

'Creativity in the Making' March 6-20, 2018

#creativeHE HANDS ON CONVERSATION

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This 'hands-on' conversation is open to anyone who is interested in this topic. It will extend over two weeks between March 6-20 and it will be conducted in the #creativeHE Google+ Forum. <https://plus.google.com/communities/110898703741307769041?hl=en>

Challenge

We invite YOU, or in partnership with others, to:

- 1) Make an artefact/object in response to any life context or situation
- 2) Record your process of thinking and making
- 3) Create a map of your process and a story which reveals how your creativity featured
- 4) Share your creations and insights with other participants in the #creativeHE forum



Process

The exploration will include the following stages:

1. An introductory conversation will allow for a platform to be built (or made) by drawing on some relevant literature and by considering illustrations.
2. A middle period of seven days will allow for our actual making (as individuals or in groups), as well as personal reflection on the process of making.
3. The final 'synthesis and reflection period' will provide an opportunity for each person or group to exhibit their artefact and share their narrative about how ideas, feelings and meanings emerged and actions were shaped through making.

As part of this synthesis participants will be invited to make a map of their making process and show how their creativity featured in the process. In this way people can share their own theories about what creativity meant in this particular context. The map can be in any style or format and it is a mediating artefact to help explain your own

process. We hope that this approach will surface some interesting ecological (connections, relationships and interactions) perspectives on creativity in practice.

After the conversation we will curate the narratives and artefacts that have been shared through Creative Academic Magazine

Notes

1 Creative Academic and #creativeHE are exploring the idea of *creativity in practice* <http://www.creativeacademic.uk/creativity-in-practice.html>

2 'Artefact' is a term that is used to refer to items created or resulting from human action and activity as well as a central concept in the study of practice. Practice is often seen as the production of artefacts (Díaz-Kommonen et al 2004). The artefacts we produce might be artistic works, crafts, something from the digital world, a song, poem or story, a dance, a diagram or indeed anything that the maker is *inspired* to create grown from the circumstances of your life (eg family, work, home, landscape, hobbies etc..)

3 We will consider *making* to be a process of *material thinking* – 'an intellectual adventure' (Carter, 2004, p. XI), where invention 'is located neither after nor before the process but in the performance itself' (Carter, 2007, p. 19). Our challenge, then, will be to think of our artefacts less as *products of creativity* and more as a means for accessing and using creativity. The 'artistic or aesthetic quality' of the artefacts we make, will be a secondary consideration and our primary concern will be the process of making and the insights we gain into how our creativity features in the process of making.

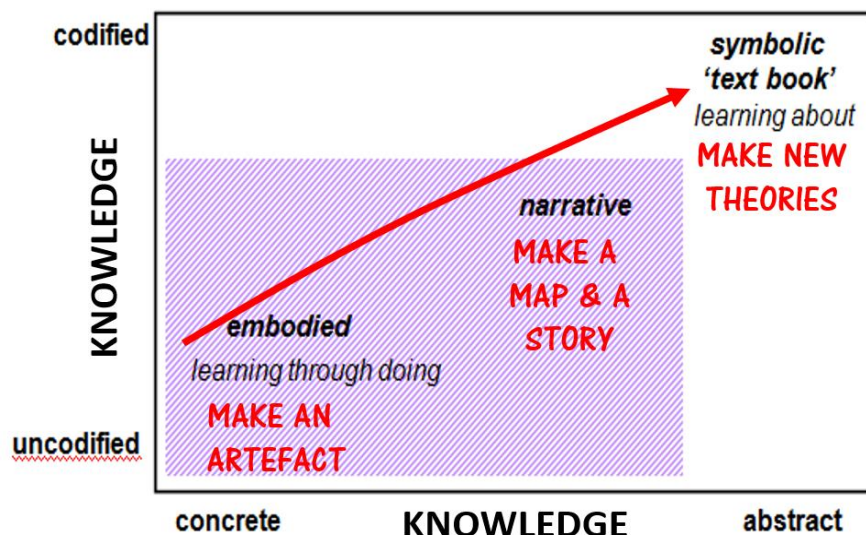
4 We will consider making as a process of connecting (Gauntlet 2011)

'Making is connecting because you have to connect things together (materials, ideas, or both) to make something new; Making is connecting because acts of creativity usually involve, at some point, a social dimension and connect us with other people; And making is connecting because through making things and sharing them in the world, we increase our engagement and connection with our social and physical environments.' (Gauntlet 2011:2)

Making embodied learning visible

We are trying to convert personal tacit and embodied knowledge gained through the experience of making something into stories (narratives) that convey meanings and from a collection of narratives derive more general principles and theories about processes of making and how creativity features in them. Maurice Boisot (1998) provides a useful conceptual aid for viewing this process.

Figure 1
Conceptual framework for viewing knowledge.
Adapted from Boisot (1998)



Using the two-by-two matrix of codified/abstract and uncoded/ concrete knowledges he shows schematically the relationship between the knowledge that is embodied in everyday thinking and practices - our personalised working knowledge that we use to deal with situations - and more abstract/symbolic and codified knowledge such as that which we find in books, reports and working papers.

Our personal embodied knowledge, and the embodied knowledge of other people, mainly populates the shaded area. It is created or co-created with others through participation in the things we do and the extraction of meaning through our reflections on the situations we have encountered. It includes knowledge that we have gained from codified sources and from every other source (including what we have sensed and felt).

Narrative or storytelling provides a communication medium, often rich in metaphor, that links these two domains the embodied and codified knowledge domains. Bauman (1986) argues that oral narrative is constitutive of social life itself.

When one looks at the social practices by which social life is accomplished one finds - with surprising frequency - people telling stories to each other, as a means of giving cognitive and emotional coherence to experience; constructing and negotiating social identity; investing the experiential landscape with moral significance in a way that can be brought to bear on human behaviour; generating, interpreting and transforming the work experience; and a host of other reasons. Narrative here is not merely the reflection of human culture, or the external charter of social institutions, or the cognitive arena for sorting out the logic of cultural codes, but is constitutive of social life in the act of story telling (Bauman 1986:113-14).

We might also add the idea of maps to the area of narratives, especially if they are annotated or animated as they also tell a story of process.

Sources

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- Carter, P. (2007). Interest: The ethics of invention. In E. Barrett & B. Bolt (Eds.), *Practice as research: Approaches to creative arts enquiry* (pp. 15-25). London: I. B. Tauris.
- Díaz-Kommonen, L. et al (2004) Expressive artefacts and artefacts of expression. *Working Papers in Art and Design 3* available at : https://www.herts.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/12355/WPIAAD_vol3_kommonen.pdf
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