

ID: 201

Workshops (30 min)

Topics: Artistic and scientific collaborations

Keywords: Creativity, Reflexivity, Intercultural, Inclusivity, Community of Practice

‘Art & Spirit’: Creativity and Reflexivity Practices in Teacher Education

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21st Century societies are increasingly seeing the need for creative, flexible, adaptive and innovative teacher educational programs that are able to disrupt and shift learners from conformity to innovation as a means of dealing with complexity, uncertainty and change.

This workshop builds on a joint pilot study held at Macquarie University, Sydney and Justus Liebig University Giessen in 2017. The initial findings indicate certain elements such as ‘time and space,’ ‘boundary breaking,’ ‘risk taking’ and ‘resistance of premature closure’ are essential to fostering creativity and reflexivity practices in learners.

Drawing on UNESCO’s World Conference on Arts Education (UNESCO, 2006) and the Creative Economy Report (UNESCO, 2013), the researchers developed a new conceptual framework on intercultural research between pre-service and in-service teachers in Australia and Germany. The research explores teachers’ critical and creative thinking processes through reflexive theories and experiential practices in active learning environments.

‘Art & Spirit’ Workshop investigates collaborative artistic practices using ‘hands on’ approaches to classical Eastern aesthetics through Chinese natural inks on Xuan paper with Chinese brushes on bamboo sticks. The task begins with ritual breathing to music while painting with the ancient Chinese calligraphic strokes. This embodied state, creates a sense of calmness and reflexivity. The Workshop shows how well facilitated artistic practices can develop in learners’ dispositions of ‘risk-taking’, ‘boundary breaking’ and ‘resistance of premature closure’.

This Arts-based inquiry research demonstrates how intercultural higher educational programs can achieve different creativity levels through a ‘spirit of play’ and reflexivity practices that focus on processes for change.