

		<p>Creative Education in 2020: A View from the Devolved Nations</p> <p>Prof Vicky Gunn (PI) Creative Disciplines Colab Cluster</p> 	<p>Presentation notes from the APDIG-CHEAD Parliamentary Reception held on 25th February 2020 at Westminster</p> <p>Vicky Gunn v.gunn@gsa.ac.uk</p>
<p>THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ARTS</p>			
			
			

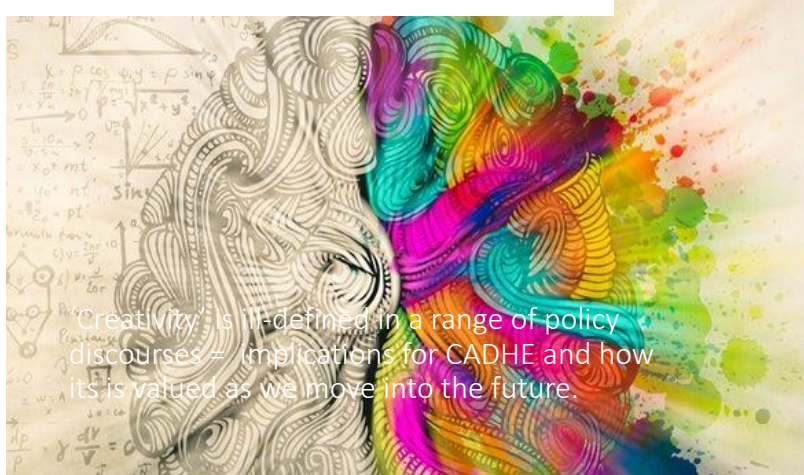
In 2016, as the architecture of the Teaching Excellence Framework (**TEF**) was revealed by the Dept for Education, it became clear that metrics associated with past activities in creative arts higher education were about to cast a long shadow forward. The prosaically named Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (**LEO**) (that's '*how much tax are our graduates likely to pay, given pay records 3, 5, and 10 years after graduation*') was going to be part of ushering a completely new governance system within higher education in England. This system was likely to renew debates around whether doing an art and design degree was 'worth' it. And I will admit to being terrified about what the political (and thus funding) ramifications of this data-set would be. So anxious indeed was I that I tried to acquire basic metrics' analysis skills (otherwise known as the autodidactic statistics for policy level 1). This led to sleepless nights. I am not a natural with numbers. But I can recognise patterns and the patterns from LEO for CADHE were uncomfortable.

Whilst Scotland was not part of this agenda (as higher education is a devolved matter), it was clear that art and design HE within the Scottish system would and could not remain unaffected. Drawing on the system established through Scotland's distinctively collaborative Quality Enhancement Framework (**QEF**), a cluster focused on using evidence for enhancement of the creative disciplines was commissioned. [Background on the collaboration and outputs here: <https://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/current-enhancement-theme/defining-and-capturing-evidence/the-creative-disciplines#>]

For the last three years, we have attempted to show how cross-institutional collaboration is the best way to address the increasing shift from narrative to number forms of higher education governance (and the associated evidence used to judge quality and standards). We did this whilst acknowledging the somewhat existential-crisis-making reality of being amidst such a change. After all, the arts depend on changing the imagination over time as evidence of impact as much as they do fixed, backward glancing data. Without narrative and qualitative evidence enrichment, demonstrating our value appropriately is (and has always been) tricky.

Our collaboration centred around collective engagement across Scottish HE, FE, creative producers & employers, as well as policy-designers at government and NGO levels. In effect, we based the collaboration within communities of commitment all intent on coming to terms with and challenging the instruments of measurement and their metrical outputs currently in play regarding the impact of the creative arts. We recognised that this metrics melee was not limited to CADHE. Indeed, it was actually being assimilated - in front of us - across the various policy domains related to the creative and cultural ecology of which our provision is an integral part. Simply put, it was an unavoidable intrusion with which we had to come to terms. Over the period of this collaboration, a series of headlines have emerged that CADHE, in relationship *with* policy makers, cannot avoid:

Creativity is ill-defined



'Creativity' is ill-defined in a range of policy discourses – implications for CADHE and how it is valued as we move into the future.

Such ill-definition will lead to partial valuation for CADHE which has a unique perspective and methods to offer. Such ill-definition is likely to lead to an over reliance on disembodied design thinking as the marker of excellent creative education, whilst avoiding the reality that learning to become an expert creative practitioner has significant infrastructural costs. Effectively this will leave our applied artists and makers out in the cold, whilst simultaneously emphasising creative industries based more on STEM than STEAM & reinscribing inequalities in the creative economy.

Collaboration and porosity are essential

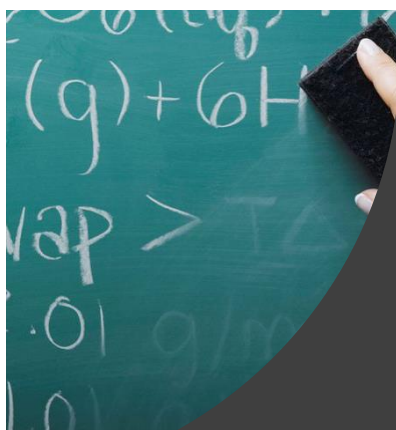
Collaboration across the creative ecology is essential for the feed forward, feed back energy of creative practice & art and design creativity

Our future moves must be to bring the conversations going on within distinct policy arenas around governance via metrics together, with CADHE acknowledged as a central spine of the creative and cultural industries and as such originators of both innovation and place-making (ie an intrinsic element of the creative economy).

To do this requires:

1. Bringing policy makers out of their particular siloes and using creative forms of engagement to enforce cross-boundary working (which in terms needs ministerial valuing of such activity);
2. More porosity between elements of the creative arts HE and creative production ecology and associated economies;
3. Revisiting the split between research-teaching funding with an eye to understanding the coherent and generative interaction of research, teaching and practice in CADHE;
4. All of which in turn asks CADHE leaders to value such activity through the visions they establish and how they support the operationalising of these visions.

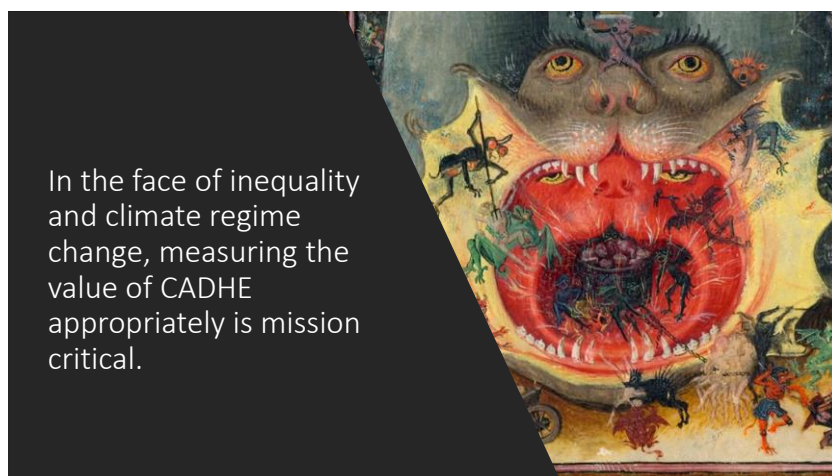
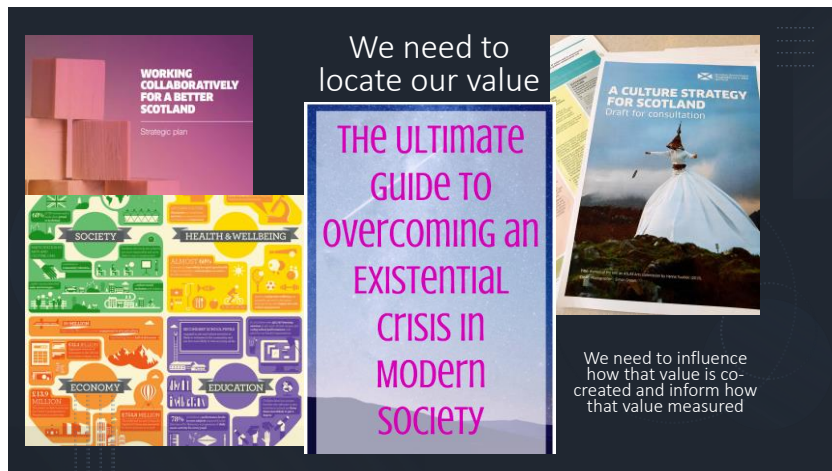
We can't avoid economics



Whilst doing that our unique offer in the current 'creativity turn' of economic policies needs to be demonstrated and emphasized.

Alongside managing all of this comes a significant need for CADHE influencers to :

1. 'Up-skill' our creative education leaders in understanding how value judgements will be made from metrics and what elements of mitigation are likely to be most convincing when it comes to dealing with funding regimes and notions of the social contract between society, government, and art and design.
2. Recognise the inequality and poverty traps that our students face and engage proactively in what effective professional education for 21st century looks like.
3. Ensure growth narratives don't outweigh environmental ones.



Postscript:

Just a few days after giving this talk at the Parliamentary reception more policy turns occurred to emphasise the criticality of this moment in CADHE’s advocacy: In Scotland, the new Cultural Strategy was launched, which includes aims stressing the interactions between cultural, education, creative industries, and economic policy: <https://www.gov.scot/news/a-culture-strategy-for-scotland/> (Though I would have liked to see more about CADHE leadership in this, it did refer back to the government’s pre-winter statement on Scotland and the creative industries: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/policy-statement-creative-industries/>). This came just days after Fiona Hyslop saw the economy added to her pre-existing cultural ministerial brief; In England, the DCMS put out a call for engagement whilst they attempt to understand possible methods for recalculating the economic value of the sectors they cover; In a twist that might point towards moving forward with subject TEF, Iain Mansfield, the original civil service lead behind the TEF mechanism became the Special Advisor to Gavin Williamson; and, following the latest roar of LEO, the IFS effectively implied the idea of funding for CADHE being part of a social contract between government and educational provision (note: government ‘loss’ is, should one flip the conversation to contractual obligation. government investment in CADHE.)

Things are about to move apace again – and we as CAD higher educators, with the academic freedom to speak about the offer to society of our specialisms, are professionally called to ensure that we stand for ethical ways forward. We need to collectively engage in emphasizing the *what matters* about our creative higher education in a manner recognisable to policy makers and parliaments whilst revisiting CADHE’s strength as part of a social contract both at a devolved and a UK-wide level. We should and surely can engage with our role in innovation, creating preferable nows and futures and, more pragmatically, the design and use of culturally relevant evidence to capture the heart and soul impacts of CADHE in creative production as part of our democratic society.