3ydd Gynhadledd Dysgu ac Addysgu

3rd Annual Learning and Teaching Conference

8 Mis Medi – 10 Mis Medi| 8 September – 10 September 2015

# Crynoldebau / abstracts

Creativity, imagination and play: their contribution to excellent teaching.

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As a sector the word creativity has become increasingly popular in terms of defining how we want people to think, perform their roles, approach challenges and explore ideas. Linked to creativity, staff and students are often exhorted to be imaginative in their approach to study and research in the disciplines, although whether imagination means the same thing in archaeology, performance, history, engineering or curation studies may be debated. Innovation, too, is widely aspired to, however play as part of a higher education experience appears to be a more problematic proposition. While some of us are persuaded that play is vital to human learning and discovery at any age, others believe it to be too trivial or childish for a higher education setting. In this talk I will explore what we understand creativity, imagination and play to be in our pedagogic practice: the ways in which we adopt alternative means of motivating learning and engagement with our subjects, as opposed to the traditional or expected. I will share examples of creative approaches which foster excellent teaching, covering content design and delivery, reflection and evaluation, staff development and pedagogic research. These examples will be underpinned by theories of pedagogy and play (among others) and will include my experiences using Lego, materials and spaces to wrestle with complex topics. I will argue that our conceptions of play within a tertiary setting must be broadened and deepened, while the contribution of creative, imaginative and playful pedagogies across the disciplines needs to be better understood. This dual goal is essential not only to motivate and engage our students but to re-invigorate our practice as teachers.