

Inter-Institutional Collaboration in Arts Education

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Current trends in arts educational research see collaboration and co-working as positive pedagogical tools for exploration, experimentation and understanding. In HE institutions and community arts, learning through collaborative making is becoming an established methodology for learning and discovery. In FE institutions however, circumstances favour individual authorship and solitary teaching of the arts. The focus here is on the 'quality' of isolated teaching, learning and progress.

Working together since 2013, we have been working towards a collaborative teaching model that aims to transcend the established teaching paradigm and develop our teaching and artistic practice collaboratively across institutions.

Through working together purposefully as Artist/Teacher/Researchers we have developed our practice in a way that allows us to both work within and disrupt the spaces of our retrospective institutions from a position of both subjective and objective alignment. As artist researchers we continue to facilitate socially engaged arts practice that is linked to our classroom teaching in a way that promotes collaborative learning *with* each other and *with* other learners. Our model challenges hierarchical models and promotes joint discovery and learning in what we have come to describe as 'The Spaces In Between'.

Our developing methodology and pedagogy are intrinsically linked. Working together over a long period of time has allowed a working relationship to develop that is deeply rooted in trust, respect and equality. It is in turn these values that we aim to promote in classroom communities of learning. Although it could be said that hierarchies in the classroom are so deeply and socially entrenched as to inform student experience at the most fundamental level, it is through the promotion of our core values that we attempt to disrupt these paradigms and create a new space for the coming together of ideas and learning through collaborative making together.

We seek to promote in learners the same active participation that we as artist researchers enjoy. An equal exchange of ideas is paramount to this, no individual (including the teacher) is seen to be the provider of knowledge, but it is in fact the spaces for learning that develop in the unknown, the juncture between one person's experience and another.

Trust is a value that cannot be taught but is a value with which we hold to very high regard. We believe that it can however, develop over time and through frequent exercise of experimentation, trial and failure in an environment where *not knowing* can be seen as of equal importance to knowing.

Whilst this collaboration has met criticism, it is through this practice that we have seen documented increases in learner attitudes, confidence and engagement with others. This paper outlines our methods and findings that we have established as we investigate 'The Spaces In-Between' in both the FE and HE institutions. It also outlines as the problematisation and ethics of inter-institutional, collaborative artist/teacher/research.