

# International Journal of Education & the Arts

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ISSN: 1529-8094

Volume 24 Number 21

November 6, 2023

## Make it Happen Summer School: Experiential Learning to Develop Novice Socially-Engaged Artists

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Citation: Broadhead, S. (2023). Make it Happen Summer School: Experiential learning to develop novice socially-engaged artists. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 24(21). <http://doi.org/10.26209/ijea24n21>

### Abstract

This article evaluates Make it Happen Summer School according to Bernstein's writing on classification, framing, and recontextualisation. The project was a collaboration between a university and an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) that aimed to develop a curriculum for creative practitioners so they could learn to propose successful socially-engaged arts projects for funding and commissions. NPOs are arts organisations that are funded by the UK Government and the UK's National Lottery via the Arts Council England.

This article draws upon quantitative and qualitative data collected in relation to this project to evaluate the curriculum and pedagogy. In order to do this, models developed from Bernstein's work guide the analysis of the findings. It was found that while many gained powerful knowledge from the project, some did not. The

processes of recontextualisation demonstrated how ideologies based on accountability and performativity shaped the curriculum reflecting the depoliticisation of socially-engaged practice.

### **Introduction**

Make it Happen Summer School was a collaborative project between a university and an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) in 2022 that aimed to develop a curriculum for creative practitioners so they could learn to propose successful socially-engaged arts projects for funding and commissions. Make it Happen Summer School was particularly focused on serving disadvantaged and marginalized groups. NPOs are arts organisations that are funded by the UK Government and the UK's National Lottery via the Arts Council England. The Arts Council 2023-2026 Investment Programme focuses on bringing creativity and culture to villages, towns, and cities across the country by supporting 985 NPOs (Arts Council England, 2023). In return they must collect data and report their activities and achievements through an annual survey (Arts Council England, 2022a).

The NPO charity commissions artists to work with neighbouring communities to increase cultural participation in areas where there is low audience engagement with the arts (Creative Scene, 2019). To illustrate this, the local council resident's survey in December 2011 showed that 52% of people in the area did not attend a single arts event during the previous year (Creative Scene, 2019).

In addition to low cultural engagement and a lack of engagement by underrepresented groups, there are also few creative practitioners active in the locality who are confident in working in a participatory manner with communities. The NPO commented that there does not seem to be an effective pipeline of talent coming from the region's universities. Graduates may have been trained in particular creative practices (fine art, visual communication, textile design for example) but were not prepared for working in what was previously called community arts, participatory arts or as it is referred to now socially-engaged practice.

In order to address this issue, a nearby university funded and supported a short programme of informal learning named Make it Happen Summer School to enhance the knowledge and skills of creative practitioners in the local area, and to develop more inclusive curriculum so that community members would feel welcomed to participate. The aim was to professionalise and increase the pool of creative practitioners who could use their arts expertise to work with a diverse group of individuals and communities. It was seen as important to develop emerging talent from the immediate area so that practitioners are confident in planning, delivering, and evaluating creative projects that engage with people from underrepresented social groups and

places.

This article draws upon quantitative and qualitative data collected in relation to this project to evaluate the curriculum and pedagogy employed to meet its aims. In order to do this, models developed from Bernstein's (2000, 2003) work on classification and framing guide the analysis of the findings. Although the aim of the project was about constructing a curriculum for socially-engaged artists, the ways in which this curriculum was transmitted was crucial in understanding its evolution and effectiveness, especially with regard to the inclusion of underrepresented groups. For those in the UK who decide to work in the cultural industries, they will find inequalities in terms of gender, age, race, class, and disability that are pervasive in the sector (Banks, 2017; Burger and Easton, 2020). This article is concerned with how education and training in the arts can contribute towards or challenge these inequalities.

Theoretical perspectives of classification and framing developed by Bernstein are drawn upon because they demonstrate how power and control operate through pedagogy and the curriculum in ways which can potentially exclude people (Bernstein, 1973). His work remains relevant today for two main reasons. First, inequalities and disadvantage continue to be reproduced through educational processes and structures (Bernstein, 2000). Second, Bernstein provided theoretical models with which empirical research can be undertaken into a wide range of educational contexts, and also local communities. His theories shine a light onto the obscurities of curriculum design and delivery, revealing practices that can disadvantage some social groups and privilege others.

The open and liberal approach of many arts curricula can appear to be inclusive, but as arts educators we cannot assume this is the case. Bernstein has provided a powerful lens with which to analyse arts education where he has shown how pedagogic approaches act selectively on different social groups, and that more open teaching approaches can still advantage the more privileged in society (Broadhead, 2015). There have been other researchers that have used Bernstein to examine arts education. For example, Bernstein's general theories of classification and framing have been applied to a school context showing how the format of artwork displays signify the teacher's approach to controlling the curriculum (Daniels, 1989). Gamble (2004) has explored Bernstein's theories in relation to craft education.

Make it Happen Summer School is situated within an environment where there is social deprivation; therefore, the audiences that the socially-engaged artists hope to reach are likely to be disadvantaged and marginalised. Moreover, the project aimed to train artists from the same locale or nearby so they could belong to similar social groups. Thus, a critical reflection on the curriculum needs to take this into account and Bernstein's theories would be an

appropriate tool to do this.

### Context

Matarasso (2011) states the term *community arts* became prevalent in the 1970s referring to, “a complex, unstable and contested practice” (p.1) undertaken by artists and theatre-makers to challenge an elitist and bourgeois art world. A community arts practice engages people in a range of cultural activities that may or may not include mural painting, photography, printing, community festivals, newsletters, drama, and video projects (Kelly, 1984 p.1). Kelly (1984) goes on to argue that community arts does not refer to specific art forms, but rather to an approach where artists work with local people on a collective basis to create appropriate means of expression. Community arts challenges the notion that artistic endeavours are only concerned with individual expression and an understanding of creativity as individualistic artistic practice. Freedman (2015) has argued that learning within the arts should be based on participation and collaboration, and less to do with self-interested, personal practice.

The majority of community arts projects operate in areas that have been marginalised through low arts participation and financial, cultural, environmental or educational deprivation. Such projects often draw upon a community’s cultural heritages while developing art forms to make them more relevant and meaningful to the local context. Matarasso (2011) points out that there was a political motivation in the community arts work of the 1970s. Kelly also notes that community arts has a radical purpose where:

Community arts proposes the use of art to effect social change and affect social policies, and encompasses the expression of political action, effecting environmental change and developing the understanding and use of established systems of communication and change. (Kelly, 1984, p. 1)

Kester (1995) remarks that concepts such as *empowerment* and *participatory democracy* that were prevalent during the 1960s re-emerged in the discourses around community-based art during the 1990s. However, the term *community arts* fell out of favour to be replaced with *participatory arts* a term which signified the diminishing political aims of this kind of work (Matarasso, 2011). *Socially-engaged* is the most recent term used to describe community and participatory arts practices.

Currently, Haghighat (2020) observes that the ambition of artist-led projects may simply be to encourage the participation of local residents. However, some artists do produce work that extends into activism and political action. It could be argued that even when, “artists’ activities are more modest, the creative work they do can irritate the current hegemonic order and offer alternative visions for society” (Haghighat, 2020, p.90).

Moving on from participatory arts, *socially-engaged art* is a term that has become prevalent in the early 21st Century context to describe art practices that are community orientated. At their most radical, these practices promote a “new social order—ways of life that emphasise participation, challenge power, and bridge disciplines ranging from urban planning and community work to theatre and the visual arts.”(Thompson, 2012, p.48).

Within the United Kingdom, some socially-engaged practice is funded by the Arts Council England through its Creative People and Places (CPP) programme. At the time of writing, it supports 39 projects to transform access to arts and culture in places where engagement is significantly below the national average (Arts Council England, 2022b).

Community-based arts degree programmes can have significant impacts on developing just and sustainable societies as well as creating a sense of belonging. Unfortunately, in the UK many arts educational provisions have suffered from significant cuts (Lilliedahl, 2021; Weale, 2021). Louise (2013) also claims that university-run community projects are part of a dying tradition. The opportunities for artists to be trained in certain practices as part of formal education are diminishing. The lack of development opportunities for artists to be trained for socially-engaged practice has been noted by one of the CPP directors:

[In my view] there’s nowhere in the UK that teaches socially-engaged [arts] practice... which is bizarre because socially-engaged practice is the fastest growing and most significant element of how art practice is changing globally, yet the UK education system is not responding to that. (Creative People and Places, 2017, p. 3)

Interventions that provide professional development for socially-engaged artists have sprung up outside academia to fill the gap in professional training and development. For example, one director of the CPP states that “The Faculty of Social Arts Practice represents an innovative experimental platform to explore and play with the demands and opportunities of social practice” (Creative People and Places, 2017, p.7). It runs a six-month programme comprising online, distance learning tutorials, seminars, discussions, assignments, and four residencies. The Faculty of Social Arts Practice offers to develop practitioners’ practical skills, critical thinking, and networking through mentoring and cross-location small commissions.

Outside of the UK, the Arctic Art and Design programme at University of Lapland supports the training of students to work as community artists engaged in regional development (Coutts et al., 2018; Härkönen & Vuontisjärvi, 2018). The pedagogic approach is based on project-based situated learning that aims to boost the students’ individual agencies. Community artists are encouraged to design socially-engaged arts

activities based on their own pedagogic skills and the objectives of the participating groups and individuals (Huhmarniemi et al., 2021, p.6).

Make it Happen Summer School, the subject of this article, is another example of a small programme aiming to train creative people to become more able to undertake socially-engaged practice. The nearby university and the NPO recognised the lack of educational opportunities that targeted local creative practitioners so they could increase their repertoire of skills needed to undertake socially-engaged arts practice.

### **Theoretical Context**

Due to the aim of this project being to develop a curriculum to train socially-engaged artists it seems relevant to look at Bernstein's (2000) work on classification, framing, and recontextualisation. Bernstein's theories are a useful tool for examining educational processes and identifying how they reproduce social inequalities. It has been proposed that the community arts context challenges the hegemonic order and offers alternative visions for society (Haghighat, 2020). But can this claim be justified in practice?

Bernstein's understanding of pedagogic practice is that it occurs in many if not all agencies of cultural production and reproduction. He cites examples of family, school, prison, and hospital (Bernstein, 2000). The community arts field is another site of cultural production and reproduction. Bernstein developed general models that could be applied to a diversity of contexts where pedagogic communication takes place. In addition, he developed a language of description to explain general principles from which specific examples of cultural reproduction through processes of teaching and learning could be analysed.

### ***Classification***

The following describes how units (e.g., agents, topics, practices, and discourses) are organised and managed. In the case of education, classification most often refers to how subjects in a curriculum relate to one another. A strong classification denotes those subjects that have strong boundaries that insulate themselves against other subjects—for example, mathematics, physics, chemistry, and English literature. A strongly classified curriculum has clear boundaries between “school knowledge” and knowledge learned in everyday life (Bernstein, 2000). A weak classification, where boundaries are more fluid, describes curricula where subjects are integrated allowing interdisciplinary learning in areas such as health studies, media, and sustainability. Often a weakly-classified curriculum will draw upon knowledge from the students' own lives and experiences. Classification is related to how power operates in a curriculum and how knowledge is controlled and distributed.

There is a concern from some commentators that a weakly-classified curriculum that is based on the lived experiences of learners may only be meaningful in local or particular contexts. It has been argued that curricula need to transmit what has been described as “powerful knowledge” because it can be applied and understood in many contexts not just the local (Beck, 2013; Young, 2013; Young & Muller, 2013; Young, 2014). Inclusive curricula offer possibilities for all pupils/learners/students/apprentices/participants, whatever their age or life stage, to move beyond their own experiences and acquire knowledge that is not necessarily tied to that experience.

Bernstein (2000) would describe this as being able to think the unthinkable and the not yet thought. For Bernstein educational curricula transmit *uncommon sense knowledge* that is “freed from the particular, the local, through the various languages of the sciences or forms of reflexivity of the arts which make possible either the creation or discovery of new realities” (1975, p. 99).

### ***Framing***

Whereas classification is associated with how the curriculum is organised, framing is applied to the pedagogical approach used to deliver that curriculum. Strongly framed approaches tend to be teacher-centred. The style of pedagogic communication has already been decided without reference to the identities of students or learners. This control of the delivery of the curriculum is in terms of:

- its sequencing (what comes first, what comes second);
- its pacing (the rate of acquisition);
- the criteria [for evaluation]; and
- the control over the social base which makes this transmission possible. (Bernstein, 2000, p. 12)

Weakly-framed teaching would appear more open and perhaps more informal. The students would have more control over the pace, sequence, and in some cases the evaluation of learning.

As Bernstein (1971) suggests, the “stronger the classification and the framing, the more the educational relationship tends to be hierarchical and ritualised...” (p. 376). Weak classification and framing could lead to educational relationships that appear more non-hierarchical and fluid, more student-centred rather than teacher-centred. However, control and power still operate in weakly-classified and framed curricula through complex modes of interpersonal communication and implicit or explicit modes of evaluation.

### ***Recontextualisation***

Recontextualisation governs how common-sense knowledge from outside education (such as everyday life, the workplace, or the family) is pedagogised. Bernstein gives an example that through recontextualisation carpentry is transformed “inside” education into woodwork or more recently design technology. Through the process of recontextualisation everyday knowledge can be turned into curricula knowledge. This is controlled by “ideological contestation over selection of content when disciplinary knowledge becomes a school subject (curriculum)”(Gamble, 2014 p.60). In other words, recontextualisation is always mediated by social, economic, political, and cultural drivers. Within Make it Happen Summer School, the practices of artists working with communities have been recontextualised into a course about socially-engaged practice.

Bernstein (2001, p.365) imagined a totally pedagogised society constructed from technologies, lifelong learning policies, and a fluid, adaptable workforce. So, the example of Make it Happen Summer School demonstrates how the lived experiences of participants and artists in a community setting have become “pedagogised” during the project.

### **My Own Story**

There are personal reasons why I find Bernstein’s theories illuminating, in that they originally intended to challenge the waste of working-class talent through the education system. I was raised in a white working-class environment and subject to many indicators of disadvantage such as coming from a low-income family, having eligibility for free school meals, and being the first-in-the-family to attend higher education. After I had achieved a degree in visual arts, I rented my own studio and began working in community arts (this was quite unusual for someone with my background). During my 30-year career as an arts educator I worked in a variety of educational contexts such as adult, penal, further, and higher education. My experience has taught me how transformative engagement in the arts can be for individuals, communities, and society. In addition to the employment that an arts education can lead to, there are impacts on student well-being, self-confidence, mental health, social cohesion, and citizen participation (Thomas and Maloy, 2021; Broadhead et al., 2022).

When I began working, I was aware that there were degrees that specialised in public and community arts practice, unlike the more general one that I had undertaken. However, these do not seem to be around today. I remember how difficult it was to learn to be a community artist without the specialist training other than by trial and error. It was not just about learning the skills, but also developing the social and cultural capitals so that I could identify opportunities and successfully apply for resources and professional fees.

In the realm of funding, I found it frustrating that resources would go to practitioners outside of the communities where the work was situated. It seemed that a project would be run by artists who did not understand the local people and places they were working with. These community arts projects may have been successful for a short time, but then the projects ended, and the artists left. No authentic or sustainable relationships had been built between the community and the artists. Sceptically, many of the projects seemed to be driven by funding opportunities and the impact of them was short-term, superficial, and to some extent exploitative of marginalised groups.

This is why I believe it is important that there are opportunities for local artists and arts practitioners to learn about socially-engaged practice where they are more able to connect with people in a more meaningful and sustained manner. This would decrease the danger that marginalised communities are colonised by artists who have no real understanding of or empathy with local cultures.

### **The Local Area Where Make it Happen Summer School Took Place**

At the time of writing, the UK Equality Act (2010) lists a series of protected characteristics that do not include social class. As a result, there tends to be less explicit data collected about class identity. However, one way of understanding who the working-classes are can be through a set of indicators that have to do with employment and socio-economic status, although this does not capture the cultural aspects of class identity. The Make it Happen Summer School project was situated in an area that had relatively high rates of unemployment (approximately 10% of the working population compared with a national rate 6.2%) (Kirklees Council, 2020). For those who are in work, manufacturing is one of the largest contributors to the local economy. In England, deprivation is measured by area through a combination of indicators in the domains of income, employment, health, education and skills, housing, and access to services, crime, and living environment. This measure is known as the Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) (Catney et al., 2023). The place in which Make it Happen Summer School was situated has 12.2% of its population living in LSOAs, which rank within the worst 10% in England. This is higher than the average for England where 9.9% of the population are within the worst 10% of LSOA. The area comprises a range of ethnicities, 76.6% of the population identify as white British. The next largest groups are 9.9% identifying as Asian/Asian British (Pakistani) and 4.9% identifying as Asian/Asian British (Indian) (Kirklees Council, 2020).

Wilson (2016) describes *working-class* as a fluid grouping, as members have very different experiences of poverty. It can be seen that, although data is not collected about the class identities of the local population, there are likely to be groups who identify as working class.

This is also suggested by the five working men's clubs that are still operating in the area. In my own case, I have always identified as working-class and coming from a nearby neighbourhood, I have a strong sense of connection with the people associated with the Make it Happen Summer School project. I recognise that local audiences and local practitioners identify with a variety of intersectional white and south Asian working-class identities.

### **Method**

The course was designed based on the needs of the NPO organisation, as well as my knowledge and experience in designing and carrying out arts learning programmes. Through dialogue between the two parties a Make it Happen Summer School learning schedule was devised. Participants were recruited from the NPO's locality to take part in the project as learners or as Bernstein would say acquirers. They were all given a small grant to cover their travel costs. These were novice community arts workers, or people who had a creative practice (such as sculpture, poetry, or textile design) and wished to learn new skills so they could work with people and communities. The summer school ran in July 2022. There was an overall project coordinator who organised a group of facilitators to deliver the sessions. These facilitators (or as Bernstein would describe them, transmitters) were expert community artists who shared their professional experience and expertise with the cohort of novices/participants.

### ***The Programme***

There was an anticipated curriculum proposed by the NPO and myself, the researcher, that comprised the following: Preparing a budget; risk assessment; preparing a proposal; promoting socially-engaged practice; researching sites and communities; developing ideas for socially-engaged practice; reporting; evaluation; representation; documentation; co-construction; doing no harm; respect for the site; collaboration; diversity and inclusion; working and connecting with communities in an ethical way; cultural literacy; empathy; listening; care for self; participants stakeholders, communities, sponsors and colleagues; and understanding the various contexts of socially-engaged practice.

The pedagogic approach used to deliver the proposed curriculum was based on undertaking a "live brief" where the participants would research and develop their own ideas based on visits to a heritage site in the local area (see Figure 1). They would then write their own proposal for a socially-engaged project based on what they had learned during the summer school. This proposal would be presented to the leader of the NPO who would give them feedback and possibly commission them to realise the proposed project. A substantial part of the activity comprised experiential learning and reflection as well as learning from the professional community artists and educators from the university.



*Figure 1. Group exploring site with threads.*

The learning outcomes were not made explicit in the programme. The knowledge and skills needed to produce a viable proposal for a socially-engaged arts project were learned through the practical activities, discussion, and reflection planned in the schedule (see Figure 2).

<b>Make it Happen Summer School learning schedule (10am – 2pm each day).</b>	
<b>First week – <i>Working with others</i></b>	
Day 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome from NPO and introductions Visit to neighbouring heritage site</li> <li>• On site workshop led by a community arts practitioner Introduction to imaging and creating site-responsive outdoor arts</li> <li>• Lunch at a nearby venue</li> </ul>
Day 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk by a community arts practitioner – How to design and deliver projects through research, heritage and dialogue with people</li> <li>• Q+A with a community arts practitioner</li> <li>• Workshop – creating initial ideas and visual display of research</li> <li>• Group research</li> <li>• Reflective journals and feedback</li> </ul>
Day 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-site workshop on devising and staging techniques with a community arts practitioner</li> <li>• Development of research</li> <li>• Developing initial ideas</li> <li>• Reflective journals and feedback</li> </ul>
<b>Second Week – <i>Making things happen</i></b>	
Day 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing ideas with a community arts practitioner</li> <li>• How to make and realise work</li> <li>• Online session with a community arts practitioner</li> <li>• Group development of ideas and mood boards</li> <li>• Reflective journals and feedback</li> </ul>
Day 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mood board creation</li> <li>• Online session with a community arts practitioner on developing and refining ideas</li> <li>• On site refining of narrative and ideas</li> <li>• Guest talk from an artist and lecturer at the university</li> </ul>
Day 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical activities based on developed ideas</li> <li>• Online session with a community arts practitioner - supported sharing of ideas</li> <li>• Reflective journals and feedback</li> </ul>
<b>Third Week – <i>Developing a proposal</i></b>	
Day 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poetry and critical thinking workshop with an arts educator from the university</li> <li>• Commission brief and practical considerations</li> </ul>

Day 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and development</li> <li>• Planning of proposals</li> <li>• Reflective journals and feedback</li> </ul>
Day 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of proposals</li> <li>• Peer feedback and questions</li> </ul>

*Figure 2.* Make it Happen Summer School schedule

### ***The Participants***

Data about the participants' social class identities was not collected, but information about their educational backgrounds was collected. All of the ten participants had degree level education, with four also having postgraduate qualifications. This might suggest that they were middle-class, however the link between degree level education and class identity can be challenged. Reilly (2022) argues that working-class academics retain their class identities throughout their careers in higher education, and can experience not "fitting in" or not feeling part of academia. At least three of the cohort had progressed to their degrees from non-traditional routes, such as through Access education. This is designed for people who did not succeed at gaining degree entry requirements at school. My perception was that the class-identities of many of the participants were very similar to my own.

As one of the aims of the project was to develop creative practitioners from the surrounding area of the NPO and heritage site, it was important to understand the characteristics of the cohort. Six of the initial 12 participants lived up to 30 minutes' drive from the heritage site. Five participants lived between 30 minutes and 45 minutes' drive from the site. One participant lived up to 60 minutes away. In the end, ten participants took part in the project. The majority of the participants travelled to the sessions by train while others travelled by car. So, it can be seen that many of the participants came from the surrounding areas if not the actual town where Make it Happen Summer School took place. The surrounding areas have a similar level of unemployment and levels of deprivation previously described. The participants described their familiarity with the place when introducing themselves in the first session.

The age of the participants revealed that the course was attractive to adults who had other commitments such as caring responsibilities or part-time work. The majority of the participants commented that the 10am–2pm, 3 days a week format worked well for them. The majority of the ten participants were aged 36–45, with three of the ten aged 41 years old. The youngest participant was 25 years old and the oldest, 52 years old. Only three participants were in their 20s while seven were over 40 years old. There was an unequal gender balance

with seven identifying as female and three identifying as male. The vast majority identified as White, British, but there was some representation from the South Asian community.

### ***Data Collection***

A mixed methods approach was employed to collect data, consisting of observations and a survey. The researcher observed the sessions and made field notes during the summer school. The participants were asked to provide feedback at the end of the course via a survey. The survey was based on the curriculum topics that were agreed by the NPO and me, the researcher. Participants were asked to decide if the topics such as “preparing a proposal” and “promoting socially engaged practice” had been covered to a large extent, to some extent, or not at all. The participants had an opportunity to add their own written reflections about their experiences on the course at the end of the survey. Data were analysed through the concepts central to Bernstein’s work on classification and framing, and Young’s (2013, 2014) related work on powerful knowledge.

### **Data Analysis and Findings**

Table 1 represents the results from the end of course survey that asked the participants to rate the extent to which the topics were covered during the course. Responses were “to a large extent”, “to some extent”, or “not at all”.

**Table 1**

*End of course survey results*

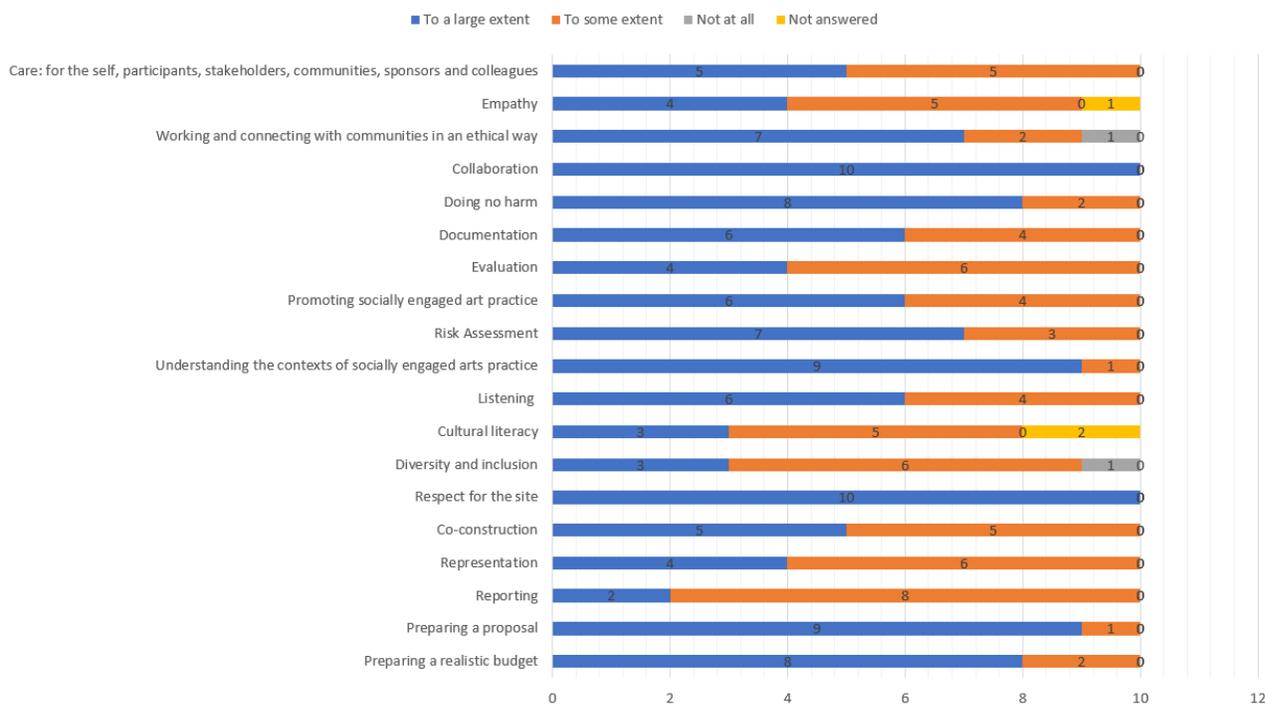


Table 2 collates all the participant written feedback and organises it in relation to key terms identified in Bernstein’s (2000, 2003) writing on classification and framing, and Young’s (2013, 2014) related work on powerful knowledge. These were classification, curriculum, powerful knowledge, framing, pacing, and sequencing. On occasion, the feedback could be aligned to more than one term. When this occurred, it was placed under the most appropriate term.

**Table 2***Feedback organised according to comments about classification and powerful knowledge*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Written Feedback</b>
Classification of the curriculum/powerful knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have gotten so much from this summer school. As a recent graduate I came into the art world not knowing much about being an artist. I have learnt about budgets, risk assessments, proposal development, site specific work, and much more. I feel like this would be hugely beneficial for recent graduates.</li> <li>• I have a different perspective on performance art.</li> <li>• I have new budget areas to consider.</li> <li>• The balance of: discourse, collaborative thinking, professional guidance, practical workshop experience (poetry), industry insight (talk), doing, creative thinking, feedback ... felt just right!</li> <li>• I have a better understanding of including research in planning.</li> <li>• The course gave me a strong foundation to begin to include detailed consideration of 'audience &amp; participant context' &amp; 'event context' within the research &amp; devising period for future projects.</li> <li>• I will be applying what I have learnt about planning to future events that I will be running, the use of mood boards and how to budget.</li> <li>• I loved the active learning format. Loads of really good tips and excellent resources including templates for risk assessment and budgets.</li> <li>• I will be taking site visits more seriously and with a new approach.</li> <li>• The topics covered have been so interesting and what I have learnt will be valuable going forward. It has helped me identify that I'm probably more suited to project management rather than performing or creating. It has been amazing to meet so many talented people from different backgrounds and skills. I hope to keep in touch and use these connections in future.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I will use what I have learnt in the creative process of future projects to bring my work into being more context-appropriate and more ‘socialist’ in its approach. This is something I have been seeking for my arts practice, when it has been so long: spectacle and experimental without the inclusion of audience in the creative process.</li></ul>
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The feedback on classification (Table 2) suggests that the participants thought the course filled a gap in their knowledge, and that curriculum content would be a useful addition for new graduates. They noted that many topics had been covered but all were deemed to be relevant. Classification is weak, as a diverse range of topics were all seen as contributing to towards the socially engaged arts projects. There was some acknowledgement that there was a balance between professional guidance, research, practical activities, and creative thinking. The deeper, complex, and critical thinking skills are mentioned in the feedback but not as much as the process driven knowledge. For example, the bureaucratic and practical tips and templates seemed particularly welcomed such as those for preparing budgets, risk assessments, and proposal development. Four of the participants explicitly say they will apply what they have learnt to new projects in the future. This indicates that they could imagine how the topics they had learned could be used in different contexts as powerful knowledge.

**Table 3***Feedback organised according to comments about framing, pacing, and sequencing*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Written Feedback</b>
Framing/pacing and sequencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This has been an absolute game changer for my career! Having the time, space, and input from others to consider proposals has made such a difference in motivation, positivity and confidence, thank you!</li> <li>• I thought the course allowed us to touch upon all of the areas above in a relaxed fashion (with some topics having more dedication than others) meaning we had more of a scope of the thinking and necessities of socially engaging art practice, rather than concentrating a few topics and missing others.</li> <li>• I didn't realise the course would be this in depth, we covered an absolutely huge amount in such a short time.</li> <li>• I have learnt so much in a short space of time about an area I am new to.</li> <li>• Wonderful course – although seemed to slow down a little during the second week. I feel it would have been good to have had the brief earlier in the project.</li> <li>• Overall a good course, I felt the start was relaxing and perhaps rushed towards the end to get the proposals ready.</li> </ul>

The feedback from Table 3 indicates that the framing was weak as the participants felt they had been given time and space to learn and think about socially-engaged practice. However, there were occasions when framing was strong because the educators took back some control over the pacing and sequencing of the teaching. Two of the participants mention the pace being relaxed suggesting that they had some agency over the pace and sequencing of their learning. There was also a sense that the pace of the course slowed down or speeded up at various points in the three weeks. For example, there was a comment that the pace of the course increased towards the end because the organisers wanted the project proposals to be completed on time, implying that the participants did not always decide on the pace of the course. Nor did they always control the sequence of the curriculum; the project facilitators decided when the participants would be given the brief (the task of presenting a proposal to

the NPO leader), but one participant wrote that they would have preferred to have had it earlier.

## **Data Analysis and Findings**

### ***Classification and the Curriculum***

When considering the feedback, it can be seen that the participants made many references to the curriculum. They mentioned that the curriculum covered various subjects such as preparing a budget, undertaking risk assessment, proposal development, as well as practical site-specific work. The wide range of diverse topics suggested weak classification, regulated by an integrated code where different subjects are brought together (Bernstein, 2000). The curriculum drew upon the day-to-day experiences of novice and expert socially-engaged arts practitioners. The boundaries between everyday work experiences and formal knowledge were not well insulated, as it was the experience of all concerned that informed the content of the curriculum. This is not surprising. It has been argued that there has been a decline in formal education in community/participatory/socially-engaged art, so therefore, an erosion of the related formal curricula knowledge is a possible consequence.

It can be seen that knowledge from the practice of community arts has been recontextualised into a curriculum. Some of that knowledge represents administrative activities that are necessary when working in the sector. Requirements specified by the funders of arts organisations are important forms of knowledge especially that which is concerned with proposing, budgeting, reporting, and evaluation. The underpinning ideology that drives the recontextualisation comes from the neoliberal discourses around performativity and accountability, where the quality of provision is measured in terms of value for money (Bhopal, 2018; Huxtable, 2022). The political and transformative aspects of community arts practice that Kelly (1984) had valued did not seem foregrounded in either the curriculum or in the participants' feedback.

What is interesting is that those "accountability" or administrative topics necessary to current socially-engaged practice were positioned alongside more critical and complex forms of knowledge. It could be argued that the discussions around the principles and ethics of socially-engaged practice such as "doing no harm", "caring for self and others", and "respecting the site" were topics that required deeper, discursive learning. There were also curriculum references to interpersonal attributes such as empathy and listening skills. There was potential for a more political awareness to come out of the conversations around these topics, although the focus was on taking personal responsibility for ethical practice. Maybe this aspect of the course needed to be guided by the expert socially-engaged artists? Participants in the end survey reported that all these types of topics had been well-covered in

the course.

### ***Powerful Knowledge***

When providing a weakly-classified curriculum, the danger is that participants may learn very successfully about socially-engaged practice in relation to that particular heritage site, but would they learn knowledge that could be transferred to other contexts? Did the project give its participants access to decontextualised, powerful knowledge (Young, 2014)? There was a considerable amount of feedback that explicitly said many of the participants would be applying what they had learned to other projects in the future, suggesting that some of them thought they had gained powerful knowledge. Although weakly-classified and based on learning in a particular site with a particular audience, and the particular work experiences of novices and experts, Make it Happen Summer School did appear to enable some of the participants to construct their own generalised knowledge that could be transferred to other forms of socially-engaged practice.

The feedback about the success of the curriculum was based on the perceptions and judgements of the participants. However, when the university researcher observed the learning process they noticed when the points of generalised knowledge came up in group discussions, the expert community artist did not make them explicit. Doing so would enable the group to recognise the significance and transferability of what was being learned.

### ***Framing, Pacing, and Sequencing Curriculum***

#### ***Framing***

The feedback referred to having time and space to consider socially-engaged practice. There were also points made about how the curriculum was delivered in a relaxed fashion. People had the opportunity to work together, talk to one another freely and to network with each other (See Figure 3). This suggests that the project based on experiential learning was mostly weakly-framed. This is where the participants had some control to plan their own learning as they each developed their own proposal for the local heritage site. However, there were times when the project facilitators did take back control of the timing and sequencing of the curriculum. For example, some of the feedback comments on how the pacing became quicker towards the end of the course. People had to produce a presentation that would be seen and reviewed by the NPO leader and the peer group. This final activity represented a form of implicit evaluation. Throughout the process the evaluation rules were not made explicit, there was no overt expectation that the participants needed to meet any assessment criteria.



Figure 3. Collaborative reflection on site

### *Pacing and Sequencing*

The pacing and sequencing of the programme was referred to in the feedback. Often this was related to the volume of content that was delivered in a short period of time. Some mentioned that there were points where the pace of the learning slowed down. However, the pace was quicker at the beginning and end of the summer school. There was also a criticism that the brief was given too late in the course. Participants would have appreciated having the brief (which was a type of assignment and an indication of what the evaluation could be) at the beginning of the summer school. How well the participants responded to the brief with a viable proposal was a form of evaluation, but this was not made explicit during the programme.

The feedback suggests that the framing was weak during the times when participants felt the course was relaxed as they had control over their learning. When the course became quicker paced, it is probable that it became more strongly-framed and the project co-ordinator took

back some of the control over the learning activities. The facilitators realised that the presentations needed to be finished before the end of the summer school and those presentations needed to demonstrate how the participants could carry out a successful socially-engaged arts project. The work would at this point be evaluated by the NPO leader and the peer group. This pattern seems to be similar to the observations of Gamble (2014) when she observed the learning undertaken by apprentices.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

The feedback from the participants, in part, confirms that many artists in the local area are not fully prepared to undertake socially-engaged practice. It is therefore important to reflect on how this can be addressed. Make it Happen Summer School demonstrates how a short course that is weakly-classified and -framed can provide some additional training in socially-engaged practice. This can build confidence and motivation in novice socially-engaged artists so they can apply what they have learned to future projects.

The course appears to be open and flexible, however the participants only had so much control over the pacing of the topics covered. This can be seen in the feedback where they said the project started in a relaxed mode but became more intense towards the end of the three weeks.

The danger of this kind of open approach is that not everyone recognises that knowledge can be transferable to other contexts. The participants learn about their particular project and the heritage site where Make it Happen Summer School was situated. However, this experience has limited value if abstract knowledge—Young (2014) would say powerful knowledge—has not been learned. There is evidence from some participants that they intended to use the knowledge in other socially-engaged work. But others did not refer to this, saying instead how much they enjoyed the course.

The participants were very positive about the open and informal pedagogy that seems to have been mostly successful in engaging them. There was no evidence that participants from working-class or under-represented backgrounds were disadvantaged by the approach taken. This could be partly due to everyone having previous experience of arts higher education where weakly-classified and -framed approaches to teaching are prevalent (Broadhead, 2015). Inequalities would arise if participants did not have an arts background and therefore could not recognise the significance of, or identification with the mode of learning.

There are aspects of the curriculum that focus on training socially-engaged artists to act in a particular manner that pragmatically focuses on accountability and bureaucracy (the importance of preparing a budget, risk assessment, preparing a proposal, reporting, evaluation,

and documentation). Also, people were being encouraged to take personal responsibility for the ethical dimensions of their practice. The critical and political aspects of engagement with communities maybe implicit in some of the proposed projects and discussion. However, it did not appear to be foregrounded in the curriculum. Bernstein's (2000) ideas around trainability are relevant where people are encouraged to train constantly, but they do not learn deeper critical skills needed to acquire generalised knowledge that can be used in different contexts.

It is possible that the trend of depoliticisation of community arts in the UK has been reproduced in the Make it Happen Summer School curriculum. The processes of recontextualization (drawing upon the professional experience of socially-engaged artists to construct a curriculum) make this apparent, through the focus on certain bureaucratic topics. This project also raises wider questions about the inclusivity of socially-engaged practice and its potential in offering transformative experiences to underrepresented audiences when the political aspects of community arts appears to be diminishing.

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## **Acknowledgements**

Many thanks to Megan Bailey for her excellent project management skills.

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ISSN: 1529-8094

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