

An IATL funded strategic project:
**'Urban Cultural Intermediaries: pedagogy, creativity and
the City'**



Final Report

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The initial rationale for this project is the increasing use of "creativity" in teaching and learning, and the observation by some tutors that creativity can make demands that students cannot fulfill – some students indeed find themselves with a facility for creativity, others do not; and what kind of creativity do we expect of students? Amateur creativity? Professional-level creative products? Some students find creative production helpful in their learning, but others do not. Recent scholarship on the creative industries, however, now recognises that creativity is more often than not a collective endeavour, and even where individual talent and skill is involved, this is usually an individual working within a set of conditions that include the contribution of others. We all too often identify creative skills with an individual's powers of creation – not collaborative methods, or different ways of engaging with a social space or place. Creativity as a concept is still derived from the proverbial romantic artist and inspired work of art. This project is part of a broader pedagogic project in the Centre for Cultural and Media Studies, exploring models of creativity that are collaborative and transformative of places. Creativity for us, is more of a process, is collaborative and managed in stages. Similarly, the significance of the role of "intermediaries" in the creative industries is that they are crucial parts of a chain of events, multiple conditions and a collaborative process -- and yet may not themselves be involved in the creation or the shaping of a final product. They may, rather, use skills in communications, management, enterprise, marketing and public engagement, all essential to the function of a project or enterprise. In other words, the intermediary is part of a value chain, and more often than not, part of a line or collective that is defined by the frameworks of creative production, such as a branded project. The intermediary may also be a catalyst, entrepreneur, provocateur or instigator; sometimes they are just agent or representative; but they are always one essential role in a much longer creative process, and they usually engage with constituencies or social groups that inhabit that industrial or cultural space.

The original project proposal:

'This project will activate students' creative potential across disciplinary boundaries and through interdisciplinary interaction -- in the context of the City of Coventry and current opportunities offered by its embryonic creative economy. With a revised framework of specific legal, ethical and strategic guidance, our pedagogy research will aim for 'strategic access' in the form of learning participation through creative teamwork (undergraduate, graduate, city youth, creative workers). We will address: (i) the 'role' of students in the city -- social, cultural and economic; (ii) the creative potential of students in the city; and (iii) the outcomes of a greater capacity of student creativity in the city in connecting with its economy, cultural actors and communities. Grounded in an MA module that has been piloted and has attracted a number of major stakeholders, the creative teamwork will address current limitations in student mobility in the City. For students in the City are 'positioned' as consumers, not producers; and that Coventry faces challenges (unlike many Midlands' cities) in both retaining its graduate population, and enabling that graduate population to feed into an expanding creative economy. The need of students for recognition, empowerment and employment meets the needs of the city in expanding its urban creative economy -- benefiting both sides. This project will generate models of practice that can be transferred, but also a sustainable program repeated and developed in forthcoming summer terms.'



The Project

Project Vocabulary:

Refugee Week: This is a national event (during the week of the 20th of June), which is the UN supported **World Refugee Day**. We will deliver our main outputs during this week.

Positive Images Festival: This has been recognised as Europe's largest festival of cultural diversity and multiculturalism, taking place over three weeks in June. It involves most of the community groups in the city, and visiting performers. We will engage with this festival, as a route into the city's creative economy.

Social Innovation: We identify and respond to "development" problems and situations in the City by using alternative, social and student-led approaches.

Mobile people: These are the people in the city who are not permanent or established residents, or do not have full political rights, or are of a foreign culture or group. They are transient (recent arrivals or travelling through -- with no established or fixed connection to the City). These may be international students, they may be refugees, and a wide spectrum of people in between.

Mobile creativity: Using a Human Development capabilities framework, we identify a neglected social group who otherwise possess creative potential, and frame this potential within the City's strategic development aims.

Cultural discourse: We are interested in two levels of cultural discourse -- (1) Coventry's current discourse of the City of Culture 2021 and its strategic ideas on how to develop the City as a cultural space; and (2) the discourses of Global Development, particularly Creative Economy and Human Development.

Cultural intervention: This is an aim. The term 'intervention' means to disrupt or intervene -- we will intervene in the City's cultural discourses with a proposal and message and two creative events. For these events (the exhibition and the public discussion) will be designed and organised as *one* intervention -- one project with one

brand, with one message and purpose, addressed to the city and its leaders.

Urban cultural intermediaries: An assumption of this project is that students (and by implication, other “mobile” people) may not be professional creative artists or designers yet can still play a significant role in the creative economy of the City. The 'intermediary' plays a role in creative production – and is pivotal in making the cultural sector work (arts organisations, festivals and live music, for example). Understanding the function of the intermediary will enable us to understand the potential and possibilities for mobile people.

Research exhibition: This exhibition is creative and looks like an art exhibition. Indeed, it is presented in the form of an art installation; however, the “research exhibition” has a very different purpose. It aims to convey knowledge, and to put forward a strong proposition or series of claims. All through the project the students were being challenged by the questions: what do we want to say to the City about our subject? What impact – social and public – do we envisage for our project.

The Project Research:

Generally, the project achieved its main aim: it constructed an innovative revision of a current MA summer module, "Culture and Social Innovation" [see diagram of new module model below]. It also explored the regulatory frameworks, assumptions and expectations that are instrumental in determining how students engage with the City and whether the City could expand its urban economy through a greater participation of students in the creative and cultural industries. All of the activities and events envisaged in the original project proposal were delivered, along with extensive student evaluations [available as separate documents]. In the final assessment, the only shortcomings of the project were in terms of (i) the difficulty in generating widespread student participation in the summer term, when most students seem to have left the City; and (ii) the project's research aims proved to be overly expansive and generated more research material that could be subject to a succinct analysis and interpretation. The project's research agenda will therefore be ongoing, and published in various forms in the coming year.

Four blog postings on the progress of the project were requested by the Warwick public engagement office. Their blog (relating to the University's contribution to the Coventry City of Culture Bid 2021), can be found here:

https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/about/cityofculture/research/support/jonathan_vickery/

The project suffered an initial upset on the late advent of the project leader (a Coventry-based artist) finding full time employment in the University. A range of new contributors were gathered, which in itself generated a stark impression on the paucity of creative labour available in the City. The initial schedule was set back somewhat (the events began in the new year 2017, and not the autumn 2016), yet it transpired that this was more appropriate (i.e. the 'public seminars' to be held in December and March were held in May and June and happily coincided with other relevant City events). Nonetheless, the autumn term was used productively for an ad hoc consultation with stakeholders, with further research and networking in Coventry (including a presentation for feedback to the Albany Theatre Outreach team on the 15th December in Millburn House).

To summarise our primary research (the project initially employed four assistants on an ad hoc basis, managed by Dr Vickery, all of whom were given individual briefing sessions).

The research involved:

- 1: Five in-depth interviews with Coventry creatives.
- 2: A search for statistics for the city's student population, graduate retention and employment (which remain fragmentary).
- 3: A Literature review and assessment of the level of research and data gathering on students in the city.
- 4: An overview of the legal status of students -- rights and responsibilities, and relevant legal frameworks or treatises (in consultation with the Students Union).

5: A student attitude survey (of a 100 students).

6: Documents and advice offered by both universities on conduct, regulations and procedures with regard student off-campus activity.

This research was preliminary (i.e. it was not a major aim of the project proposal, and so was not comprehensive). Moreover, it is ongoing, and will be summarised as part of the narrative and analysis for the academic journal paper to follow [see below]. Currently, the research serves to scope the parameters of an ongoing project bid and strategic pedagogic development of students and their relationship with in the City. The project began with some basic questions on the creative life of the City itself.

1: Is it possible to speak of Coventry possessing a “cultural sector” or “creative industries”? If so, who are the key actors and agencies in this sector(s)?

2: Is the City Council concerned on a policy level with the City’s large student population (beyond the university institutions)?

3: Who collates, documents and assesses data on students in the City? Is this systematic, and does it impact on policy?

4: What different jurisdictions do students inhabit: how do we understand the inhibition or prohibitions to a full participation in the City’s urban economy?

5: What do students think of Coventry -- are their impressions unnecessarily governed by stereotypes or bad experiences?

6: How are students incentivised or encouraged to become involved in the cultural life of the City -- by university institutions, arts organisations or potential employers?

These questions are complex and require further research, but even our limited research generated some interesting insights into the City’s development (and lack of development, as say, compared to Leicester and Nottingham). Its direct relevance to our pedagogic development can be summarised as follows:

(i) The City's cultural organisations are growing, in part through the impetus of the UK City of Culture 2021 bid and the new City Cultural Strategy 2017-2027 (which will be implemented whether or not the city is successful in the bid). The next five years will be a critical development, offering huge opportunities for the universities and students -- in terms of participation (experience, skills, learning) and employment.

(ii) The growth of the City's creative industries is somewhat stunted, and a new injection of "start-up" and entrepreneurship is without doubt required. While many in the City express a skepticism on whether this could happen, City Council forecasts on the City demographic and industrial growth in the next decade, presents medium-term opportunities to plan and work with a broader vision and aspiration. The City Council itself lacks a research and strategy-making capability in the area of creative and cultural industries, and so presents an opportunity for academic intervention.

(iii) For us, the key organisations in the City who collate data on students, graduation and employment, are the Coventry City University Initiative, Coventry University Careers and Employability Service and Warwick University Student Careers and Skills. The project took the opportunity to forge relations with Coventry University’s *Culturae Mundi* as well as the City University Initiative.

(iv) Students are demographically diverse, and their involvement in the City heavily depends on their legal status – our observations tend to support the view that a "Tier 4" visa student (international student) possesses a mindset that tends to inhibit any form of involvement in the City other than educational and routine leisure/entertainment. Our attitude survey suggests that students of all kinds are imbued with a sense of their transience, and the provisional nature of their residency at the University and in the City.

(v) Our attitude survey also finds that students are equivocal in their views and understanding of the City of Coventry – as a place for culture, social life and potential employment. Negative associations persist, but they are not as strong as one would expect,

and tend to be subject to the students' experiences (of people, events or activities in the City).

(vi) Beyond the available institutional mechanisms of participation – student projects and programs -- there is little *incentive* for students to participate in the cultural life of the city, or become social catalysts for change and development, or engage in enterprise or creative projects, or any other forms of creative industry.

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The Project events:

The First Stakeholders meeting was not possible during the autumn term (coordinating demanding schedules was problematic). Dr Vickery therefore met with and briefed stakeholders individually. Generally, there was a good deal of goodwill expressed for both the project and IATL, but the intensity of schedules and workloads largely prohibit much involvement in anything outside immediate responsibilities. The Second Stakeholders meeting was nonetheless successfully held on the 3rd April 2017 in Millburn House. This was particularly helpful in respect to gaining the advice and help on Sinead Ouilon (Coventry City University Initiative) and Sarah Pagan (Coventry Growth Hub). The importance of the Stakeholders were to offer (a) validation and credibility to the project (particularly involving people from the City); (b) reflection and critical appraisal of the incremental project results; and (c) to provide important information on developments in the City, other related research, agencies and actors who would be interested in hearing about the project.

Advisors: at the outset, Tom Fleming Consultants and the Barcelona-based Agenda 21 for Culture [which operate under the NGO, United Cities and Local Governments: UCLG). We have received feedback from both: Tom Fleming has conveyed his endorsement and interest in the project personally, and will be visiting Coventry this autumn to address students on these and related issues. Agenda 21 for Culture have sent us the framework guidelines for a civic workshop they have devised, on increasing a City's stakeholder commitment to developing cultural policies. This will be useful in developing the full pedagogic potential of students' engagement with the City. The project has also offered us the opportunity for engagement with City cultural operators, Coventry Artspace, Spon Spun Festival, Albany Theatre, various artists and creatives (e.g. Talking Birds, Native Media), and Coventry University (Culturae Mundi and Coventry City University Initiative), Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre. We will be continuing a working relationship with all of these organisations in a new "civic pedagogy" project.

The project operated within the framework of IATL's strategic approach to pedagogic innovation -- 'Interdisciplinarity, Inclusiveness, Internationalisation', 'Diversity', 'Student Leadership', 'Open space Learning', 'Student as Researcher'. This offered a critical framework to which we referred consistently. It was written into the student brief for the project module, and will be reflected in the video documentary film of the project as well as academic journal article.

'Interdisciplinarity' was developed through the encounter of students with the City's arts policies, urban planning and design, immigration, asylum and refugee policies, and frameworks of practice for designing, programming, managing and delivering a public exhibition and event (exhibition designer, event manager, arts administration, curating and creative artist).

'Inclusiveness' was the subject of the civic participation model we devised during the module.

'Internationalisation' emerged as the student group was international, but also through the subject of the project research ("mobile" people) and the liaison with the Coventry Migrant and Refugee Centre.

'Diversity' was intrinsic to our contribution to the Positive Images Festival.

'Student Leadership' was internal to the structure of the module -- there were over ten contributors to the student learning (faculty, professional artists and curators) but all worked on a contributory basis, where the student group was organised as an independent creative team with its own decision-making procedures. Moreover, a preliminary day workshop was run by a development consultant preparing the students for leadership and creativity in their work.

'Open space Learning' was internal to the project in terms of the City being cast as "creative platform" in coordination with Coventry Artspace organisation.

'Student as Researcher' -- the first stage of the module was a facilitated encounter with the city ("walking the city") and subsequent development of urban cultural research methodologies.

The module (see next section) was an occasion to devise a framework for extended participation -- the participation of both non-enrolled Warwick students, Coventry students, young people and others in the City (for example, refugees). This participatory model will continue to be developed in forthcoming iterations of the new module, but where we now have a framework identifying the legal, social and practical conditions under which such participants can contribute.

During the year, Dr Vickery undertook four formal presentations of the project:

- (i): IATL conference, 'Re-Shaping the Learning Environment', Oculus, 14th December 2016.
- (ii): Warwick-Coventry conference, 'Sky Blues City', WAC, 26th April 2017.
- (iii): Presentation during a week long visit to the Institut für Kulturpolitik at the Universität Hildesheim, Germany, 3-7th July.
- (iii): Culture Forum, Coventry Belgrade Theatre, 21st July 2017.

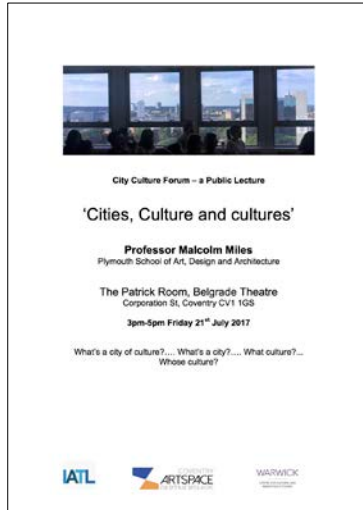
The scheduled Public Seminars were also intended to present the project and its research findings to the City, as well as use this to create a space for public debate on our original research questions. We therefore commissioned the Coventry design group Native Media to manage these events (attracting their network of young start-up creatives and those already embedded in the City's urban culture). The seminars were as follows, and took place during June and July.

- 1: 'The Right to the City', Artspace (Eaton House): 14th June 2017: 5-7pm.
- 2: 'Students, the City, the Creative and Cultural Industries': Fargo Village, June 28th 2017: 5-7pm.
- 2: 'Coventry Culture Forum', Belgrade Theatre Patrick Suite, July 21st 2017: 3-6pm.

These three events were significant in establishing both our presence and a model of public cultural debate in the City (of which there is no parallel).

'The Right to the City' at Artspace offices on 14th June, featured speakers Professor John Clammer (Jindhal University, Dehli, and International Visiting Fellow of Warwick's Institute of Advanced Study), Dr Jonathan Vickery, Mindy Chillery (Coventry Artspace), Sinead Ouilon (Coventry University City Initiative), Dr Vishalakshi Roy (WBS and Coventry Cultural Strategy), Dr Chris Maughan (Coventry Food Union) and Mark Hinton (Community worker; Warwick Centre for Lifelong Learning). The seminar was attended by 30 people, most from Coventry but also from Birmingham and even Bristol. The talks and issues we discussed included the global movement for democracy in cities, the role of culture in developing urban democracy and the importance of both students and creative workers in promoting democratic participation in the City (talks were later circulated by Powerpoint).

'Students, the City, the Creative and Cultural Industries' took place at Fargo Village, June 28th 2017: 5-7pm. This event functioned as a research focus group, and featured some of the City's young people who had succeeded in setting up a creative enterprise in Fargo



Village, and 6 graduates from city universities (Coventry and Warwick) who have remained in the City for a variety of reasons. It has generated some important views, which will be represented in the journal article.

'Coventry Culture Forum', at the Belgrade Theatre Patrick Suite, on July 21st, was attended by over 50 people from Coventry's cultural sector, including the City Council and universities. It set a precedent for a public cultural event gathering, to discuss the cultural development of the City -- provisionally entitled the Culture Forum. It began with Dr Vickery outlining the 'Urban Cultural Intermediaries' project and how it had identified several needs in the City -- for a coordinated and assertive dialogue on cultural participation, the creative sector and the role of culture and creativity in the city's urban development. The main speaker was a special guest, one of the UK's most prestigious scholars on urban

culture, Professor Malcolm Miles (Plymouth). Apart from his scholarly standing, his knowledge of Plymouth's post-War urban planning allowed him to create parallels with Coventry, and his message was to affirm the potential of Coventry's urban culture.

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The module:

The main project product is the revised MA module -- the module is 'Culture and Social Innovation' -- Option Module TH980 of the MA Arts, *Enterprise and Development*. It is normally an exclusive module (enrolled students are students on this masters course). This year there were 10 enrolled students on the module (an intentionally small cohort, given the intensive group work required), but where we sought a smaller cohort given the experimental aims of the module. Three students from two other MA courses in the Centre joined as participants. At the start of term, the full range of contributors and external participants (artists, Coventry students, young people, refugees) was yet to be determined. As we progressed through the 10 week summer term, we devised an 'inclusive' model for pedagogic engagement with the City -- and also encountered the profound difficulties in motivating non-enrolled students in such a project, particularly during the summer period.

As part of this module revision, Dr Vickery generated the following module documents, all made available on Moodle:

- (i) Module Curriculum and Project Outline of (4700wds)
- (ii) Student Module Briefing (3500 wds)
- (iii) Contributor Module Briefing -- for tutors, contributing professionals, and so on (1700 wds)
- (v) Participant Module Briefing -- legal agreement for general or other non-enrolled participants in the module.
- (iv) Module Moodle interface and Facebook pages (Facebook, called 'Mobile Creativity Coventry' was public and advertised on the Warwick Public Engagement office website).

As a vehicle of the students' intervention into the city, the final outputs of the module featured:

- (a) an **exhibition at the City Arcadia Gallery**, on 22-23rd June 2017; this was programmed a part of the Positive Images Festival; and
- (b) a **Public Discussion and Performance evening**, at the Golden Cross pub, Coventry center (Hay's Lane). The issues raised at the exhibition was the subject of talks and discussion (by a largely invited audience -- including an organiser of the Positive Images Festival, various people with experience of immigrating into Coventry, and leaders of the Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre).

The preparation for the module was extensive -- liaising with 10 contributors, negotiating the use of the City Arcadia Gallery and other venues (three others "fell through"). One of the few observations to emerge from this preparation is the utter lack of common cultural space in the city, and how it is difficult if not impossible for cultural entrepreneurs to find a space to work in or gather an audience of participants (without substantial rental costs).

The module featured 10 contributors and external participants, centered around the city. The contributors were:

Chris Maughan -- Coventry Food Union.

Kate Hawkins – independent artist, Coventry.

Karolina Korupczynska – curator-artist from the Stryx Gallery, Birmingham.

Melissa Eveleigh -- freelance development consultant (Arts for Action, London).

Sam Williams -- freelance artist, Coventry.

Mindy Chillery/Gavin Hughes – Artspace, Coventry.

Emilia Monisko -- IGGY/freelance artist, Coventry.

Professor Malcolm Miles, Plymouth.

Native Media, Coventry.

Professor John Clammer, jindal Global University Delhi, india (visiting).

The project briefing articulated the module as follows: *“In this summer module, we will learn about and gain experience of...*

- > Human Development as it applies to urban community.
- > Creative urban research.
- > Curating and managing an art exhibition.
- > Managing, marketing and programming a cultural public event.
- > Teamwork and liaison with development organisations.



“We will ‘innovate’ a social approach to development by

- > Social participation in culture -- people not involved in the cultural life of the city become active through our project.
- > Knowledge of culture and cultural diversity -- we represent the true 'global' cultural diversity of the city.
- > Global development discourses -- we use Human Development and the 'capabilities' approach to look at the mobile people of Coventry.

“Our project will ask the following RQs (research questions):

- RQ 1: Who are the 'mobile' people of Coventry -- the provisional, transient, non-citizens of the city?
- RQ 2: Where are they located in the city -- how do they occupy the space of the city (or, are marginalised from the main cultural spaces and public life of the city)?
- RQ 3: How do Coventry's mobile population embody or express the 'global' of Coventry and its cultural diversity?
- RQ 4: How can we 'globalise' Coventry's urban policy development through a knowledge and understanding of its cultural diversity?
- RQ 5: What capabilities and potential for creativity in the city do the mobile people of Coventry possess?
- RQ 6: How can we propose pathways to development for mobile creativity in the city -- and generate an intervention into the policy discourse of the city?

The MA course, within which this module sits (MA Arts, Enterprise and Development), we consider how both local and International Development tends to focus on either dire human need (like poverty or malnutrition), or the 'hard' economics of physical infrastructure, organisations and institutions, government and the professional middle class that make for economic 'growth'. The UNESCO/UNCTAD *Creative Economy Report 2013* argued in another direction -- a successful 'economy' is not primarily the effects of a growing industry, GDP, profit making mechanisms and business models of enterprise. A successful 'economy' is primarily an educated, skilled, equitable and secure population -- of active citizens in local communities and local economy. However, many 'creative economy' policies for development, over-emphasise the professional, organisational-institutional and specialist requirements of a 'cultural sector' -- and do not express an understanding of the potential of youth, immigrants and visitors, refugees and other 'non-citizens'. Our focus is the human development of the latter – the "non-citizen -- a social dimension of the City's culture not factored as significant by policy makers in urban development.



The students became concerned – personally, ethically and intellectually -- with the 'human' dimension of development as it presented itself in our preliminary explorations of the city of Coventry (with artists Kate Hawkins and Chris Maughan). They undertook empirical research on the social life, urban culture, people, knowledge and skills of the City -- from the viewpoint of those who are usually left out of policy frameworks. These 'mobile' people (which include international students) do not 'belong', are not permanent, do not have full political rights, are often financially restricted, and usually carry with them another (foreign) culture. In Coventry, we found *the global in the local* by exploring the urban communities of 'mobile' (transient, provisional, moving in and out...) people -- and the impact of their inclusion in the city's development. As a social category, mobile people may include:

- > Young people
- > Ethnic communities
- > Artists and creatives (who drift or move around the economy or the country)
- > Recent immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees.
- > Students, particularly International students

The Student-Led Research: the students were encouraged to travel throughout the City, meet with people and communities and gather information, knowledge and any kind of research material that they could find. The three concepts 'cultural mapping', 'photourbanism', and 'curating the city' are three contemporary methods of urban research that we utilised:

Cultural mapping: understanding the cultural geography of the city, and how culture and the creative economy uses (or is used within) the space of the city.

Photourbanism: articulates the nature and dynamics of the city through photography and film.

Curating the city: finds ways of expressing the experience of the city through its material culture (which may be objects or debris that you find, or that symbolise the city's urban life).

The first stage of the module was a research phase but interconnected with the two main objectives -- to curate a public exhibition that would communicate with a public on a major set of issues emerging from the project. They were able to collate material (information, found objects, clothes, documents, interviews, images, film, and anything else), which represents Coventry's mobile population -- and expresses their creative capabilities. *The students' brief suggested sources of research and visual material for the exhibition:*

- (i) Mobile people -- who are they?
- (ii) Mobile cultures -- communities and diasporas.
- (iii) Artifacts and visual expressions -- what visual materials can 'represent' the cultural life of these people?
- (iv) Testimony and the spoken word -- perhaps social documentary, perhaps intangible cultural heritage -- you articulate the experience of mobile people.
- (v) The potential creativity of mobile people -- the capabilities and their possible cultural impacts on the city.
- (vi) Development -- how do we think differently about the City's development, and the role of culture within it?

The research exhibition was different from the usual "work of art"-focused exhibition. It served as a media of communication for complex knowledge of the City. *The knowledge they communicated aimed to:*

- (a) Make visible the 'mobile' people of Coventry -- the people not officially recognised as part of the established urban culture of the city (young people, communities, artists and creatives, ethnic minorities and refugees).
- (b) Include maps, images and other visual representations of the City -- where we

differentiate between 'official' and 'unofficial' culture.

(c) Investigate street culture and the 'informal economy' -- not recognised by official cultural or urban policy.

(d) Engage with communities -- ethnic, immigrant, refugee or religious minority communities and their geography.

(e) Use interview material, statements, recordings with these people -- how they experience the city, what cultural activity they engage in, what human and cultural skills they possess.

The exhibition was documented by the student evaluation presentation, available separately as a PDF.

Challenges encountered in delivering the module:

These difficulties are instructive, as they identify -- in the context of participation, enterprise and an employment future for students in the City -- the barriers to entry and inhibitors to new enterprise. These barriers were found to be

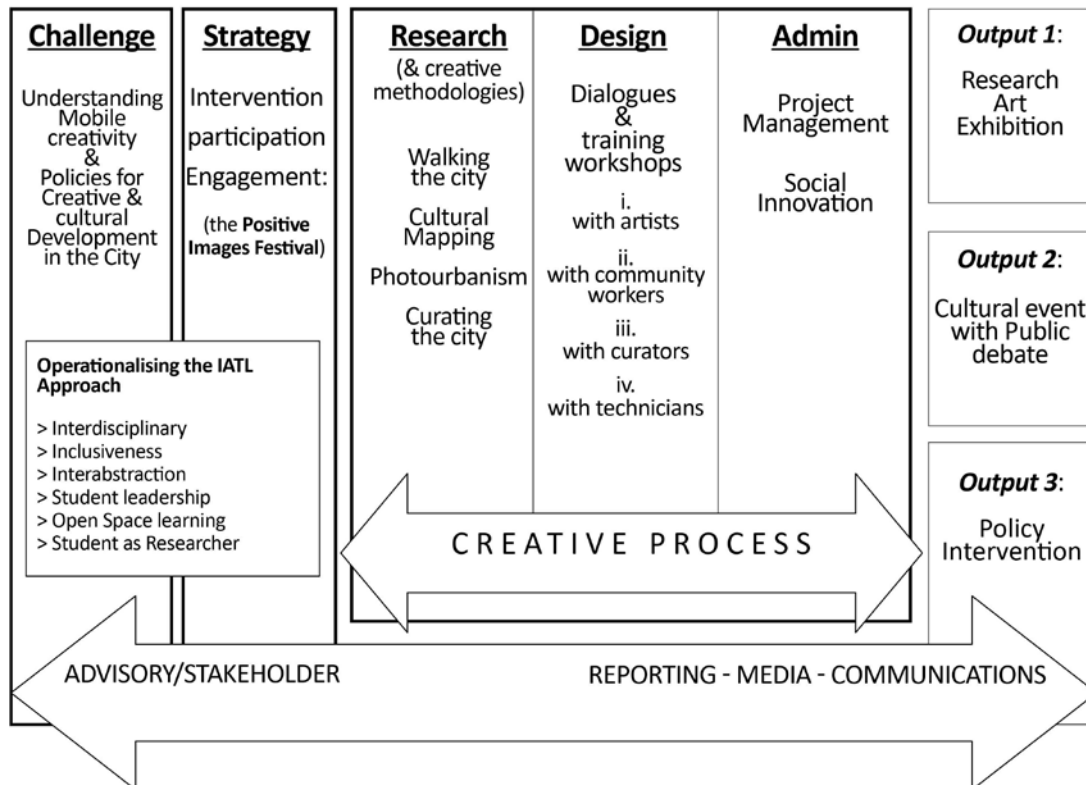
1: A lack of collaborative project and workspace outside of direct institutional or organisation ownership.

2: A lack of cohesive cultural and creative networks and general lack of communication in the City. This had two implications: difficulty in communication, and unreliability. Professional commitments, values, and a consistent approach to communication, were all questioned by the students. To them, a general attitude seem to prevail, that student projects were not worthy of professional attention. However, the use of the IATL brand, and our networking and consequent involvement of faculty and City cultural professionals, was critical to the projects' success.

3: The lack of a formal interconnection between Warwick and Coventry universities means that it is difficult to locate channels of communication, gateways to collaboration, and key individuals who facilitate collaborative work.

The new module model:

Urban Cultural Intermediaries: students impacting the city through creativity and culture
structural model



This model is comprised of stages – from the framework and briefing stage (challenge), to the refined strategic aims, to the creative process, then resulting in outputs. Here there are three interrelated outputs – in 2017 all part of the Positive Images Festival. This model is abstract, and can be used in different contexts (i.e. is not specific to the Positive Images Festival, a strategic reference and output that might change in subsequent years).

The challenge was to identify both a “need” in the City, and a gap in the policy framework for the City’s new cultural and creative strategy. This challenge was based on the pedagogic motivation for the module – to devise a new concept of creativity. In pedagogy, as in a city’s urban economy policies, creativity seems to offer more than it delivers. This is not because there is something misplaced in our desire for creativity, but that our understanding of creativity is defective: it is still grounded in a selective understanding of fine art. Research in creative industries is a corrective for this, and has explicated forms of creativity that are social and economic in their context and impact. The Challenge of this model is the challenge of connecting creativity with a “need” in the City (something whose importance the City cannot deny, and the frameworks of change and impact, i.e. policy frameworks). Of course, a student project will rarely change a civic policy, but policies are always evolving and the City has reached a point where it is now openly recognising the need for dynamic approaches to culture and creativity, and one’s that are facilitated or supported by the City’s strategy.



Academic value:

Academic Outputs: these are the discrete objects of knowledge generated by the project:

1: A strategic model of pedagogy in the City – in addition to the above diagram, we are still developing the 'cultural intermediary' construct as a model of student intervention, which will be defined in relation to student experience as it emerged through the module's 10 weeks. This is particularly important with regard the profile and aspirations of the MA Arts, Enterprise and Development. The strategic model has innovated concepts of 'mobile creativity', 'human creative economy', 'cultural intervention', as well as 'urban cultural intermediary', and these can serve as critical alternatives to modish demands for all students to model themselves on creative producers. This has also presented research opportunities, in responding to the 'capabilities approach' of Human Development discourse, and in generating a working corrective to the common policy assumptions deriving from Richard Florida's 'Creative Class' notion (in relation to students and graduates as service providers and bearers of 'talent': Florida, 2002).

2: A Model methodology for cultural intervention in the City through research -- using Cultural mapping, Photourbanism, and Curating the city as content for (i) inclusive participation, (ii) public engagement events, and (iii) policy proposal (generating a challenge for the city's development discourses -- how we use culture to stimulate growth in the City).

3: A model of cultural intervention specifically in the city in the form of a 'research exhibition'. This is a creative exhibition (in the form of a series of art installations), which communicate the findings of a research project, and make a distinct proposition (explicitly engaging with the development discourses of the city).

4: An evolving City policy proposal -- towards a specific policy framework for the city in relation to Coventry's 50,000 student population, and the pathways to increase cultural participation and production in the city, as well as graduate retention.

5: An evolving Sustainability strategy: while the students had a budget (£200 for exhibition materials), they were briefed with demonstrating techniques of recycling, sharing, upcycling and other sustainable methods for 'cost free' cultural production. In partnership with the new BAsc in Global Sustainable Development (Dr Alastair Smith) we are developing a new model of sustainable urban pedagogy.

The project has also afforded us strategic alliances with the following:

The City: Artspace; Albany Theatre.

Warwick: Dr Alastair Smith BAsc Global Sustainable Development (Cross-Faculty Studies) and Mark Hinton (CLL) and Rob O'Toole [see Outcomes below].

Consultant Dr Vish Roy (Earthen Lamp, CCMPS, WBS and Warwick Creative Exchange). Native Media, a Coventry design group.

Project Outcomes [internal]

1: New framework for the module 'Culture and Social Innovation' -- where 'social innovation' is defined in terms of urban cultural intervention (where skills for research, as intermediary, as citizen-activist and creative producer, networking and employment potential).

2: A conceptual model of civic participation.

3: Student module evaluations -- these are extensive and form a small archive of student responses and assessment of the project in relation to its aims and practical outcomes. It was designed to generate important feedback, as well as act as an assessed piece of work.

4: Short video documentary generated by IGGY.

Project Outcomes [external -- subject to planning and other funding streams]:

1. A network of people who are actively lobbying and identifying opportunities for the creation of a city space (a creative hub or project workspace), which can support urban cultural interventions and practice-based research collaborations, as well as public events (public talks, debates, and public presentations emerging from these projects).

2: An annual 'Public City' lecture in an accessible city location, as an annual focal point for debates on the development role of culture in the city.

3: A new model of 'inclusive pedagogy' for university practice in the city -- where enrolment does not preclude other forms of value being offered to non-enrolled participants.

4: A research bid in the making -- 'The Civic Curriculum and Public Pedagogy through Cultural Intervention'. This is a follow-on project, which maximises the value of the IATL strategic project and expands on its research.



Conclusion and summary: [the IATL final report template of questions]:

What did you achieve with this project?

A revised module framework for delivering urban cultural pedagogy with participatory, public and research dimensions. It is relevant to the City's growing need for (a) the huge student population to play a greater role in the City's cultural and creative production and thus expanding urban economy; (b) new pedagogic interventions involving those not able to enroll in university courses; and (c) participation in major cultural events -- in this case, the Positive Images Festival.

What has been the single biggest impact of the project?

To devise a model of a module that combines pedagogy, research and a high profile public event, where research knowledge is connected to live policy debates in the City.

What were the biggest problems you encountered during the project?

First, the problems with attracting participants to a project whose central framework was still under development. Participation is a major challenge, both on campus (with enrolled students) and in the City (with other students, residents, or non-residents, like refugees). Reluctance to step outside one's comfort zone, plays a role for many people, but also a general marginalisation of student projects (as intrinsically unimportant) and a lack of familiarity with such projects operating in the open space of the City (and lack of familiarity with Warwick University, which is a distant and somewhat mysterious institution to many inhabitants in the City)!

What student involvement was there on this project?

As innovation was central to this project, it did not aim for a large number of students (in successive years, it will do this). It began with 9 enrolled students and 3 participants (from other MA courses), along with around 20 other students who attended our various activities (from research trips to the exhibition and the four public events).

How many students do you estimate were impacted by this project and in what way?

While the number of actively involved students was low (12), the number of students who attended at least one of our events was 76. The module's newly devised participation model will allow us to work more widely, and begin to recruit for the summer module in the Autumn Term of each year.

Could you see your project being replicated or built on elsewhere in the University?

Yes, in whole or in part. A particular briefing document would need to be written for this, as this current module structure is based on specific partnerships with Artspace and the Positive Images Festival.

Do you recognise in the outcomes of your project implications for the University and beyond?

Yes: universities and students are once-removed from the social, cultural and political life of the City. However, a large, talented and mobile social grouping of students could be effective

in terms of roles in a city's urban economic development. Institutional barriers prevent such thinking taking place in policy contexts. Cities, on the whole, do not conduct systematic and critical research on the changing social and cultural dynamics of urban life, and moreover, such knowledge is not internal to the way culture and creative industries develop. This is one area students can play a leading role -- generating knowledge in a creative and public way.

What evaluation of your project did you carry out and what were the results?

Following from the 'Student-Led Research' principle of the project, an evaluation document was calibrated as part of their assessed submission. Each student therefore submitted a 3000 word evaluation, assessed by the project leader and co-workers. These evaluations form an important resource for future development.

Where will your project go from here?

We now have (a) a new module template, with supporting documents, to be rolled out every summer -- with increasing impact; (b) new pedagogic innovations in urban research methodology and cultural intervention (research exhibition); (c) a developing research bid on 'The Civic Curriculum and Public Pedagogy through Cultural Intervention'.

Dr Jonathan Vickery

Director

Arts, Enterprise and Development

30 August 2017.