Making and being made: wise humanising creativity in interdisciplinary early years arts education

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Abstract
This paper focuses on how wise humanising creativity (WHC) is manifested within early years interdisciplinary arts education. It draws on Arts Council-funded participatory research by Devon Carousel Project and University of Exeter’s Graduate School of Education. It is grounded in previous AHRC-funded research, which conceptualised WHC in the face of educational creativity/performativity tensions. WHC articulates the dialogic embodied interrelationship of creativity and identity – creators are ‘making and being made’; they are ‘becoming’. The research used a qualitative methodology to create open-ended spaces of dialogue or ‘Living Dialogic Spaces’ framed by an ecological model to situate the team’s different positionings. Data collection included traditional qualitative techniques and arts-based techniques. Data analysis involved inductive/deductive conversations between existing theory and emergent themes. Analysis indicated that ‘making and being made’, and other key WHC features were manifested. We conclude by suggesting that WHC can help develop understanding of how creative arts practice supports the breadth of young children’s development, and the role of the creativity-identity dialogue within that, as well as indicating what the practice and research has to offer beyond the Early Years.

Key words: wise humanising creativity, interdisciplinary arts, participatory research, early years, embodied dialogue

Introduction
Creativity has been a core feature of the Early Years, formally and informally for decades (e.g. Shagoury Hubbard 1996; NACCCE 1999; Prentice 2000; Duffy 2006; Kudryavtsev 2011; Craft 2013). This study builds on this to consider a relatively new conceptualization of creativity within interdisciplinary early years arts to try to better understand both the theoretical concept and the connected practice within 21st century educational imperatives for creativity.

The concept is wise humanising creativity (WHC) (Chappell and Craft, with Rolfe and Jobbins 2011; Chappell and Craft 2011; Craft 2013), which is driven by the recognition of creativity’s fundamentally humanising potential, and the need to intrinsically consider wisdom
(Sternberg 2003). Banaji, Burn and Buckingham (2010) remind us that there are many
creativity rhetorics; and yet the CREATE Research Group at University of Exeter (UoE) found
that none of these encapsulated the humanising creative experiences that we were
documenting (Chappell 2008, 2011). In particular, the UoE team were seeing the process of
creators not only ‘making’ but also ‘being made’. A reciprocal relationship between
embodied identity and the creative process was being evidenced; that is as we create we are
also creating ourselves; we go on a humanising ‘journey of becoming’ (Chappell 2011;
Chappell with Craft, Rolfe and Jobbins 2012).

In the current UK educational climate of constrained resources being prioritised towards a
core traditional curriculum, those justifying creativity, the arts and culture (which might be
viewed by some as ‘none core’ activities e.g. Gove 2011), have perhaps turned to more
marketised arguments (Gertler, Florida, Gates, and Vinodrai 2002). We therefore find
creativity within education, often cited as beneficial because it prepares the creative
workforce of tomorrow, and fuels capitalist growth (Seltzer and Bentley, 1996) rather than
because it contributes to a humanising process, or the development of a ‘whole person’
living in relationship with others.

This focus on marketised creativity is perhaps reflected in how creativity is now positioned
within UK Early Years Programmes of Study. Until 2008 ‘creative development’ was detailed
as one of six areas within the early learning goals and educational programmes (Early Years
Programmes of Study 2008). However Early Years Programmes of Study (2012) revisions
saw a re-prioritisation of these into seven prime learning areas (communication and
language; physical development; and personal, social and emotional development, literacy;
mathematics; understanding the world; and expressive arts and design). These no longer
detail creative development, although the programmes articulate one of three
characteristics of effective teaching and learning as ‘creating and thinking critically’. This
shift from explicitly naming creative development to downplaying it to a characteristic of
effective teaching and learning perhaps reflects a broader policy perspective which no
longer prioritises creativity within curricula as before. Prior to this it had even been argued
that creativity was not centrally positioned enough (Robinson 2015) and overall it might be
argued that the English curriculum is moving towards a less holistic take on creativity, even
in the Early Years.
In the context of this reduced Early Years curricula emphasis on creativity the UoE team and the Devon Carousel Project have been studying WHC. WHC first emerged conceptually in secondary level dance education studies (Chappell and Craft with Rolfe and Jobbins 2011). It has since been used to frame studies of: European primary and secondary level digital creativity (Walsh, Chappell and Craft under review); 14 – 18 year old interdisciplinary dance-focused practice; pan-European research aimed at developing creativity in science education (Chappell, Slade and Greenwood with Craft and Black, 2014 in review). It has also been used to support arguments for wider educational systems change (Hallgarten, Hannon and Beresford 2015) and participatory research in older people’s dance (Wakeley 2014).

Across 2012 the team working on The Devon Carousel, Arts Council-funded Playing with Circles became aware that WHC had strong resonance with the findings from their research into the Carousel approach. Carousel is a Devon-based social enterprise, within which professional artists specialising in interdisciplinary early years arts, collaboratively engage young children and their parents/caregivers through participatory arts, creative learning and outdoor play. The project aims to enrich lives, build confidence and help individuals to fulfil their potential whilst combating barriers to arts participation¹. It was therefore a ripe context for studying WHC.

As the team moved into its 2013-14 Arts Council England funded research project, Round and Round You Turn Me, WHC became a more active conceptual framework in understanding ‘how creative arts practice supports Early Years children’s development’. Within these broader aims which led to a research film (Dawson, Chappell, Cartwright, Pender, Swinford and Ford 2014), a small team focused on: How is wise humanising creativity manifested within early years interdisciplinary arts education? This team included two Carousel practitioner researchers and a University-based researcher. Through a review of extant literature and discussion the team chose to collaboratively frame their research within the WHC concept. The practitioner researchers then led on data collection and the University researcher facilitated this and co-analysis. Research findings were collaboratively developed and co-writing was key to their presentation (see methodology section for further details).

¹ www.thecarouselproject.org.uk

URL: http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ciey
Literature Review

In the last fifteen years, in the UK, a considerable body of work has developed which considers creativity within education. There are many rhetorics of creativity and it is now widely acknowledged to be multi-dimensional (Banaji et al 2010).

Drawing on this work, there are ways of conceptualising creativity which could be appropriate to framing study of interdisciplinary early years arts education. It can be said to nurture ‘little c creativity’ (Craft 2002), which suggests that creativity is about problem-finding and solving through life. Carousel practice certainly aims to contribute to young children and families doing this.

Under the ‘little c creativity’ umbrella, Craft developed ‘possibility thinking’ (PT) (e.g. Burnard, Craft, and Grainger 2006). She argued that children’s creativity is driven by transitions from ‘what is’ to ‘what might be’, encapsulated in ‘what if?’ and ‘as if’ thinking. This is a potentially useful lens through which to understand young children’s creative activity. And yet with its roots in a psychologically driven perspective and a stated intention to focus on Ryle’s (1949) ‘knowing that’ and ‘knowing how’ (Craft 2002, 109), the project team found that it difficult to use PT as a frame for aesthetic activity without feeling that there was a need for more. Reid’s (1980) work is helpful in understanding what this might be. He proposes that ‘knowing this’ or felt knowledge of experience, connected to the aesthetic, deserves a place within education alongside ‘knowing that’ and ‘knowing how’.

More recently, working specifically within the Early Years, Nutbrown (2013) has discussed the ‘aesthetic’ as regarding senses, emotions and feelings. She draws on Dissanayake’s (2001, 241) idea that infants are born with “‘aesthetic incunabula’, a...‘swaddling’ which makes the emotional effects of the arts discernible from the earliest months”. This is the human need to attend to the world through the senses, which manifests differently at different ages. She reasons that we need to ensure that education pays due regard to this human aesthetic capacity. Hence our research team’s desire to more strongly recognise it within our creativity conceptualisation. Carousel practice is embedded within the artists’ professional practice and as such seeks to actively work with babies’, young children’s and families’ aesthetic abilities. Carousel’s 2012 research and accompanying research film (Dawson, Chappell, Cartwright, Pender, Swinford and Ford 2012) showed that a key Carousel element was offering children a “‘Grandness’ – a multi-sensory 3 dimensional way of experiencing
and exploring”, which relates to Nutbrown’s emphasis on young children’s aesthetic capabilities.

In order to more fully incorporate aesthetic capabilities within creativity we therefore turned to Chappell’s humanising creativity (Chappell 2008, 2011) and, with Craft, wise humanising creativity ideas (Chappell et al 2011; Chappell and Craft 2011). These concepts have some similarities to, but are not the same as Fischman’s (2007) discussion of the need for more humane creativity. Chappell’s work especially has been conceptually driven by a desire to more actively include aesthetic understanding and ‘knowing this’. Chappell has recently worked on arts-based, WHC-framed creativity research projects (e.g. Chappell and Swinford in press; Chappell and Jobbins 2015) and this Carousel study is part of this.

WHC derives from people engaging in collaborative thinking and joint embodied action to imaginatively develop new ideas which are valuable to them and their community (Chappell et al 2012). This means engaging with the ethics of what matters to the community. WHC places a strong emphasis on the physical inter-relationship of creativity and identity, so that in the process of making, children are also being made; they go on a journey of becoming. This is an active process of change; it is guided by compassion and shared values because it happens in an individual, collaborative and communal way. This seems particularly relevant to the child-family-artist relationships within Carousel’s type of interdisciplinary arts-based early years practice.

Crucial to children having and sometimes becoming new creative ideas (e.g. in dance activity where they are the dance) is the relationship between their ‘inside’ and ‘outside’. Children can engage in dialogue and share themselves and their ideas (inside) with other people, their ideas and the developing artistic idea (on the outside) (Chappell et al 2012). Briginshaw (2001) earmarks this inside/out dialogue as a means to creators generating new arts ideas. Chappell et al (2012) argue that “those involved in humanising creativity create responsibly, mindful of the consequences and their use by others”. ‘Humanising’ comes from shared action being embodied; it takes place in the very place of being human, the body; and it does so as part of a communal endeavour. In arts education especially, this is guided by shared values, whilst empathetically negotiating others’ needs, shared ownership of ideas and group identity. It is the fact that shared embodied action occurs within communal endeavour with shared values that contributes to its humanising capacities,
rather than all embodied action being humanising per se. Relating this back to Early Years Arts, Carousel practice might be said to provide space for the arts-based inside-out/outside-in creative dialogues that contribute to children’s journeys of becoming in an ethically aware and embodied way.

Furthermore, Chappell et al (2012) have found support for this embodied, aesthetically-based humanising dialogue in Shusterman (2008). As a body philosopher, he developed a concept called ‘somaesthetics’ - the study of the experience and use of one’s body as a place of sensory-aesthetic appreciation and creative self-fashioning, where ‘body-mind’ is inseparable. How young children not only work with their ‘soma’ aesthetically, but might often be said to be more strongly defined by their soma than adults is often evident within Carousel practice (Chappell and Swinford in press). This is supported by Nutbrown (2013, 241)’s argument that “the youngest of human beings engage with the world first through an innate aesthetic attending, through their senses”. There is therefore a strong connection between the soma, aesthetic experience and the humanising process working ‘in relationship’ and within wider notions of responsibility, which reinforces the inter-relationship of these in order to understand creativity within WHC, which is considered here.

So then, in framing this study, we have found it useful to apply the framing from other WHC research projects (e.g. Walsh, Chappell and Craft under review). Walsh et al (under review) identified four key features as being core to evidencing WHC, which have been further developed into five themes here. These are, firstly, the core idea of making and being made. This is grounded in the reciprocal relationship between creativity and identity, and the related notion of humanising journeys of becoming. Secondly is the notion of new ideas that matter. This means that creativity has the capacity to be humanising when it is carried out with ethical consideration as part of creative value judgements in relation to what matters to that particular community. Thirdly is the role of working on your own and with others so that creativity occurs individually, collaboratively and communally and often within a shared group identity. This is fundamentally driven by a dialogue between the inside and the outside. Fourthly WHC is characterized by immersion in creating, that is getting lost in an embodied creative flow in order to take risks and develop new, surprising ideas. And the final feature is that of taking and sharing control where creators initiate and share the development of creative ideas, and understanding/applying the principles that
might guide decision-making. It is this framing of WHC that we have applied within this research.

One final noteworthy point, is the fact that Carousel practice is interdisciplinary. Ajaykumar (2004, 140) defined this as a “creative, dynamic and equitable encounter between forms that perhaps have conventionally not even been considered in the same breath”. At times Carousel’s interdisciplinary practice might combine more obviously (e.g. a print-maker leading a session with a visual artist). But at others the disciplines interacting may be less obvious (e.g. a print-maker with a dance artist). When a creative space is created in a Carousel session between dance and print-making and the different ways of knowing that the two disciplines bring, it might be argued that the possibilities inherent in that space are multi-modal and multi-dimensional. This space of interaction is a key definer of Carousel practice and is new territory for the investigation of the WHC concept, which has the potential to facilitate new emergent understanding.

Methodology

This is qualitative participatory action research driven by an approach developed by Chappell and Craft (2011), which draws on the work Giroux (2003). This aims to flatten hierarchies to research ‘with’ rather than ‘on’ practitioners. They developed a technique called creative learning conversations to produce Living Dialogic Space, meaning that academics, practitioners and where possible children engaged as researchers listen to each other’s questions and ideas. This allows them to actively co-research an area around which they share passion and curiosity, from which they may generate their own or shared outcomes (Craft with Chappell, Rolfe and Jobbins 2011). This approach draws on the social sciences, the arts practitioner (especially dance), and Early Years teaching philosophies, and acknowledges the social construction of reality, and multiple perspectives applied to co-interpret data.

Across 2013/14, research was carried out within the Carousel Arts Council-funded Round and Round You Turn Me project. Within broader questioning by the larger team, four researchers focused on asking: how is wise humanising creativity manifested within early years interdisciplinary arts education? It is this question that we are reporting on here.
“Round and Round You Turn Me” consisted of 6 phases in sites including Children’s Centres, a community-based family session, pre-schools and a contemporary art gallery, in which the research took place. In each 6 week phase, two artists collaborated on a different activity which explored how creative arts practice supports Early Years development. Phases 1 and 4 involved 44 children and babies between the ages of 4 months and 18 months with 48 parents or carers also taking part. The research within these phases investigated how artists, parents and babies can collaborate together to stimulate babies’ senses. Phase 2 involved 15 children and babies between the ages of 6 months and 4 years with 10 parents or carers also taking part. The research in this phase examined the challenges of working with babies and older children. Phase 3 involved 6 children between the ages of 2 and 3 with 3 nursery teachers also involved. The research within this phase considered how printmaking and dance can increase children’s body awareness. The research within phases 5 and 6 considered the nature of the artists’ collaboration in a rural family group and a contemporary art gallery. Phase 5 involved 10 family groups including 15 children between the ages of 4 months and 4 years. Phase 6 involved 6 children between the ages of 3 and 4 years, with their parent or carer and teacher. The artist researchers (Catherine Cartwright, Tamsin Pender and Lizzie Swinford) worked in different pairings in each phase making each collaboration individual and distinct.

Catherine Cartwright is a multi-disciplinary artist, working primarily with printmaking, drawing and film. Tamsin Pender is a visual artist who has exhibited widely, including Tate Gallery St Ives and Walsall New Art Gallery. Lizzie Swinford is a contemporary dance practitioner (dancer and teacher) working in the community, schools, further and higher education. Katherine Ford is the Director of Carousel and has shaped the vision of the organization alongside securing funds. Kerry Chappell is a UoE Lecturer and specialises in dance, creativity and educational futures; and participatory methodologies.

Data collection across the 6 phases included traditional qualitative techniques such as observations, reflections and interviews, and arts-based techniques such as reflective and observational drawing, participant mapping tools and data artefacts, for example sculptures by participants (Figure 1). Photography and film were also used, allowing for a focus on movement, colour and shape where it took precedence over words. Observational drawings were created by the visual artist to record activity and focus the act of looking, particularly when collaborating with the dance artist. The printmaker created drawings of participants,
in order to reflect upon a specific moment or sequence of events. Visual maps by parents, practitioners and artists recorded participants’ movements around and through the space.

*Insert Figure 1 and caption*

With practitioners working as both artist and researcher within the sessions, data collection was often built into the arts activities. For example, where data was collected by printmaking and movement in phase 3, a record of children’s pathways in space was created through photographing foot patterns printed through walking on paper. These showed the limits of the pattern early in phase 3 where children were reticent and the prints went almost entirely in one direction. In phase 4, parent/carers were given clipboards on a trip to a museum on which to write observations and to graphically map the movements of their children. In this way, multiple observations triangulated with the researchers’ data were found to capture fleeting but meaningful moments in the participants’ journeys.

Data analysis involved inductive/deductive conversations between existing understanding of WHC represented by the five themes, and emergent themes surfacing from this new context. Analysis was triangulated across the team, with one member leading on the first round of lower level analysis, and other team members triangulating this before moving on to develop higher level analysis.

**Ethics**

As the project was a collaboration between The Devon Carousel Project and UoE, the research was subject to UoE’s Graduate School of Education ethical guidelines (British Educational Research Association [BERA] 2011). A UoE Certificate of Ethical Research Approval was obtained from the Chair of the Graduate School of Education’s Research Ethics Committee. This involved submitting full details of the project to the Committee and articulating how informed positive consent, anonymity and confidentiality, and no harm to participants would be ensured; alongside copies of all research information letters and informed consent forms. Participants in the research including staff, and children’s parents were given the opportunity to read about the research, its data collection techniques, data treatment and publication plans, before signing the informed consent form. At the beginning of each of the 6 research phases, the research was also verbally explained to participants, and any questions answered.
No research took place without informed consent from participants and the consent form clearly explained the use of observation, interviews, audio-recording, still and moving images in research and publication. Those who wanted to be involved but not have their image used were fully respected in this decision; as were those who wanted to take part in project activity but not the research element. Publication data was carefully modified where appropriate, for example, to protect participants’ identities. For example, the sound has been removed from video clips where voices mention children’s real names. Also, hard copy data was stored in lockable cupboards and digital data in password protected online areas.

Overall, the research and accompanying informed consent forms worked to principles of anonymity (pseudonyms are used for all participants), protection from harm, right to withdraw and confidentiality. These BERA guidelines are foundational to the EECERA Ethical Code for Early Childhood Researchers (2014) applied in this journal. The overarching ethos of the project is one of democratic engagement incorporating university staff, practitioners and participants into the research process as they wished.

### Findings

The findings are presented below using the five WHC categories with emergent sub-categories detailed where appropriate.

#### Making and being made

This is grounded in the interrelationship of creativity and embodied identity – a process of becoming. There are three features of this: children expressing and developing their own voice; actively using imaginative body mind; and experiencing personal change when creating.

We found evidence of children being offered “objects and materials to create opportunities to explore the artworks and process children’s responses through making” (artist researcher/reflections/Ph6). The artists reflected on children finding their voice as the artist; children took on that identity and extended ideas. In the gallery, one of the artist researchers said to Emily “let’s see?” and Emily responded “Don’t touch it, it’s mine, I made it” (artist researcher/fieldnotes/Ph6). Emily sees her work as part of her world. At another time, the artist researcher reflected “We have a picture of this artefact [Figure 2]: feather coloured blue and wrapped in orange foil wrapper. I think she is being an artist” (artist researcher/fieldnotes/Ph6).
The second feature was children actively using their imaginative bodymind. Figure 3 shows children physically engaging in printmaking improvisations going beyond their obvious. A nursery staff member said: “It did make them aware - definitely more about themselves, different parts of their body” (nursery staff/interview/Ph3). One of the artist researchers also wrote (reflective analysis/Ph3):

the focus was feet. We put out the card for them to walk on in bare feet ...The rolling idea came from them and I think for them, in that context it did go beyond the obvious. It wasn’t suggested by us (we weren’t going to do rolling until week 2!)

Film data also demonstrates this imaginative bodymind in action². Insert film link here [Ph3 Week 4 P1060208.MOV].

The third making and being made feature that we were analysing for was children experiencing personal changes when creating. Parents and nursery staff commented on personal changes for different children. For example: “it was good to see how much John got involved because normally he flits from activity to activity, he’s quite busy. But he really engaged in the session” (early years practitioner/interview/Ph6). His involvement had grown so much that a nursery professional commented: “a life-changing experience for John”. One of the artist researchers commented: “we had been concerned that John was wandering and not engaged until we realized he was ‘just being’ [Figure 4]... Is this the beginning of his journey of ‘becoming’?” (artist researcher/reflective analysis/Ph6)

We can therefore evidence here children beginning to both make and be made. We see this as a fledgling manifestation, with children at the beginning of their journeys, discovering

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² This film clip has had the sound removed so as to not identify the children by their real names

URL: http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ciey
their voices, imaginative bodyminds and what changes to themselves and the world might be possible through them.

**Taking and sharing control**

This is concerned with initiating and sharing the development of creative ideas and understanding and applying principles that might guide decision-making. Three features framed our analysis: artists and learners initiate or respond to others’ ideas appropriately; see how rules work and what happens to them; are confident to decide what to do and to do it.

We found strong evidence of learners initiating and responding to the ideas of others appropriately, for example one mother observed, “I like getting involved in her world.” (Parent/post-it note/Ph4). We saw evidence of ideas initiated by children responded to somatically (Shusterman, 2008), exampled in Figure 5: a mother’s response is embodied as she leans back to support her baby and follow his gaze during a baby-led tour of a museum.

*Insert Figure 5 here and caption*

The flattened hierarchy of child-family-artist relationships nurtured by the artists created opportunities to see the second feature (how rules work and what happens to them). “Parents and artists mirrored the babies’ actions and responses, creating the opportunity for turn taking between parent and child” (artist researcher/reflective analysis/Ph4). Film footage also shows this mirroring in action. *Insert film link here [Ph4 Week 3 VID00177]*.

*Insert Figure 6 here and caption*

Artists and learners could be seen to occupy each position in Figure 6 at various times within Ph1: Carousel artists act, parents observe and mirror actions to baby; baby observes and mirrors the actions; baby acts and parent or artist observes and reflects their actions back. In this way, rules of creative engagement were observed and acted upon in ways that passed control around between Carousel artists and participants.

The third feature is concerned with learners’ confidence in deciding what to do and to do it, particularly relating to art-focused decision-making. There was evidence of sophisticated decision-making and even very young babies were active collaborators, not passive
recipients of artists’ curious offerings (activities or situations established to challenge children’s curiosity): “Ingrid pulls a string. The whole structure moves up and down. She has a face of joy while she follows with her gaze how the strings move” (Volunteer/observation/Ph4).

Carousel artists working within a contemporary art gallery with 3-4 year olds witnessed them becoming the decision-making artist. “I introduce the idea of one person being the artist and the other being the clay that the artist shapes and moulds into position. This quickly turns into mirroring as Belinda strikes many poses and I mirror her. I think she really gets that she is posing as a statue, making funny faces, changing position, holding it and then changing to another pose” (artist researcher/reflections/Ph6).

We saw evidence that very young children began to take and share control by mirroring, turn taking, and beginning to lead adults. As children developed and were stimulated by Carousel artists’ curious offerings in the contemporary art gallery, children displayed decision making skills that put them at the centre of their own creative journey and actively played with ideas of artistic identity and ownership.

**New ideas that matter**

This incorporated three features; explores and actions new ideas; thinks about the consequences of ideas; understands that different ideas are of different value to their community.

We found many instances of children generating new ideas, developing different ways of doing things. One of the artist researchers reflected that children worked out that to bump balloons they needed to use “sharp movements...[the] dynamic is very clear in children’s movement even if they don’t touch [the] balloon” (artist researcher/reflection/Ph3). Figure 7 (Ph3) shows children using paintbrushes to prod jelly. Here they were interested more in testing its properties than eating it.

*Insert Figure 7 here and caption*

Parents commented on this ‘newness’: “I think we do more new things in the 90 minute session than we do in the rest of the week” (parent/email/Ph3). Film data also showed
evidence of this ‘newness’ when a new intensity of focus came into a child’s engagement. 

Insert film link here [Ph5 Week3 P1060699.MOV]. The research team felt that one way their work allowed for this personalized ‘newness’ was by placing children at the centre, encouraging them to lead.

The second feature, whether children were thinking about their ideas’ consequences was less evident. Although children were physically thinking through their related actions in the elastic maze (a ‘curious offering’). Two artist researchers commented on seeing a girl “decision making and exploring in action” (artist researcher/reflection/Ph5), as they observed her walking through the maze independently, lifting threads and looking around her as she decided what to do. Film data also supports this in action. Insert link to film clip here [Ph5 Week4 P1060736.MOV]. Although this is not direct evidence of children thinking about artistic consequences, the early years practitioners reflected that there may be something of this informing children’s decisions. Clare noted the “seriousness and grandness” of the artistic practice (early years practitioner/interview/Ph6).

In relation to the third feature, understanding that different ideas are of different value to their community, there are inklings of this, but no more. One of the artist researcher described a situation in which:

Belinda made a person from objects in session 1...Session 2 they made individual person ‘stamps’ and printed them into boxes. They arranged the boxes into what Tim called ‘house of people’. In session 4 they found places for their own boxes.... I think they are making decisions about what is important to them individually and as a group (artist researcher/reflections/Ph6).

There was also observational data, which showed children discerning between carpet and bubble wrap, the beginnings of perceiving different textures with different art values (Volunteer/observation/Ph4).

So, within the data, we can see strong evidence for children exploring and actioning new ideas; and some evidence of them beginning to consider their ideas’ physical, social and at times artistic consequences. However, there are only hints of children explicitly understanding that they can choose between ideas because they matter to them or their group.
Working on own and with others

While WHC attends to the individual journey of becoming, it flourishes in a communal context. Creativity humanises because it develops the individual in relationship (Figure 8).

Insert Figure 8 here and caption

The core features used to frame here were: children asking questions to other people and of themselves; questioning other people’s ideas to see if they are different to your own; trying to find ways to work with other people or to work differently. We also found evidence for a new sub-category: dialogue across art forms.

There was evidence of children asking questions to other people and of themselves. One of the artist researchers reflected how children invited adults to join their creativity asking, “which one do you want? ... come and do it too. Let’s see what happens” (artist researcher/reflection/Ph2). This question acknowledged different choices and a discussion ensued centring on them, indicating an emergence of the second feature; questioning other people’s ideas to see if they are different to your own. In general there was less evidence for this.

The third feature, trying to find ways to work with other people or to work differently was strongly evidenced by the prevalence of the terms ‘sociability’, ‘community’ and ‘secure relationships’ in artists’ observations and analysis. A parent commented on the “interaction between babies. Trying to converse and copy each others movements” (parent/post-it/Ph4). Film data shows this in action too. Insert film link here [Ph 4 Week 3 VID00170].

Where children were fragile and reluctant to engage, close work with known adults encouraged them to participate (Figure 9).

Insert Figure 9 here and caption

Artists observed a sense of community where adults supported children across families and helped the artists facilitate the session, creating a shared group identity. However, artists
sometimes observed a negative sociability, as adults were sociable between themselves
instead of engaging with the children.

From the artists’ collaboration, a sub-category of ‘dialogue across art forms’ emerged.
Artists merged and stepped between disciplines, devising activities where art forms were
integriedly linked. One participant described the “buzz of newness and excitement” that
resulted from the “dynamic of two different collaborating artists” (parent/email/Ph5).

Insert Figures 10 and 11 here and captions

Children explored the print process using movement; lying flat, being “inked” by a dry roller
(Figure 10) and covered with “paper” or fabric, which can also be seen in the film data. Insert
film link here [Ph5 Week 3 P1060694.MOV]. They made their own intuitive links across art
forms. One child drew Spiderman and “sort of jumped the pastel up and down...he became
Spiderman...this movement then turned into dancing; with twirls and other movements”
(artist researcher/reflections/Ph2).

This dialogue allowed ideas from inside the child to be expressed physically and shared with
others. Throughout the data there are instances of ideas bubbling to the surface and
emerging as questions and actions that enable children to work alone and with others.

Immersed in creating

We were working to analyse three features here: children getting lost in what they were
doing when creating, liking to do things which went out of their comfort zone, and
frequently come up with surprising ideas.

Artists observed that the sessions’ pace and wealth and variety of activities resulted in a
busy, excited atmosphere in which families moved between related activities, and children
frequently got lost in what they were doing when creating: “Gareth really enjoyed being a fly
caught in the elastic spiders web, buzzing and wriggling away. He almost missed snack time
because he was so caught up in it” (parent/e-mail/Ph5).

In Figure 12, children are spooning paint onto paper between pots, engaged in exploring
independently for a long time.
For the second feature, ‘likes to do things which go out of their comfort zone’, we found evidence of the artists seeking to challenge children and adults to try new things. By participating in these activities or not, children demonstrated their willingness to move outside of their comfort zone. In the contemporary art gallery, over a few weeks, children became familiar with their environment - one child said: “This is my favourite space – there is so much room”. But some still found some of the subject matter (e.g. figurines) challenging. As this happened, artists sought to work with this challenge and one reflected: “These figurines are familiar by now but still elicit a response that indicates discomfort. Would making artworks themselves from figures and clay enable this to be expressed and processed?” (artist researcher/reflections/Ph6).

There was then evidence that children came up with surprising ideas. A child used a golf tee from home as a tool for drawing on tissue paper that was covering ink (monotype drawing) (Ph5). Throughout the project, children frequently surprised the adults in how they used props. For example, in an outdoor movement activity with water a child was observed “dipping his ironman toy into the water to make the toy do the jumping. Once inside this same toy was dipped into the paint pot of coloured water and onto the paper” (artist researcher/reflections/Ph3).

Overall then we see all five of the WHC core features evidenced in some way; the pattern and significance of which we will discuss next.

Discussion

So in framing Early Years interdisciplinary arts education with WHC, we can see evidence of the previously researched WHC features. Making and being made, perhaps the most important feature, emerged within our analysis. We saw evidence of children beginning to develop their own voice, both literally and through their bodies, with parents commenting on some relatively profound changes for their children within the process. We can connect this to Briginshaw (2001), also highlighted in Chappell et al (2012), who emphasises the importance to the ‘becoming’ process of being able to experience different identities. Young
children were able to step into the artist role, seeing the world from a different perspective and then also seeing themselves and their capabilities afresh. Also, when Carousel practice engages children in being an artist this is an inter-disciplinary engagement where children's voices are manifest via different but intertwined ways of knowing the world and expressing their version of it. WHC has been studied in the interdisciplinary context of upper primary European arts/science education (Chappell et al in review) and it is important to note that the role of integrated disciplinary ways of knowing in developing identities and new ideas in this early years study, can contribute to this growing international perspective on WHC.

The findings also indicated young children engaging in sharing creative control between themselves and adults within flattened hierarchies. Through its mirroring, turn-taking and children leading, Carousel practice is strongly collaborative and communal, with an emphasis not only on children and early years professionals, but also on accompanying parents or carers and, at times, siblings. This resonates with Faulkner, Coates, Craft and Duffy (2006) who argue for the importance of early years cultural and creative activities as socially constructed dynamic practices which emerge through interaction. The relationship dynamic of working solo and with others therefore seems to offer a rare environment in which babies and young children can share new idea development with family and professionals in a subtle way. This extends their creative learning beyond what is possible in the home or nursery. This is not at all as explicit as learning the choreography rules in a secondary dance classroom (where the theory originated), but it provides an important very early apprenticeship for young children into individually, collaboratively and communally manipulating and learning rules with a bridge between home and the more formal educational settings to which they will slowly be introduced.

The social and interactive nature of these processes also resonates with Samuelsson, Asplund Carlsson, Olsson, Pramling and Wallerstedt’s (2009) articulation of the importance of conversing and interacting in early years arts learning in their large scale study in Scandinavia. This study reinforces this international argument for collaboration and interaction in early years education. It also adds an argument for the importance of young children engaging communally. This means stretching children to engage in a more shared group identity which goes beyond basic group work, and emphasises communality as another vital layer of their social mix. In turn it is important that communality is evidenced here in relation to creativity which in other arenas has been seen as reducable to the
individual (e.g. within more cognitive conceptualisations of creativity, e.g., Boden [1990]; Cropley [2001]). The new emergent sub-category in this study of ‘dialogue across art forms’ adds to Samuelsson et al’s (2009) arguments further, as it highlights the role of the interdisciplinary context, and ensuing new shared spaces within which this individual, collaborative and communal creativity can occur.

The findings of this study also strongly connect to the notion of learning fledgling ethical or moral rules within new ideas in early years interdisciplinary arts practice. Chappell and Swinford (in press) writing internationally on improvisation in early years dance practice have discussed seeing the beginnings of what Le Voguer and Pasch (2014, 102), citing Gill (2007), refer to as ‘everyday morality’; we would argue that this is evident in small ways here too. The findings above demonstrate children trying out new ideas for them, with some evidence of them considering consequences. This is perhaps to be expected for children so young. But the fact that there is fledgling evidence of children considering the consequences of their creative activities is important in pushing our understandings of creativity. It takes us beyond an innovation for its own sake definition of the term, and brings in questions of ethics and trusteeship (Sternberg 2003). This study demonstrates that we can see early years education as a potential starting point for considering what wise creative action might be, and how children might learn to consider ‘everyday morality’ in small but cumulative ways starting in their first educational environments.

Finally in relation to immersion there are connections to be made to Shusterman (2008, 2) who, writing in America, notes the importance of immersing via the whole body which “constitutes an essential fundamental dimension of our identity”. Here we see under 5’s physically immersed in their arts-based activity, although perhaps less willing to take risks which may be a more gradual part of their arts learning process, and personal growth. Shusterman (2008, 214) also argues for us remembering that we are not “self-sufficient agents but stewards and impresarios of larger powers”; while these young children may not be fully aware of this future capacity, the interdisciplinary arts activities provide a palette within which they can begin to test out their own self and its somatic relations in a safely immersed way. We can therefore make contributions to ideas beyond the early years which argue for a more ‘embodied’ understanding of human existence per se, and which we see in fledgling form here in our findings. Being able to immerse in the ‘flow’ is an element of the creative process per se which has been carefully articulated by Csikszentmihalyi (1996). To
see this manifesting in this early years data, in such an embodied way, provides an indication again as to a broader conceptualisation of creativity than might perhaps have been fully considered to date within the early years.

All five features of WHC are evidenced in fledgling form in this study, which is the first time this has been seen in an Early Years context. Previous WHC research has posited that the journeys of becoming which ensue from WHC are incremental and cumulative, and this study provides the first evidence of the initiation of this for children as young as 4 months. It also reinforces the arguments being made more widely in the literature for creativity to be conceptualised and practiced as a ‘confluence’ of dimensions (e.g. Amabile 1996; Craft 2002) rather than a narrowly individualised or more cognitively (e.g. Cropley 2001) defined ability.

Conclusion
As stated earlier, creativity has long been a core feature of Early Years education (e.g. Shagoury Hubbard 1996; NACCCE 1999; Prentice 2000; Duffy 2006; Kudryavtsev, 2011; Craft 2013), but it now seems less central with the reprioritisation of UK Early Years learning goals (Early Years Programmes of Study 2012) perhaps reflecting similar shifts in other western countries, such as America (Carlsson Paige 2008). Despite this we have been able to evidence the beginnings of wise humanising creativity in early years contexts working within these parameters. In terms of ongoing policy and practice there is a message to relay that creative activity can still have “life wide” (Craft 2002, 1) implications for children’s development. Although creativity is now defined in the UK Early Years as a ‘characteristic of effective teaching’, this study indicates that it could permeate all seven associated ‘areas of learning’. Through the way in which WHC is evidenced here it could certainly appropriately emerge in all the earmarked areas, especially personal social and emotional development, communication and language; physical development; understanding the world; and expressive arts and design. However we would argue for more. Having evidenced WHC here, we would argue that creativity conceived and practiced from such a confluence perspective pervades across young children’s development and it should be re-positioned more centrally within Early Years curricula, not only in the UK, but in other educational systems where it has been eroded (e.g. Carlsson Paige 2008).
Further, an interesting development for this research from here would be to investigate, whether, despite new similar policy constraints in other parts of the educational curriculum, this kind of interdisciplinary arts practice has relevance in nurturing WHC beyond the Early Years. We would argue that the way the practice shares control, values collaboration and community, and works alongside children in an embodied way that flattens hierarchy to facilitate WHC creates opportunity for creativity learning that has potential at least into Key Stage 1, and perhaps beyond, especially as the original WHC conceptualisation emerged from study of secondary school arts practice.

Having said all of this we do not want to fuel a position in which creativity becomes increasingly connected solely with arts activity in early years practice. WHC as a creativity theory has been applied and used to frame understanding of creativity in digital and science learning contexts as well as the arts, and across the age ranges. Drawing on Craft’s (2002) seminal writing in this area, we would strongly argue that creativity is manifest across all disciplines. Indeed the evidence that we offer in this paper, although taking place under the ‘banner’ of interdisciplinary arts is grounded in the Carousel project aims of developing the whole child, and for the arts to integrate with other EY learning experiences to allow children to learn about themselves and their world, rather than simply themselves as artists.

Although a small study, we feel that we have an important contribution to make in terms of arguing less for creativity in education as connected to young children being innovative for its own sake, but more for creativity in education as being a collaborative and communal endeavour which is grounded in the body, and which can contribute to developing a whole person who considers the impact of their actions. Drawing support from Nutbrown's (2013) argument that infants and young children have an aesthetic swaddling, Chappell and Swinford (in press) have argued that children perhaps understand the nuances of lived embodied experience in their often pre- or semi-verbal worlds in a more intense way than adults, because their bodies more often provide them with their interactions with the world at this age. WHC emphasises the importance of creativity as embodied, and we therefore aim that through this work, we can contribute to strengthening the argument for both creativity across disciplines and embodiment per se to be honoured as a vital part of EY education and beyond.
Certainly this study can be added to the developing body of international research into WHC now, in early years, primary and secondary contexts (e.g. Craft 2013; Walsh et al in review; Wakeley 2014; Hallgarten et al 2015) to make an integrated argument for less rational, risk-averse education. This resonates with the work of Tobin (e.g. 2004) in American and Japanese cultural contexts, who argues against pure rationality in education. Through our research we can contribute to these international debates and show that interdisciplinary arts practice in the early years can nurture WHC and encourage journeys of becoming through embodied, creative, communal learning activities.

While WHC attends to the individual journey of becoming, it flourishes in a communal context where journeys are interconnected. Creativity humanises because it develops the individual in relationship, and it develops the community and its values through the individuals within it. With increasing threats to the interactional, creative and playful environments of early years education across the world, this study provides evidence to argue for how vital and productive for young children’s development these elements can be in early years education. Writing about early years education, Carlsson Paige (2008) has stated that academic skills are only important if they make us more human. We would agree that these skills are important for our citizens of tomorrow, but reinforce from this study, that these need to be nurtured within wise, humanising environments where creativity is a necessarily central concept in both curricula and practice, if we really want young children to fully thrive.

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Figure List

Figure 1: Collaborative sculpture made by children in response to Matthew Sawyer exhibition (Ph6)

Figure 2: Emily’s feather/foil artefact (Ph6)

Figure 3: Rolling on corrugated cardboard to experience texture with whole body (Ph3)

Figure 4: John ‘just being’ in the space (Ph6)

Figure 5: Mother following baby’s gaze (Ph1)

Figure 6: Representation of Act, Observe, Mirror

Figure 7: Paintbrushes used to wobble jelly.

Figure 8: Mirror drawing together (Ph5)

Figure 9: Flour play (Ph3)

Figure 10: Printing bodies (Ph5)

Figure 11: Printing with ink (Ph5)

Figure 12: Getting lost in painting pots