

***Developing creative industries ‘driven’ curricular and implications  
for South Africa’s Higher Education Institutions: A case study of  
TUT’s Faculty of the Arts***

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by

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## 1. Introduction

It has been argued that the global drive towards an increasingly knowledge based economy has compelled universities to shift from a teaching, learning and research focus to an entrepreneurial paradigm. Indeed, Etzkowitz, et al (2000) regard the emergence of the 'entrepreneurial university' as a response to the crucial importance of the knowledge economy in local and global innovation systems. As an academic institution, the university has come to be viewed as a creative incubator and transfer agent for innovative knowledge and skills. Under the current stringent financial climate and dwindling research funds, universities are being compelled to pursue entrepreneurial strategies for the sake of survival. Thus the university is gradually ceasing to be an insulated 'ivory tower' but a core player within the knowledge economy, producing and disseminating new ideas for the creative industrial economy.

This paper focuses on steps being taken by the Faculty of the Arts at Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) in Pretoria, South Africa to develop a creative industries 'driven' curriculum. The paper examines the Faculty's attempts to shift from the existing creative arts towards a more creative industries based curriculum. In particular, the paper will examine the implications of the Faculty's drive to establish the Centre for Creative Industries within the context of South Africa as a developing country. Universities are establishing innovation centres and arts incubators as institutional support mechanisms and forging strategic alliances with government, industry and other organisations in order to contribute to the creative economy.

Since TUT is an increasingly transforming and technology based university, the paper argues that the Faculty of the Arts will be better placed to develop its creative industry 'friendly' curriculum from existing creative fields of study such as the performing arts, drama and film, entertainment technology, fashion design, visual communication, fine and applied arts. The Faculty needs to imagine its future role as a conduit for enhancing the South African creative industries by being able to package the creative industries at institutional and national levels. According to Ruth Bridgstock (2007), universities need to develop creative industries 'driven' curricula that can provide students with a work integrated

learning (WIL) experience. She further notes that it is more realistic for universities to focus on graduate employability from the outset by introducing domain specific knowledge and skills that foster workplace based training, develop career identities, instil personal responsibility and create self-management skills.

## **2. Contextualising the creative industries**

Due to the emergence of various definitions of the creative industries (see DCMS, 1998; CCI, 2013), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD) (2008) description appears to provide a less cumbersome but more consolidated view of what constitutes the creative industries. UNCTAD (2008:iii) regards the creative industries as comprising the interface between culture, creativity, economics and technology, expressed through the ability to create intellectual capital, with the potential to create jobs, generate income and produce export earnings, while at the same time promoting social inclusion, cultural diversity and sustainable development. In other words, UNCTAD (2008) places the creative industries at the crossroads of arts and culture, innovation and technology, business and intellectual capital, in the process of producing and distributing creative goods and services that contribute to economic growth and human development.

Corinne van Beilen and Greg Hearn (2014) regard the element of 'creativity' as fundamental to a better understanding of the creative industries. They place creativity into three basic categories, namely: (i) artistic creativity - involving original ideas expressed in the form of text, sound and image; (ii) scientific creativity - involving experimentation with new ideas and symbols; and (iii) economic creativity - involving the capacity for and knowledge of business innovation. Thus 'creativity' involves the process of generating, connecting and transforming ideas into goods (or products) and services that have economic value.

## **3. Recurricularisation of the creative arts**

Stuart Cunningham (2005:284) asserts that the shift from creative arts to creative industries is characterised by how the creative industries have been able to mainstream arts and culture. In this process, 'creativity' is the critical element in the emerging creative industries curriculum. The dividing line between the

creative arts and creative industries remains thin as the 'creative industries' seem to have been slow to name themselves accordingly. However, in terms of salient differences, the creative industries have become prominent by virtue of their positioning at the centre of the new development paradigm within the global knowledge economy (Barrowclough and Kozul-Wright, 2008). In fact, Cunningham (2005) contends that the creative industries have managed to bring together a range of previously disconnected sectors such as the visual and performing arts, digital arts and media, the hitherto culturally specific and non-commercial to the culturally creative and commercial. Such repositioning of the creative industries has exposed gaps that have necessitated the revisiting and re-envisaging of the existing creative arts curriculum.

The major challenge for the existing arts curriculum lies in creating a lifelong learning environment where creative talent can flourish while simultaneously turning out individuals with the skills and motivation that can enable them to join the creative workforce. Indeed, UNCTAD (2008:40) has noted that opportunities for the growth of the creative industries in developing countries are affected by lack of entrepreneurial skills, inadequate infrastructure and lack of institutional support. Ruth Bridgstock (2005) argues that since most developing countries are characterised by the informal economy, the education system needs to be framed in accordance with the protean career model. Hall (2004:2) describes protean career artists as self-determined and driven by the capacity to continually reinvent themselves in the face of an ever-changing labour market. Protean careerists are open to new possibilities and view their careers as marked by a series of learning cycles. In order to produce 'protean careerists', the education system should be an indispensable element for, and critical enabler to, the development of a creative industries 'driven' curriculum. In essence therefore, the re-curricularisation exercise needs to focus on preparing individuals who can add value to the creative workforce and be geared towards enhancing the growth of the creative industries.

In his presentation to the Faculty Task Team responsible for driving the re-curricularisation exercise which he aptly entitled, "What type of curriculum content, diploma or degree ought we to develop as the Faculty of the Arts?", Mzo

Sirayi, the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Arts, highlighted some of the guiding principles for developing the envisaged new arts curriculum as follows:

*What should be the needs of the graduate from the point of view of curriculum content? ...The graduate is expected to have the capacity to solve problems, to provide answers to questions of various kinds, as well as to be practical, that is, vocational training. This means that the graduate should not only have a sound grasp of knowledge in his or her field of expertise, but should also be able to cope with related and sometimes totally different fields, and to have a general understanding of the world.*

*Ngara argues that it is not just the mastery of knowledge that determine how educated a person is (Ngara, 1994). Similarly, in her unpublished article, "Educators Shape the Future of Global Entertainment", Hoffer (2015) writes that employers are more and more interested in recruiting employees who are versatile in their learning. Being trained in a single area does not work well any longer. For example, a drama student must study dance, music, history or political science and stage construction (including design and painting) in order to understand how dramas are produced. Our students must walk pathways that involve many other disciplines.*

*In addition, our programmes must have a Work Integrated Learning (WIL) component as articulated by the Government Gazette dated 14 October 2014, No. 38 116, which states that, "In the Higher Education Qualification and Strategic Framework (HEQSF), WIL may take various forms including simulated learning, work-directed theoretical learning, problem-based learning, project-based learning and workplace-based learning". It continues to suggest that, "Where the entire WIL component or any part of it takes the form of workplace-based learning, it is the responsibility of institutions that offer programmes requiring credits for such learning to place students into appropriate workplaces" (2015:2).*

What is evident in Sirayi's presentation are the distinguishing features of Hall and Bridgstock's protean career model regarded as important to a creative industries 'driven' curriculum. In her PhD study aptly entitled, "Success in the protean career

: a predictive study of professional artists and tertiary arts graduates”, Bridgstock argues that due to the contemporary shift towards an increasingly globalised creative economy, where creativity and innovation are highly prized, creative workers are expected to possess capabilities which are of great benefit both within and outside the arts. These include problem-solving abilities, emotional intelligence and team working skills. According to Hall (2004), the term ‘protean career’ was derived from Greek mythology involving the god, Proteus who could change his shape and disposition at will. Hence protean careerists are characterised by the rise of ‘boundaryless careers’ that are defined by non-linear career progression, strong internal motivation and career self-management as criteria for success. In other words, protean careerists mark an apparent departure from traditional, linear and hierarchical artists by virtue of their fluidity, ambiguity, indeterminacy and embeddedness in other non-discipline specific fields of operation. Bridgstock (2005) notes that individuals who do not have the option to choose their own career paths will find it difficult for develop their talents. Thus, as a first step towards the re-curricularisation exercise, Sirayi’s argument on the qualities of the new arts graduate and expectations regarding curriculum content are in line with Hall and Bridgstock’s protean career model.

#### **4. BA in Arts Management and Centre for Creative Industries as case studies**

As part of its re-curricularisation exercise, TUT’s Faculty of the Arts will be introducing the Bachelor of Arts in Arts Management degree programme in 2017. According to Priscilla Nesamvuni (2015), this new qualification will provide students with the necessary competencies to function as arts managers within the creative industries in line with the agenda for cultural renewal and cultural identity that has been enunciated in a number of South African government policy documents. These documents include the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (2010) and the Revised White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (2013).

While cognisant of the requirements for the professional management of South Africa’s arts, culture and heritage, the programme has identified the serious lack of individuals with formal training in arts business management. The programme

intends to fill this gap after recognising the potential role of the creative industries in growing South Africa's creative economy. Graduates from the programme will be expected to contribute to the management of creative industry enterprises.

The programme has been in response to surveys conducted by the Faculty of the Arts in 2014 in which alumni from the Faculty indicated that they felt incapacitated by the lack of arts management skills in their undergraduate training. The workshops that were also conducted in collaboration with the National Arts Council and seminars presented by creative industries experts from Queensland University of Technology in Australia overwhelmingly supported the introduction of the Arts Management programme. The workshops and seminars demonstrated the desire to equip students with transferrable entrepreneurial knowledge and skills pertaining to the creative industries and their respective value chains. The qualification will be expected to produce holistic, competitive and flexible graduates with the ability to deal with the interface between arts management and the creative industries.

The second case study involves the recent approval by the university for the Faculty to establish the Centre for Creative Industries. The Centre will play a significant role in the growth of the creative industries in South Africa by virtue of being part of an increasingly transforming University of Technology (UoT). Due to its location on the edge of the capital city of Pretoria, the Centre is poised to further transform the Faculty into a creative industries training and research hub for South Africa. The presence of such conducive factors as learner accessibility, cost effectiveness, racial integration, vocational inclination, and above all, the existing creative industries 'friendly' curriculum, create an ideal infrastructure for the Centre. The Faculty consists of six departments focusing on the creative arts, namely the Departments of Performing Arts, Drama and Film, Entertainment Technology, Fashion Design, Visual Communication and Fine and Applied Arts.

In order to benchmark the Centre with leading international models, the Executive Dean and myself paid an academic and research exchange visit to the ARC Centre

of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation (CCI) at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in Brisbane (Australia) in November, 2014. Apart from exploring the synergies between the two universities of technology (UoTs), it was eye opening to learn how QUT's Bachelor of Creative Industries (BCI) degree programme lays the foundation for the Centre of Excellence's activities. The structure of the BCI programme revolves around the following:

- (i) preparation of students for the creative workforce
- (ii) adoption of the value chains approach to the creative industries curriculum
- (iii) focus on the 'protean career' identity building process
- (iv) creation of the culture of creative enterprise, entrepreneurship and transdisciplinarity
- (v) work integrated learning (WIL) through industry internships, career branding and project development

The ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation (CCI) not only acts as the research hub for QUT's Creative Industries Faculty but also functions to mainstream innovation in and through the creative industries for government policy consideration, to deepen it for academic engagement, and apply it for industry and community benefit (CCI Report, 2013:3). To this end, the CCI runs a thriving postgraduate programme that offers interdisciplinary research areas including creative industry entrepreneurship, technology and innovation, the knowledge based economy, creative enterprise theory, career development theory, creative research methodology and practice. From personal observations of the QUT experience, it was delightful to see how the CCI has been able to register the following notable achievements:

- (i) establishing thriving arts incubators for graduating students.
- (ii) transforming QUT into a research intensive university through research publications on the creative industries, cultural policy, intellectual property rights, the creative economy, technology and innovation systems.

(iii) enabling QUT to interface with government, industry and community organisations.

(v) profiling the creative industries into plausible drivers of national economic growth.

(vi) using the creative industries to transform the Faculty into a 'cultural precinct'.

For other international benchmarks, the Faculty's Centre for Creative Industries has also taken note of other success stories like Stanford University located in the Silicon Valley (USA) which has become the creative industries hub for Microsoft, Hewlett Packard (HP) and other digital arts models. Using Stanford University as one of their case studies, Florida, et al (2006) have argued that the traditional university's primary focus on research, teaching and learning has been supplanted by the entrepreneurial university which serves as a 'technology incubator' and 'engine of innovation' for research and development, knowledge transfer, spin-off companies and creative talent. Florida, et al (2006) give the example of one Silicon Valley entrepreneur and Stanford University alumni who was asked to comment on the secret of Silicon Valley's success. The alumni's simple response was, "Take one great research university. Add venture capital. Shake vigorously." (2006:3). If these words could be applied to the Faculty's Centre for Creative Industries, one can imagine its future role as both a catalyst and conduit for enhancing the South African creative economy by attracting, training and producing the country's creative talent.

## **5. Implications and challenges for Higher Education Institutions**

According to a study carried out by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) entitled, *Review of Career Guidance Policies*, "many students in tertiary education institutions appear to have little idea of why they are there or where it is leading them" (2002:18). The students enter into courses that they have vague notions on what they will do after their studies. More often than not, they are influenced by unrealistic, if not romantic notions about the world of work. Such uncertain career identities will influence the students' engagement

with learning during their undergraduate courses, including their career choices and behaviour after graduation. In her article on, “Skills for creative industries graduates,” Bridgstock asserts that one of the key tasks to be undertaken during the first year of a creative industries programme is to:

*support students through an iterative (or spiral-like) process of adaptive career identity building whereby students reflect upon their own core career needs and values, and in turn learn about and experience ... various aspects of their intended occupations (2011:18).*

By implication, Bridgstock (2011) argues for a creative industries ‘driven’ curriculum that places students at the centre of the experiential learning process. She further notes that it is more realistic for universities to put more emphasis on graduate employability from the outset by focusing on domain specific knowledge and skills, in addition to embedded skills that can foster workplace based training, develop career identity, instil personal responsibility and create career self-management skills.

For the Faculty of the Arts in particular, the move towards a creative industries ‘driven’ curriculum, as exemplified by the undergraduate arts management programme and the new Centre for Creative Industries, reflects a much more serious approach to what Bridgstock calls the ‘graduate employability agenda’. Such an agenda makes the protean career approach a model for creative industries graduates. However, while the protean career model has been found to have positive outcomes for creative industries graduates (Bridgstock, 2008, 2011; Hall, 2004; DCMS, 2006), time will tell whether the same conclusions can be drawn about the Arts Management programme being advocated by the Faculty. In the justification for the BA in Arts Management degree, Priscilla Nesamvuni points out that:

*This qualification will provide students with the necessary competencies to function as arts managers within the creative industries. Due to the lack of individuals with formal training in arts management, the graduate will perform practical work in managing creative industries enterprises.*

*Graduates with this qualification will be equipped with the necessary skills to enter the workforce as arts managers (2015:7).*

The emphasis on ‘entering the workforce as arts managers’ tends to miss the core values expected of the creative protean careerist. Even at its inception, when the UK Department of Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS) was making its case for public investment in the creative industries, the argument was not to churn out arts managers but for “educational institutions to develop a constant supply of creative and innovative graduates who will form the backbone of the sector and help consistently to reinvent it” (2006:2). Such graduates have the challenging task of managing their own creative career choices and competencies as self-motivated individuals capable of either securing employment or creating employment opportunities for the sector through start-up companies, small, micro and medium scale enterprises (SMMEs) as well as being self-employed agents in their own right.

To its credit, however, the Faculty’s departments have thriving work integrated learning programmes (WIL) that are considered as crucial to the creative industries curriculum. From his evaluative study of QUT’s creative graduates’ experience of WIL programmes, Christy Collis (2010) was able to establish that WIL should not only focus on training students to become employees but must also focus on developing the work experience and employability of students, even those who will eventually take up non-conventional (or protean) career paths. Thus apart from providing students with potential employment opportunities, WIL also allows all the stakeholders, that is students, academics and industry partners, to keep pace with ever evolving and innovative trends within the creative industries. The captains of industry also get the opportunity to address what they will have identified as gaps in the university curriculum.

These observations are more or less similar to what the Faculty’s departments have been, and are still doing, with regards to the WIL programmes. In fact, each department has a WIL coordinator responsible for engaging with industry partners and other community stakeholders. The Department of Visual Communication in particular has compiled an employers’ database that enables it to offer students industry placements countrywide. The students can even afford to select companies best suited to their own career preferences. The department has also

prepared videos of interviews with industry partners in the fields of graphic design, interior design, photography and multimedia in order to highlight industry expectations for students. The students are introduced to what they can expect from industry prior to their placements. The same department has also been able to assign course credits to students WIL experiences.

Notwithstanding these WIL achievements, the Faculty still has a long way to go before it can attain what Charlotte Carey and Annette Naudin (2006) have described as a fully-fledged 'creative enterprise education'. The two researchers equate 'enterprise' with 'entrepreneurship' and view these interchangeable terms as implying the creation and management of new ideas, and turning such ideas into uniquely innovative and profitable opportunities. This type of education has close parallels with what has been described as Mode 2 knowledge production (Kraak, 2000:2 - 3) which is characterised by trans-disciplinarity and the continuous re-invention of products and services that add value to existing knowledge, skills and designs. As Chrissie Boughey (in Gravett and Geysler, 2004) adds, Mode 2 knowledge implies that South African higher education institutions are no longer limited to the task of producing more graduates, but to produce 'the right sort of graduates' who can fit into the ever-changing global knowledge economy.

Thus instead of merely focusing on WIL as a source of graduates' employability, creative enterprise education, and by extension, Mode 2 knowledge production, need to be embedded within the curriculum in order to produce, "creative entrepreneurs who can use their creativity to unlock the wealth that lies within themselves" (Carey and Naudin, 2006:521). In a world where graduate employment has increasingly become scarce, one cannot help but agree with Carey and Naudin's argument for an enterprise approach to the creative industries curriculum that can be able to deliver 'owner managers', 'self-employers', 'free agents', 'protean careerists', and above all, 'embedded creatives'.

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