



A Series of Big Education Conversations Inspire New Visions in Totnes, Devon

CASE STUDY

From November 2022 to February 2024, **jae spencer keyse** ([Radical Reimagination](#)), supported by Eliza Reid Perks, Tallula Bentley, and Dom Antonia, brought the Big Education Conversation to Totnes, Devon. This series of community-led discussions invited educators, students, parents, and local leaders to explore bold questions such as *“What if education was more holistic and relational?”* and *“What if learning was intergenerational?”*

Each event focused on a **unique theme**. The first, held at The Jamming Station, brought together university students and lecturers to explore typical academic hierarchies, the potential of peer learning and how the purpose of education influences these power dynamics. The second, hosted at SANDS School - a democratic and Climate Emergency School - saw students and educators envisioning an education system that learns from nature, inner wisdom, and the land. A third gathering engaged alternative education and community leaders in reflective walking discussions, exploring shared goals beyond traditional frameworks. The final event at The Angel Space examined the role of technology in learning, drawing in parents, educators, and community members curious about AI's impact on education.

Throughout the conversations, participants found space to express ideas, form new connections, and imagine shifts in education that resonated across backgrounds. A local teacher described the experience as *“an extremely rich gathering... so skillfully facilitated, supportive, creative, and generative.”* The dreaming exercises, a key method used by jae, helped participants recognise shared aspirations and engage more deeply with the conversation.

Participants reported a greater sense of connection, inspiration, and motivation to engage further in educational dialogue. Feedback highlighted the transformative potential of such conversations, with many expressing a desire for more events and longer learning journeys.

As co-host Tallulah reflected, *“I felt a sense of the collective value for whole-person learning and reflective practice.”* The conversations demonstrated the power of community-driven dialogue in shaping the future of education.”

LOOKING AHEAD:

The thematic insights gathered from the discussions, such as the emphasis on holistic education and the integration of technology in learning, provide a roadmap for future initiatives. Moreover, the connections and networks formed through these events have laid the groundwork for continued collaboration and innovation in the educational landscape of the South West.

SNAPSHOT



WHO?

- **Organisers and facilitators:** jae spencer keyse from Radical Reimagination, with support from Eliza Reid Perks, Tallula Bentley, and Dom Antonia.
- **Participants:** University students and lecturers, young people, staff, parents, alternative education and community leaders, and curious public from Totnes, Dartington, South Devon College, Exeter, and Plymouth Universities.

WHERE?

- A range of settings in Totnes including Sands School, a public park and community venues such as The Albatross and The Angel Space.

WHY?

- To inspire, motivate, and connect individuals through public forums and spaces for conversation,
- To gather insights and encourage collaborative, intergenerational action to drive educational change.

HOW MANY?

- Approximately 67 attendees across 4 events, including university students, lecturers, young people, staff, parents, and community members.

“The evening broke down barriers of different pedagogical approaches and created connection in the reimagining of other possibilities.”

Participant