

James Biddulph (PhD Abstract)

Creative Learning in multicultural home contexts

My PhD study investigates creative learning in one UK inner city social context. It seeks to explore the ‘multitude of meanings’ relating to creative learning as articulated by children and their parents. Throughout, an argument is made to counteract the universalized conceptualization of the term as seen in policy and political rhetoric.

Building on the recent revival of interest in creativity and creative learning in education, the social construction of meaning is extended further, moving beyond the school gate and into children’s homes to identify the children’s ‘creative learning lived worlds’. In doing so, it builds on research into creative learning as it relates to school, to understanding how diverse communities value, construct meaning, perceive and understand what it ‘is deemed to mean’.

Working within a broadly social constructionism epistemology, with an understanding of the symbolic interactions between people that construct meaning and drawing on theories related to the structural forces in education, particularly an interest in the tensions between dominant and marginalized social groups and their contribution to discourse about creative learning, I aim to foreground the voices of children and their parents.

To achieve this end, an ethnographic multiple case study of six children in one UK inner city primary school is being conducted. The case is bounded by the authentic site of school community, which includes times and spaces for creative learning in home contexts. Within the case study, I use multiple methods including interviews, observation and participant image-based methods.

An analytic framework that draws on both inductive and deductive analysis is employed to understand how creative learning is constructed, defined and how it is practiced in children’s multiple social worlds.

I hope that findings from the study will suggest implications for the transformation of creative learning in schools, with reference to the social and cultural particularity of the contexts in which schools and teachers hope to develop it. The aim is to find more contextually sensitive approaches to creative learning so that it remains a democratic and inclusive ‘way of knowing’.

September 2013