“I wonder if I haven’t taken crazy pills,” muses Tom Bennett, in his extraordinary article (issue no 2389, Friday 10th October)questioning the role of creativity in education.

Tom, I share your wonderment. Let me also share my experience of Scotland, where the educational imperatives, I readily concede, differ markedly from those in Essex, England. This does not make me unhappy.

You assert that “I don’t think we even know what it (creativity) is.” Oh, I rather think we do. Here in Scotland, where the Curriculum for Excellence is predicated on the importance of creativity in learning AND teaching, all of the agencies concerned with its delivery have been engaged in forming a creative learning partnership, and evaluating its impact.

A foundation stone of this is the shared definition that creativity is the capacity to generate ideas of value to the individual and the ability to look at things afresh. To tackle problems with an open mind, make connections, learn from errors and let pupils and teachers’ imaginations take them to new possibilities.

Our initial report citing empirical evidence of practical benefits comes from all of the partners involved, Creative Scotland, Education Scotland, The General Teaching Council, The Scottish Qualifications Authority, The College Development Network, Skills Development Scotland and the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland. (It can be downloaded at <http://www.creativescotland.com/what-we-do/major-projects/creative-learning-and-young-people/creative-learning-plan>)

All shared their positive experience of utilising creativity both in the manner information was gained and used, and the way in which it was imparted.

It’s a common misconception that creativity in schools concerns only lessons in the expressive arts. Important as these are, the creativity we have sought to embed encompasses every aspect of the curriculum. Who could possibly argue that Science is not a creative subject, or mathematical formulae, or, for heaven’s sake, English and History?

But if, as you write, “a good fifth of a child’s secondary education and more at primary” is given over to the expressive arts, I would love to have more detail of this arresting statistic – something of an unexpected breakthrough!

However you suggest that no model of educational creativity offers any assurance of reward or proof it doesn’t conflict with pre-existing data. The rewards are apparent and recorded; not least the surely self evident belief that a student whose interest and imagination are engaged is one who is more eager to access, utilise and retain information. Or that a teacher liberated from the straightjacket of traditional methodologies is more likely to remain enthused and energised.

Our partnerships have also encompassed the cultural community with all of our national performing arts companies and many smaller cultural organisations building fruitful relationships with schools and colleges – collaborations which have proved mutually beneficial. We also have creative learning networks in nearly all of our local authorities allowing these connections to be made and nourished.

I notice in passing the side swipe at Sir Kenneth Robinson “the pharaoh of creative education,” whose TED talk, you note with evident dismay, has had 28 million plus hits. A more inquiring mind might have wondered why. I submit it has gone viral because it is truly inspirational.

I see that you would prefer your students “to think inside the box…to value the box. Boxes are useful”.

And stifling. And devoid of light. And confining. And, given the pre-determined designs, lacking either innovation or excitement.

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