning. A responsibility to co-generate opportunities for risk, encourage encounters with it, and inculcate unfamiliar learners to its discomforts and rewards. We have a pedagogical duty to defend and create risk – to value it.

## **Societal Context of Risk**

### **Societal setting of risk**

Society at large is notoriously poor at judgements around risk (Kasperson et al., 1988). Probability and consequence is amplified (and even misrepresented) by mass media narratives (Frost et al., 1997), (Smith, 2005), (Smith, 2005), (Moynihan et al., 2000), (Rogers et al., 1987), (Miles & Morse, 2007), (C. Wilkinson et al., 2007).

News media outlets (once jostling as bastions of balance and actuality) are increasingly positioning themselves as forces of representation, with frequent self-reference to viewers and their opinions (Cook, 1998), (I. Wilkinson, 1999). There is a self-feeding distortion of risk as media predominantly present failures and (often potential) negative consequences (aircraft, drugs, natural disasters, climate, nano-particles) to viewers, then additionally layers the terror/ alarm of their own viewers as validation of risk's magnitude and effect. The vox populi, once confined to the person on the street requiring a lumbering multimember news team, is now omnipresent, instant, practiced, ready-to-spout-forth, and self-selecting.

We are led towards the view that "unknown risks have a dangerous yet unfathomable impact like a submerged iceberg" (Piroumian, 2014). The consequence of not eliminating this version of risk is Titanically disastrous; eliminating it, survival. This kind of narrative is borrowed from the tenets of drama that depends upon tension and adversity, fictionalising over-elaborated risks for the protagonists to conquer or from which to be protected. But, of course, the same malevolent soundtrack portending the potential danger does not accompany our non-fictional risks.

### **Theories of risk**

Cognitive theories of risk perceive a formula of "the product of the probability and consequences (magnitude and severity of... a hazard)" (Bradbury, 1989 p. 382). In this 'calculated' version of risk, there is a sense of how people might be made to

better understand 'real' risks, but a lack of critique into how society constructs its base notions of risk (Lupton, 1999). There is a failure to examine the values around risk. 'Sociocultural' theories of risk, on the other hand, also encompass these meta-contexts. Lupton (1999) outlines three broad thrusts of sociocultural theorists: 1) risk as deep cultural semiosis (the boundaries of 'us' and 'them'); 2) risk as an emergent consequence of contemporary living: 'risk society'; and 3) risk as a justifying factor for control and ordering of populations and our willingness to submit to them ('governmentality').

## **Risk on the creative campus**

These societal contexts and risk theories create inherent tensions for us on the creative campus. That is because we tend towards artistically rooted and social/human-oriented pedagogies and research methodologies (so being drawn towards cultural semiotic dialogues of risk). But we are also situated within higher education - itself having a unique role in both 'risk society' and 'governmentality' perspectives: Ulrich Beck (major proponent of the notion of 'risk society') talks of people having to create their own 'self-reflexive biographies' (P.U. Beck, 1992) because futures are no longer mapped or predictable as they were with pre-industrial or industrial epochs. It has strong resonance with higher education's focus on 'employability' in its broadest definition. People now have to be reflexive about themselves and the world in a wider sense, but with particular resonance within creative industries because we explicitly demand reflexivity of students within their practice. Following Beck's argument, we are therefore co-contributors to 'risk society'. Beck calls this 'individualisation', and with Beck-Gernsheim relates its dual edge: "Seen from one angle, it means freedom to choose, and from another pressure to conform to internalised demands" (U. Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995). On other words, subjects are aware of their freedoms, but also their burdens and responsibilities. Foucault's 'governmentality' perspectives of risk points to the university as manufacturer of discourse around notions of 'truth': "'Truth' is centred on the form of scientific discourse and the institutions which produce it" (Danaher et al., 2000). Its degree-awarding role is an instrument too of surveillance and conformity, and students' willingness to be assessed within that framework the ultimate realisation of 'governmentality' - a population's joint willingness to be governed. And these dichotomies evoke our own institutional internal tensions around our risk-taking: that our 'creative' disciplines seek to recognise multiple individualised truths, whereas others within the same institution

seek to discover unique truths – so we must assess (and students must learn and be assessed) differently whilst maintaining a single common academic reputation.

The creative campus within a university is unique in requiring our students to conform but be non-conformist, to risk without causing risk for others or the institution, to create and challenge whilst being mindful of previous creators, and to accept our indications of their success (our 'expert knowledge') in doing so. Our distinctiveness is rooted in risk.

### **Risk in the commodification of learning**

Edinburgh College of Art merged in 2011 with the University of Edinburgh, though it took three years to be assessed 'complete'. The college has roots back to the 1770s, but its current title dates from 1907: a whippersnapper joining its older Russell Group neighbour. Until recently, the university web site's serif tag line read: "Influencing the world since 1583" which is now updated with a serif: "One of the world's top 20 universities" (University of Edinburgh, 2014).

Neither tag line nor serif is present on the enlarged Edinburgh College of Art sub-site which opens instead with: "ECA is a vibrant and creative community of students and academics: a place of experimentation, exploration, intellectual stimulation and exciting collaborations" (Edinburgh College of Art, 2014). The university relates its relationship with risk to the expert knowledge and power relationships of Beck (1992) and Foucault (Danaher et al., 2000), whereas the constituent art college emphasises risk's socio-cultural aspects of community and deviation emphasised by Jacobs (1961) and Douglas (2013). This elucidates the suspicions and tensions of merger.

The university was born with Scottish nationality prior to the 1707 Act of Union, whereas the art college was born within the later wider United Kingdom. But Scotland has always retained unique laws, and policies of education, health, and transport from elsewhere in the UK. This accounts for the different policies on

higher education fees within the UK: Scottish and non-UK European Union students are currently entitled to have their undergraduate fees met, though students from the rest of the UK are charged around GBP £9,000 (c. USD \$15,000 in 2014) for each year of their four year undergraduate degree.

To say commodification of education has reached us as a necessary response to English fees policy is naive, since our international and postgraduate students are well used to paying for their learning at ECA. Nevertheless, there has been a widening of the environment in which explicit payment is made for learning and development, and though Scottish students are not paying it, the price tag (even as a notional commoditised value) has been established. Students are even more entitled to reflect at what cost do the consequences of their risk-taking come to them: a recent interview of BA (Hons) Graphic Design students graduating from the university conducted by one of the authors elicited this comment: "I wanted to be more experimental, but it's like the risk involved wouldn't benefit my final grade" (interview respondent). This student worked through those tensions and graduated with a first class honours degree.

### **Health & safety on the creative campus**

As educators, each of us operates within an organisation that has responsibilities and procedures for ensuring the health and safety of employees and of the public (as do we each personally). In Scotland, we refer at present (June 2014) to a mass of UK regulations on health and safety (UK Health Safety Executive, n.d.), and this is mirrored by occupational safety provisions worldwide. Health and safety of students in that regime is under general duties of care to the public rather than as workers within the organisation. This legislation is an area of UK law that has a 'reverse burden'. Whilst other legislation provides an assumption of innocence until proven guilty, these provisions require defendants to demonstrate innocence through pre-documented precautions. As that burden extends upwards within the

institution, in any enquiry we are likely to face hierarchies of hindsight that attempt to push that burden back to us – as past legislative judgements have it: that we were ‘on a frolic’ of our own.

ECA’s own health and safety officer in interview listed the potential risks to be mitigated against as: “risk of arrest; risk of offending public decency; risk of physical harm; and damage to reputation.” (Alistair Brown). It is interesting how few of those risks relate directly to the legislative responsibilities of the institution. “Damage to reputation” of the institution is particularly academically perplexing, since this borrows heavily from Foucault’s viewpoints on risk and power around maintaining the University’s credibility in generating ‘truth’.

In UK health and safety legislation, a key element of whether an entity has discharged their responsibilities around risk is whether a realised risk (a ‘hazard’ or ‘danger’) could have been ‘foreseen or expected’. Whilst there are arguments around hindsight and reasonable projection, this means that any risk that has already been realised is deemed ‘foreseeable’ in its future occurrence. A June 2014 catastrophic fire at Glasgow School of Art in the West of Scotland consumed student portfolios and architectural treasures (Figure 1). It was rumoured to relate to a data projector, and had immediate impact at Edinburgh College of Art in the East of Scotland.

Notices appeared on the doors of our college informing students that any projector left on overnight within the current degree show would be removed. This related to a long-running analysis at the college, but nevertheless demonstrated that the high-profile realisation of that risk (even elsewhere) created an immediate burden of responsibility since it was now an actual ‘hazard’. This has impacts for our setting of briefs with students, which we discuss later.



**Figure 1 - Fire at Glasgow School of Art (Source: Sharman, 2014)**

### Signature Pedagogies of Design

Lee S. Shulman advocates a notion of signature pedagogies - “a mode of teaching that has become inextricably identified with preparing people for a particular profession” (Shulman, 2005b). A signature pedagogy has the characteristics of being: “distinctive in that profession”, “pervasive within the curriculum”, and “essential to general pedagogy of an entire profession, as elements of instruction and of socialization.” (Shulman, 2005b). Some students of the creative campus may not frame their goals in terms of ‘profession’, so here that term should be seen also as synonymous with ‘post study endeavours’. There have been attempts at elucidating what these signature pedagogies might be on the creative campus (Crowther, 2013), (Thomson et al., 2012), (Sims & Shreeve, 2012), (Shreeve et al., 2010). Here, we’ll use the Sims & Shreeve (2012) lens since its components were

readily identifiable to this paper's (graphic design educator) authors: the studio; the brief; the critique; the sketchbook; research; dialogue and discussion.

Whilst this list implies a flat taxonomy, we make explicit here an inferred hierarchy (whilst acknowledging the validity of alternative framings) by concentrating on: the studio, the brief (leaving research and sketchbook as tools in evaluating and realising alternative responses to it) and the crit (as a particular form – at its best – of dialogue and discussion).

### **The Studio**

There is wide variation in perceptions and critique of what is going on in the educational design studio. In graphic design, we can look to both 'artistic' interpretations and 'engineering' viewpoints, since we sit within liminalities of both and more (Harland, 2012). Swann describes an art atelier-derived Bauhaus-type 'meister' set-up as 'Sitting with Nellie' (Swann, 2002). She relates her own personal-benefit with that approach, but simultaneously paints it as out-dated because of its resource-requirements. Thomson conveys a rather more experimental space in which students:

"...are given latitude to take risks, innovate, and explore pitfalls, and they may fail, but under the guidance, insight and encouragement of faculty who are focused on student development not project completion" (Thompson, 2002).

And Ochsner relates even deeper waters:

"Studio may, at times, resemble analytic psychotherapy [in which] the therapist is more active—in addition to interpretation, he or she freely employs suggestion, environmental manipulation, guidance, clarification and reality testing" (Ochsner, 2000 p. 205).

This perhaps explains why Ochsner frames the studio not only in terms of place, but of process:

“The studio process is one which attempts to engage and develop the student’s abilities for creative play or reflection in action. The process is one in which we encourage vulnerability, risk-taking, lowering defences, and the like” (Ochsner, 2000).

This indicates how the constituent pedagogies that occur in this setting are conflated with the setting itself: a place or space *incensed* with vulnerability and risk. The common dominant theme amongst studies of the studio is this emotional charge (Austerlitz & Sachs, 2006), (Austerlitz, 2007), (Sachs, 1999), (Uluoğlu, 2000).

Our studios without risk are not the studios that we value. But fiscal pressures threaten the studio:

“The broader financial context facing many universities frames most of the discussions and debates about the role and value of teaching models such as studio. Unfortunately, debates about their worth are often reduced to the resources needed to support studio classes and/ or small classes (Frankham 2006). Disappointingly, the very nature of creative pedagogies and what is required to enact them is largely ignored” (Clarke & Budge, 2010).

In 2014 these fiscal constraints are strong, and those who argue for the studio’s retention require a robust counter argument. Perhaps the earlier paradox inferred by Schön (1987) in our introduction may be adapted to assist that argument: that the studio provides the freedom for students and educators to *risk* in a setting relatively low in *danger*: a ‘safe’ space in which the other signature pedagogies are facilitated. But this argument for the value of the studio is built on the value of risk: which we hope this paper is elucidating.

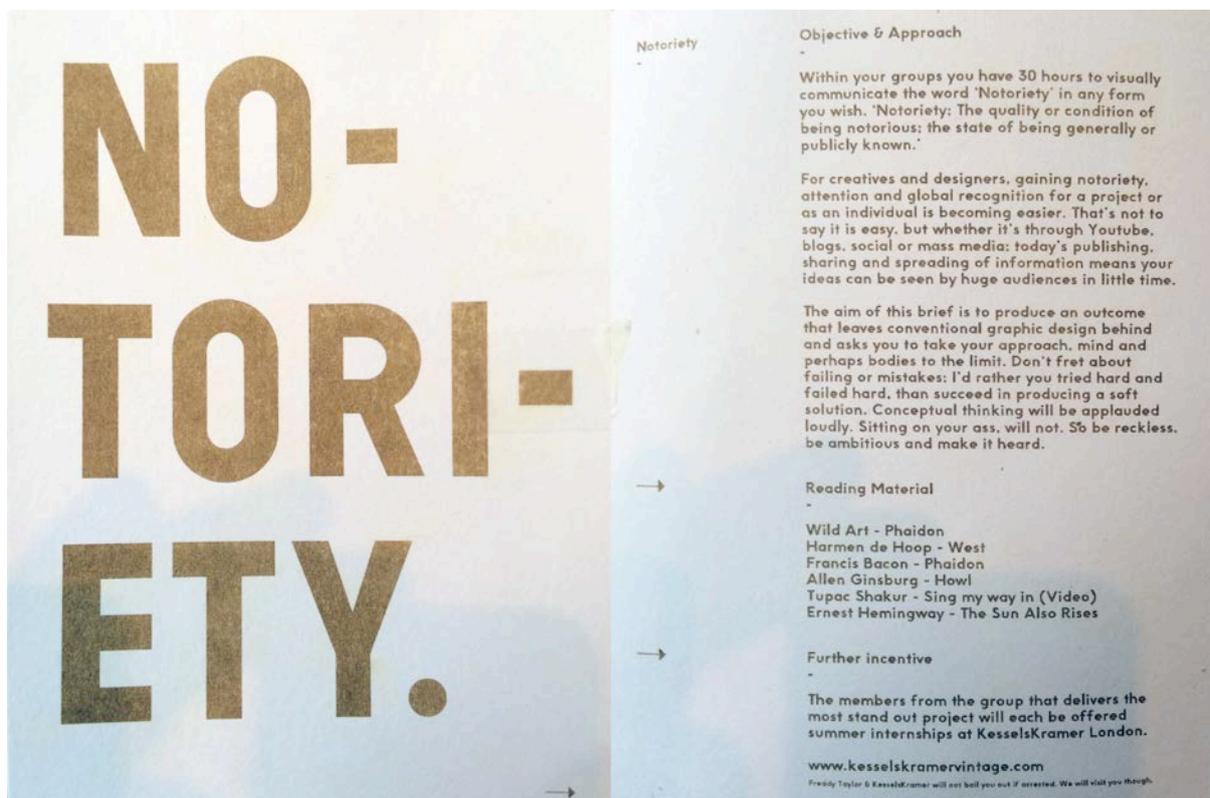
### **The Brief**

Vaughan et al relate opposing perspectives of ambiguity (from different stake holders) in brief setting. The father of a student in the study has the viewpoint that: “the openness of brief leads to little or no direction” (Vaughan et al., 2008).

Whereas the tutor of that student responds that: “‘rather than ‘right’ or ‘wrong,’ we are expecting students to engage with the themes of the brief and develop a position in response to that engagement.” (Vaughan et al., 2008) They conclude that there is an:

“...often unspoken requirement that students experiment, take risks, learn to assess the appropriateness of solutions according to context, and engage in a longer and more open-ended process of enquiry than they may previously have been used to” (Vaughan et al., 2008).

It is apposite here to present an ECA graphic design brief that became known (even temporarily infamous) through the consequent responses of our students, titled rather appropriately ‘Notoriety’ (Figure 2).



**Figure 2 - 'Notoriety' Brief (Source: Patterson, 2014)**

Alumni of the programme are occasionally invited back to work with students, and this was one of those occasions. A student had graduated from the programme in 2013 and been employed by an international agency (with its public-facing 'outlet' in London, England). His brief to students opened:

"Within your groups you have 30 hours to visually communicate the word 'Notoriety' in any form you wish. 'Notoriety: The quality or condition of being notorious: the state of being generally or publicly known" (Taylor, F. & Kessels Kramer, 2014).

It concluded with its significant incentive: "The members from the group that delivers the most stand out project will each be offered summer internships at Kessels Krammer London" ( Taylor, F. & Kessels Kramer, 2014).

The nature of student responses to this brief is summed up well by a later written apology by one group of students to the head of operations of The National Galleries of Scotland. It demonstrates which elements of the brief shone out to those students:

"MOCK THEFT OF PAINTING AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY - FRIDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2014. We would like to formally apologise for our actions on Friday 7th February. We were given a brief from a visiting lecturer to "become notorious" and we were encouraged to "be reckless, be ambitious and make it heard." We did not have the intention to waste anyone's time or cause any harm and we are very sorry for any inconvenience that our actions have caused. We have removed the video from YouTube and put a stop to any further developments to the project. We would also like to clarify that the painting we 'stole' was a very obvious fake and is why the gallery staff took no action. With our sincere apologies, Second Year Graphic Design." (ECA Second Year Graphic Design, 2014)



**Figure 3 - 'Hoax Heist' (Source: Students of Edinburgh College of Art)**

This was one of a number of communications within and outside the institution to salve the consequences of the response of that particular group of students. Whilst we cannot condone the potentials for harm in their staging a hoax heist and maintaining for some days that they had stolen “The Portrait of Cecilia Margaret” (Figure 3) from the National Gallery of Scotland, the students nevertheless demonstrated an innate understanding of risk, and the fascination of mass-media for risk: that lacking a celebrity, only an adverse event or circumstance would attract the attention they required in the timeframe that they had. Two other responses in particular showed a similar understandings, though another response which staged a hoax kidnapping of the visiting tutor in central Edinburgh had misjudged the interest of local law enforcement and in doing so crossed the ‘invisible line’ for many in their perception that the risk of that response had become so ‘played-out’ as to be a hazard or danger. It should be said that those students still dispute that reading.

The 'winners' of the brief were the group who responded with an 'Exotic Animal Showdown', and the success of their response was in navigating the rocky territory around risk. They reflected back people's own outrage at a perceived risk in subsequently demanding action of them. The criticisms of the other group's responses were said by their critics to be in the potential for danger in their performative aspects (though there was barely concealed disapproval around their contesting of status, power and authority too). The performance in 'Exotic Animal Showdown' was core from the beginning though never enacted so could not be realistically criticised for its physical danger. But it did offend and upset with its flyer's tag-line: "One night of real animal fighting for your entertainment" (Figure 4) promising in a green space of the city a list of animal fights: "Brown Bear vs. Bengal Tiger", "Chimp vs. Baboon" and "King Cobra vs. Mongoose".



**Figure 4 - 'Animal Showdown' Flyer (Source: Students of Edinburgh College of Art)**

Responses on Twitter and Facebook alerted the feeds of the Scottish Society for the Protection of Animals and City of Edinburgh Council with comments such as:

“Absolutely vile, there’s no way this will actually be allowed”, and “Im literally disgusted that this kind of thing can still happen. makes me ill and i cant believe it’s happening in my country” (sic). The campaign concluded with the revelation that it was in fact raising awareness of these issues and requesting that the 1,100 people who had interacted with the web presence now substantiate their ‘virtual’ outrage with ‘on ground’ contributions to the charity ‘World Animal Protection’ (Ben Shmulevitch, 2014). Several months later the contributions stand at GBP £70 from 7 of those 1,100 people. Not only did this campaign toy with Beck’s notion of ‘Risk Society’ – risks so global that we effectively ‘bury our heads’ to cope – it also offered a practical pointer towards mitigating this risk in the form of donation. In so doing, it played also with the socio-cultural narratives of espoused risks: ‘vile’; (literally) ‘disgusted’; ‘makes me ill’ and confronted the power-relations of ‘veracity’ and ‘truth’.

These examples bring into sharp focus what can be learned from this brief with regard to risk. First, more cognisance of the words “be reckless” in the brief would have been wise. We have a long-term duty of care and development to our students that visiting tutors do not. These examples may cause us to wish to ‘retreat’ to Schön’s “setting relatively low in risk” (Schön, 1987). That is because whilst lay-people invited into the studio setting through degree-shows and the like should expect to be potentially ‘distressed’ or ‘offended’ by student responses, the ground is considerably more contested outside the studio. Contemporary western society is practiced, as shown earlier, in viewing potential danger (i.e. risk) as danger itself, and we may need explicit conversations about that with our students, though the ‘learning by doing’ in this brief provided powerful lessons for them (and us) which appear to have been potentially far more effective than a conversation about it. It is problematic and even hypocritical to seek reflexivity and risk-taking from students within the creative campus, and yet expect them to ‘deposit’ it at the door between sessions.

## The Critique

Klebesadel and Kornetsky claim that the critique (crit) is *the* signature pedagogy for art (Klebesadel & Kornetsky, 2009). But graphic design's extra liminalities suggest stronger additional dependence on other signature pedagogies. They agree that: "experimentation and risk-taking with permission to learn from mistakes in the service of innovation are core expectations" (Klebesadel & Kornetsky, 2009). Another additional important dimension of the crit is introduced: "In critique, students observe how their faculty articulate the criteria that will be used to assess their academic performance" (Klebesadel & Kornetsky, 2009). This then somewhat addresses Vaughan et al's (2008) concerns about students' understanding that the ambiguity of the brief is designed to elicit a *process* of 'experimentation and risk' rather than a 'right' or 'wrong' answer (Vaughan et al., 2008).

Nevertheless, the crit is inherently risky for students: in both being prepared to receive feedback and provide it. Reception of feedback (what is heard) is easily distorted by the reflexive abilities of the learner, their previous experiences and their interpretative capacities, as the title of Blair's (2007) paper indicates: "At the end of a huge crit in the summer, it was crap I'd worked really hard but all she said was fine and I was gutted" (Blair, 2007). The large crit is particularly singled as potentially problematic in: "much of the verbal formative assessment feedback literally falling on deaf ears" (Blair, 2007). In other words, during oral group-feedback, the educator has an omnipresent risk of being misinterpreted.

Shulman describes medical problem-based group learning, but could equally be describing the group critique when saying of participation that: "hiding was impossible; anonymity wasn't an option." (Shulman, 2005b). He says of this kind of group facilitation that:

“Students know that at any moment in time, they are visible and accountable. They will not only be asked to comment on the topic. But regularly, they will be asked to build on the contributions of those who spoke before them.”  
(Shulman, 2005b).

Whilst this does have ironic overtones of Foucault’s description of Bentham’s risk-reducing ‘Panopticon’ (Danaher et al., 2000) – a mechanism for ensuring prisoners were alert to always potentially being monitored – we are reminded again of Ochsner’s “vulnerability, risk-taking, lowering defenses, and the like” (Ochsner, 2000) required of both student and educator in the execution of these pedagogies.

### **Signature Pedagogies in Action**

The undergraduate graphic design programme at ECA won The Guardian University Awards 2013 in the ‘Employability Initiative’ category for its Design Agency Project. The project requires students to set-up cross-year design agencies (mentored by people from ‘industry’) as a way of addressing Sims & Shreeves’ ‘Disciplinary Ways of Knowing’ (Sims & Shreeve, 2012 p. 55) particular to graphic design. There was wide publicity from the award, but just one single formal statement of feedback from its judges: “It was an ambitious idea which took a clear risk, and this should be applauded.”

So this is the notion of the bold or brave risk as a contribution towards personal, technological or societal development. It has an essence of the wild frontier and intrepid pioneer, evoked in tales of derring-do fiction, but discussed as fact in volumes like ‘Maximize Your Potential’ (Glei, 2013). And that book’s subtitle ‘Grow your expertise, take bold risks & build an incredible career’ has striking similarities to the commoditised promise of creative employability within contemporary higher education, with our romanticised visions of the journey of adversity, triumph and emancipation. It is a pantomime proxy (“it’s not beyond you!”) for the

quiet reflection, repetitive process, doing and re-making, reassurance towards risk-taking, and detailed critique and assessment which is the reality of our stock-in-trade. The romantic vision is not untrue, but implies that there is a ready-made environment within creative education of metaphorical jungle-vines, fast-flowing rivers, deep ravines and avalanches. There is not: these opportunities are built by educators brief-by-brief, crit-by-crit, learning-by-doing. They are under threat from a risk-averse society and a thrust towards the certain outcomes demanded of a commoditised education: “what are *you* teaching *me* today?”

### **Risk and Students**

Vaughan et al’s description of “the unspoken requirement” of risk and ambiguity is expounded:

“Students entering higher education often seek ‘clarity’, but a central, although largely unspoken, tenet of art and design pedagogy would appear to be the centrality of ‘ambiguity’ to the creative process” (Vaughan et al., 2008).

They relate that the student is usually seen as the problem if they have difficulty with taking risks. But Vaughan et al suggest that it is rather the ‘unspokenness’ that is the issue, and that this pedagogic thrust itself should rather be located as the site of the problem. The conclusion is not that ambiguity and risk are ‘wrong’ but that students unfamiliar with the veneration of these notions should expect to be guided towards them. It is an important perspective for anyone advocating risk in the curriculum – that naive learners may need significant assistance.

Students come with a diverse range of experiences, though some dispute (because of institutional ‘standards’) whether this extends to representing a wide range of backgrounds. As part of University of Edinburgh’s ‘Widening Project’ team, the ‘Access to Creative Education’ project recently reported (Triggs, 2012) that interviewed teachers:

"...felt art schools were "too elitist" and "difficult to get into", citing stories of pupils applying multiple times and not getting in. (This perception was also held by many of their pupils)" (Triggs, 2012 p. 15).

If both teachers and pupils sense elitism then (whether that is true or not) it seems reasonable to infer that we see a narrowed range of potential backgrounds in the creative campus. When we 'widen participation', we widen the number of students unused to the notion of risk being valuable (though perhaps with a greater resilience of it in everyday lives), and we are faced with how to generate the trust necessary to transition them to that valuing of risk and ambiguity. That trust is important because "the fostering of a "sense of trust" in the interaction between student and instructor is clearly necessary if the student is to be willing to accept the risks and ambiguities inherent in a creative design process." (Ochsner, 2000)

The Edinburgh ACES report (Triggs, 2012) would suggest that student relationships with teachers and others around them in their earlier education has consequences too for their relationship with creative risk-taking:

"... a student becomes dependent on the instructor, waiting to be told what to do before producing any design work. This can be a case where the attempt is made to secure approval from the instructor without taking the creative risk and may echo the student's experience of a relationship with a parent or significant adult in childhood." (Ochsner, 2000)

There is a suggestion that building 'small triumphs' in a gradual evolution of risk-taking practices is helpful:

"Particularly with beginning students, for whom the design process (reflection-in-action) is unfamiliar, the importance of achieving some success so that risk-taking is encouraged and psychic defenses are not engaged cannot be overemphasized... These students may have had little experience with the risks and ambiguities that are part of design education and may have

the hardest time accepting that they may not be as successful, at least initially, in this new mode of reflection-in-action" (Ochsner, 2000).

Vaughan et al identifies the problem too: "Although... we value a 'pedagogy of ambiguity', we often fail to transition students from the safety of the 'concrete' or 'expected' to the ambiguous and contingent, in a way that makes them feel safe or enabled." (Vaughan et al., 2008).

We must prevent students from inhabiting the 'failure cycle' (Schön, 1987) with its protective destructive (and disruptive) behaviours, and instead help them transition and emerge through these periods of natural disorientation (regardless of their 'risk' biographies). Vaughan et al (2008) and Schön (1987) agree that being specific and open about risk and failure ameliorates negative feelings. This has resonance for the authors of this paper, since we found that though we had both perceived the college's prospectus for undergraduate graphic design to talk about risk (and it certainly implies it), we found that it was only the masters programme where it was made explicit:

"Graphic Design at ECA encourages its students to take a risk, to test the boundaries of the discipline and push their design ideas beyond personally predetermined limits" (Edinburgh College of Art, 2014).

## Conclusion

There are healthy tensions between the risks of the creative campus and wider concerns of health & safety. In our creative communities of learning, we must encourage risk-taking but also protect the members of our community from harm. This includes protecting them from obvious physical danger, but also from unbridled harmful criticism around their behaviours where they have simply responded to the ethos of their environment - the creative campus. Alastair Brown, Edinburgh College of Art Health and Safety Officer acknowledges this tension when he says: "The problem is that our worst case scenario is their best".

We want students to 'feel' their risks, but not be harmed by them - and that is why it is important to recognise the differences between the extents of risk and hazards & danger: risk is something with the potential to cause harm, and a natural part of life - and of experiential learning. Being cognisant of theories and perspectives of risk helps us to value it rather than fear and retreat from it as too bothersome.

But the risk we present is not edgy, heroic, romantic whimsy; but nor is it hazardous, burdensome danger. Rather it is a solid, central generative prerequisite for a community of educators and learners on the highly-charged cultural campus. When we find ourselves with its inevitable occasional difficult consequences, it may help to recall the words of Paulo Freire:

"The more conscious and committed [educators] are, the more they understand that their role of educators requires them to take risks, including a willingness to risk their own jobs. Educators who do their work uncritically, just to preserve their jobs, have not yet grasped the political nature of education." (Freire, 1985)

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