

I WAS A STUDENT ON THE IATE MODULE 'APPLIED IMAGINATION'.

I USED TO THINK THERE WAS AN EASY ANSWER TO THE QUESTION: 'WHAT IS THE IMAGINATION?'

TURNS OUT, THERE ISN'T. WE ENGAGE WITH OUR IMAGINATIONS DIFFERENTLY AT DIFFERENT TIMES, FOR DIFFERENT PURPOSES. HERE ARE A FEW OF THE WAYS I WAS ENCOURAGED TO EXPLORE THAT QUESTION DURING THE MODULE, AND SOME OF THE ANSWERS I CAME UP WITH:

EVERY SESSION OF THE MODULE INVOLVED LOSE OUR INHIBITIONS TO THE FREEDOM-LIKE EXPERIMENTATION WITH PLAY DOUGH SOLVING LOGIC PUZZLES AND USING THE 'SIX CREATIVITY. AS WELL AS PERCHING ON CHAIRS, WE SAT ON CUSHIONS, LAY ON THE FLOOR AND WALKED AROUND THE ROOM.

THIS PLAYFUL ENVIRONMENT EASED THE 'JUDGING' ATMOSPHERE THAT OFTEN HAUNTS ACADEMIC SPACES, LOOSENING THE PRESSURE OF GROUP DISCUSSIONS. WE LEARNT TO NOT BE AFRAID OF FAILING, BUT RATHER TO SEE FAILURE AS A NECESSITY ON THE PATH TO SUCCESS. THIS FOSTERED A SENSE OF UNINHIBITED COLLABORATIVE THINKING.

IT ALSO HIGHLIGHTED HOW SENSITIVE OUR IMAGINATIONS ARE TO EXTERNAL ELEMENTS. IF WE HADN'T SHARED A FEELING OF UNINHIBITED PLAY IN EACH SESSION, OUR IMAGINATIONS WOULD HAVE BEEN MUCH MORE RESTRICTED.

OUR IMAGINATIONS ARE DEPENDENT ON ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS, AND A FEARLESS SENSE OF PLAY CAN BE VITAL TO ACCESSING THEM.

'PLAY AND FEARING FAILURE'

ACTIVITIES THAT ENCOURAGED US TO OF 'PLAY'. THIS PLAY RANGED FROM CHILD-LIKE EXPERIMENTATION WITH PLAY DOUGH TO THE MORE STRUCTURED PLAY OF 'THINKING HATS' PROCESS TO STIMULATE OUR CREATIVITY.

APPLIED IMAGINATION

'MATHEMATICS AND LANGUAGE'

I STUDY ENGLISH AND CREATIVE WRITING. I'VE WRAPPED MYSELF IN WORDS EVERY DAY FOR THE PAST 4 YEARS OF MY DEGREE WITHOUT MORE THAN A PASSING GLANCE AT THE WORLD OF NUMBERS. AS SUCH I NEVER REALLY THOUGHT I'D STUMBLE ACROSS COMMON GROUND BETWEEN THE TWO. YET IN A SESSION ABOUT THE MATHEMATICAL IMAGINATION, I DID JUST THAT.

IN WRITING, I TEND TO FIND THAT BY WORKING WITHIN A SET OF LIMITS - A SET FORM, WORD COUNT OR STYLE - I AM ABLE TO DIVE DEEPER INTO MY IMAGINATION AND PLUCK OUT MORE CREATIVE IDEAS. LIKE WATER IN AN AQUEDUCT, MY IMAGINATION TRAVELS FURTHER WHEN I PUT WALLS AROUND IT THAT STOP IT FROM SLOPPING ABOUT EVERYWHERE.

IN MATHS, THE EQUIVALENT LIMITS ARE CREATED BY THE MATHEMATICAL LANGUAGE: ALGEBRA AND NUMBERS ('X') DON'T PROVOKE AN EMOTIONAL RESPONSE WHERE WORDS DO ('CUTE KITTENS'). THIS NON-AFFECTIVITY ALLOWS MATHEMATICIANS TO STRETCH THEIR IMAGINATIONS TO PLACES THAT AREN'T ACCESSIBLE THROUGH EMOTIONAL LANGUAGE - THEY CAN CALCULATE THINGS LIKE THE STRUCTURE OF A SIXTH, SEVENTH OR EIGHTH DIMENSION TO AN OTHERWISE IMPOSSIBLE LEVEL OF DETAIL.

ONE OF THE MAIN THINGS I TOOK FROM THE MODULE WAS THAT MULTIPLE ENTITIES WORKING TOGETHER CAN PRODUCE INFINITELY MORE USEFUL RESULTS THAN EACH ONE FLYING SOLO. PARTICIPANT IN THE MODULE CAME FROM A RANGE OF DISCIPLINES, ENABLING US TO STIR OUR INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES TOGETHER INTO A MELTING POT OF INTERDISCIPLINARY DISCUSSION. MOREOVER, EACH WEEK WE WERE ENCOURAGED TO CONSIDER HOW THE IMAGINATION IS DEFINED, AND USED, IN DIFFERENT FIELDS - FROM NEUROSCIENCE, TO MUSIC, TO CHILDREN'S LITERATURE. HOPPING FROM WEEK TO WEEK, WE BECAME EQUIPPED WITH THE TOOLS TO PIECE TOGETHER THE SIMILARITIES IN HOW SEEMINGLY DISPARATE DISCIPLINES VIEW THE IMAGINATION.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLABORATION WAS MADE VISIBLE WHEN WE OBSERVED THE MEMBERS OF THE SONG QUARTET PUTTING THEIR IMAGINATIONS TOGETHER TO PRODUCE ENCHANTING MUSIC. EACH OF THEIR INSTRUMENTS WERE ENCOURAGED TO CONSIDER HOW THE IMAGINATION IS DEFINED, AND USED, IN DIFFERENT FIELDS - RHYTHM, TIMBRE, MUSICAL SENSITIVITY. IN THE SAME WAY, THE MODULE HELPED ME OBSERVE HOW THE SOMETIMES DISCORDANT, SOMETIMES HARMONIOUS, VOICES OF DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES CAN SLOT TOGETHER TO FORM A DIZZYINGLY RICH SENSE OF THE IMAGINATION.

'COLLABORATION'

DOODLE HERE

I FOUND THAT THE AMBIGUOUSNESS OF DOODLING GAVE ME THE SPACE TO 'INCLUDE' MY CREATIVE IDEAS. I'VE LEFT A LITTLE SPACE, SO YOU CAN TRY IT TOO.

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