

# Embedding student feedback in deep pedagogic reflection: The potentials of drawing and Deleuzian analysis

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## Abstract

Student evaluation practices often fall into repetitive patterns of 'rate the teacher' and 'blame the student'. In this paper, we think with the Deleuzian conceptualisations of becoming and affect in order to move beyond these limitations. We experiment with drawing as a way to gather student feedback that opens up dialogue, applying rhizomatic mapping to prompt deeper pedagogic reflection. We explored 31 drawings created by 3<sup>rd</sup> year undergraduate students of education. In this paper, we present three worked examples of visual and verbal rhizomatic mapping, along with written pedagogic reflections. We suggest that this process enabled us to enter into deeper pedagogic reflections via a generative questioning space in which the whole beings of the students were brought to the fore, including the embodied student experience.

**Keywords:** student evaluation, affect, becomings, Deleuze, drawing, HE pedagogy

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## **Abstract**

Student evaluation practices often fall into repetitive patterns of 'rate the teacher' and 'blame the student'. In this paper, we think with the Deleuzian conceptualisations of becoming and affect in order to move beyond these limitations. We experiment with drawing as a way to gather student feedback that opens up dialogue, applying rhizomatic mapping to prompt deeper pedagogic reflection. We explored 31 drawings created by 3<sup>rd</sup> year undergraduate students of education. In this paper, we present three worked examples of visual and verbal rhizomatic mapping, along with written pedagogic reflections. We suggest that this process enabled us to enter into deeper pedagogic reflections via a generative questioning space in which the whole beings of the students were brought to the fore, including the embodied student experience.

## **Introduction**

Insights into student experience are at the centre of impactful pedagogic reflection among Higher Education (HE) teaching teams (Kember et al., 2002; Spooren et al., 2013; Golding & Adam, 2016). However, the relationship between student feedback and pedagogic development is jeopardised by the use of student feedback to rate teachers, rank universities and make quick improvements in student experience that relate more to university facilities than to pedagogy (Rowley, 2003; Penny, 2003; Spooren et al., 2013; Palmer, 2012). When the agenda is commodification and competition, gathering and analysing student feedback prioritises easy-to-spot commonalities in what students are saying, rather than valuing depth, reflection and the potential for genuine transformation in learning and teaching. How can we as teachers reclaim the value of student feedback in the pedagogic reflection process? This paper explores the potential of gathering student feedback through drawing and what happens when we take an approach to analysis inspired by the Deleuzian commitment to the messiness of becoming and the centrality of affect.

The first part of the paper offers a background to typical student feedback practices in HE and the limitations that surround these feedback practices. Following this, two sections of theoretical framing are presented as a way of moving practice forward: the first of these is structured around the Deleuzian conceptualisations of affect and becoming; the second part of the theoretical framing considers what drawing might bring to the student feedback process. Following this, we offer an overview of the study design and the analytical procedure. We present three worked examples of engaging with student feedback communicated through drawing, and the pedagogic reflections that emerge as a result of rhizomatic mapping around these drawings. The discussion highlights what is special about these pedagogic reflections in comparison to what is typically possible when working with just written student feedback. We discuss the implications of this process and argue that experimenting with multimodal expressions of student feedback and analytical processes that do not prioritise commonalities above depth can support exciting and rich pedagogic reflections with genuine transformative potential.

### **Background: Typical student feedback practices in HE**

As HE becomes increasingly market-oriented, student feedback is increasingly seen as a mechanism in comparison (Bedggood & Donovan, 2012). Feedback is used to make comparisons between universities, as in the National Student Survey (NSS) in the UK (where this research is based), or within universities between different teachers, as in America, where Student Evaluations of Teaching (SET) are used as a key indicator of teacher performance and contribute to the allocation of rewards and promotion among staff members. When such comparisons become a primary aim in gathering student feedback, it is likely that teachers will have a particular affective relationship to feedback from their students, wanting the 'right' feedback rather than the feedback that will most help them to develop as a teacher (Rowley, 2003; Penny, 2003; Sporeen et al., 2013; Palmer, 2012).

Perhaps because of the focus on feedback for comparison, research has found little evidence of student feedback being used to develop courses or teaching practices (Alderman, Towers & Bannah, 2012; Blair & Valdez Noel, 2014; Bassett et al., 2017). Within this context, student feedback is typically gathered through surveys that

comprise mostly quantitative items (e.g. using a Likert scale) and a small number of open-ended questions that require freeform written responses (e.g. Wentworth et al., 2018; Erikson, Erikson & Punzi, 2018). The quantitative data generated through these student feedback forms can be used to rate courses and teachers, make comparisons and even allocate rewards based on questionable statistical comparisons (Boysen et al., 2014).

There have been calls to re-integrate student feedback practices as an essential part of the pedagogic process. Edström (2008) builds on Biggs' (2003) notion of constructive alignment to highlight the contradictory messages that often exist when we compare everyday teaching practices with how feedback from students is gathered. Similarly, Erikson et al. (2018) argue for 'evaluations to be treated as an academic task, both for students and teachers, rather than as a mere administrative task' (p. 2). When students engage in giving feedback they are learning about learning; we therefore need to be careful in how we frame this opportunity and the implicit messages that are at work within the practice as it unfolds. 'Rate the teacher' style feedback undermines a learner-teacher relationship where learners have been encouraged to lead their own learning experiences (Rowley, 2003; Zerihun et al., 2011).

Generating deep pedagogic reflection through student feedback depends on an emphasis on rich feedback rather than feedback that is simply easy to work with (Kember et al., 2002; Spooen et al., 2013; Golding & Adam, 2016). A shift in this direction is supported by the use of qualitative, open-ended questioning. Many researchers have made the argument for incorporating open-ended written responses as part of course feedback so that students engage with their own learning experiences and do not put forward just a decontextualized judgment of teaching (Douglas et al., 2015; Lewis, 2001; Harper & Kuh, 2007; Erikson, Erikson & Punzi, 2016; Erikson, Erikson & Punzi, 2018). Researchers such as Erikson et al. (2018) have found that in qualitative feedback, students focus more on their own experiences and responsibilities and less on rating the teacher.

These alternative, qualitative approaches reinforce the student-centred attitude that experienced teachers demonstrate when engaging with student feedback. Golding & Adam (2016) found that award-winning teachers were more likely to be deeply curious about what their students were experiencing. They resisted the temptation to fall into

othering the student and blaming them for negative experiences they encountered within the learning, and instead treated evaluations as a 'window on student's learning' (p. 9). This contrasts with teachers that respond to feedback with defensive mechanisms (McCulloch, 2009; Arther, 2009), which in turn dramatically reduce responsiveness (Flodén, 2017; Moore & Kuol, 2005). Qualitative responses from students can support this way of engaging with feedback. Despite the complexity of interpreting qualitative responses, Svinicki (2001) found among teachers 'a solid preference for student written comments...despite the common confusion that the comments sometimes elicit' (p. 17).

### **Theoretical framing: Deleuze on becoming and affect**

For Deleuze and Guattari (1987), becoming is a process of constant movement, but without a point of departure or a point of arrival. This conceptualisation of becoming is a radical departure from how we often think about the student experience, confined and controlled by the parameters of university time and space. Becoming is messy, a constant muddle, the 'continual production of differentiation' (Taylor and Harris-Evans, 2018, p. 1262) and transition, over the course of a module for example, is conceptualised as 'experiential emergence through the interplay of microlevel events' (p. 1256). Within this complex muddle, what could it really mean to try and organise and categorise student feedback? Thinking about student experience in HE with this conceptualisation of becoming is limited so far. An important exception to this is the research of Taylor and Harris-Evans (2018) which used Deleuzian notions of becoming to reconceptualise students' transitions into HE during the first year of university. Rather than thinking about transition as a shift from one state to another, or a development according to critical incidents on a linear timeline, they worked with students' transitions as 'a complex sometimes confusing whirl of emotions, spaces, materialities, people, relationships, histories, affects, responses, demands and expectations' (p. 1258). They sought to stay with the messiness of student transitions and to refrain from reducing student experiences to common themes or issues. In doing so, they opened up new ways of connecting with students and experimenting with the role of HE teachers in relation to student becomings.

An essential part of student becomings is affect. Affect is always part of the messy muddle, the assemblage of becoming and experience. When we talk about affect, we are building on Deleuze's writing on affect, which in turn works with Spinoza's notion of 'affectus' (Deleuze, 1988). Affect according to Deleuze is a material phenomenon occurring in bodies. Hickey-Moody (2013, p. 81) describes affect as the 'materiality of change', as the 'residues of experience that live on in thought and body' (p. 81). In essence, affect is how our bodies respond to experience, and how these changes continue to vibrate through our bodies, actions and lives. Take, for example, the experience of a student who has felt what they perceive to be a humiliating comment from a lecturer in front of their peers. The affect that was produced at the time of the experience will live on in the body of the student, and will be felt in future scenarios – when entering the same lecture theatre perhaps, or as they pass the lecturer in the corridor. Affect is feeling before it has been categorised and hierarchized into emotion. Affect changes our bodily state so that we are ready to act on upon the world. In that sense, affect is intrinsically related to action – to the capacity to make change and affect others. Affect is not a static entity – it is drawn into assemblages that are constantly changing and it is a vital part of the constant 'alteration of subjectivities' (Hickey-Moody, 2013, p. 80).

Deleuzian conceptualisations of affect take us away from attempts to separate out and polarise the affective dimension of learning, for example by asking students what they did or did not enjoy about the learning experience, or imposing emotional categories onto what is expressed (e.g. anger, sadness, joy, fear). Instead, working with affect allows for feeling to exist in a muddled and complex state and it gives us a chance to stay with/in this mess (Blaise, 2013). Affect might be avoided in research on student experience because it is unpredictable and chaotic. For example, in Hodges and Stanton's (2007) analysis of qualitative student responses in course evaluation, comments that reflected 'affective issues' (p. 280) were dismissed in favour of comments that, according to the researchers' interpretation, related more to the cognitive dimensions of learning. Similarly, Kahu (2013) notes that psychological perspectives on student engagement, while reportedly embracing the importance of affect alongside cognition and behaviour, are likely to attempt to determine affect through the administration of quantitative surveys which limit students' expression to identification with particular emotional constructs, such as belonging, interest and

enjoyment. What happens when we shift this attitude and embrace affect as a vital force within student feedback? Perhaps, through affect we can move from the striated space of everyday hierarchies into the smooth space of pedagogic possibility (MacRae, 2011).

### **Potentials of drawing in student feedback**

Participants in this study were invited to draw 'how they felt about the module' onto a blank body outline (figure 1). We suggest that drawings generated in response to this instruction and this particular resource led to a greater sense of openness in the student feedback. When we talk about 'openness', there are two particular ideas that we wish to explore: 1) the openness in interpretations of drawing and 2) the logic of AND rather than OR (LeCercle, 2002).

INSERT Figure 1. Inviting student feedback through drawing

Firstly, the drawings are more open in that while meaningful, their meanings are not easily pinned down by someone viewing the drawings. Meaning-making through drawing as opposed to writing is less conventionalised and less codified (Kress & Jewitt, 2003). If I draw a heart on my chest in blue pen, this connotes particular meanings in the context of student feedback, but it does not denote anything in particular. The meaning of the drawing exists as a sprawling assemblage of possibilities. Hickey-Moody (2013) describes the way in which creative methods are a means of 'mapping the ways mixtures or assemblages change' (p. 80). This mapping is not an act of certainty, in which we suggest a clear and static link from signified to signifier. The drawing is a way in to the 'residues of experience that live on in thought and body' (p. 81), but it is only ever a way in, rather than a specific interpretable message. We are interested to see whether drawings used in student feedback can help to open up and deepen the pedagogic reflections of those teaching in universities, since the uncertainty of drawing is an invitation to engage in negotiation, discussion and dialogue.

Secondly, students' drawings are potentially more open in terms of what can be drawn into the meaning-making and the expression. While written feedback is interpreted in relation to the 'cognitive' conceptual content of what it articulates, affect and sensation have a more prominent role to play in drawing. The drawings that the students created

in this study were sprawling in what they linked with: thoughts, ideas, emotions, dreams, hopes, ambitions, memories, emissions, silences, withholdings and bodily sensations. This is what Lecerle (2002) describes as the logic of dreams: the logic of AND rather than INSTEAD OF. In this logic, we avoid categorising our perceptions and experiences and make space for the dream-like muddle of experience, where sprawling associations and possibilities are possible. In this sense, drawing can help us to move beyond the cognitive domain and linear interpretations. Can it therefore help us to re-imagine what feedback does and what it could do? Will the focus on affect in students' responses to the drawing change the nature of the dialogue that the teachers engage in in relation to the feedback?

### **About the research**

The study was conducted at the end of a third year module entitled *Creativity and the Arts in Education* which is an optional module for students on two undergraduate degree programmes in education at the London university where this study was based. In the module, students learn about creativity from different theoretical perspectives, and consider how creativity and the arts could be and are supported or inhibited within different educational systems. Seminars are characterised by a high proportion of verbal discussions, active learning tasks and multimodal representations of learning. For the academic year 2017-2018, more than 70 students chose to participate in the module.

To find out more about students' experiences of the module, module evaluation forms were given out at the end of the year across three seminar groups led by two tutors. In the form (figure 1), the students were asked to make a drawing onto the body outline following the instructions: 'You can use the body outline below to show us how you feel about this module. You can use colour, pattern, pictures and words and add them to the body however you want to so that it captures how you feel about your experience on this module. There is no right or wrong in this activity – just go with whatever you feel.' For this part of the form, felt-tip pens in various colours were passed around the classroom. The forms were completed anonymously and students put their folded module evaluations at the front of the class in a folder rather than handing them directly



to their tutor. While the forms were completed, the tutor remained at the front of the classroom so that what students wrote or drew was not visible to them.

It was explained to the students before completing the forms that their responses would be an important part of improving the module for future cohorts of students. It was also explained to them that the teaching team would like a chance to consider what insights could come through module evaluations of this format, and because of this the students were asked to consider whether they would offer their informed consent for their anonymous module evaluation forms to be used as part of research. If they were happy for this to happen, they were asked to tick a box at the beginning of the form. If they preferred not to participate, they were told to leave the box blank. Out of the 33 students who drew onto the body outline, 31 ticked the box indicating that they were happy for their form to be part of the research. These ethical measures were explained in an approved application to the university ethics committee at Middlesex University.

## **Data analysis**

Data analysis was conceptualised as an opportunity to engage with the 'detail, density and difference of each student's experiences' (Taylor & Harris-Evans, 2018, p. 1257). In order to achieve this, a rhizomic logic was adopted whereby attention was given to the 'fragments, parts and bits' (p. 1257) rather than attempting to construct/impose generalised themes as a way of giving shape to the data. Taylor and Harris-Evans (2018) build on MacLure's (2010) notion of 'glow' as way to work with data that steers away from generalisation. MacLure suggests that when we familiarise ourselves with data, when we immerse ourselves in it, we can hope that parts of the data will come to 'glow' resonating in our minds and bodies. These are the data 'hotspots' that enable us to navigate the open process of sense-making. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) introduce an important distinction between 'sense-making' and 'common sense' ontologies. While a common sense ontology will look for reality to fit existing schemas, or at least to update schemas in an ordered and sequential manner, sense-making encounters the world as a process of constant difference, in which every moment is different from every other moment and every experience is different from every other experience (Author, 2015; Author, forthcoming). If we wish to recognise and value the

ever-becoming difference, then we need to develop research methods that help us to make sense rather than apply common sense – this is what Deleuze and Guattari describes as ‘mapping’ rather than ‘tracing’ in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987). MacLure’s (2010, 2013) focus on hotspots and ‘glow’ constitutes a way in to this process: ‘... it is not the commonality of instances that matters, but the specificity with which those commonalities are articulated’ (Taylor & Harris-Evans, 2018, p. 1258).

Both researchers annotated all of the drawings when the participants had given their consent for the drawings to be used as part of the research process. We did not limit ourselves to particular type or number of annotations, but instead engaged in stream-of-consciousness writing led by our own affective relationship to the drawings. We met to discuss our initial observations about these annotations and to share the particular examples of drawing that we felt to ‘glow’ – those drawings that stayed with us beyond the confines of the analytical procedure, and that we found ourselves thinking about beyond the time limits of working on this study. Together, we decided to focus on a selection of twelve drawings that we were particularly drawn to.

In the next stage of the analysis, we hoped to go deeper but wanted to maintain the openness, resisting the temptation to start drawing up themes and points of commonality between the drawings. We explored a method of mind-mapping each drawing through both writing and images found online. We used images taken from the internet as a way of building associations that might not emerge if we based our associative process on words alone. This was a new process for both of us that we had not seen used in any other research studies we had come across. Our maps looked different in terms of layout, but both made use of an assemblage of words and found images, and when we met to discuss these maps, we both agreed that the process had taken us in unanticipated directions of reflection and consideration, that felt relevant to our aims of deepening the pedagogic reflection process. We met again to discuss what had emerged through these processes, sharing the maps that we had created, and then discussed what the process had given to us as teachers in terms of our pedagogic reflection.

To articulate this – how the process impacted on pedagogic reflection – we went back to our maps about the drawings and for each, wrote two paragraphs. In the first paragraph, we summarised our main associations with the drawing, the lines of thought that we had followed in relation to the drawing through words and images. In

the second paragraph, we considered the nature of the pedagogic reflection that we had engaged in: a meta-reflection answering the question ‘what did this process give us an insight into in terms of our pedagogic approach, and how was this different to what might have occurred had the student feedback been gathered through writing alone?’

We present our findings as a series of three worked examples. For each example, we show the drawing alongside the images and writing that we associated with the drawing. We then introduce the written reflective paragraphs outlined above. Since the mapping and reflections were created individually, the worked examples are written in the singular first person ‘I’.

### **Map around Drawing A**

Insert Figure 2. Map around Drawing A

#### **Drawing A: What emerges through mapping**

In this drawing, there is the scribble, scramble, messiness in the head and in the hands. The scribble is a jumble of ideas and feelings, but it is also a sense of connectedness – everything is joined up, the pen never coming off the page, the continuous sense of emergence, the continuous thought and activity involved in learning. Writing moves down the body, writing imprints the body; there is calligraphy across the body, the body is a canvas for a message, and the message is ‘sharing’. The word ‘thoughts’ lands in the belly, as though the body is pregnant with thought, pregnant with ideas, held and carried in the body. They are generating ideas but also protecting them, they are deep inside and internal. Sharing comes out again as central. The knowledge cap is un-integrated, but the sharing is part of the body, knowledge is a process of sharing – it exists externally, it is not a part of individual minds and bodies; theories of collaborative creativity resonate here – one of the central concepts in our module content. I return to the downwards writing, the vertical plane, the y axis; while the x axis is often representative of time and change over time, when we move across the vertical plane, we are moving across depth but remaining in the moment and everything that emanates from the moment. The words are in the present tense – we are ‘sharing’ our thoughts, and the command is to ‘create’ i.e. to create now. Why are

the lightbulbs around the head inverted? Why do they hang rather than pop out as they do in so much popular imagery? What is the inverted symbolism here – the shining downwards, or are we shining a light in dark corners? The light is an external source, rather than something stemming from the individual's mind and thought process; the hanging light bulbs de-centres this one body.

### **Drawing A: Pedagogic reflection shaped through mapping**

Reflections on the drawing are characterised by multiplicity – there is a sense of this AND this AND this and it is endless: what LeCercle (2011) describes as ‘the logic of dreams’. For example, the scribble associates with jumble but also joined-up-ness; these elements, these associations are not in a state of contradiction, because this is the logic of AND rather than INSTEAD OF. The parts of the drawing do not mean X instead of Y, instead they might resonate with aspects of X and Y and Z. My mind returns readily to the ‘hotspots’, the ‘glow’ and I find myself coming back again and again to the writing down the body and the multiple associations that emerge from this downwards writing. The images that crop up in the visual mapping around the drawing, also inspire further focus and discussion and thought; in one of the photographs, there is some upside down writing – I am drawn to it, it feels significant to the experiences of the students in my seminar groups – perhaps because of the difficulty with which they write, the sense of slowness, the sense that they do not own their writing, that they do their writing always for someone else, always with the thought of another (judgmental) person watching them and reading what they write. Questions bubble up in my mind. Even though this is a simple biro drawing, this process of reflection leads me towards a sense of endless depth in the student's experience and all that they are bringing. I feel that I could talk about what my students seem to be going through forever. I experience a motivation to take a step closer towards the experiences of my students, to connect more fully. The reflection is a space of questions – why this, why that – but these are not necessarily questions that can be answered or that we need answers to. I am staying in a space of openness as I go through this process, without value judgments because there is nothing certain or stable enough to which we might assign the value judgment.

## **Mapping around Drawing B**

Insert Figure 3. Mapping around Drawing B

### **Drawing B: What emerges through mapping**

The drawing is immediately attractive as it is so neat and organised. The handwriting is also very neat and all of the comments are – at least on the surface – positive, but there are also elements that on deeper reflection I find troubling in this drawing. The head is filled with a cloud – the cloud is presumably a brain – but it is more like a dense rain cloud, filled with all of the ‘reading’. Is the cloud brain suggests concentration and intensity but it is also disconnected from the rest of the body, with no visual connections to other parts of the body. The heart symbol in the chest immediately connotes love and passion, and there is ‘passion’ written into the heart in capital letters. However, the heart, like the mind, is disconnected from other parts of the body. The pink in the hands we are told is the ‘hands on creativity’, but the pink hands also suggest a pain in the hands. The hands are cut off from other parts of the body just as the heart and the brain are. I am left wondering: where is the whole? The legs are like bricks, well structured, well put together, solid and protected from attack, but also so heavy and hard to move. Where is the room for change? Where is the flow? The heavy legs prompt the idea of heavy boots, like moon boots, which keep you held down despite the lack of gravity. Within this, there is the potential fear of becoming untethered and floating off into space.

### **Drawing B: Pedagogic reflection shaped through mapping**

I am not looking for ‘positive feedback’ as I map this drawing. I move beyond the thrill of reading ‘positive’ comments quickly, and discount the comments as explanatory. I want to engage with the visual mode, I want the uncertainty, the messy muddle of the affective assemblage, rather than to tick off in my mind a student’s apparent satisfaction. And as the associations multiply, I feel that this is in many ways not a simply positive experience. There is a conversation here, that exists in a space somewhere between myself and the student, the ideas and resonances belonging to neither one of us – a space of constant questioning without answer. As the associations tumble forward, and become more outlandish (such as walking on the

moon) I realise that *for me* there is lots of sadness in this drawing. I feel deeply aware of the anxiety around learning for many of my students, the way that they cling to the assessment requirements, and they clamour for assessment literacy activities as a way to feel tethered. Do they lack their own centre of gravity? I have never before had a language for thinking about this, but this metaphor of the moon boots helps me to conceptualise and deeply feel the difficulties of being a university student when you have never identified yourself as an academic achiever.

### **Mapping around Drawing C**

Insert Figure 4. Mapping around Drawing C

#### **Drawing C: What emerges through mapping**

There is so much movement in this drawing, the flow of information in and out, in both directions simultaneously. There is the sensation and the sensing, the constant in-take of new sensory information; touch as bi-directional, we touch the world, and we are touched by the world. These lines are like nerves, there is enervation, the connectivity, the feeling, the constant pulse of touch and movement and change. The brain is a centre for this movement, fully connected and in some kind of control, though not entirely in control because the movements are sweeping and extend with unpredictability. The brain sends commands to the body and out into the world, but these commands are not linear, not direct, they are explorations. The colours of the rainbow, flowing, curling and spiralling around. There is vibrancy and colour in the diversity of experience. The flurry of 'smiley faces' – why these symbols? Why these neat representations of 'positive feedback'? Are these gimmicky, quick copies, relating back to the simplicity of some feedback practices (e.g. in the airport, hitting a button with a happy/sad face to rate your experience today)? Is this a reassurance that this is positive feedback, a perceived need for constraint? There is connection across the drawing, but there is also perhaps an unravelling, a spiralling outwards, too much feeling? Too much connection? The loss of control in the experience. There is also emergence, the growth outwards, the growth towards the light, the need to be nourished in order to thrive.

### **Drawing C: Pedagogic reflection shaped through mapping**

Again, we are in this reflective place of questions (without answers) and multiplicities. Everything moves in both directions at once – there is connectivity, and feeling and the constant pulse of change, but there is also the potential unravelling, the spiralling outwards, the scary loss of boundaries and barriers. These elements exist simultaneously; there is no contradiction. This drawing brings the whole body into the experience, it brings to the fore the sensing of the world, the connection between the mind-body in experience and in the learning process. I feel warmth as I look at the drawing, not a short-lived glow of receiving ‘positive feedback’, but a renewal of energy in relation to the module. In particular, I feel refreshed in my commitment to drawing the arts into the learning process, as a way to invite the whole person in – this is a drawing of the whole person, fully present, mind, body and soul. I am getting to grips with my own personal pedagogy through these drawings – what is important to me, not just picking a pedagogy off the shelf, but instead developing my own sense of what learning and teaching might look, sound and feel like.

### **Discussion**

The worked examples above suggest two significant possibilities for pedagogic reflection that emerge through this unusual student feedback process.

Firstly, we found that engaging with this process gave us ‘thicker skin’ whereby our personal identities did not feel under attack, since there was no simplistic categorisation of feedback into positive and negative assessments of our capabilities as teachers. Rather than perceiving the student as a separate individual intent on rating us, we moved into a space that existed somewhere in between the student and ourselves, an in-between space characterised by constant questioning and constant association (akin to the curiosity described in Golding & Adam, 2016). Since we moved away from ‘rate the teacher’ style feedback, we also moved away from a ‘blame the student’ response. Rather than dismissing our students as defective in their learning, we stayed with their affective associations and the complexity of their experiences. Linked to this, and the process invited us to engage with our students as whole persons. Students’ drawings, even though they were made in just a few minutes, reminded us of the power of the arts as a way to feel and bring to life the whole self,

and how this can feed back into the learning experience (Wright, 2001). This demonstrates how the using the arts in student feedback might be a key component in the 'ontological turn' proposed by some as a better way of understanding and responding to student experience and engagement (Dall'alba & Barnacle, 2007; Bryson & Hand, 2007). Secondly, the drawings invited the body back into our reflections about learning and teaching. We were aware throughout every stage of the analysis of the primacy of physical sensing and sensation as part of the learning experience, and this greatly influenced how we thought about the changes we wished to make in the year ahead. The body is noticeably absent in typical perspectives on student experience (e.g. Kahu, 2013). Even when affect is prioritised (e.g. Christie et al., 2008), it tends to be seen as something that sits within the 'mind', rather than being conceptualised as an embodied phenomenon. Thus, using drawings in student feedback – and potentially the arts more generally – can be a way of enabling the body to be part of how we 'meet' student experience in the context of pedagogic reflections.

We make no claims in this paper regarding generalisation. We have been explicit that we are trying to engage with the depth and richness of each student's experience, and the complexity and muddle within even this constructed unit of analysis. Furthermore, we are not suggesting that our interpretations of the drawings are 'right'. Rather, we are interested in how the process of interpreting students' drawings can open up and deepen pedagogic reflections among university teachers. We suggest that drawing might do this because making sense of drawings relies on open-ended negotiation, association and dialogue and less emphasis on understanding singular and set meanings. It is therefore possible that the resulting pedagogic reflections may move teaching in a direction unanticipated by the students who provided the feedback and it is important to consider the consequences of this. We hope that the paper opens up space for experimenting and exploring with how we gather and engage with student feedback in HE. In this research, we have focused solely on the drawings created by students. We are aware that others would advocate using the drawings to elicit verbal discussion with students. While this would generate particular insights, we have avoided surrounding the drawings with words because of the tendency in academic analysis to over-rely on verbal expressions (when available) at the expense of engaging fully with other modes (Kress, 2009; Bezemer & Kress, 2015; Jewitt & Kress,



2003). We argue that future research on student feedback would benefit from engaging with a wider range of communicative modes, and that this might require freeing these modes from the context of verbal exchanges and enabling them to 'speak' for themselves.

## **Conclusion**

Typical students' feedback practices in HE have been developed with the aims of rating and ranking universities and their component parts (including teachers), and this severely limits their potential to feed into pedagogic reflection and impact on learning and teaching in meaningful ways. We created a student feedback process for a module in the hope of inspiring deeper pedagogic reflections. Students drew their feedback on a module about creativity in education, and our analysis of the drawings flowed from the Deleuzian concepts of becoming and affect. We argue that this process enabled us to enter into a generative questioning space that previous research suggests is typically missing from teachers' engagement with student feedback. In this questioning space, the whole beings and becomings of the students were brought to the fore – in line with the 'ontological turn' demanded by some HE researchers hoping to reconceptualise student engagement and experience in more inclusive ways. In addition, the process highlighted the embodied elements of learning experiences, offering a practical way to re-introduce bodies which are typically forgotten in more conventional means of gathering student feedback.

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