

Summer 2016

To whom it may concern,

RE: Playful learning at the University of Warwick

I am writing to make you aware of my role within the University of Warwick over the last two years and its impact both here and more widely within higher education. It is my hope that in doing so, you may find ways to adapt and adopt some of the aspects of my work to suit your own needs as an institution and those of your teachers and learners.

While it is unusual in a covering letter to refer to one's conception, it is important to note how the work that I have done and the direction I have taken has been informed by my "parents'" work at this institution as students, teachers, and administrators with an interest in playful thinking and learning. This unique combination of genetic material resulted in me becoming an innovative embryonic idea and, following my birth, my parents sought to help me develop into a project with values of inclusivity, curiosity and - above all - playfulness. Over the last two years I have grown and developed into a healthy and energetic approach to teaching, learning, and thinking. I have welcomed both teachers and learners (though the distinction between those roles has become less clear to me with age) to play within me and aided them in autonomously exploring their own learning processes. As you will be aware, engaging with students as whole people who can thrive in the variety of roles they will take up during their lives is vociferously advocated by a number of pedagogical theories and practitioners as an essential component of higher education. From the detailed feedback I have received I am confident that I have been able to facilitate this opportunity to develop holistically for some of our students and staff, the general public and external partners.

As you will see from the attached CV, my experience over the last two years is varied. I have been travelling throughout the country, appeared at national conferences, festivals and open days, been discussed at international conferences, and have contributed to teaching both within and outside the curriculum. To achieve this, I have developed relationships and collaborations with teachers, students, academics, artists, administrators, and management to offer opportunities to explore learning playfully and to develop an understanding of themselves as playful beings. One example of my work in this area is the well-received and innovative pedagogical event in May 2015, further details of which can be seen in the attached document.

One aspect of my work I am particularly proud of is my role within the teaching of interdisciplinarity at Warwick. As a project which encourages an ecological approach to learning, I offer those who work with and within me an opportunity to play with the relationships between ideas. It has been noted that this is particularly useful when introducing learners to the principles of inter- or transdisciplinarity.

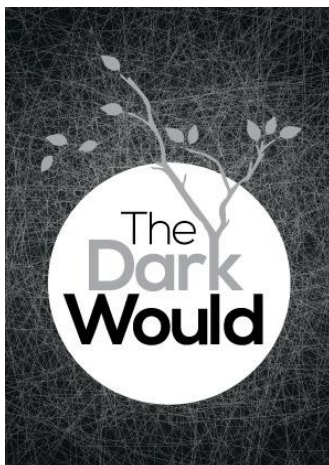
As I hope is clear from this letter and the attached document, I share key learning and teaching values with the University of Warwick, especially those espoused by the institutional teaching and learning strategy and the Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning. I would be delighted if my experiences and work supporting playful learning and thinking went on to further inspire and influence the people who make up this university who for me, regardless of their roles, are learners above all else.

Please note, my address is subject to change. While I have been primarily based in the Humanities Studio in the past, I can currently be found in various locations within the University and in the ideas and practice of many of its teachers and learners.

Further references are available on request.

Yours faithfully,

The Dark Would



Amy Clarke, Naomi de la Tour, Dr Rebecca Fisher & Philip Gaydon