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**EDUCATING FOR SOCIALLY ENGAGED ART**  
**IN**  
**IRISH HIGHER EDUCATION**

A. M. Lyons

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education

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Ann Marie Lyons

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education

School of Education  
Faculty of Social Sciences  
The University of Sheffield

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I, the author, confirm that the Thesis is my own work. I am aware of the University's Guidance on the Use of Unfair Means ([www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/unfair-means](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/unfair-means)). This work has not been previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university.

Dedicated to the memory of my mother, Maura Austin Lyons



## **Abstract**

The study concerns higher education for socially engaged art (SEA), focusing on one MA programme in the Republic of Ireland. The research examines the historical context from which SEA higher education in Ireland emerged, how pedagogical practices for SEA are being shaped in this particular programme and the pedagogical, political and aesthetic issues that can arise in the academic setting of higher education with regard to SEA education. Data were collected in ten one-to-one interviews and a group interview, with past and current staff members, between June 2016 and April 2017. Positioned within a qualitative paradigm the data are thematically analysed from a social constructionist methodological perspective, informed by the critical discourse analysis approach of Siegfried Jäger and Florentine Maier (2016). This methodological approach focuses on the discursive meanings that are mobilised in the data, and are theorised as discourse strands of Place, Practice and Academy.

The study provides insights into what is at stake when an art practice with origins in the counter-cultural movement of community arts and the politics of cultural democracy, is formalised within the academic setting of higher education and its art historical traditions. It finds academicisation of SEA practice is connected with community arts historical traditions, but also with avant-garde art historical traditions and their successor practices. Higher education is considered important in instituting SEA into those traditions and legitimising SEA as a valid art practice. Arts-based and pedagogy-based approaches are deemed characteristic of pedagogical practices carried out on the programme. Features of the contemporary higher education landscape, including neo-liberalism, the Bologna Accord, modularisation, theories of human capital, are ascertained to impact on the institutional logics of the programme. Relating to an Irish context, but having resonances beyond Ireland, the study contributes knowledge about SEA higher education, an under-researched area of higher art education in Ireland and elsewhere.

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## List of Abbreviations

BAK	Basis voor Actuelle Kunst
CAFE	Creative Activity for Everyone
CIT	Cork Institute of Technology
DBAE	Discipline Based Art Education
EAP	European Academy of Participation
ETB	Education & Training Board
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ERA	European Research Area
EU	European Union
FÁS	Foras Áiseanna Saothair
FE	Further Education
FETAC	Further Education and Training Council
FET	Further Education and Training
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IOT	Institute of Technology
MoMA	Museum of Modern Art
MuHKA	Museum of Contemporary Art in Antwerp
NAWC	National Arts Worker Course
NCVA	National Council for Vocational Awards
NCAD	National College of Art and Design
OECD	Organisation of Economic Co-operation & Development
PME	Professional Masters in Education
QQI	Quality & Qualifications Ireland
SEA	Socially Engaged Art
SEA FACE	Socially Engaged Art, Further, Adult, Community Education
SEA+FE	Socially Engaged Art + Further Education
SOLAS	Further Education and Training Authority
UCD	University College Dublin
VEC	Vocational Educational Committee







Figure 1: l'Université. ©Alice Maher, 2012/2013. Photography: Conor Hogan.



## Chapter 1: Introduction: Situating the Inquiry

### *Introduction*

The starting point for this inquiry was an interest in providing an account of when, why and how education for socially engaged art practice developed in Irish higher education.<sup>1</sup> My initial curiosity related to a desire to understand the phenomenon of the academicisation in Ireland of a field of art practice that had roots in the counter-cultural social movement of community arts. This movement developed in the Irish context in the early 1980s (Ciarán Benson, 1989; Eilish Kelly, 1999; Jude Bowles, 2002; Sandy Fitzgerald, 2004; Ailbhe Murphy, 2004). Movement activities included the provision of educating for the practice, through development of education programmes in community-based and non-formal settings (Bowles, 1992; Nuala Hunt, 1999). These programmes began in the early 1990s. Education for the practice in higher education began a decade later, in 2001-2002, with a post-graduate Diploma programme in the National College of Art and Design (NCAD) in Dublin (Hunt et al., 2012; Hunt & Granville, 2016), entitled *Community, Arts, Education*.

The move of community arts into the academy is analogous with the academic trajectories of other social movements such as the women's movement and the development of its academic wing in the discipline of Women's Studies. However, unlike the well documented case of Women's Studies in the academy (Ellen Messer-Davidow, 2002; Robyn Wiegman, 2002; Daphne Patai, 2003; Joan Wallach Scott, 2008), the phenomenon of the move of community arts into the academy has received limited attention. In addition, the literature on educating for this field of practice in the academy is significantly less than that about art education in the academy more generally. And further, as Helguera (2011: ix) has pointed out, theorisation regarding the practice 'has developed much more than the more pedestrian discussion of the technical components that constitute it' and it was for this reason Helguera wrote his 2011 book, *Educating for Socially Engaged Practice: A Materials and Techniques*

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this research Ireland refers to the Republic of Ireland. In Ireland, the Higher Education Authority (HEA) is the statutory body responsible for governing and regulating the country's higher education system. Its website provides a wide range of statistical and other data about Irish higher education. For example, [https://hea.ie/statistics/data\\_visualisations/roi-enrolments/](https://hea.ie/statistics/data_visualisations/roi-enrolments/), [https://hea.ie/statistics/data\\_visualisations/infographics/](https://hea.ie/statistics/data_visualisations/infographics/), [https://hea.ie/statistics/data\\_visualisations/bar-chart-race-total-enrolments-by-field-of-study/](https://hea.ie/statistics/data_visualisations/bar-chart-race-total-enrolments-by-field-of-study/)

*Handbook*. He says that other areas of art-making, 'have nuts-and-bolts technical manuals' to guide practitioners and that socially engaged art needs its own 'reference book of "materials and techniques"' (2011: x). Helguera's comments are applicable to the Irish situation and this study aims to add to knowledge about the 'nuts and bolts' of educating for this field of art practice in Ireland.

In the Irish context there is a modest amount of literature on the provision of education for the practice in community-based and non-formal settings, (Bowles, 1992; Kelly, 1999; Ed Carroll, 1998, 2002; Fiona Whelan and Kevin Ryan, 2016), and a similarly modest amount on higher education for the practice, (Murphy, 2004, 2012; Hunt et al., 2012; Connell Vaughan, 2017; Fiona Woods, 2017; Roxane Permar, 2019; Whelan, 2019). This research will make a contribution to this under-researched area of higher art education, and will have relevance both in the Irish context and further afield. It does not claim to represent all forms of higher education for the practice that are currently taking place in Ireland. Its emphasis is on one particular post-graduate programme in the Republic of Ireland and the particular focus of the research is detailed below.

### **1.1 Focus of the Inquiry**

The overall aim of the research is to investigate education for socially engaged practice in higher education in Ireland, through an inquiry into an MA related to this field of practice at one particular higher education art college.<sup>2</sup> The research addresses the following questions:

- (1) What was the historical context out of which higher education for socially engaged art practice in Ireland emerged?
- (2) How are pedagogical practices for socially engaged art practice being shaped in this particular programme?
- 3) What are the pedagogical, political and aesthetic issues that arise in the institutional setting of higher education for education in socially engaged practice?

The research questions address the initiation and development of the programme at the College, the structure of the programme, how this form of art practice is being taught on the programme and the institutional conditions within which the programme operates. Data

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<sup>2</sup> The particular institution will be referred to as the 'College' throughout the thesis.

were gathered in ten face-to-face, one-to-one interviews and one group interview, with both former and current staff members.

Conforming to the social constructionist theoretical approach of the study, the data were analysed in an approach to critical discourse analysis informed by Jäger and Maier (2016), through which data are abstracted into a number of elements, including what they term 'discourse strands'. In the case of this research, three discourse strands, Place, Practice and Academy, were constructed from the analysis of the data and used heuristically in the interpretation of the findings. Place relates to the specific higher education art college location of the programme, Practice to the pedagogical practices carried out on this particular programme and Academy to the wider institutional context of contemporary higher education.

The theoretical approach of Jäger and Maier informs this study because its operationalisation of the theoretical ideas of a social constructionist approach to critical discourse analysis is less focused on the technical aspects of linguistics and more aligned with the disciplines of the social sciences. Hidalgo Tenorio points to the origins of critical discourse analysis being in 'textual and linguistic analysis', subsequent to which it expanded to include 'sociology, social theory and philosophy' (2011: 184). Jäger and Maier define knowledge as 'all elements of thinking and feeling in human minds ... all contents that make up human consciousness' (2016: 110). Their work supports the approach taken in the practical tasks of thematically analysing the data in this study, through outlining 'concepts and methods that facilitate analysis' (2016: 120). The details of the concepts and methods used in the study are elaborated in chapters three and four.

One impulse to carry out this research emerged from my interest in social movements and the academicisation process that can sometimes be associated with such movements, as in the instance of the women's movement and the academic discipline of Women's Studies mentioned above. Broadly informed by the notion of cultural democracy, the community arts movement advocates for equitable access for all 'to the means of cultural production' and 'more democratic and participatory forms of cultural decision-making' (The Movement for Cultural Democracy).<sup>3</sup> As with the women's movement there is not unanimous support

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<sup>3</sup> <http://culturaldemocracy.uk/>

within the community arts movement for education for the practice to take place in the setting of higher education. There are fears of its depoliticisation within academia as well as an appropriation of the practice, with the agenda for the practice being set by higher education rather than by practitioners in the movement of community arts. Since the academy has its own forms of disciplinary practices, significant among which is its role in the professionalisation of the practice, it is inevitable that these will impact on practices brought into the institution from other contexts. How these different forms of practice are negotiated and disciplined in the context of the academicisation of community arts is an important aspect of this research.

### **1.2 Positionality: Speaking from Somewhere**

Articulating where one 'sits' with regard to the research context, as opposed to 'sitting on the fence' (Morwenna Griffiths, 1998) announces the positionality and relatedly, the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the researcher and how the various aspects of the research process are implemented. I come to this research from the position of someone working in higher education in Ireland, specifically in the area of community-university engagement. I came into this area of higher education a number of years ago, following work in other areas including that of teaching, in a range of settings including community-based, adult and higher education, and modalities including formal, non-formal and informal. I did not formally train to become a teacher. My pedagogical practice and educational philosophy were born out of involvement in the women's movement, thereby informed by notions such as consciousness-raising, constructivism and traditions in feminist, critical and radical approaches to pedagogy. On moving into the area of community-university engagement I became interested in the field of education more broadly, including the discipline of education itself. It was possible to pursue this interest through the Professional Doctorate in Education (EdD) at the University of Sheffield. Linking my practice as a community engagement co-ordinator with the EdD programme gave me the opportunity to address an issue that had emerged in my work, that of formal education for the practices of community arts and socially engaged art. Preliminary investigation of this issue demonstrated that there was, and continues to be, formal education for the practice in Ireland, but it is an aspect of art education about which there is little documentation and research. This is particularly the case with regard to research on education for the practice

in higher education, an aspect that was ideally suited to being addressed in my research for this thesis. Related to my prior experiences and activities in social movements such as the women's movement, I was struck by the parallels between that movement and the community arts movement with regard to being instituted into the academy, and consequently focused the research on the academicisation of the practice of community arts in higher education. Thus, the research was motivated by a desire to learn about the academicisation of a form of art practice that has origins in the counter-cultural social movement of community arts and by my current job as a co-ordinator of community engagement in a higher education institution in Ireland, through which I work with a number of arts organisations, including those that are community-based and engage in participatory and collaborative forms of practice.

How one is positioned as a researcher is often configured as to whether one is an 'insider' or an 'outsider' to the research context. However it is also acknowledged that it is not always possible to categorise oneself as either one or the other. In my case I understand my positionality as researcher as not conforming to either insider or outsider, and I am in agreement with the argument that this binary does not adequately represent the manifold ways in which insider and outsider positions elide with one another (Pat Thomson and Helen Gunter, 2011; Elizabeth McNess, Arthur Lore & Michael Crossley, 2015). Griffiths (1998: 146) proposes that it is preferable to configure positionality as 'both/and' rather than 'either/or'. Thus insider and outsider are on a continuum rather than fixed or definitive positionalities. For example, in the context of this research I am an insider to higher education, but an outsider to the particular higher education institution (HEI) being examined in this study. Similarly, I am an insider with regard to certain areas of socially engaged art practice, including the practice of some of the participants, but an outsider with regard to education for the practice. I agree with Natasha Mauthner and Andrea Doucet (2003: 421) who argue that the research choices we make are connected with, not only 'our personal or academic biographies' and 'intellectual concerns', but also with the 'interpersonal, political and institutional contexts' in which we are situated. That position is mirrored in Griffiths' argument that knowledge 'bears the marks of its knowers', which concisely represents the ontological and epistemological position I have adopted in this research (1998: 82).



Educational research can variously be 'about' education and 'for' education. Outlining the purpose of educational research as relating to social justice, Griffiths (1998: 26) delineates three orientations with regard to educational research, (i) 'research for social justice'; (ii) research that depends 'on the researcher's orientation to social justice' but is 'about' something else; (iii) research in which the methodological or epistemological framework is in itself the grounds for 'claiming it to be research for social justice.' The research in this study conforms to Griffiths' second point above. It is 'about' higher education for socially engaged art practice, and 'for' pedagogical practices in this field of art practice in the higher education academy.

In the next section I provide a contextualisation of the inquiry, addressing the development of the field of community arts in Ireland, a chronology of education for the practice (formal, non-formal and informal), including settings outside of higher education and its subsequent establishment in the academy at the College.

### **1.3 Community Arts Education in Ireland: Chronology of Events**

The community arts movement of the late twentieth century was an international phenomenon and has been described by Kate Crehan (2011:79) as a form of practice that 'offered new possibilities of more democratic forms of art and new ways for art to act as a catalyst for social change'. It developed in Ireland in the 1980s and people active in the movement in Dublin were among those supporting the provision of a formal education programme in community arts at the College (Hunt et al., 2012). In this way, connections were made between the community arts movement and the academy with regard to establishing a formal academic programme in this field of practice at the College. Establishing a higher education programme in community arts in the academy was an expansion of this community-based, collaborative field of art practice into the space of higher education (Hunt et al., 2012, Murphy, 2012).

According to Bowles community arts was 'an identifiable activity in Ireland since the 1970s' but it is activities and events that occur in the early 1980s that represent a more formal organisation of contemporary community arts practice (Bowles: 1992: xi)<sup>4</sup>. The 1980s was a

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<sup>4</sup> For an extensive historical account see for example, John Mulloy, *Culture, Collectivity and Globalisation: Performing Community and Arts in Ireland* (2006), which documents practices of 'collective creativity' from the old Gaelic society to the present day.

time of economic recession and high rates of unemployment in Ireland, and community arts was a component of many community development activities devoted to working on these issues and engaging in struggles for social justice. Bowles (1992: 11) observes:

Arts activities were seen as tools with which people could take a greater control over their lives by exploring and expressing social issues of relevance to individuals and communities. In addition, the voluntary organisations addressing poverty and alienation were increasingly using developmental education techniques, which involved creative methods.

According to various accounts, for example, those that are included in the publication, *An Outburst of Frankness* edited by Sandy Fitzgerald, (Fitzgerald, 2004), 1983 and 1984 were significant years for the organisation of the community arts movement in Ireland, including education in this field of practice. An important event in the development of community arts in Ireland was a meeting of people involved in the nascent movement in the North Star Hotel in Dublin in 1983 (Fitzgerald, 2004). The meeting aimed to bring together those involved in community arts and was convened by City Workshop, a Dublin north inner-city community arts organisation, and as well as people from City Workshop there were attendees from 'Waterford Arts for All, Neighbourhood Open Workshops, Moving Theatre, Grapevine Arts Centre' (Fitzgerald, 2004: 72). Following the meeting in 1983 a number of people who attended that meeting visited various parts of Ireland to connect with other people involved in community arts in a variety of locations, with a view to developing further contacts and creating networking opportunities. The 1983 meeting and these subsequent activities led to the establishment of Creative Activity for Everyone (CAFE)<sup>5</sup>, an umbrella group for community arts in Ireland (Bowles, 1992; Fitzgerald, 2004). CAFE was committed to 'achieving social and cultural equality through creative action' with 'training, information and lobbying' identified as key objectives (Bowles, 1992: 15-16). The inclusion of 'training' in CAFE's remit demonstrates there was concern that education for this field of practice be made available, and perhaps it is no surprise that the early initiatives in this regard come from the space closest affiliated to the social movement ethos of community arts, that of the non-formal sector of education, including community-based and adult education settings. According to Alison Jeffers (2017) and Janet Hetherington & Mark Webster (2017) education

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<sup>5</sup> In 2003 the name was changed from CAFE to Create. According to the Create website this change is a reflection 'that times had moved on for the organisation, in the course of its twenty year history, and in the broader arts environment.' <http://www.create-ireland.ie/about/history>

for the practice began in a similar way in the UK, starting in the 1970s and described as 'self-facilitated and located in practice' (Hetherington and Webster, 2017: 186).

CAFE's first training programme took place in 1985 and it went on to develop and provide a range of other programmes, including the *National Arts Worker Course* (NAWC), which was delivered twice, first in 1991-1992 and for a second time in 1992-1993 (Bowles, 1992). The programme was accredited by the higher education institution (HEI), St. Patrick's College, Maynooth<sup>6</sup> as an extra-mural Diploma. Reflecting its connections with community activism and community development, the participants on the NAWC programme are described as 'community arts workers' and the committee formed to devise the programme included 'people involved in community arts, arts and education, adult education, community work and CAFE's education officer' (Bowles, 1992: 27). Bowles comments that one motivation of CAFE to provide training and education in community arts was to augment practitioners' knowledge of 'community development theory and processes, including leadership and facilitation skills (1992: 19), conforming with, according to John Mulloy 'arts-based community development' (Mulloy, 2012: 189).

Another programme developed by CAFE, in the late 1990s, was the *Learning Wheel*, a Training for Trainers programme in community arts, which took place in 1996-1997 (Carroll, 1998; Hunt, 1999). It was also an accredited programme, accredited by both St. Patrick's College, Maynooth and the National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA)<sup>7</sup>. As well as the programmes offered by CAFE there were also programmes organised by a number of community arts organisations, community development organisations and the adult and further education sector, including those co-ordinated by state agencies such as the Vocational Educational Committees (VEC) and FÁS (Foras Áiseanna Saothair), the state's Training and Employment Authority, which co-ordinated labour activation programmes<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Through the Universities Act, 1997, the college at Maynooth was re-structured, creating the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, a stand-alone university independent of St. Patrick's College, which reverted to solely being a clerical college. It is now known as Maynooth University.

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/about-us/university-history>

<sup>7</sup> The NCVA is a former statutory body for awards in Further Education. The NCVA was the statutory awarding body for Further Education in Ireland. It was succeeded by the Further Education and Training Council (FETAC), in 2011, provided for in the Qualifications (Education & Training) Act, 1999. FETAC's functions were in turn taken over, in 2012, by the Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI).

<sup>8</sup> The Vocational Education Committees (VECs) and FÁS, formerly separate entities, have been dissolved and re-configured. FÁS has been re-organised as SOLAS, the umbrella group for the state's Further Education &

(Carroll, 1998, 2002; Camilla Fitzsimons, 2017). As well as funders such as FÁS and the VECs, there was funding provided by the Arts Council and the Calouste Gulbenkian Fund to finance some of these programmes. However Carroll (1998, 2002) and Fitzgerald (2004) observe that in the 1980s and into the 1990s the funding of 'cultural work', including the various education programmes outlined above, came largely from FÁS funding, mainly through European Union (EU) schemes for employment, and actually exceeded Arts Council funding of community arts for much of the 1990s.

Thus, early initiatives in the area of community arts education and training were, variously, in the non-formal, informal, community-based, adult and continuing education sector, all of which received substantial funding from EU labour activation programmes and some of which were accredited by formal educational institutions. The participants came from backgrounds in both the arts and community development, and the programmes varied from short single module courses, for example, those run by Macnas, a community arts organisation in Galway, to lengthier programmes such as CAFE's *National Arts Worker Course* and the *Learning Wheel*, which ran over a period of six months to a year and which were HEI-accredited<sup>9</sup> (Bowles, 1992, Carroll, 1998, 2002; Hunt, 1999). Their work was informed by arts activism and the utility of the arts in addressing social and economic disadvantage. Many of the programmes emanated from, and were based in, particular communities, responding to needs articulated within those communities, or representing a response articulated by arts workers and community development workers with regard to the value of the arts in bringing about social change (Bowles, 1992, Fitzgerald, 2004).

By reason of their connections to the community and adult and further education sectors these early programmes were generally based on the principles and practices of community education, and were providing programmes within the non-formal and FE sectors of education. The first HE-based programme, which was at postgraduate level, was to happen in 2001, at NCAD, more than a decade after the first community-based programmes, beginning with a post-graduate Diploma and subsequently developing an MA (Hunt et al., 2012; Hunt & Granville, 2016). Thus the first HE-based programme came after a significant

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Training (FET) initiatives and the VECs have been re-organised and re-named Education and Training Boards (ETBs) who oversee the provision of FET programmes.

<sup>9</sup> The Learning Wheel was jointly accredited by Maynooth University and the National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA).

amount of educational activity in community arts practice in the community and adult and further education sectors. Post-graduate programmes in other HEIs were subsequently developed. In the academic year 2010-2011 an MA entitled *Social Practice and the Creative Environment* (MA SPACE) began in the Limerick School of Art and Design, at the Limerick Institute of Technology, and an MA entitled *Creative Practice* at the Galway Mayo Institute of Technology, began in the academic year 2016-2017.

### **1.3 Organisation of the Thesis**

The thesis proceeds from this introductory chapter to examine, in chapter 2, literature relevant to the inquiry. Adapting the *Major Themes* approach as defined by Pat Thomson,<sup>10</sup> the literature review pivots around the core topics, and related sub-topics, of education and art. I judge these topics to be core to the research, as they are germane to the research questions, which can be understood to cluster around the academicisation of the field of community arts education.

Chapter 3 is devoted to the methodological and epistemological characteristics of the research design, and includes attention to the ontological perspective I adopt as a researcher. These aspects synthesise in the theoretical orientation of the research, which is informed by the critical discourse analytic approach of Jäger and Maier (2016), details of which are provided in this chapter.

The practical details about the research activities, including the ethical considerations, the application of the interview method and the initial stages of the data analysis feature in chapter 4. The initial data analysis aspect of the research design is significantly guided by the work of Liz Spencer et al. (2014) who provide useful guidance with regard to the initial organisation and management of the data collected in the interviews.

The later stages of the data analysis process are addressed in chapter 5 where the work of Spencer et al. (2014) and Jäger and Maier (2016) are used to inform the analytical approach. Chapter 6 presents a discussion of the findings in the light of both the literature that relates to the research topic and the research questions posed. Chapter 7 is the final chapter and offers a summary and concluding remarks on the inquiry.

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<sup>10</sup> Details of this approach are provided in Chapter 2.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review: Mapping Topics, Planes and Sectors

### *Introduction*

In one of her *Patter* blog<sup>11</sup> posts Thomson identifies five approaches to carrying out a literature review. These are: *Chronology*, which historically maps the field; *Major Themes*, which demonstrates how the research connects with, and adds to, contemporary topics or themes; the *Canon/Classic Studies*, a quite specific discussion of relevant canonical texts; the *Wheel*, which brings together diverse literatures and possibly disciplines, that are relevant by virtue of their applicability to the research topic; the *Pyramid*, a contextually based and quite broad approach, but which ultimately entails a concentrated focus on the research topic.

This taxonomy is helpful in deciding how to structure the literature review and for the purposes of this research I have chosen to adapt the *Major Themes* approach, as it better aligns with the objectives of the research than any of the other four approaches. According to Thomson, the *Major Themes* approach can focus on 'current themes or topics in the field' and be structured around either the type of 'questions that have been asked and the topics that have been studied' or the 'key concepts and categories' that are being used in the research. In this research education and art are considered key topics because they are relevant to the research questions regarding the academicisation of the field of community arts. In addition, each of the topics of education and art can be understood to have sub-topics, constituting a number of concepts and categories, which are reflective of the specificities of the higher education setting of the academy and the field of community arts as a form of contemporary art practice. Taking this into account with regard to organisation of the literature review, I propose the constitutive parts of education to be, higher education, higher art education and pedagogical practices, and the constituent parts of art to be, community arts, socially engaged art, the pedagogical turn in art, and socially engaged art pedagogies.

My use of the *Major Themes* approach can also be broadly aligned with the social constructionist theoretical orientation of the research, as informed by the work of Jäger and

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<sup>11</sup> <https://patthomson.net/2016/08/29/five-ways-to-structure-a-literature-review/>

Maier (2016) on critical discourse analysis. According to Jäger and Maier discourses are positioned and configured according to various discourse planes and sectors. A discourse plane describes the various 'social locations' or 'social spaces' from which people speak, for example, locations such as politics, education, mass media, business (2016: 123). Constitutive of discourse planes are discourse sectors. For example, in the context of this research, higher education is configured as one of the sectors of the plane of education and socially engaged art as one of the sectors of the plane of art.

There is a certain heuristic character to this adaptation of the *Major Themes* approach to the literature review, since although presented as analytically separable, there are flows and transversal relationships across the different topics and sub-topics or discourse planes and discourse sectors. However, its heuristic characteristics are useful in organising the presentation of the different dimensions of the literature relevant to the research questions.

The review of the literature opens with a consideration of education, addressing in the first instance, aspects related to higher education, and subsequently, higher art education, and pedagogical practices. This is followed by a consideration of art, which begins with a discussion of community arts and socially engaged art, goes on to address the pedagogical turn in art, and concludes with an examination of pedagogies for socially engaged art.

### **2.1 Higher Education**

The origins of the modern university date back to over two hundred years ago, at which time, according to David Harvey 'the nation state and the modern notion of culture came together to make the university the guardian of national culture' (Harvey, 1998:114). According to Gerard Delanty (1998:7) from the time of the Enlightenment 'the university developed under the auspices of the central and national state providing it with a system of knowledge, which was at the same time a system of power'. Thus the university was intimately connected with the project of building the modern nation state. It also mirrored the stratification system and the reproduction of inequality in society across gender, class, race lines, as the university was the place 'where the elite citizens went to be socialized and educated' (Bill Readings, 1996).

For some, such as Readings (1996), the contemporary university is 'in ruins' with regard to its remit as the nation-state's guardian because of the hollowing out of the nation-state through globalisation and transnationalism. Also commenting on the contemporary university, Brian

Holmes (2015: 19) argues that the 'old concepts of universal knowledge and maintenance of the democratic sphere are being eroded'. While it is debatable the extent to which the nation state has been hollowed out by globalisation and transnationalism (Harvey, 1998; Simon Marginson, 2009,) an undeniable feature of contemporary society, including higher education, is the pre-eminence accorded to the market and, relatedly, the commodification of knowledge and education. According to Henriette Heise and Jakob Jakobsen, co-organisers of Copenhagen Free University, 'the control orchestrated by the financial and political elites' in contemporary society is oriented towards 'the financialisation of our brains, our nervous systems, our subjectivity, our desires, our selves'.<sup>12</sup>

In the context of the university, Harvey (1998:114) argues that the university is now aligned with the 'economistic logic of contemporary capitalism, converting knowledge into information, students into consumers and transforming the ability to think into a capacity for information processing'. Marginson (2010) observes that since education and research are foundational to knowledge and knowledge production, higher education is centrally implicated in the knowledge economy and globalisation, with major research universities important drivers of globalisation throughout the world. According to Mark Olssen and Michael Peters (2005:313) 'higher education has become the new star ship in the policy fleet for governments around the world'.

Manifestations at a European political level of a commitment to the knowledge economy in higher education are to be seen in the Bologna Declaration of 1999 and the establishment of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Research Area (ERA). The objectives of these initiatives include building comparability, modularisation, mobility and quality assurance across the higher education system in Europe, alongside the goal of making Europe the most significant knowledge-based economy in the world (Marijk Van Der Wende, 2000; Jeroen Huisman 2009; Dietrich Lemke, 2010; Frank McMahon, 2014).

Using the concept of the 'Undercommons' and referencing the university system in the United States, Fred Moten and Stefano Harney (2004) offer a subversive approach to the contemporary neo-liberal university. While acknowledging its historical and contemporary exclusionary practices they propose that instead of abandoning the institution of the

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<sup>12</sup> <https://chtodelat.org/b8-newspapers/12-53/we-have-won/>



university, the resources of the university can be appropriated and put to use for emancipatory purposes. For example, this can be achieved by staff in the university, working to make this happen. Using figurations of the fugitive or thief, such staff can facilitate the appropriation of these resources for projects subversive of the hegemonic order. Those who work in universities comprise a heterogeneous group, among whom there may be those who are subversive, who can be said to be 'within' but not 'of' the university. As represented by Moten and Harney, this is similar to the way 'colonial police force recruited unwittingly from guerrilla neighbourhoods, university labor may harbour refugees, fugitives, renegades, and castaways' (2004: 104). Moten and Harney's notion of the fugitive offers a fresh analysis of how the university can adopt an agonistic and critical function in contemporary society, which I think has a useful application in the context of the field of community arts and socially engaged art practice.

### 2.1.2 *Neo-liberalism and Cognitive Capitalism*

Another core element of the higher education landscape, and society more widely, is the hegemony of the political philosophy and economic theory of neo-liberalism. While neo-liberalism is analytically separate from globalisation, since globalisation is a broader phenomenon and would have happened without the emergence of neo-liberalism, nonetheless, given its current hegemony, neo-liberalism is intimately connected to the contemporary workings of globalisation and capitalism. In this scenario knowledge is a new form of global capital and the state adopts a role in creating individuals who are enterprising and entrepreneurial (Olssen and Peters, 2005). And as Emma Mahony (2016: 52) points out, notwithstanding that neoliberal ideology privileges the market, the apparatus of the state also plays a central role 'insofar as it facilitates, protects and guarantees neoliberal values', through state regulation acting to protect 'the best interests of the market'. The function of higher education in meeting the demands of the market is indicative of this contemporary connection between the market and the apparatus of the state. It is accompanied by the decline of state funding for the sector, with education increasingly becoming a private, as opposed to, a public good.

The dominant form of neo-liberal capitalism is cognitive capitalism (Yann Moulier Boutang, 2012), a mode of production that is driven by new technologies. It is a knowledge-based form of capitalism and its activities are related to areas such as, technology, media, finance,

cultural industries, rather than the production of goods with physical labour, as was the case in industrial capitalism. According to the Organisation of Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD) (1999:7) a knowledge-based economy is where 'the production, diffusion and use of technology and information are key to economic activity and sustainable growth'.

Writing about universities in the context of the current phase of capitalism Sheila Slaughter and Larry Leslie (1997) say it has inaugurated what they call 'academic capitalism'. This involves the commodification of knowledge, and because of the reduction in public funding, a requirement for higher education and those working in higher education to be entrepreneurial and market-oriented in raising finance. They argue that the changes which are taking place in universities today are equivalent to those which occurred at the time of the Industrial Revolution:

As the industrial revolution at the end of the nineteenth century created the wealth that provided the base for postsecondary education and attendant professionalization, so the globalization of the political economy at the end of the twentieth century is destabilizing patterns of university professional work developed over the past hundred years. (1997: 1)

### 2.1.3 Quantification and Measurement in Contemporary Higher Education

Another aspect of the impact of neo-liberalism on higher education is its culture of quantification and measurement, made necessary, according to Pascal Gielen and Paul De Bruyne (2012: 4) because neo-liberalism is less optimistic than liberalism about 'freely acting individuals'. This lack of trust has brought about the development of 'all sorts of tools to make freedom measurable, controllable and manageable', with the result that that which is not measurable becomes 'more difficult to legitimize and honour' (Gielen and De Bruyne, 2012: 5).

In turn, measurement and calculability are cornerstones of the new public management, or new managerialism, that is characteristic of contemporary higher education, resulting in a change of ethos and organisation from the 'academic to the operational' (Kathleen Lynch, 2012: 21). Maarten Simons and Jan Masschelein (2012: 81) say this type of scenario entails developing professional qualities of calculation, setting targets and 'becoming accountable for their added value'. According to Lynch (2012) the nature of the monitoring and

surveillance that accompany this ecology of higher education creates a relentless competitiveness and the creation of a subjectivity that entails constantly managing one's identity and promoting 'oneself and one's own achievements' (2012: 197). For Ball (2003: 215) there are 'terrors of performativity' attaching to the maintenance of this type of subjectivity. Furthermore, Ball (2016) argues the evidence on which one's performance is measured is positivistic and 'data-driven', creating what he calls a meta-self or 'data-double'.

#### 2.1.4 Higher Education and Human Capital Discourse in Ireland

Writing about the system of higher education in Ireland, John Walsh (2014: 29) says there are strong human capital and 'economic imperatives' in Irish education policy, which began in the 1960s and intensified from the 1990s onwards with the discourse of the knowledge-based economy. He argues that in the 1990s there was a 'reorientation of the entire higher education sector towards national objectives, to be achieved through managerial "reform" and greater engagement with industry' (2012: 39). Lynch (2012) concurs with this argument pointing out the significance of human capital discourse in education in Ireland since the mid-1960s, evident in policy changes in education emanating from the 1965 OECD *Investment in Education* report (Áine Hyland, 2014). Significant among these policy changes was the role to be undertaken by the education system in addressing the failure of economic policies since the foundation of the state in 1922, with industrialisation becoming a key component of economic policy. Lynch argues that the 2004 OECD review of higher education in Ireland was a 'watershed' moment for Irish higher education in its promotion of higher education's role in providing a 'skilled workforce for the economy' and not including an emphasis on the role of higher education in 'developing the civil, political, social or cultural institutions of society either locally or globally' (2012: 21).

#### 2.1.5 Students in Contemporary Higher Education

These transformations in higher education have impacted on students also, with one significant change being that under neo-liberalism's concepts of human capital, students are constructed as consumers and customers<sup>13</sup> of education. As mentioned earlier, economic policies of neo-liberalism have resulted in a decline of state investment in higher education, resulting in expensive student tuition fees, paid for by individual students, with subsequent

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<sup>13</sup> In some universities the student number is called a customer number.

high levels of debt on graduation. For Holmes (2015: 19) 'entrepreneurialism and the concept of investing in one's own capital through education have been the templates for a total makeover of academic institutions', such that students are put in a situation of needing to get a good return on what they have invested in their education. According to Simons and Masschelein (2012: 70) this produces a particular type of subjectivity, which they describe as an entrepreneurial self, in which 'life itself has become an enterprise, and we have become entrepreneurial selves and entrepreneurs of the self'. Further, they argue that entrepreneurship requires the self to be advertised and sold, because in:

a globalized world employability becomes the challenge and that is exactly what the transformed educational institutions are teaching young people: get used to take care of the ongoing capitalized and marketization of your life. (Simons and Masschelein, 2012: 71)<sup>14</sup>

Thomas Docherty (2015: no page number) argues that increased tuition fees and the resultant levels of debt incurred by students means that students are currently 'structurally *required* to be in debt' and therefore must 'attend in most pressing fashion to their own personal life chances' (italics in original). This makes a desire to have a return on investment particularly acute and a prioritisation of instrumental educational goals a significant part of the contemporary higher educational landscape, in Ireland and elsewhere. Lynch (2012) argues that this emphasis on personal investment in education has displaced the notion of a right to education and its focus is consequently increasingly on the creation of 'consumer citizens' (2012: 14), echoing Holmes' (2015) view of the erosion of education's role in the maintenance of the public space of democracy. According to Holmes:

For the governing logic of the present, knowledge is a pure instrumentality bound to ownership rights, and education is a personal investment that has to cash out in the future. (2015: 19)

Making a related point, Wendy Brown (2015: 177) describes neo-liberalism as a 'stealth revolution' and argues that with a human capital model 'democracies are perceived as requiring technically skilled human capital, not educated participants in public life and common rule'. Martha Nussbaum (2010) is also critical of the current human capital model,

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<sup>14</sup> An event offered to graduating students by the Career Development Centre at NUI Galway (March 7<sup>th</sup> 2019) was entitled *First Steps to Success: Owning your Worth and Planning the Game Strategy: Learn how to Develop your Personal Brand, Understand your Worth and Optimise your Career from the Beginning*.

what she calls the economic growth paradigm of education, because of the ways in which it is displacing the function of education in educating for democracy.

The discussions about contemporary higher education outlined above are often characterised by a binary stand-off regarding educational goals, i.e. as to whether educational goals should be oriented towards the job market or oriented towards education-for-education's sake. An apposite engagement with this issue is offered by Gert Biesta (2010, 2014). He identifies credentials as an important goal in contemporary higher education, and while not ignoring other educational goals, proposes a tri-partite model of 'domains' of educational goals and processes. These domains are, qualification, socialisation and subjectification. Qualification concerns the issue of credentialism, comprising knowledge, skills, dispositions; socialisation is the normative dimension of learning social and cultural rules and customs; subjectification is the domain of one's own uniqueness and singularity and is a space of agency within social structures. Biesta's three interconnected domains offer a useful corrective to binary thinking about the goals of contemporary higher education. They attend to aspects of employability but do not privilege employability above other educational goals.

Contemporary higher art education engages with issues similar to those of higher education in general, outlined above, but also has aspects that are particular to itself. The following section addresses issues that are pertinent to higher art education.

## ***2.2 Higher Art Education***

In their discussion of art as a discipline, Nicholas Addison et al. (2010) refer to its reputation as a discipline that is more 'free' than other disciplines. They argue that this reputation can be over-stated and an unrealistic harking back to Romantic notions of the artist, which is an idea at variance with the ways in which the majority of artists and designers live and work today. Nonetheless, and beyond the specifics of art as a discipline, there is wide support for the idea, both historically and contemporaneously, of the capacity of art, art education and education through art to provide opportunities to think, live and contribute to society in creative ways (John Dewey, 1934/2005; Herbert Read, 1943/1970; Maxine Greene, 1995; Elliot Eisner, 2002; Eisner & Tom Barone, 2012; Biesta, 2017a). The avant-garde notion of 'art into life', exemplified by the Bauhaus movement, established in Germany in 1919 and the

Vkhutemas, established in Moscow in 1920, among others, made a ground-breaking contribution to art education through both their pedagogical approach and conception of the role of the artist in society. As described by Bert Taken and Jeroen Boomgaard the Bauhaus view is that artists can play an important social role by applying 'their artistic qualities to designing people's actual living environments' and in this way 'the population could be sensitized to aesthetic values' (2012: 93).

With regard to the positioning of art education in disciplinary and curricular terms, Eisner (1987/8: 7) proposes one particular approach, that of 'discipline-based art education' (DBAE), which provides a 'systematic and sequential' approach to teaching art. For Eisner DBAE has four core elements: 'art production, art criticism, art history and aesthetics' (1987/8: 7). Historically, art education would not necessarily have been organised in this way. For example, as a result of the UK Coldstream Report on art education in 1960, the expansion of art education to include history of art, was an effort to have art considered as equivalent to other academic disciplines, in having cognitive as well as an expressivist components (Addison et al., 2012) and adding academic enquiry to the practices of art-making. This represents a move from the historical forms of art education in which artists are teachers of artists, a type of 'master-apprentice' model and centred on the studio practice of art production (Taken & Boomgaard, 2012; Julie Ault & Martin Beck, 2006; Liam Gillick, 2006), to forms of art education conforming more to the DBAE model. According to Gillick (2006: 5) this expanded notion of art education can pose challenges in synchronising the 'theoretical components' and the 'practical working aspects' of the art school environment.

Changes in the art world more broadly also impacted on the changes in higher art education initiated in the 1960s. As Haris Pellapaisiotis (2006) points out, the advent of conceptualism and the dematerialisation of the art object<sup>15</sup> initiated in the 1960s meant that art could focus on event and process rather than on the art object, resulting in curricula being expanded to

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<sup>15</sup> According to the Tate online glossary *Art Terms*, the term 'conceptual art' was first used to describe this movement in art by Sol LeWitt in 1967, in the journal, *Artforum*, where he states that 'In conceptual art the idea or concept is the most important aspect of the work. When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means that all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. LeWitt, S. 1967. Paragraphs on Conceptual Art. *Artforum*, 5 (10), 78-79. [Online] Available: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/c/conceptual-art>

include art theory and a requirement to explain one's practice theoretically. Thus the 1960s saw expansion of the traditional fields of Fine Art and the historical pre-eminence given to drawing changed, in order to include conceptual art practices and thereby to be more in tune with what was happening in the art world beyond the academy (Arthur Efland, 1990; John Turpin, 1995; Lisa Tickner, 2008; Richard Siegesmund, 2012; Nicholas Houghton, 2014). These changes were not unanimously agreed to by the art academies, but for many students these were welcome developments and many students were involved in a range of protests advocating for these changes (Turpin, 1995; Tickner, 2008; Felicity Allen, 2012).

### 2.2.1 Higher Art Education in the University

With regard to the place of the university in art education in a European context, higher art education is a relatively recent arrival into the university. For example, in the UK and Ireland art education was organised historically in independent colleges and academies and the move to incorporate them into the university happened generally from the 1960s onwards (Turpin, 1995; Tickner, 2008; Allen, 2011; Thierry de Duve, 2011). For example, in the UK many art colleges were initially incorporated into polytechnics and in 1992 all polytechnics became universities (Jill Journeaux, Pilar Montero and Judith Mottram, 2017). In Ireland all previously independent art schools and colleges are now incorporated into the higher education sectors of Universities or Institutes of Technology. For example, the Crawford College of Art and Design, in Cork, is now part of the Cork Institute of Technology (CIT); NCAD, became a college of the National University of Ireland in 1996 and was amalgamated with University College Dublin (UCD) in 2010<sup>16</sup>. The amalgamation with UCD was not without controversy and was marked by protests by students and some staff (Mahony, 2018). One source of disagreement was the plan to move NCAD from its city centre location in Dublin to the UCD campus, which is in a suburban location. The plan to re-locate to the UCD campus was successfully resisted and while formally amalgamated with UCD the college remains located in the city centre (Mahony, 2018). Thus a significant feature of the changes since the 1960s has been the move of art education into higher education and universities. In the European context, the Bologna Accord is also of significance and this is discussed below.

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<sup>16</sup> This amalgamation was one of a number of amalgamations of tertiary institutions that had previously been autonomous from the configuration of Universities and Institutes of Technology (IOTs) in Ireland. Through amalgamation these 'outlier' institutions were brought under the jurisdiction of either a University or an IOT.

### 2.2.2 The Bologna Accord and Higher Art Education

Largely coincident with the move to the university was the extension of the curriculum to include subjects such as theory and art history and at post-graduate level, research. Alignment with the Bologna Accord meant concurring with its provisions including, comparability and modularisation, linked to which was goal of ensuring the place of Europe in the global knowledge economy (Van Der Wende, 2000; Huisman 2009; Lemke, 2010; McMahon, 2014). For some involved in higher art education, the Bologna provisions are anathema to good education, and their dissatisfaction with Bologna was an impetus to use the space of art to interrogate art education pedagogies. An example of a response to the Bologna Accord was the A.C.A.D.E.M.Y project of 2005-2007, organised by a consortium of art colleges and galleries, consisting of a variety of exhibition and discursive formats, including a publication documenting the various activities of the project (Angelika Nollert et al., 2006). In outlining the motivation to carry out this project the book editors say it arose from a dissatisfaction with the 'neo-liberal economic credo' and the ways in which 'western European governments are increasingly instrumentalising public sector support of art, rejecting its speculative potential for more secure and measurable outcomes' (2007: 7). They express concern about the 'centralising implications' of a 'defined curricular content covering relevant topics', and seek to retain the space for 'speculative possibilities within the newly stipulated rules' (2007: 7).

In contra-distinction to this perspective is the initiative entitled the European Academy of Participation (EAP), an Erasmus+ funded Strategic Partnership project, which ran from 2015 to 2018. The EAP 'collaboratively developed a benchmark statement about Participatory Art Practice' through the creation and piloting of modules in participatory approaches to art practice (2018: 7). This initiative was aligned with the *TUNING* process, established in 2000 to progress the objectives of the Bologna Accord. According to the EAP the *TUNING* process is not aiming for uniformity but for 'points of reference, convergence and common understanding', taking cognisance of the European Qualifications Frameworks for Life Long Learning and the European Higher Education Area (EAP, 2018: 7).

Commenting on the Bologna Accord Dieter Lesage (2012) says that although it can be said it was developed for capitalist interests, it can be re-oriented to meet art education needs, through the practices associated with research in higher education. The research



opportunities available in higher art education can create free time and time for experimentation, with the art academy 'an excellent site of artistic production' (2012: 127). He cites the doctorate as one mechanism through which this can be done. Subscribing to the model of practice as research, he argues there is no need for the supplement of a written text in this type of doctorate. He also argues that art research of this nature can and should resist the capitalistic ideas of marketisation and the return on investment model characteristic of neo-liberalism (2012).

### 2.2.3 Higher Art Education and Professionalisation

A major aspect of contemporary higher art education is that artists, predominantly, go to art school to be professionally trained (Suhail Malik, 2015; Houghton, 2016). According to Malik art schools are now a necessary step 'to get the certifying stamp of institutional credibility in order to become a professional artist' (2015: 51). The scope for criticality in institutional art education settings forms parts of the discussion about higher education art and the phenomenon of professionalisation. Malik does not disavow the usefulness of formal art education institutions, as he argues they can be 'important mechanisms of social change' (2015: 54), and that the field of art is better placed than other fields in 'meeting the interests of an education that does not observe the increasingly disciplinary and specialised structures of universities' (2015: 66). Stefan Hertmans (2012) makes the point that art is not alone in basing its theory of knowledge on unpredictability as these models are also used in the physical sciences and economics. He argues that art education should not be modest about 'experimental cognition' and that it behoves art education to have 'open goals without finality' (2012: 142).

Ruth Sonderegger contends that although the promise of the 1968 student revolution has 'come to an end' she still believes in 'the critical power of (semi-public) educational spaces in which different people meet to produce and reproduce knowledge' (2015: 47). She argues that in spaces of knowledge production 'it is impossible to preclude the seduction of curiosity' and that art academies are particularly well-placed in this regard because they are often less modularised than other forms of higher education. Jan Verwoert (2006) also addresses the capability of the art academy to be a place of experimentation and concurs with Sonderegger in concluding that the power structures of the art academy are not so inflexible as to prevent this happening. Offering a more sardonic view, Steve Duncombe (2018: 143) says:

There is a way that the university operates; it takes the most critical and radical ideas, and it turns them into sort of a commodity of knowledge to be consumed, perhaps displayed, but thoroughly contained. I am very cynical about the university as a site for radical struggle. It has amazing recuperative powers – the university can take almost anything radical: feminism, class analysis, critical race theory, and just turn it into a seminar.

#### 2.2.4 Higher Art Education and its 'Other'

It is the case that there is a long history of art education moving in the direction opposite to that addressed in the previous sections. This history includes the creation of extra-institutional and para-institutional alternative art schools and self-organised education, taking place throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first (Manifesta 6,<sup>17</sup> 2006; Steven Madoff, 2009; Marco Scotini, 2012; Sam Thorne, 2017). Famous among these alternative art schools are *Black Mountain College*, North Carolina, established in the 1930s by members of the Bauhaus who fled Nazi Germany; the *Free International University* of Joseph Beuys in Germany in the 1970s; Copenhagen Free University (2001-20007); Chto Delat's *School of Engaged Art*, St. Petersburg, Russia, founded in 2013, *Open School East*, Margate, UK, also founded in 2013; Tania Bruguera's *Cátedra Arte de Conducta* and *Institute of Artivism/Instituto de Artivismo Hannah Arendt*, Havana, Cuba (Thorne, 2017)<sup>18</sup>. Other manifestations include art exhibitions, conferences, biennales<sup>19</sup> and quinquennials<sup>20</sup> devoted to the subject of education. These initiatives and events demonstrate transversal connections between art education and art practice. Gary Granville (2011: 349) describes these kinds of connections as 'art practice at the edges of art education, and art education at the edges of education practice', relevant to which, since the late 1990s/early 2000s, is what has been called the 'pedagogical turn' in art, and will be addressed in more detail later in the chapter. The next section moves on to the third element of the topic of education, that of pedagogical practices.

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<sup>17</sup> The 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the Manifesta Biennale was to be held in Nicosia, Cyprus, in 2006, but was cancelled because of political problems. Its theme was art education and it was subsequently convened as the United Nations Plaza in Berlin, and in other iterations including the Night School in New York. An edited collection of written texts *Notes for an Art School* was published in 2006.

<sup>18</sup> See Thorne, Sam, (2017), *School*. Berlin: Sternberg Press, for a comprehensive account of 'self-organised' schools since the 2000s.

<sup>19</sup> For example, the Manifesta Biennale.

<sup>20</sup> For example, Documenta, significant with regard to education are Documenta X in 1992 and Documenta 12 in 2007.

## 2.3 *Pedagogical Practices*

Pedagogy is symbiotically linked to education, and can be defined as methods and practices of teaching. The term is derived from the Greek word *paidagogia*, meaning the leading of children, implicit in which is the objective of bringing about change of some description in those being taught, through the process of learning. According to Joris Vlieghe (2016: 4) education can be 'minimally defined as involving moments of transformation'. Writing about the Humanities, Gayatri Spivak (2004: 526) has argued that teaching aims to bring about 'an *uncoercive* re-arrangement of desires' (italics in original).

### 2.3.1 Approaches to Pedagogy

Commonly used methods in the practice of teaching are the traditional or transmission method, conceptualised as a teacher-centred or monological approach, and constructivism, conceptualised as a student-centred or dialogical approach. In the transmission model the teacher is understood as the authoritative figure who has the information and transfers this to the students. This is described by Paulo Freire (1972) as the 'banking method', reflecting a process whereby students passively absorb information. According to Virginia Richardson (1997: 3), an exponent of constructivism, knowledge is 'usually not well integrated with other knowledge held by students' in the transmission model. Richardson describes the constructivist approach as an approach which facilitates individuals 'to create their own understandings, based upon the interaction of what they already know and believe, and the phenomena or ideas with which they come into contact' (1997: 3). Constructivism has roots in the Socratic or maieutic method, whereby the pedagogical process 'takes out' what is already there within the student, their knowledge, their experiences. Latter-day proponents of this approach include Dewey (1934/2005), Jean Piaget (1968), Freire (1972), Lev Vygotsky (1987). These in turn are representative of variations within constructivism, having orientations that are either individual or social and sociological. Piaget is associated with a cognitive approach that focuses on individual development; Dewey's approach is oriented toward the transactional, Vygotsky to the social and Freire towards emancipation and social transformation (Richardson, 1997; Biesta, 2013).

The positionality of the teacher is a matter of debate with regard to constructivism and is characterised by a number of nuanced arguments. Richardson (2003) has pointed out that

constructivism is a useful theory for explaining the processes of learning but is less good at explaining the processes of teaching. According to her there are difficulties 'translating a theory of learning into a theory or practice of teaching' and it is 'a conversion that has always been difficult and less than satisfactory' (Richardson, 2003: 1623). She also points out that students learn from the transmission model too. Tyson Lewis (2012) queries the assumption that there is not an authoritative teacher presence in the constructivist classroom. In a critique directed at the emancipatory strands of constructivism, he argues that a notion of the vanguard is retained to ensure that students make the correct epistemological and political interpretations. Referencing Freire, Lewis (2012: 104) argues:

[t]he epistemological project of Freire's own pedagogy ... is predicated on overcoming the naïve and superstitious consciousness of the masses with a critical comprehension of the world. This movement is safeguarded *in the last instance* by a master (by a vanguard) whose authority provides the correct political orientation and prophetic vision of the revolutionary movement (*italics in original*).

In a similar vein Sharon Todd (2012: 81) says that while she supports the view that education is 'fundamentally about change and transformation' her question is:

what transformational role can education play in order to make a difference in the world if it already presumes to know what it wants that world to be and what it wants students to become? Isn't this simply a function of arrogance? An arrogance that claims in the name of others how they ought to live and what they ought to value?

### 2.3.2 The Role of the Teacher

In his treatment of the role of the teacher Biesta (2013) argues that the move from a transmission model to a constructivist model relegates the role of the teacher to a facilitator of learning. He argues for a greater role for the teacher, maintaining it is important to distinguish between 'learning from' and 'being taught by' (2013: 449). He contends the 'learning from' approach diminishes the role of the teacher to being the equivalent of a resource, such as the internet, and argues that the teacher is something more than a facilitator of learning. He is of the view that:

if teaching is to have a meaning beyond the facilitation of learning, if it is essential rather than accidental to learning, then it has to come with a notion of 'transcendence'. It has to be understood as something that comes from the outside and brings something radically new.

In making the distinction between 'learning from' and 'being taught by', he addresses a key dilemma regarding the Socratic maieutic method, which is known as the learning paradox. The paradox is that if learning entails bringing out what is already contained inside, 'how do you bring something new to the situation?' (2013: 450). Biesta draws on Emmanuel Lévinas to make the argument that teaching entails bringing something additional to what is already there i.e. teaching 'brings me more than I contain' (2013: 453). Todd (2003) also follows Lévinas in this regard. She says his insight that there are things 'beyond the capacity of the I' is 'antithetical to the Socratic method that so predominates dialogical approaches to educational practice, where teaching is viewed as "bringing out of the I that which it already contains"' (2003: 30).

For Biesta (2017b) education involves encounters with others, each in their own uniqueness, what Biesta calls 'irreplaceability', and in these educational encounters the teacher has a role to play in motivating or arousing in students the desire to live in the world in a 'grown-up' way.<sup>21</sup> In the space of education we practice how to 'meet the world' and, following Dewey and Hannah Arendt, he says we come to understand the nature of both our individual personal desires and what is desirable in the context of others in the world. Being 'grown up' means understanding 'we can't have all one's own way' and our desires must take cognisance of what is considered socially desirable. In the educational space three things are important: (1) content, i.e. that students learn something; (2) purpose, i.e. that they learn this content for a reason; (3) relationship, i.e. that they learn this content from someone, in order that the role of the teacher is not effaced in educational encounters. There is therefore a position of authority given to the teacher in this scenario, and a possible consequential authoritarianism. In addressing this, Biesta argues that authority 'foisted on people' is authoritarian, but this is not a necessary outcome of teacher authority. He likens teaching, being taught, as a situation whereby one 'is open to receiving the gift of teaching' and the 'interruptions' to one's world that may ensue from being taught (2013: 459), similar to Spivak's notion of the 're-arrangement of desires'. Incorporating psychoanalysis into her approach and also addressing the notion of interruption, Deborah Britzman (2017) adds the emotional dimension to the intellectual and political dimensions of critical pedagogy. She says it is important to

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<sup>21</sup> Biesta is not using 'grown-up' according to a developmental model – instead it signifies our capacity to be 'world-centred' as opposed to being the 'centre of the world', and is not age-related.

recognise that these interruptions can constitute 'difficult' or 'traumatic knowledge' for the student in the encountering of things that are new and unfamiliar (2017). Ultimately, however, whether one is taught or not, is beyond the control of the teacher, but ideally, it means students 'being able to give such interruptions a place' in their 'understanding' and 'being' (Biesta, 2013: 459).

Addressing the issue of monological and dialogical approaches to pedagogy Vlieghe (2016) argues it is possible to negotiate a position that is neither centred on the student nor on the teacher. His article compares the work of Freire and Jacques Rancière and drawing on the work of Rancière he argues for a 'thing-centred pedagogy'. What Vlieghe calls the 'thing' of education i.e. education for the purpose of education in and of itself, is not the central purpose in the Freirian model, since the goal of the educational activity is to raise consciousness that will reveal the nature of oppression, the notion that education is both ideological and emancipatory. Vlieghe calls Freire's approach 'emancipatory education', and although Rancière sees an emancipatory purpose in education, it is not education as means to an end, in the way that Freire advocates. Vlieghe terms Rancière's approach 'educational emancipation'. According to Vlieghe (2016: 6):

More than defining emancipation in terms of groups of disenfranchised people breaking away from domination, emancipation for Rancière has the form of a transformation of ourselves in and through education i.e. by becoming proficient in some skill or subject matter.

The words 'transformation of ourselves' have significance in the work of Rancière in that they contain a proposition that there is an assumption of equality rather than an inequality of intelligence between students and teachers. In his book *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (1991), recounting historical events in Flanders in the nineteenth century, he presents a situation in which students are not taught by a teacher in a conventional sense, but, instead, demonstrate capacities to teach themselves. Joseph Jacotot, the schoolmaster whose account of his work as a teacher is recounted by Rancière in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, is a French refugee in Flanders in the early part of the nineteenth century. He speaks only French and has the task of teaching French literature to students who speak only Flemish, and so he embarks on an experiment. He did this by asking them to read a bi-lingual (French-Flemish) version of François Fénelon's novel *Le Télémaque* and the result was that the students became proficient in French. Based on this, Rancière is proposing that there is an equality of

intelligences at work in the pedagogical situation, and this obviates the need for what Rancière calls 'explication' (1991: 4). A commentary written about Jacotot's expectations regarding his experiment in teaching is recounted in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, illustrating the presumption of equality and the redundancy of 'explication':

He expected horrendous barbarisms, or maybe a complete inability to perform. How could these young people, deprived of explanation, understand the resolve the difficulties of a language entirely new to them? ... And how surprised he was to discover that the students, left to themselves, managed this difficult step as well as many French could have done! Was wanting all that was necessary for doing? (1991: 2)

This begs the question as to what is the role of the teacher in this scenario, particularly with regard to the phenomenon of 'wanting' in education. Vlieghe (2016: 6) answers this question by saying that an equality of intelligence 'doesn't automatically imply equality of willpower', and that it is in the area of willpower that one finds a role of the teacher. He argues that:

The main role of the emancipatory teacher is to draw someone's attention to something—i.e. *to something that matters*. The point being that in order to do so, one might even be an ignorant master (like in the case of Jacotot and the illiterate father). But, Rancière is not holding a plea for ignorance in teachers. Rather, these extreme cases of ignorance show what being an emancipatory master is really about: to make someone attentive for a subject matter, so that she can devote herself to it and become emancipated (*italics in original*) (2016:7)

### 2.3.3 Beyond Binaries and Predictable Outcomes

One feature of the literature on methods and practices deployed to realise pedagogical goals is the delineation of binaries, such as, transmission and constructivist, individual and social, and attempts made to interrogate these binaries. Another one that might be added relates to the goals of education, and the observation by Biesta and Carl Anders Säfström (2011: 540) that education often falls between the two stools of populism and idealism, with populism expecting too little from education and idealism too much. They characterise populism as being concerned with 'what works' and idealism with goals such as democracy, solidarity and inclusion. In alignment with a desire to go beyond binaries, they argue it is preferable to hold the 'tension' between these two terms rather than thinking of them in an either/or way, so as to attend to what is educational about education.

Elaborating on these ideas in *Letting Art Teach* (2017a) and echoing ideas in his earlier publications, Biesta proposes that pedagogies which attend to what is educational about

education have three components, interruption, suspension and sustenance. Education should interrupt what is familiar and habitual; the space of education is a space apart, a suspension of time which is devoted to education; education provides sustenance through relational activity with others. Lewis (2014), following Giorgio Agamben, makes a similar argument in his appropriation of the word 'study' which he distinguishes from 'learning'. Study is not instrumentalised and tied to outcomes that are pre-determined, and in terms similar to those used by Biesta, Lewis (2014) argues that education is about 'suspension' and not having a prior determination tied to economic imperatives.

Also working with ideas about contingency and lack of certainty about outcomes, Glenn Loughran writes about education as art. He argues education as art can imagine 'a non-state, non-institutional knot between pedagogy and artistic practice' (2012: 170), notwithstanding that it is always open to appropriation by neo-liberal forms of creative capitalism, through for example, discourses around innovation and human capital. Loughran uses the concept of the 'event' as developed in the work of philosopher, Alain Badiou, arguing for 'evental education' which allows space for contingency and provides a 'theoretical framework through which to engage with the emancipatory traditions of radical education in a time of creative capitalism' (2012: 170).

Working from the Greek etymology of the word school – *schole* – expressed as a space of free time, outside of both *oikos* (domestic) and *polis* (public sphere), Simons and Masschelein (2012: 72) define school as a form 'that does certain things and actually creates a particular time, space and matter', a time free of utilitarian goals. They are critical of what they call the creation of 'entrepreneurial selves' (2012: 70) that characterises contemporary education. They say a change in the form of education is necessary, and following Arendt, they, like Biesta who proposes being 'world-centred' as opposed to being 'centre of the world' (2017a: 37), argue for an education that involves 'care for the world' (2012: 83). For Biesta art is an important practice in engaging in this 'dialogue with the world' (2017a: 38). This does not mean that art is 'identical' to education but 'it does reveal that the educational question – how to come into and remain in dialogue with the world – is also the question of art' (2017a:38).

The next section is more centrally concerned with the topic and sub-topics aligned with art for the purposes of this review. It opens with a discussion of the fields of community arts and



socially engaged practice, followed by attention to the pedagogical turn and finally to a discussion of pedagogies for socially engaged art.

#### **2.4 *Community Arts and Socially Engaged Art***

The practice of community arts is associated with the social movements of the 1960s and political campaigns for cultural democracy (François Matarasso, 2013, 2019; Crehan, 2011; Jeffers, 2017) which questioned the traditional élitism of the arts, orthodox understandings of what constitutes the arts and conventional definitions of what are the appropriate locations for the arts. Community arts takes the arts out of art institutions and into places where people live; expands and experiments with art forms in ways that are relevant to communities, in terms of both place and interest, and involves the communities in creative expression and participation in the making of art. Commenting on community arts practice Claire Bishop (2012: 177) observes that although it is difficult to generalise about the field, it has 'recurrent characteristics'. These include being 'positioned against the hierarchies of the international art world', advocating for 'participation and co-authorship', providing opportunities for creativity to those 'living in areas of social, cultural and financial deprivation' and being a 'powerful medium for social and political change'.

Writing about her experience of community arts in an Irish context Hunt (1999: 39) describes it as 'a vibrant, expressive and developmental process' which challenges 'definitions of artist, art and creativity'. Involving a 'hybrid of art forms' the field is 'distinguished by collective, collaborative and creative approaches to making and doing art' (1999: 39-40). Also writing in an Irish context, Kelly says that community arts is the 'whole spectrum of the arts' including 'art, drama, photography, creative writing, poetry, film, video, music, dance' (Kelly, 1999: 17). This can involve using the arts for personal empowerment, to achieve social and political goals through processes of community development or as Kelly says, an opportunity for people 'to get to the place where they too can decide to make "useless" art for themselves' (1999: 21).

According to Matarasso (2019: 19) community arts 'is an older, rights-based practice that emerged in the cultural revolution' of the 1960s. He says that community arts has been succeeded by participatory arts which he argues is less radical than community arts and is a 'specific and historically recent practice that connects professional and non-professional

artists in an act of co-creation' (2019: 19). He goes on to argue that one motivation for people naming their practice as participatory arts rather than community arts is 'to distinguish it from a practice that seemed out of date and tainted by relentless assaults on its artistic value' (2019: 21).

#### 2.4.1 Changes in the Naming of the Practice

In discussing the change in language from community arts to other terms, such as socially engaged art, Sophie Hope (2017) refers to the development of the professionalisation of the practice and the emergence of individual artists who self-identify and practice as socially engaged artists. Hope argues that the commissioning of professional artists distinguishes community arts from socially engaged art. She defines commissioning as involving a contract between an artist and an organisation, based on a proposal made by the artist in response to a brief prepared by the organisation (2017: 204). Also referring to this scenario, Hetherington and Webster (2017) say it changes the egalitarian ethos of the early community arts movement and Ryan (2016: no page) argues it institutes a 'rupture between artist and non-artist'. Mulloy (2006) agrees that professionalisation and the commissioning of artists signals a difference between community arts and socially engaged practice. For him, community arts involves 'collective creativity for social change' whereas socially engaged practice involves artists with a practice who wish to gain professional recognition for their skills. For Mulloy professionalisation is a negative development, and he argues it has contributed to the 'collapse of oppositionality, gradually draining community arts of its significance as a site of aesthetic and ethical autonomy' (2006: xiii). Hope disagrees that professionalisation is necessarily a negative thing. Against Mulloy she cites Grant Kester's dialogical aesthetics which advances the idea that in dialogical fashion all who are involved in such art projects are 'co-participants in the transformation of both self and society' (Kester, 2004: 79 in Hope, 2017: 213).

The concerns relating to threats to the field of community arts practice are not solely related to the professionalisation of artists' practice, emanating instead from the sources of funding for community arts, regarding which Owen Kelly (1984) coined the term 'funding-addicted'. For example, with regard to the Irish context, a considerable proportion of funding for community arts activities has come from government and EU funds orientated towards employment and labour activation programmes, resulting in arts outcomes being

superseded by getting people 'out of poverty' and into employment. Commenting on this phenomenon, Ryan (Whelan and Ryan, 2016) argues that the emergence of these 'neoliberal workfare regimes' impacted on the notions of empowerment in community arts, whereby creativity and the arts are instrumentalised, resulting in community arts becoming a type of 'vocational training nested within the now dominant welfare-to-work paradigm' (2016: no page). Making a similar point about the instrumentalisation of art for neo-liberal purposes, and writing about the UK context, Bishop (2006) uses the metaphor of community arts being used as a 'band-aid' to address broader structural issues of inequality.

#### 2.4.2 *The Social Turn in Art*

Similar, but also distinct from the community arts movement, is what has been termed the 'social turn' in art (Bishop, 2006). According to the Tate Gallery online glossary, *Art Terms*, the social turn describes 'the recent return to socially engaged art that is collaborative, often participatory and involves people as the medium or material of the work'. Loughran<sup>22</sup> says that participatory art practice signals:

a shift in the thinking of artistic practices away from the construction of objects in a gallery space towards the formation of social relations. These types of practices emerged largely in the early twentieth century with the historic avant-garde, who sought to negate the traditional borders and limitations of artistic practice.

Woods dates the origins of collaborative and participatory forms of art practice earlier than the twentieth century, charting 'foundational critical impulses of the practice' that date back to the nineteenth century, citing as an example the British Arts and Crafts movement of that century (2017: 17). For Paul Clements (2011:23) the phenomenon of art 'melding into "real life"' was an idea advocated by both the twentieth century avant-garde and the community arts movement. Commenting on the situation in Ireland, Mowbray Bates (2004: 14-15) remarks on differences in emphasis between the North of Ireland and the Republic of Ireland:

Sometimes the emphasis could be stronger, I think, on pushing the art forms [in the north] than perhaps here [in the south], which in my experience, would be coming from the more political, a more community action oriented direction.

In the context of the avant-garde and specific connections to community arts in Ireland in the 1980s, it is interesting that Beuys visited at that time, and had plans to establish a branch of his Free International University in Dublin. And also at that time, as recalled by James King

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<sup>22</sup> <http://eventaleducation.tumblr.com/post/74532741690>

(2004: 14), a group of artists from the North of Ireland visited Germany at the invitation of Beuys. For King 'that was where there was a sort of the blending of the community arts and the avant-garde'.

Socially engaged art is but one of a range of terms to describe contemporary forms of participatory art practice, what Mick Wilson (2018: 32) designates as 'art practices that diverge in different ways from the formal model of the modernist, autonomous work of art'.

According to Wilson this range of terms includes:

'socially engaged art', 'social practice', 'community art', 'community-based art', 'collaborative practice', 'collaborative art', 'interventionist art', 'dialogic art', 'littoral art', 'relational art', 'contextual art', 'new genre public art', and 'activist art'.

Wilson also points out, in a lecture in 2014, that while these various modes of practice are representative of different genealogies and historical contexts they converge on:

seeking to re-position the place of art-making both institutionally and in terms of the role of the artist/auteur – making authorship diffuse within a community or mobilising the institutional circuits of the mainstream art-world. (2014)

The terms 'community arts' and 'socially engaged art' resonate in the context of the College programme. In its initial iteration as a Diploma programme the term community arts was used and when it was converted to an MA community arts was replaced by socially engaged art, reflective of the shifting genealogies and historical contexts remarked upon by Wilson (2014, 2018) above. Although not particular to formal and higher education the notion of the 'pedagogical turn' has resonances with the broader area of art and education and is discussed below.

## **2.5 The Pedagogical Turn**

The pedagogical turn is related to curatorial practice and art institutions such as galleries and museums (Irit Rogoff, 2008; Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson, 2010; Janna Graham et al., 2016).

The term is defined by Tranzit (no page) as:

a tendency in contemporary art prevalent since the second half of the 1990s, in which different modes of educational forms and structures, alternative pedagogical methods and programs appeared in/as curatorial and artistic practices. Initiatives related to the educational turn revolve around the notion of education, gaining and sharing knowledge, artistic/curatorial research, and knowledge production. The emphasis is not on the object-based artwork. Instead, the focus of these projects is in on the process itself, as well as on the use of discursive, pedagogical methods and situations in and outside of the exhibition.

Writing about the pedagogical turn with regard to museum and gallery education Carmen Mörsch (2011) identifies four strategies which have both pedagogical and audience development objectives, (1) the *affirmative*, which communicates information about art to existing art-aware audiences; (2) the *reproductive* which is oriented towards building new audiences for art; (3) the *deconstructive*, which concerns developing a critical position regarding art; (4) the *transformative*, which has a social justice agenda and aims to bring about change in art institutions and wider society through the medium of art. A belief in the capacity of art to educate and the role of galleries and museums in this endeavour is not a twenty-first century idea, since the transformative and self-actualisation purposes and potential of art education pre-date contemporary times. However, the so-called pedagogical turn is a particular manifestation in current debates and has also been addressed in conferences and exhibitions.

#### 2.5.1 Conferences and Exhibitions and the Pedagogical Turn

Conferences which have addressed the pedagogical turn include *Deschooling Society* which took place in April 2010, at the Serpentine Gallery in London (co-organised by the Serpentine and the Hayward galleries). It took its title from Ivan Illich's 1971 book of the same name and outlined its interest in education as arising from the fact that:

the subject of education has attracted renewed attention from artists, curators, academics, and collectives. Pedagogical models are currently being explored, re-imagined, and deployed by practitioners from around the world in highly diverse projects comprising laboratories, discursive platforms, temporary schools, participatory workshops, and libraries. Simultaneously, progressive globalization has led to a revaluing of the collective knowledge and agency of local communities.

The *Deschooling Society* conference was a follow-on conference from one that was held in Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York in May 2009, entitled *Transpedagogy: Contemporary Art & the Vehicles of Education*, which explored the role of Education departments in museums and galleries. In a reference to this conference in his 2013 book, *What We Made: Conversations on Art and Social Co-operation*, Tom Finkelpearl, quotes curator Dominic Willson who observes that curators 'find themselves with the job, not of mediating, but of creating platforms, occasions, situations for an educational experience (or an experience of education) to take place' (2013: 91).

The *A.C.A.D.E.M.Y* project (2005-2007), also hinges on the notion of the pedagogical turn in curatorial practice.<sup>23</sup> Through the years of its operation, it organised exhibitions, lectures and symposia and produced an edited book, entitled *A.C.A.D.E.M.Y* (2006), which consists of both visual and written texts. One of its exhibitions, entitled *Academy. Learning from Art*, was held in Museum of Contemporary Art in Antwerp (MuHKA) in 2006 and an excerpt from the exhibition information, below, gives a clear sense of the project's purpose with regard to pedagogies for art education in the academy:

By considering 'learning' as something that extends beyond the educational system, in this exhibition the attention shifted from art education to art as ambition: the possibility of learning how to depict social reality in a different way and of learning to look, think and react differently. Because we approach the academy as a laboratory that offers space for new possibilities, at the same time we look at art as a space in which other worlds (and world views) become possible. ... Some other artists have reacted to the educational theme in various ways – by means of a single work of art, by proposing a new learning method or even by means of a letter addressed to the curators.<sup>24</sup>

Also in the Netherlands, curatorial projects at Basis voor Actuelle Kunst (BAK) in Utrecht and de Appel Arts Centre in Amsterdam include pedagogical aspects. At BAK, in 2016, Tom Holert curated a research exhibition entitled *Learning Laboratories: Architecture, Instructional Technology, and the Social Production of Pedagogical Space Around 1970*, which investigated 'progressive educational experiments from a variety of geopolitical contexts dating back some five decades' (Maria Hlavajova, 2016: 8). Also at BAK, 'an exhibition as seminar' comprising 'exhibitionary, performative, and discursive gatherings' entitled *To Seminar* (based on Roland Barthes' 1974 text, *To the Seminar*) and part of BAK's *Future Vocabularies* project, took place in 2017. In a publication relating to the exhibition Hlavajova remarks that contemporary debates on social and political challenges always turn to 'education as a hopeful, if abstract, source of solutions' and that the work at BAK is a desire to contribute to discussions on these challenges from the 'space of art'. She argues the space of art can 'invest the faculty of the imagination' in the 'interstices' between art and education (2017: 2). Also in 2017, at de Appel, and co-organised with the University of Maryland at Baltimore, USA, an exhibition by the artist Antoni Muntadas, entitled *Activating Artifacts: About Academia*,

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<sup>23</sup> *A.C.A.D.E.M.Y* comprised five partners – Siemens Art Program, Kunstverein, Hamburg, MuHKA (Museum of Contemporary Art) Antwerp, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven and the Department of Visual Cultures, Goldsmiths College, London.

<sup>24</sup> <http://ensembles.mhka.be/events/academy-learning-from-art>

was held, and publications based on the exhibition were also produced (2017a; 2017b).

The motivation behind this exhibition and publications was to facilitate an interdisciplinary dialogue about globalised higher education through:

exploring topics of privatisation, corporatisation, gentrification and globalisation, as well as the complex relationship between the production of knowledge and the economic interests it generates. (2017b)

The alternative art schools discussed earlier and the various manifestations of the pedagogical turn in curatorial practices in galleries and museums demonstrate transversal connections between art education and art practice. In an epistemological frame, Malik argues that transdisciplinarity, what he calls 'disciplinary promiscuity', is important with regard to art, because the field of art 'means discourses as much as artworks (2015: 66). Having discussed the pedagogical turn in art and curatorial practice, the next section addresses the topic of pedagogical practices for socially engaged art practice.

## **2.6 Socially Engaged Art Pedagogies**

Pedagogy is an important element of much of the practice of community arts and socially engaged art and there is the additional layer of how practitioners are themselves educated for this field of practice, a key focus of this inquiry. Educating for this field of practice is not unique to the formal setting of the academy. As outlined earlier, it can take place in a variety of non-formal, informal and other formal educational settings as well as non-educational settings (Thorne, 2017; Sholette, Bass & Social Practice Queens, 2018). For example, in the Irish educational context, as noted earlier, education for this field of practice was taking place in settings outside of academia a number of years in advance of it being offered in higher education.

### **2.6.1 *Transpedagogy***

Writing about educating for SEA practice Helguera (2011) argues that SEA is situated in the traditions of conceptual and performance art, in emphasising process and the dematerialisation of the art object (although this does not mean that all conceptual and performance art is a form of SEA practice). He says that while all art 'invites social interaction', in SEA, 'it is the process itself – the fabrication of the work – that is social' (2011: 11). He argues that tools from education, as well as sociology, linguistics and ethnography are important for SEA education, and while SEA artists are not aiming to be amateur social

scientists, the tools of these disciplines are of value for the practice (2011: ix). Helguera proposes that a SEA curriculum should include the following four components: 1) an understanding of methodological approaches in social science disciplines including, 'sociology, theatre, education, ethnography, and communication'; 2) responsiveness and reconfiguration according to the 'needs and interests of the students'; 3) an 'experiential approach to art in the world'; 4) 'a refunctioned curriculum of art history and art technique' to include an historical examination of the ways in which these aspects were 'taught in the past' (2011: 86-87). He says he was motivated to write this book because of the scarcity of material on educating for SEA, but is at pains to also say that the approach he proposes is not intended to be 'a manifesto for best practices' or to 'turn socially engaged art into a set of academic rules' (2011: xiii-xiv). As well as outlining guidelines for education for SEA he refers to the phenomenon of pedagogy being an element of SEA. He contends there are parallels between the processes involved in art and education, and that education practices 'provide an ideal framework for process-based and collaborative conceptual practices' (2011: xi). He argues that SEA is a particular form of pedagogy, one that is specific to art, a form which he terms 'transpedagogy' or 'pedagogy in the expanded field' (2011: 71), which has echoes of Granville's (2011) observation about the valences of art practice and art education.

#### 2.6.2 Some Models of SEA Higher Education

The 2018 Sholette, Bass & Queens Social Practice<sup>25</sup> edited collection, *Art as Social Practice*, addresses issues similar to those identified by Helguera (2011). The collection contains a number of 'lesson plans', interviews and theoretical-type articles on educating for socially engaged practice, including contributions relating to settings both inside and outside the academy. There are a diverse range of lesson plans, the majority from the US, but also from a number of other countries, including two from Ireland. Most of the lesson plans are in the style of 'how to' guides, which while not an elucidation of pedagogical principles, are undoubtedly a useful resource for practice, and the interviews also provide insights regarding pedagogical practices. Reflecting on education for the practice, Bass (2018: 3), who teaches on the Social Practice programme at Queens, in New York, says:

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<sup>25</sup> Social practice is the term that is preferred by Sholette and his colleagues.



I've grown weary of and disinterested in the *art class is the only place for self-expression* narrative. Although I believe there's some validity in it, what I really want to know is whether teaching socially engaged art provides some ability to think critically about the interpersonal environments we find ourselves in. How can teaching differently, both in terms of subject matter and style, help us to live better outside the realm of art school? (italics in original).

Sholette (2018) concurs with this approach to pedagogy and its application to SEA education, and also situates SEA education within an historical frame. He cites the pragmatic philosophy of Dewey and the 'artistic pedagogy' of Beuys as significant progenitors of this approach to art education. Dewey ascribes great importance to art *in* education i.e. understanding art as indispensable to education and consequently to the development of a well-functioning democracy. As well as believing everyone is an artist, Beuys understood education to be intrinsic to his art practice, stating at one point that 'to be a teacher is my greatest work of art' (Bishop, 2012: 243), a position that might be described as education *as* art. According to Bishop (2012: 243) Beuys 'remains the best-known reference for contemporary artists' engagement with experimental pedagogy.' Kristina Lee Podesva (2007: no page) describes Beuys' practice (beginning in the 1970s) as appropriating 'pedagogical forms' in 'artistic production', for example, 'educational lectures *as* performances, documented in a series of photographs and blackboard drawings,<sup>26</sup> that register the artist's actions' (italics in original). She distinguishes Beuys' practice of education *as* art, from that of, for example, the Bauhaus and Black Mountain College, because unlike Beuys, 'they did not appropriate pedagogical forms in their artistic production, using them instead as a means to end' (Podesva, 2007: no page). Outside of the art world and some decades after the 1970s, Beuys has been mobilised by Biesta in his 2017 book *Letting Art Teach*.

Addressing the actual practice of implementing SEA education principles, Sholette (2018: 282) proposes the following five steps: 1) curriculum planning that is participatory; 2) 'performative' or 'art-based' research; 3) 'horizontal classroom discussion'; 4) 'critical group reflection' leading to step 5) 'redesign' of the programme as required. Commenting on the historical divide between medium-specific and transdisciplinary approaches to art education, he observes that although SEA is not necessarily a form of 'medium-specific

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<sup>26</sup> Some of Beuys' blackboards are in the permanent collection of the Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery in Dublin.

studio art instruction', some of the lesson plans included in this collection demonstrate that 'object-oriented' techniques are also used in social practice (Sholette, 2018: 282).

The education of 'community artists' in the UK is discussed by Hetherington and Webster (2017) in a book chapter that provides an overview of the evolution of education for community arts and SEA in the UK. They examine developments in both the formal and non-formal sectors, including the *MA in Community and Participatory Arts* at Staffordshire, with which they have been involved. They describe themselves as 'community arts workers whose work has led us to academia' (2017: 183) and they discuss the issues relating to professionalisation of the practice that arise with formal academic accreditation of SEA. They report on a 1976 Arts Council report on training needs for community arts practice advocating that training incorporate the 'virtues (and none of the smugness) of professionalism' (2017: 184). Education and training initiatives subsequently developed, including in both formal and informal settings and both within the community arts sector (for example, Welfare State International) and outside of it, in both FE and HE, creating what they call a 'two-strand' approach (2017: 188). They remark on the diversity of art forms comprising community arts and the disagreements among practitioners with regard to approaches to training and education. They argue that these disagreements were 'fuelled by the philosophical and ideological mistrust of formal educational structures' among some community artists, one of which was a concern that 'establishing professional standards' could undermine 'the egalitarian and participative ethos' of community arts (2017: 186). Citing Kelly's (1984) argument that community arts was vulnerable to definition from elsewhere because it neglected to devise its own definition of its practice, they recount there was concern that programmes would be designed by educational institutions rather than community artists.

This concern is also alluded to by Chris Crickmay (2003) in his account of the programme *Art and Social Context*, which included community arts as one 'model of practice' and was initiated in Dartington College, Devon<sup>27</sup>, in the late 1970s. He says there was 'determined resistance' by some community artists to the practice being institutionalised through formal

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<sup>27</sup> The programme at Dartington ended in 1990 and moved to Bristol Polytechnic and subsequently to its successor, University of West England.

education and 'some (understandable) pressure' from the artists that education should come from, and be provided by those 'within their own ranks' (Crickmay, 2003: 122).

Hetherington and Webster (2017) point to the double-edged sword of Arts Council recognition of community arts in the 1980s, and echoing Kelly's contention about the dilemmas regarding the practice being defined from elsewhere, argue that the practice was being drawn into a 'rhetoric and mechanism associated with formal institutions and state apparatus' (2017: 192). Education for the practice is implicated in this scenario, as they characterise community arts practice as shifting from a radical political movement to an 'institutionalized profession where artists needed to acquire specific skills to respond to the professional standards of the organizations for whom they were beginning to work' (2017: 192). Commenting on the current situation regarding provision of programmes with 'high-social or applied content', in HE in the UK, they remark that it is difficult to sustain numbers<sup>28</sup> and that the most sustainable programmes are those of art form specialisms, for example, music, theatre and dance. An additional feature of the HE sector they document concerns academic research that is relevant to the practice, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), which has funded the *Cultural Value Project* and *Connected Communities* programme.<sup>29</sup> Reviewing the outcomes from education and training initiatives since the 1970s Hetherington and Webster (2017) argue there is now greater diversity within the community arts workforce. They characterise the workforce as one in which some remain 'driven purely by political and social goals' and others choose to adopt a more 'career-orientated approach'; it is reflective of a context which 'arguably values a more professional ethos and the recognition that this professionalization brings' (2017: 199).

Commenting on a 2018 UK Social Art Network event on SEA education, entitled the *Social Art Summit*, attended by people involved in SEA HE programmes in England, Ireland and Scotland, Permar (2019) relates discussion regarding the desirability of higher education for

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<sup>28</sup> The MA at Staffordshire University is not currently being offered. According to the authors this relates to HE fee increases and reduced access to funding for community artists, but they say they remain connected to the sector 'through collaborative research and supporting the delivery of specific community arts projects' (2017: 184).

<sup>29</sup> Cultural Value Project: <https://ahrc.ukri.org/research/fundedthemesandprogrammes/culturalvalueproject/>;  
Connected Communities: <https://ahrc.ukri.org/research/fundedthemesandprogrammes/crosscouncilprogrammes/connectedcommunities/>

SEA. According to Permar there was not unanimity among attendees about the value of institutionalising SEA higher education, with debate revolving around the age-old debates as to whether institutions need to be 'dismantled' or whether it is possible to 'work from within to effect change, prod, poke and irritate' (2019: 62). Permar believes the academy has much to gain from involvement in SEA education. She argues that while there are struggles in the neoliberal university, SEA's roots in community arts and critical theory mean that SEA 'is good for academia through its flexibility of practice, social relevance and ability to ask challenging questions' (2019: 63).

### 2.6.3 SEA Higher Education in an Irish Context

The lack of HE provision for the practice in Ireland was being flagged at the end of the 1990s, as is illustrated in Hunt (1999) who includes the absence of provision in higher education alongside a range of issues facing 'community arts education and training at this time' (1999: 38). Other issues she identifies include the lack of a co-ordinated approach or policy, the absence of an agreed definition of the field of practice, limited accreditation routes and what she says is the 'difficult question' of 'who is responsible for community arts education and who will pay for it' (1999: 38-39). According to Helen O'Donoghue (2004: 22) higher art education had 'failed miserably' in Ireland, and she observes that although individual tutors might be supportive of the practice, education for the field was not 'built in structurally' within colleges of art. As remarked upon earlier, formal HE provision began in the early 2000s, coming after the development of programmes in community-based and adult education formal, non-formal and informal settings.

Reflecting on SEA education and writing in an Irish context, Murphy (2012: 151) says that it involves an interface between art, education and community, and because of this education for this field of practice needs to take account of a range of 'pedagogical co-ordinates'. She draws attention to the existence of what she calls a 'pedagogical gap' which is the absence of 'critical tools to announce (and analyse) the kinds of inter-personal and inter-organisational difficulties' which inevitably arise in collaborative art projects (Murphy, 2014). She says that students need to be educated to engage with 'diverse publics and communities', community contexts that present 'disorienting challenges in the form of aesthetic, ethical and social modes of accountability' (2012: 151). These are 'complex organisational platforms' of artists, community groups, artist organisations, community

development projects, and therefore negotiation skills as well as artistic skills are required to carry out the practice. Murphy argues there is a dearth of arts evaluation models to properly appraise the nature and complexity of the practice. This can lead to a misreading of the field whereby the role of the community in 'shaping a process of self-actualisation through collaborative practice' is not recognised.

Acknowledging the role of the community as co-producers of the artwork can lead to a reading of this practice as not being primarily related to aesthetic matters but to matters such as social inclusion and social change, a critique much associated with the critic Bishop (2006: 182) who opposes what she calls 'art marshalled to effect social change'. Similar to Helguera (2011), Murphy (2012) argues that traditional art historical approaches are not sufficient in educating for SEA, as they need to be accompanied by a set of tools derived from social science methodologies that can help negotiate the organisational complexity characteristic of this field of practice. To this end, Murphy (2012) proposes a four-way matrix for practice that incorporates the elements of macro and micro levels of political economy and the elements of inter- and intra- sets of personal relationships, as a way of navigating the variety of personal and political positionalities that constitute this particular form of art practice.

In their article on the development of the programme at NCAD, Hunt et al. (2012) note there was solid work being done in the area of community arts since the middle of the 1980s. However, they argue that a problematic issue at that time was that arts policy was more focused on improving rates of participation and audience development than on 'artists intentions, the dynamic of negotiations within collaborative projects, quality of outcomes, or identifying emerging critical pedagogies' (2012: 273). In that context there was a role for the college in providing 'support and critical engagement for arts practices that are socially engaged' (2012: 272). They were keen to attract practitioners such as community workers and youth workers working in local projects, as well as artists, in order to open up to these practitioners the potential of arts practices 'contributing to, or collaboration with their own practices' (2012: 276). The working group established to develop the programme to achieve this defined the programme as constituting 'a visual art treatment of the principles, processes and practices of community-based learning in an area of visual art practice that

has an overwhelming validity but remains without academic support or recognition' (2012: 276).

Commenting on education for SEA Connell Vaughan (2017: 29) argues that engagement is a 'weasel word' that requires more interrogation than it often receives. He says the word 'tricks us into unquestioningly accepting all manner of contradictory practices as valuable'. He cautions against 'shallow engagement' pointing out that presence does not necessarily entail engagement. He directs some of his comments to students, whom he says must 'thoroughly address and assess the terms of "engagement" at play in contemporary art'. He argues that developing taxonomies and typologies of the field is necessary and that this task entails addressing a number of questions regarding engagement. These include, what is engagement/good engagement; what are its institutional limits; how is it to be measured and managed; what roles do the 'artist/professional/mediator/technology' play in structuring engagement (2017:30).

As discussed earlier, disaffection with formal academic structures is a motivation for setting up alternatives outside the academy. On the other hand moving into the academy can be motivated by things including the desire to secure academic credentials, for example, professional qualification by individual artists (Malik, 2015; Houghton, 2016; Hetherington and Webster, 2017). In addition, with regard to community arts and socially engaged art as particular forms of art practice, there can be a desire to secure recognition for the field as a legitimate form of art practice (Hunt et al., 2012, Murphy, 2012; Hetherington and Webster, 2017).

### **Conclusion**

In adapting Thomson's *Major Themes* approach the literature review maps the core topics of education and art, incorporating a number of sub-topics within each of these two core topics, or in the terminology of Jäger and Maier (2016), configuring the review in the context of discourse planes and their constitutive discourse sectors. In education, the constitutive elements are, higher education, higher art education, pedagogical practices; in art, they are, community arts, socially engaged art, the pedagogical turn and pedagogies for socially engaged art practice. While the term 'themes' is not entirely applicable to my use of the

*Major Themes* approach, its overall orientation regarding marshalling the literature into a manageable format, serves well.

There are flows and inter-connections between these various constituent elements of the literature, but for heuristic purposes they are aligned with either education or art. Arranging the literature review so that it works in the linear format of a written thesis involves a certain 'flattening' of the more nuanced ways in which there are flows and interconnections between the various dimensions of the literature. However, in addressing this task, understanding the final formation of the literature review as a heuristic device attempts to address this shortcoming.

As the research investigates higher education for the field of socially engaged art practice, the review draws on literature relating to sectors within the fields of both education and art, in an Irish context and beyond. Helguera's (2011) observation that educating for the field of socially engaged art is less well documented than art education more generally, is reflected in the review, as is his observation that there is a dearth of information on pedagogies for the practice. These observations pertain to Ireland also.

Addressing the gap in knowledge about education for socially engaged art practice in an Irish higher education context is a key objective of this study. In examining one particular post-graduate programme in socially engaged art, in Ireland, the research involves an inquiry into: (1) the historical context from which the programme emerged; (2) how pedagogical practices for the SEA field of practice are being shaped in this particular programme; (3) pedagogical, political and aesthetic issues that arise in the institutional setting of higher education for education in this field of practice. The next chapter is devoted to the methodology of the research, examining the methodological assumptions informing the research design, addressing its ontological and epistemological perspectives and the research method used in the research, that of the interview.

## Chapter 3: Methodological Approach and Selection of Method

### *Introduction*

This chapter presents the methodological and epistemological framing of the research, as well as the ontological positioning that informs the research process. The research method is that of interview, both one-to-one and group, and its methodological characteristics, as applicable to this study, are discussed in this chapter. (The details regarding the practical implementation of the interview method are discussed in chapter 4.)

The research design is situated within a qualitative paradigm, taking the form of a thematically analysed interview-based study. Its methodological approach is positioned within social constructionism, as is the justification for the epistemological claims of the research. An approach to critical discourse analysis, developed by Jäger and Maier (2016) informs the particular social constructionist theoretical orientation of the research.

The discussion in this chapter opens by addressing the ontological perspective of the research, following which the epistemological and methodological approaches are addressed. Discussion of the methodological approach includes elucidation of the discourse analysis approach of Jäger and Maier (2016) as well as the methodological perspectives informing my application of the interview method. Ultimately, although this study adopted a thematic analytical rather than a discourse analytical approach it was enhanced by insights gained from Jäger and Maier (2016).

### **3.1 *Ontological Perspective***

Key concepts in the ontological perspective adopted in this study are ideas concerning relationality, the dialogical and split subjectivity. Conforming to social constructionism, the theoretical paradigm of the study, the point of view enunciated in the research is that (i) identity is not a unitary and stable entity and (ii) that meanings are constructed through relational and dialogical processes.

Writing about the research context, Norman Denzin argues that 'our subjectivity becomes entangled in the lives of others' (1997: 27). For Mauthner & Doucet (2003: 417) social constructionist approaches along with other approaches, such as, feminism, hermeneutics



and critical theory, recognise that 'knowledge and understanding are contextually and historically grounded, as well as linguistically constituted'. They argue that ontologically we are 'selves in relation' and interdependent, rather than separate and independent of one another (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003: 422). Placing this in the context of the research process they argue that knowledge is jointly produced 'through the interaction between respondents' accounts and how we make sense of those accounts' (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003: 424). They thus illustrate the importance of reflexivity when carrying out research, arguing that 'subjects are reflexively constituted between the researcher and the researched' in the process of research. The notion of the 'double hermeneutic' as theorised by Anthony Giddens (1987) is also helpful with regard to the issue of reflexivity, in demonstrating the embeddedness of the researcher in the realities they are seeking to account for, since, as he argues, the 'concepts of the social sciences are not produced about an independently constituted subject matter ... The "findings" of the social sciences very often enter constitutively into the world they describe' (1987: 20). Similarly, as Ann Oakley (1992) points out, 'facts do not exist independently of perception and social construction', and furthermore, all research is political in 'the sense that is about and influenced by, relations of power' (Oakley, 1992: 301).

McNess, Lore, & Crossley (2015: 298) characterise social constructionist approaches to identity as 'multiple, shifting and constantly in the process of formation'. Donna Haraway (1991) also argues a unified identity is not achievable, since 'the knowing self is partial in all its guises, never finished ... it is always constructed and stitched together imperfectly' (1991: 193). Also pointing to the notion of subjectivity as exceeding fixity and stability is Patti Lather's concept of the 'incalculable subject', which enfolds political ideas and is described by her as 'as a counter to neoliberal and Big Data efforts to count and parse, capture and model our every move, a subject outside the parameters of the algorithms' (Lather, 2016: 126).

This research does not claim to represent true essences/essential selves in its accounts of the research nor does it adhere to the notion that it is possible to have unmediated access to the lived experiences of the participants. However, while the entirety of individuals cannot be accessed and known, I agree with the view of Mauthner & Doucet that 'it is possible to grasp something of their articulated experience and subjectivity through a research encounter'

(2003: 423) and I propose this as a key organising principle of the ontological basis of this research.

### **3.2 Epistemological Perspective**

In adopting a social constructionist approach the epistemological stance of the research is post-positivist and premised on the notion that meanings in research 'are made rather than found' (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003: 414). And relatedly, the research does not subscribe to the view that research activities are neutral and detached. In this regard the research is informed by Haraway's (1991: 187-188) theorisation of 'situated knowledges', described by Haraway as aiming to achieve 'a usable doctrine of objectivity' so as:

to have *simultaneously* an account of radical contingency for all knowledge claims and knowing subjects, a critical practice for recognizing our own 'semiotic technologies' for making meanings, and a no-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of a 'real' world, one that can be partially shared and friendly to earth-wide projects of finite freedom, adequate material abundance, modest meaning in suffering, and limited human happiness. (italics in original)

Haraway argues that a doctrine of objectivity that promises transcendence, (historically the yardstick of objectivity), is not what is required in carrying out research. Instead, it is necessary to harness the 'power of modern critical theories of how meanings and bodies get made' (1991: 187). This is what she terms 'embodied subjectivity', and this, she argues is what constitutes 'situated knowledges' (1991: 187-188). Situated knowledges are 'partial' and 'locatable' rather than transcendent. In pursuing this argument she uses the metaphor of vision and talks about the 'god trick', i.e. the transcendent view found in traditional philosophy and science, which purports that it is possible to see 'everywhere from nowhere' (1991: 189), which she argues is clearly untenable, as we are all situated somewhere. Thus, she argues against transcendence, the 'view from nowhere' and universalism, stating that it is the partial perspective of specific embodied subjectivity, rather than the transcendence of body and space, that offers the most tenable way to achieve objectivity.

In aligning with the above ideas, the epistemological approach adopted in this research recognises ideological, discursive and material contexts and frames its analysis in accordance with constructionist as opposed to interpretive or phenomenological models. The orientation in this approach is towards a 'structural' as opposed to a

'substantive' analysis of the data, thus focusing on the discursive meanings that are mobilised, as opposed to meanings that inhere, in the data.

### **3.3 Methodological Approach**

As well as the conceptual framework underpinning the research, there are the practical tasks associated with the management of the data collected in the research process, what Spencer et al. call the 'analytic path' of data analysis (2014: 279). They describe their approach as one that is, 'substantive and cross-sectional, moves from data-driven descriptive to more abstract themes, may attempt explanation and does not report quantification' (Spencer et al., 2014: 279). While I do not agree with the entirety of their approach, I find their practical guidance on the initial organising and managing the data very helpful, and I discuss this further in chapter 4.

I diverge from Spencer et al. with regard to their methodological approach, because they describe their position as being oriented towards the 'substantive', whereas the approach I adopt is oriented towards the 'structural', as detailed above. Thus, since the work of Spencer et al. (2014) is oriented towards a substantive, rather than a structural, methodological position, insights from the work of Jäger and Maier (2016), are incorporated into the analysis.

#### **3.3.1 Discourse Analysis**

Discourse analysis is associated with the 'linguistic turn' and post-structuralism and according to Margaret Wetherell, Stephanie Taylor & Simeon Yates (2001) it is also connected with approaches such as social interactionism, ethnomethodology and discursive psychology. The notion that language is representational and constructive of reality informs approaches such as semiotic and conversation analysis and also discourse analysis. As Erica Burman and Ian Parker (1993: 3) point out, although discourse analysis comprises a diverse range of approaches, a common feature among them is an understanding regarding the 'significance and structuring effects of language' and an association with 'interpretive and reflexive styles of analysis'. Discourse analysis can be understood as a study of 'language in use' and as such prompts debates about the foundations of knowledge, the construction of subjectivity and the management of society (Wetherell, Taylor & Yates, 2001: 3-5). According to Fran Tonkiss (1998: 246) discourse analytic approaches are useful in highlighting that language is not a neutral or transparent means of communication as it does not involve

'*reflecting* reality in a straightforward way, but as *constructing* and organizing that social reality for us' (italics in original). Unlike the notion of 'lived experience' of phenomenological approaches, in which language can be construed as agentic, discursive notions of language connote how people are constructed through language. Discourse analysis is less interested in *what* is said and more interested in *how* it is said and *how* it is that certain discourses become hegemonic. Carrie Paechter (2001: 41) defines discourse as a 'way of speaking, thinking or writing that presents particular relationships as self-evidently true'. For Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak (1997: 258) discourse is both socially 'constitutive' and socially 'conditioned', because it is through discourse that 'situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people' are formed.

There are power relations imbricated in discourses, and as conduits of power, according to Michael Apple (2004: 180), 'discursive power involves a struggle both to construct (a sense of) reality and to circulate that reality as widely and smoothly as possible throughout society'. Making a similar point, Ball (1994: 14) argues that discourses can shape not only 'what can be said and thought, but also who can speak, when, where and with what authority'.

Thus discourse analysis has a varied genealogy and now comprises a number of theoretical approaches, ranging from those that focus on the more micro and technical linguistic aspects of language to those that include a more macro social, political and economic approach. The work of Jäger and Maier (2016) work has particularly informed this study and is detailed below.

### 3.3.2 Jäger & Maier and Critical Discourse Analysis

Included in the theoretical perspectives used in critical discourse studies are ones influenced by Michel Foucault, of which Jäger and Maier (2016) are exponents. Another exponent is Florian Schneider, whose 'discourse toolbox' (2013) is modelled on the work of Jäger's ideas about a 'toolbox' for critical discourse analysis. According to Jäger and Maier (2016: 110), Foucault's theory of discourse centres on a number of questions related to knowledge, including, what is valid knowledge in the context of both time and place; how is knowledge constructed and how is it reproduced; what is the role of knowledge in the constitution of subjects and how is society shaped as a consequence of the workings of knowledge. For Jäger and Maier knowledge is the defining feature of 'human consciousness' (2016: 110). Based on

Jürgen Link (1983) they define discourse as 'an institutionalized way of talking [including] non-linguistically performed acting, that regulates and reinforces action and thereby exerts power' (2016: 111). They state that their approach to critical discourse methodology has been in development since the mid-1980s and that they have applied it in a wide variety of studies. Most of their work is written in German, but the work I reference here was written in English and represents a reasonably up-to-date account and overview of their methodology, having been published in 2016. They advise that the guidance they provide is not intended to be a 'rigid formula', but a 'flexible approach and a systematic incitement for researchers to develop their own analytic strategies' (2016: 134). Schneider has similar advice, recommending 'tailoring' the toolbox to fit the 'concerns' of individual research projects (2013: 1). Below I detail aspects of the critical discourse approach developed by Jäger and Maier that are relevant to this research, and identify how these are operationalised in carrying out of the research.

Jäger and Maier (2016: 119) say that the task of critique is to discover the knowledges contained in discourses and to analyse how these knowledges are related to power relations in 'power/knowledge complexes', paying attention both to 'what' is said and 'how' it is said. They also draw attention to the limits of what is sayable, arguing that 'discursive limits' exist. However, these limits can be malleable through the use of what they call rhetorical strategies, for example, in order to say things that 'cannot be said directly without risking negative sanctions' (2016: 121). They give an instance related to modern-day racism as an example of a discursive limit being extended, through the use of statements such as "I am not a racist but ..." which they argue extends the discursive limit of what can be said. They give an example of a narrowing of discursive limits is politicians' use of the phrase "there is no alternative", because they argue, 'it suggests that there is no possibility to call this action into question and publicly debate it' (2016: 122). For Schneider (2013: 5), while discourse analysis cannot 'provide adequate evidence on what goes on in people's heads' it can provide evidence of 'how specific actors construct an argument and how this argument fits into wider social practices'.

According to the analytic schema proposed by Jäger and Maier, contained within the overarching frame of 'discourse' are a number of configurations of discursive practice, which emerge through a type of deconstructive process. For them, the term *discourse* is more

abstract in character than other elements of the schema. They give discourse the term *énoncés* which they define as 'all the kernels of meaning that constitute the "atoms" of a particular discourse' (2016: 121). At a less abstract level are the actual discursive utterances (*énonciations*), 'performances located at the surface of the texts' (2016: 121) which they term *discourse strands*, which are composed of a variety of topics and sub-topics constitutive of the discourse strand. Discourse strands are configured from *discourse fragments*, which are the particular elements of texts that articulate the topics and sub-topics of the discourse strands. For example, the texts of interview transcripts can comprise a range of discourse strands, and particular excerpts/quotations from the interview transcripts comprise discourse fragments, and are articulations of the contents of the discourse strands. It can also happen that fragments from various discourse strands are combined, resulting in what they call *discourse entanglements*, creating what they term a *discursive knot*. An example they give of this is the statement "integrating immigrants into our society costs a lot of money" which they say entangles the discourse strand of immigration with the discourse strand of the economy (2016: 122). In an elaboration of entangled discourse strands they refer to the use of *collective symbols*, which they describe as 'cultural stereotypes' or '*topoi*' (the Greek word for place). According to Jäger and Maier these are generally known by members of a given society 'and they provide the repertoire of images from which we construct a picture of reality for ourselves' (2016: 123). Attention is also paid to time with regard to topics contained in discourse strands. Time can be conceptualised as diachronic (longitudinal, across various periods of time and place) and synchronic (a particular time and place). However, the diachronic and the synchronic are connected to each other, since each topic 'has a genesis, a historical *a priori*', so that 'keeping an eye on its history' (2016: 121) is necessary, since what is sayable is always historically contextual, a text always has a context.

Additional configurations of discourse strands outlined by Jäger and Maier are those of *discourse planes* and *discourse sectors*. As mentioned earlier, discourse planes describe the various 'social locations' from which people speak, and in turn, discourse planes are constitutive of discourse sectors, for example, higher education as a sector of the plane of education, socially engaged art as a sector of the plane of art. Based on the subject matter and the related research questions in this study, the discourses to be analysed when using this approach are chosen from one or more discourse planes and discourse sectors within

those planes. The planes delineate the 'social space' of the discourses, one of which, for example, in the case of this research, is education in Ireland, and one of the sectors within that plane is Irish higher education. Time is another feature to be taken into account with regard to social planes, as there is always an historical context. While the focus of this research is largely the synchronic time of the present, it is intersected by the diachronic time of the period from the 1990s up to now, because a chronology of when and how education for the field of socially engaged art arrived in the College is reported on in the research.

Jäger and Maier (2016) also identify discursive positionalities at the level of the subject, which they term *discourse positions*. For them, subjects holding discourse positions include groups and institutions as well as individuals. In addition there are what can be termed overall or macro societal discourses and global discourses. Since according to this theoretical approach there is not a position outside discourse, they argue that subjects are 'enmeshed' in a variety of discourses and they work these discourses into a 'specific ideological position or worldview in the course of their life'. In addition, this relationship to discourse works the other way around, because discursive positions 'contribute to and reproduce the discursive enmeshments of subjects' (2016: 125). For Jäger and Maier the term 'subjects' implies a 'double-meaning of subjectivity' in the sense that subjects are both 'creators of discourse' and are also 'created by and subjected to discourse' (2016: 112).

Jäger and Maier (2016) also outline the operationalisation of their approach at the various stages of the research process. As alluded to earlier, in this research their approach is combined with that of Spencer et al. (2014) in the analysis of the data. This application and operationalisation of the ideas informing their approach to critical discourse analysis is examined in further detail in chapter 4.

In the final section of this chapter I examine the methodology of the method used in this research, that of the interview. As with the operationalisation of the critical discourse analytic approach of Jäger and Maier, the details about the particular type of interview, its application and the rationale for its selection are addressed in chapter 4.

### 3.3.3 Data Collection Method: Interview

With regard to the method of research interviews Svend Brinkmann and Steiner Kvale, (2015: 18) delineate three non-positivist philosophical approaches to the method of qualitative

interviews; phenomenological, which focuses on how 'life world phenomena' are *experienced*; hermeneutic, which is concerned with how meanings are *interpreted*; constructionist or discursive, which emphasises 'how discursive practices *construct* the social worlds in which human beings live'. Jaber Gubrium et al. (2012: 14) propose a similar delineation in their tripartite overview of philosophical approaches to qualitative research; phenomenological, relating to 'consciousness and the life-world'; hermeneutics, relating to 'interpretations of the meanings of texts'; postmodern, relating to the 'social construction of knowledge'. Making a distinction between the phenomenological and the discursive, Prue Chamberlayne, Joanna Bornat & Tom Wengraf (2000: 17) say that the former assumes that 'personalised inner worlds' give meaning to what is encountered in the external world, and the latter emphasises how the structuring of the external world shapes 'individuals and collectivities'.

These different perspectives imply assumptions about the nature of knowledge produced in the context of qualitative interviews. According to Brinkmann and Kvale (2015), the phenomenological approach, in its objective of accessing people's lived experiences, works on the assumption that the researcher can accurately convey the 'essences of experiences' of participants (2015: 52). The hermeneutic approach is based on the assumption that it is possible 'to get a valid and common understanding of the text (2015: 60). In contrast to the approaches of phenomenology and hermeneutics, Brinkmann and Kvale describe constructionism as having a 'view of the subject that is locally produced in and through the social practice of interviewing', so that there is no essential subject or meanings to be discovered in the context of the research process (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015: 172). Describing social constructionism Apple (2004: 180) says reality 'doesn't stalk around with a label' so that 'what something is, what it does, one's evaluation of it – all this is not naturally preordained. It is socially constructed'.

Brinkmann and Kvale propose the two ideal-types of 'miner' and 'traveller', as a way to conceptualise the processes at work in the practice of qualitative research interviewing and the justification for the epistemological claims being made. The phenomenological and hermeneutic approaches conform to the miner ideal-type, being based on the assumption that it is possible to discover and report on 'nuggets' of 'facts, essences/essential meanings' (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015: 52). The traveller ideal-type fits the constructionist approach,



which they describe as having an affinity with 'a post-modern constructive understanding that involves a conversational approach to social research' (2015: 58).

Although an interview can be described as a type of conversation it is, as Elliot Mishler (1991: 2) points out, different to 'everyday' or 'naturally occurring' conversations. Similarly, Brinkmann and Kvale (2015: 17), notwithstanding their use of the term 'conversation', warn against naturalising the interview context because although interview activity can suggest a 'certain simplicity' this simplicity is 'illusory'. For Denzin (2001:24) an interview is constructed as a performative encounter and does not access essences of lived experience. He describes an interview as a 'vehicle for producing performance texts and performance ethnographies about self and society' and argues no unitary or essential self can be revealed in an interview.

However, in keeping with the idea of conversation, the interview does provide an opportunity for dialogue and shared production of accounts of the social world. In this context James Holstein and Jaber Gubrium (1995) put forward the idea of the 'active interview', by which they mean that both the participants and the researcher actively contribute to the interview process and product. According to Denzin (2001: 28) this understanding of the interview complements the argument there is no 'essential' or 'real' self to be found through carrying out an interview, and, furthermore, since it is a 'joint performance' attention is paid to the presence of the researcher and the desirability of researcher reflexivity in the research process. While the impact of the presence of the researcher can pose problems in positivist approaches to research, it is not considered an impediment to knowledge production in non-positivist approaches. For example, Adrian Holliday (2007: 138) argues that researchers can 'capitalize on the complexities of their presence within the research setting', and he supports this argument by quoting Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson's (1983) advice that instead of making 'futile attempts to eliminate the effects of the researcher, we should set about understanding them' (1983: 17).

For Mishler (1991: 85) interviews are forms of discourse, 'speech events whose structure and meaning are jointly produced by interviewers and interviewees'. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015: 4) echo this opinion in arguing that knowledge is co-constructed in the inter-action that occurs in an interview, saying that an interview is 'literally an inter-view'. Commenting on social constructionist approaches Carolyn Baker (2002: 781) argues that the term 'accounts'

rather than 'reports' best fits these types of approaches. She provides an evocative description of the dynamics of an interview, defining accounts as:

the sense-making work through which participants engage in explaining, attributing, justifying, describing, and otherwise finding possible sense or orderliness in the various events, people, places, and courses of action they talk about.

How language is conceptualised is another important consideration in these debates. Paul Filmer et al. (1998: 24) outline that language can be understood as '*referential*', i.e. that it 'refers to a reality existing beyond language' and as '*representational* and *constructive* of reality', i.e. that it is 'the means by which humans *socially construct* their worlds' (italics in original). They point out that while the referential and the representational are conceptually distinct, it is possible, to hold the view that language is both, the view that they themselves support. As an example, they argue that the phenomena of illness and suffering demonstrate that the 'material conditions of our bodily existence give us a basic grounding in a reality that exists prior to language' (Filmer et al., 1998: 24-25), providing a reminder that materialist ontologies cannot be entirely discounted in social constructionist analysis.

#### 3.3.4 Qualitative Interviews and Knowledge Claims

The issue of criteria for validating the knowledge claims of qualitative approaches to interviews is also of relevance. The criteria attaching to qualitative research differ from those attaching to quantitative research. According to Mishler (1991: 112) qualitative research is not seeking a 'singular and absolute "truth", but the assessment of the relative plausibility of an interpretation when compared with other specific and potentially plausible alternative interpretations'.

Mishler contends this is demonstrated through clear documentation of the process, clarity about the guidelines for the analysis and explication of the theoretical approach (Mishler, 1991: 113). Brinkmann and Kvale (2015: 24) are guided by a pragmatic approach to the validation of research, the criterion of which is 'producing knowledge worth knowing – knowledge that makes a difference to the discipline and those who depend on it'. For Holliday (2007: 75-76) Clifford Geertz's (1973) concept of 'thick description' is a useful qualitative alternative to what he calls the more quantitative concept of triangulation, which he argues aims to 'gain a quantity of different viewpoints of the same phenomenon' and is more akin to a 'post-positivist image of validity'. Holliday dismisses the criticism of thick

description as a form of 'naïve naturalism' and argues it is well-suited to postmodern qualitative research because it 'generates a richness of perception while reflecting and exploring data records, discovering patterns and constructing and exploring impressions' (2007: 76).

Discussing the various types of interview formats which critique the classical approach, such as the unstructured format, and quoting Sue Jones (1985), Seale (1998: 205-206) identifies the challenges attached to the replication of qualitative interviews:

In qualitative research the notion of some kind of impersonal, machine-like investigator is recognised as a chimera. An interview is a complicated, shifting social *process* occurring between two individual human beings, which can never be exactly replicated ... What is crucial is that researchers choose their actions with a self-conscious awareness of why they are making them. (Jones 1985: 48-49 italics in original)

In this research I carried out ten face-to-face and one group, semi-structured, interviews, the application of which was informed by the methodological arguments outlined above. As Jones (1985) observes, an interview is a 'complicated' and 'shifting' 'process'. It is a particular form of a conversational encounter with others. It has a type of formality, since although it may be dialogical and take the form of a conversation, it is different to every day conversations, something that struck me quite forcibly during the interview process. The dialogical can also connote that the knowledge constructed from the interview is co-constructed between the researcher and the participants in the research, and this perspective applies in this study. Thus, the knowledge produced in interviews is an outcome of an interactive process between the different parties, rather than the sole-authored product of a detached and neutral researcher. In addition, in my application of the interview method I did not aspire to achieving access to the essential selves of the participants. The research is therefore not premised on discovering the essential truth or essence of what participants said in the context of the interview situation. In this regard, I am in agreement with Mauthner and Doucet (2003), who argue that notwithstanding this particular epistemological position it is possible to construct accounts that convey the experiences and subjectivities of the participants. The ideal-type of the 'traveller' as opposed to that of the 'miner', (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015) best describes the processes involved in carrying out the interviews for this research.

## ***Conclusion***

The methodological and epistemological approach to the study, allied with the related dimension of ontology have been discussed in this chapter. Understanding methodology as the 'theory' of the method, the chapter also includes details about the particular discourse analytic approach and the particular application of the interview method used in the study. Reflecting the views articulated by writers such as Denzin (2001) and Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) on the various types of non-positivist approaches to the method of qualitative interviews, this study applies a social constructionist, non-positivistic approach to the research interviews. Although relying on the delineation of the 'analytic path' of Spencer et al. (2014) for the initial organisation and management of the data, I supplement their work with an alternative methodological and epistemological approach, because theirs is oriented towards the phenomenological rather than the social constructionist. Therefore I also draw on the work of Jäger and Maier (2016) and Schneider (2013), whose approach to discourse analysis informs the epistemological and methodological framing of the study. This framing is eloquently encapsulated in the observation of artist Olafur Eliasson (2019):

No word is said without a world around it, these networks of words—spoken, exchanged, received, and reconfigured—co-produce our collective reality. They constitute not only a saying but an action.

The next chapter is devoted to the operationalisation of the methodological approach for the purposes of the empirical fieldwork. It addresses the data collection methods and the initial analytic tasks of organising, managing and abstracting the data, largely informed by the work of Spencer et al. (2014). The subsequent chapter is devoted to the later steps in the analysis, those of interpretation, where the work of Jäger and Maier (2016) comes more to the fore.

## Chapter 4: Data Collection Method and Initial Data Analysis: Tools & Tasks

### *Introduction*

This research was prompted by an interest in finding out about the origins of higher education for socially engaged art practice in an Irish context. It took the form of an investigation into one particular post-graduate programme in Ireland, using the method of individual one-to-one interviews and a group interview. In this chapter I detail how the research was initiated and developed. I first outline the ethical procedure and considerations, followed by the process of selecting the participants for interview, the data collection activities and the first steps of the analytic process, which is that of the organisation and management of the data (Spencer et al., 2014). This leads to the abstraction of the data into the discourse strands (Jäger and Maier, 2016) of Place, Practice and Academy, which will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 5.

### *4.1 Preparation for the Research: Ethical Procedure and Considerations*

Prior to the beginning of the fieldwork for the research ethical approval was sought and obtained from the University of Sheffield.<sup>30</sup> This included approval of the Consent Form<sup>31</sup> which was duly signed by each participant, immediately prior to the interview taking place. An important ethical consideration was that of preserving the anonymity of the institution and the participants. While confidentiality could be guaranteed regarding security and storing of data,<sup>32</sup> there were some limitations with regard to anonymity, more particularly with regard to the HEI involved than the individual participants. As detailed in the Ethics Application form, and as indicated in the Consent Form, although the institution is not named in the text (it is referred to as the College throughout), names are anonymised, (through numerical pseudonyms) and job titles are not identified, since Ireland is a small country with only a small number of post-graduate SEA programmes, one cannot give an absolute guarantee of anonymity. Thus although this issue could not be entirely mitigated, it was discussed with the participants in advance of their signing of the Consent Form, so

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<sup>30</sup> See Appendix 1 for the Ethics Approval Letter from the University of Sheffield.

<sup>31</sup> See Appendix 2 for a copy of the Consent Form.

<sup>32</sup> The data is recorded on audio recordings stored electronically on an encrypted USB and on hard-copy transcripts of the recordings, both of which are kept in a locked cabinet in my office at NUI Galway.

their agreement to participate was in the knowledge of this aspect of the ethical context. In addition, each one-to-one interview transcript was returned to the participants for their comments and amendments, which were accordingly accepted. Five of the participants availed of the opportunity to amend their interview transcripts.

#### ***4.2 Beginning and Organising the Fieldwork***

Having secured ethical approval for the research, I began the fieldwork by making contact with the co-ordinator of the programme in the HEI identified in the Ethics Application form. I made contact by email and we arranged to meet in person to discuss the research proposal. Arising from this meeting the co-ordinator agreed to take part in the research and to contact colleagues on the programme (both current and past) regarding the research. After the meeting I emailed a research information sheet<sup>33</sup> to the co-ordinator who subsequently emailed this document to her colleagues, requesting that they let her know whether they wished to take part and if they did, that I would follow up with them, by email. Ten colleagues, both current and past, were emailed by the co-ordinator; nine responded to the co-ordinator indicating an interest in taking part and agreeing to be contacted by me. The co-ordinator then forwarded me the email details of the prospective participants, following which I contacted each of them individually with an invitation to take part in the research. Each of those nine individuals agreed to take part, thereby bringing the total number of participants to ten.<sup>34</sup> Thus, facilitated by the co-ordinator I was enabled to reach the colleagues associated with the programme, the participants relevant to the research investigation.<sup>35</sup>

A schedule of one-to-one interviews was drawn up and dates and times were agreed with the participants.<sup>36</sup> All participants received an interview guide,<sup>37</sup> outlining the research questions and indicating, in broad terms, the areas the interview questions could address, in advance of the interview. Interviews lasted between one and one hour and a half, and were audio-recorded and transcribed; the written transcripts were sent to participants for comments and

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<sup>33</sup> See Appendix 3 for the Research Information Sheet.

<sup>34</sup> Further information about the participants is detailed later in the chapter.

<sup>35</sup> See Appendix 4 for participant profiles.

<sup>36</sup> The initial meeting with the co-ordinator was in January 2016. The one-to-one interviews were held between June and September 2016.

<sup>37</sup> See Appendix 5 for the One-to-One Interview Guide.

amendments. The one-to-one interviews were supplemented with a group interview, held some months<sup>38</sup> after the individual interviews. Following the initial analysis of the interview transcripts I thought it would be useful to hold a group interview (Currie and Kelly, 2012). I judged the purpose of this to be a review and check-back exercise, and also an opportunity to discuss, in greater detail, issues relating to the wider institutional arrangements of higher education and their impact on the participants and the programme, which, as I reflected on the initial analysis of the data, had not been emphasised sufficiently in the one-to-one interviews. I contacted the participants to this effect and sent them an interview guide<sup>39</sup> which was framed around the question 'what is at stake in practices of study related to socially engaged art practice in higher education in Ireland today?' Six of the ten participants took part in the group interview, which lasted two hours, was audio-recorded and transcribed.

Choosing to investigate a particular programme in one particular institution conforms to a case-study model. Robert Stake (2000: 437) delineates three types of case-study: intrinsic, instrumental and collective.<sup>40</sup> The model used in this study is the intrinsic type i.e. it has the objective of understanding or accounting for one particular case, in and of itself, rather than because it is representative of other cases. It is also relevant in this regard to point out that the inquiry does not involve an evaluation of the programme. Its aim is to situate the programme in its historical context, give an account of how pedagogical practices are being shaped on the programme and how the programme is impacted by the wider institutional arrangements of higher education.

#### **4.3 Institutional Organisation, Staffing and Content of the Programme**

Education for socially engaged art practice in the College has gone through a number of iterations since its inception in the early 2000s. The iteration more specifically considered in this research is the MA *SEA+FE*, a programme comprised of both socially engaged art and further education. The two elements are quite separately configured in the programme, with one manifestation of this being that staff teach either in FE

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<sup>38</sup> The group interview was held in April 2017.

<sup>39</sup> See Appendix 6 for Group Interview Guide.

<sup>40</sup> According to Stake (2000) the instrumental is applicable when a particular case is analysed as illustrative of cases broader than the particular case; the collective is an instrumental-type model which uses a number of cases in an individual study.

teacher education, or in socially engaged art practice education. With regard to the students on the programme, they are both student FE teachers and student SEA practitioners and they come from a variety of arts and non-arts backgrounds. As education for socially engaged practice is the particular focus in this research, the main emphasis in the study is on the SEA element of the programme.

Most of those who teach, or who have taught, on the SEA part of the programme are also artists, and have an art practice that is either exclusively SEA or part-SEA. Participants also include those involved in community activism. The SEA staff, while not teaching the discipline of education itself, are engaging with the field of education in their work as educators of SEA practice. Some members of the programme's staff have formal qualifications in the discipline of education, including those who teach on the FE element, but most do not, reflecting the situation whereby it is common for artists to teach as well as carry out an art practice, without necessarily training formally to be a teacher. Eight of the ten participants, either currently, or in the past, have been involved in SEA practice; six of these eight, either currently or previously, have taught on the SEA part of the programme, and one teaches on the FE part of the programme; the other two participants come from the field of adult and community education, cumulatively representing an hybridity of experience, skills and backgrounds of those involved in the programme overall.

The programme is part-time and runs in the evenings over a period of two years. A range of pedagogical techniques are used on the SEA programme, including lectures, workshops, site-visits, a Practicum (placement) and a practice-based research project. Forms of assessment include written assignments, presentations and group work. The programme modules cover a range of areas pertaining to the field of SEA, addressing genealogies of SEA practice, both relating to, and external to, traditional art history; key concepts informing the aesthetics and politics of SEA practice; methodological tools for the examination of contemporary cultural institutional and policy contexts, local and global; attention to exemplars of practice, including site-visits to both rural and urban contexts; reflection on, and development of, personal practice; exploring the intersectionality of SEA practice and FE practice, attending to transdisciplinarity and the pedagogical turn. The practice-based research project can include a practice component accompanied by a written component, or a written dissertation. The research can relate to either the SEA or FE elements of the



programme or a combination of both. The Practicum placement is chosen by the students and to date has included settings in Ireland as well as outside of Ireland. The placement can entail working with an artist on a SEA project, for example, working with Rick Lowe in Project Row Houses, Houston, Texas<sup>41</sup>; with Suzanne Lacy in Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA), Dublin on *The School for Revolutionary Girls*.<sup>42</sup> It can also involve progressing a project in the student's workplace or working with community-based groups or arts organisations.

#### **4.4 Application of the Interview Method**

As alluded to earlier, the method of interview was both one-to-one and group, each of which was face-to-face, semi-structured and dialogical. Given that the nature of the inquiry included participants reflecting on their personal practice in the setting of a contemporary institution of higher education, the interview method was judged to be the most conducive approach to creating the conditions suitable for consideration of these issues. And further, a dialogical approach to the interview, was deemed both methodologically appropriate and befitting of an investigation into collaborative and dialogical forms of art practice.

The one-to-one interviews formed the first phase of the field-work and the group interview, the second stage. The emphasis in the one-to-one interviews was on participants' individual accounts about the programme and their pedagogical practices as SEA educators. The emphasis in the group interview was on the wider institutional arrangements of higher education, the context in which the individual participants are carrying out their practice as educators. As mentioned earlier, following the initial analysis of the one-to-one interview transcripts I concluded that an exploration, with the participants, of how the wider institutional arrangements of higher education were impacting on them and the programme, would enrich the data and hence deepen the analysis of the inquiry. It transpired that the group interview achieved an important goal of a group interview technique, that of dynamic interaction and discussion among the participants (Currie and Kelly, 2012). The group interview consequently proved successful in eliciting insightful reflections by the participants on the impact of the wider institutional arrangements of higher education on the programme and their individual practices.

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<sup>41</sup> <https://projectrowhouses.org/about/about-prh/>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.suzannelacy.com/school-for-revolutionary-girls/>

In the next section details of the of the formal data analysis process are presented. Following the collection of the data through the interview process and their transcription from an audio format to written formats, the beginning stages of the 'analytic path' were put in place. Figure 2 (see page over) illustrates the various steps along the way. It is adapted from diagrams in Spencer et al. (2014: 281) and Campus Engage (2017: 28). Discussion of the initial stage of data management, informed by Spencer et al. (2014) opens discussion of the formal stage of the analysis of the data.

#### ***4.5 Constructing the 'analytic path'***

Spencer et al. (2014) propose two main stages in the formal analysis of data, (1) the initial stage of Data Management and (2) the subsequent Abstraction and Interpretation stage. Although, as they point out, there is a certain amount of fluidity between the two stages, the former, by virtue of involving the initial organisation and sorting of the data is more data-driven than the latter, which entails a move towards 'more abstract themes' (2014: 279). Jäger and Maier (2016: 128) outline a three-stage analytic process which includes a 'structural analysis' of discourse strands, a close analysis of discourse fragments, culminating in a 'synoptic analysis' of the data. However, I found the more inductive approach of Spencer et al. (2014) more conducive to managing and organising the large amount of interview data in the initial stages.<sup>43</sup> Below, I discuss in more detail the approach of Spencer et al. (2014) and I return to a greater emphasis on Jäger and Maier (2016) in the interpretation and discussion of the findings in chapter 5.

##### ***4.5.1 Data Management***

As illustrated in Figure 2, five steps are identified in the Data Management stage of the Spencer et al. model: (i) familiarisation, (ii) constructing an initial thematic framework, (iii) indexing and sorting, (iv) reviewing data extracts, (v) data summary and display. Familiarisation is about immersion in the data and generating an initial list of topics of interest and relevance to the research, with the task being 'to identify topics or issues that are of interest, recurrent across the data set and relevant to the research question' (Spencer et al., 2014: 297). This list of topics is then sorted into sets of themes and sub-themes, creating an initial thematic framework.

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<sup>43</sup> I would like to thank Liz Brosnan for pointing me in the direction of Spencer et al.

## Formal Data Analysis Process

1

### Managing the data

Familiarisation with the data  
(reading the transcripts & listening to the audio)

Construct the initial set of themes (n=6)

Colour-code the transcripts according to the initial thematic framework

**Sort** the data for each interview in tabular format according to the initial thematic framework

Re-read in this format and construct a set of subthemes within each of the initial 6 themes (total number of subthemes n=32)

**Collate** the data for each interview in tabular format according to this expanded thematic framework

2

### Abstracting the data

Identification of pertinent data excerpts/discourse fragments in the collated format

Indexing of data in the collated format

Condensation/splicing of the data into a set of overarching themes (n=10)

Further analysis and abstraction of these 10 themes into 3 discourse strands

3

### Accounting for the data

Synoptic Analysis/Interpretation of the discourse strands

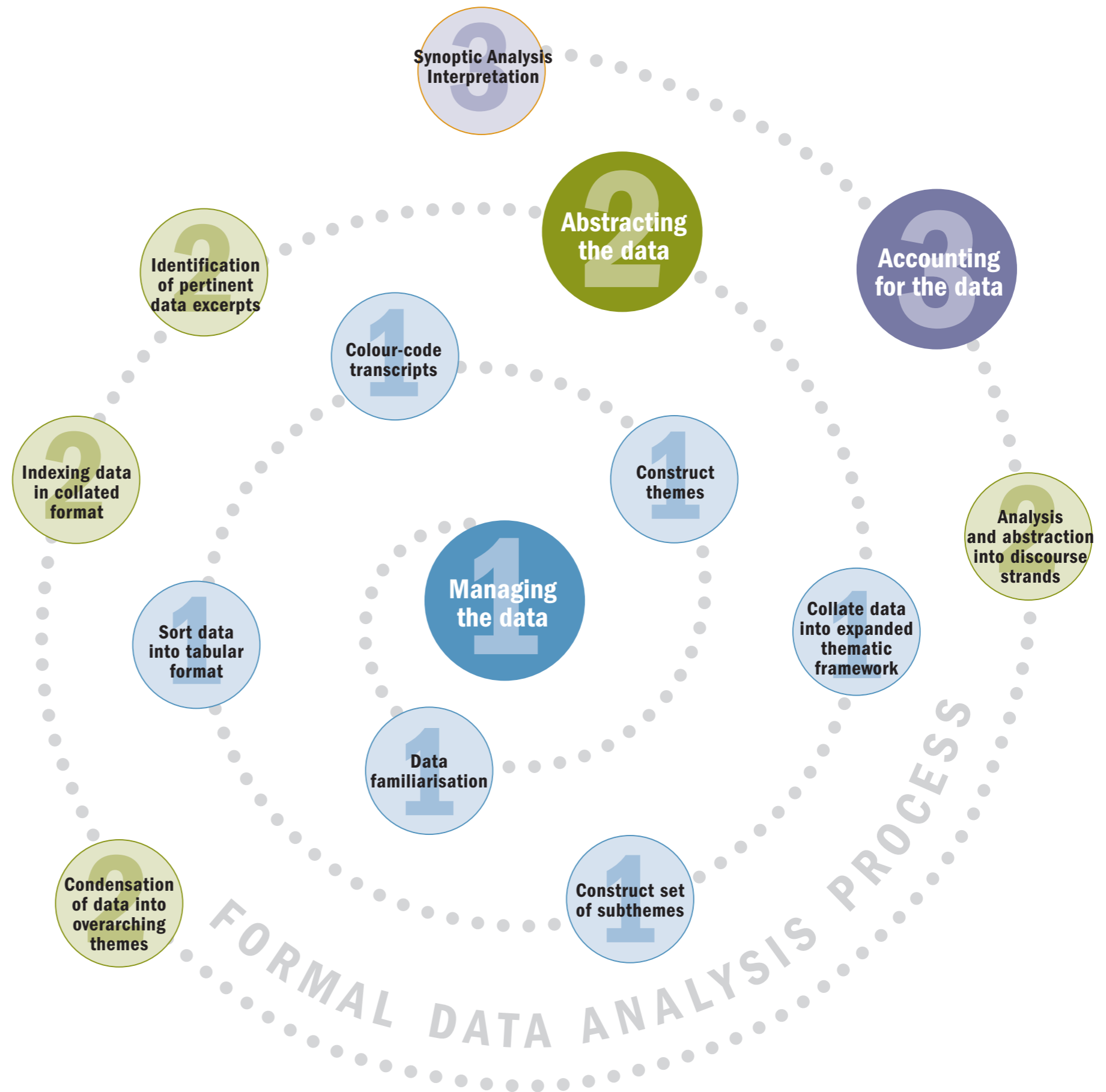


Figure 2: Formal Data Analysis Process (Adapted from Spencer et al., 2014 and Campus Engage, *Engaged Research: Society and Higher Education*, 2017)

This framework of themes and sub-themes provides the basis from which coding or indexing<sup>44</sup> proceeds. Sorting and indexing collates data judged to relate to the same thing and labels these chunks of data according to the themes and sub-themes contained in the initial thematic framework. In the subsequent step, the collation of the data is reviewed and any necessary revisions to the way in which the data is collated are made. The fifth step, data summary and display, is not a universally applicable step, for example, it is not applicable to conversation analysis, involves creating a matrix comprising of a written summary for 'each subtheme and each person in the study' (Spencer et al., 2014: 283-284). This fifth step is not included in this research.

#### 4.5.2 Data Abstraction

As the term suggests this stage of the analysis process is more explicitly analytical and is the stage where 'the researcher devises a more analytic set of building blocks to categorise and classify the data' (Spencer et al., 2014: 284). The key steps Spencer et al. include in this stage of the analysis are: the development of categories, and perhaps typologies, mapping linkages across the data, and generating interpretation or explanations of the data. This stage of the data analysis is carried out by reviewing the data extracts or summaries and iteratively constructing categories, typologies, which embody the abstraction of the data into increasingly more analytic concepts and themes. Referencing Dey's (1993) metaphor of 'splitting' and 'splicing' data, they describe the process as one where splitting 'gives greater precision and detail', and splicing 'achieves greater integration and scope' (Spencer et al., 2014: 285). This iterative splitting and splicing builds towards a further refinement of the analysis, whereby linkages or associations apparent in the data can be constructed. These various processes of abstraction provide a context for the second aspect of this stage of the process, that of interpretation of the patterns that have been discerned through refining and assembling the data into categories, typologies and linkages.

Although the process is delineated as a series of steps, in practice, it is more of a circular-type process, as illustrated in Figure 2. Thus you are moving forwards and backwards between the

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<sup>44</sup> In using the term 'indexing' Spencer et al. cite Clive Seale (1999: 154) who says that the 'early stages of coding are therefore more appropriately called "indexing", acting as signposts to interesting bits of data, rather than representing some final argument of meaning' (cited in Spencer et al., 2014: 278).

various aspects of the process as you manage the data and broach the abstraction and interpretation of the data. Spencer et al. also point out that not all researchers will follow all the steps outlined above, since how one proceeds with data analysis and the steps one includes, depends on the research question and aims of the research as well as the extent, resources and context of the study. The next section moves on to discuss the application of the model in this research. Figures 3, 4 and 5 (see page over), illustrate the various steps in the implementation of the analytic process.

#### ***4.6 Application of the Analytic Process***

##### ***4.6.1 Application of the Model: Data Management***

The first activity, that of becoming familiar with the data, involved listening to the audio tapes and reading the interview transcripts a number of times, arising from which I constructed an initial thematic framework of six themes, which were, History, Pedagogies, Institutional Conditions, Community Arts, Students, Personal, detailed in Figure 3. Subsequently, each of the interview transcripts was tagged according to each of these six themes, using electronic colour-coding to mark-up data extracts relevant to each of these 6 themes. The data extracts from each interview were then sorted under each of the 6 themes, so that I could now read, sequentially, the data extracts of each interview transcript with regard to each of the six initial themes. Arising from this reading, a number of sub-themes for each of the 6 initial themes was constructed, an exercise of splitting which came to a total of thirty-two sub-themes, as detailed in Figure 3. These thirty-two sub-themes were then collated such that I could now read the data extracts relevant to each of the sub-themes in sequence.

The next part of the analysis involved indexing the data extracts in this format from which, in a splicing exercise, the following ten themes were constructed: College, School of Education, Community-based Settings, MA SEA+FE, Art Practice, Education Practice, SEA Pedagogical Practices, Contemporary Higher Education, Contemporary Higher Art Education, Academicisation of SEA Education, detailed in Figure 4. The completion of the tasks of splitting and splicing and condensing the data as outlined above, marks a movement from Spencer et al.'s (2014) Data Management tasks of the formal analytic process to what they term the Abstraction stage of the process.

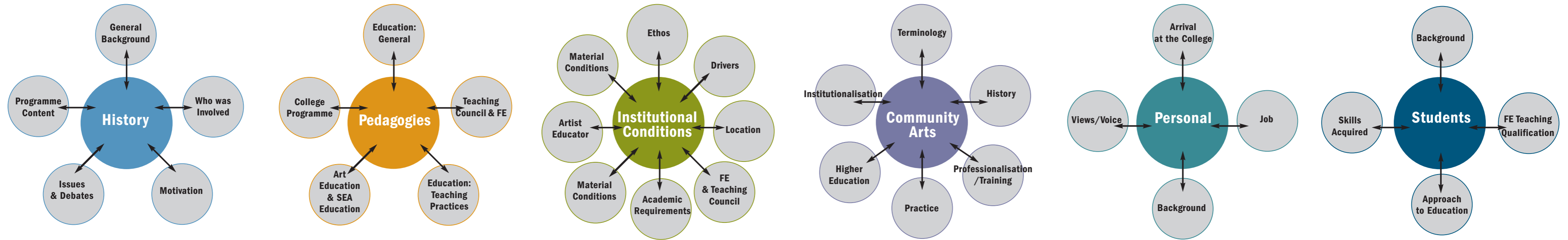


Figure 3: Themes and Subthemes

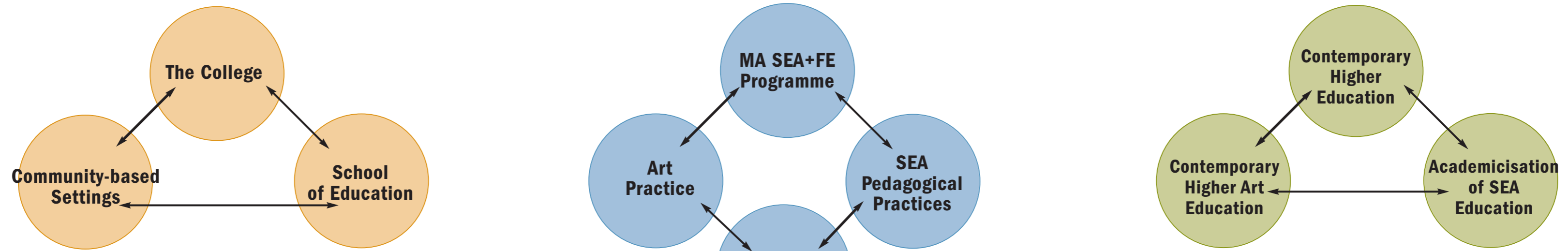


Figure 4: Abstracted Themes

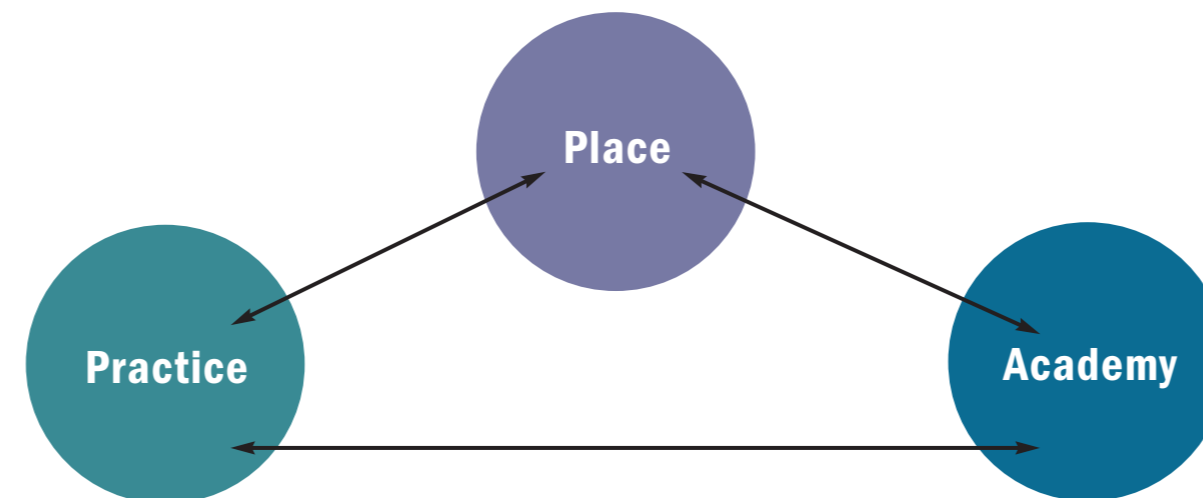


Figure 5: Discourse Strands

#### 4.6.2 Application of the Model: Data Abstraction

The data abstraction process involves a final splicing of the data, through abstraction and configuration of these ten themes into the three discourse strands of Place, Practice and Academy, in preparation for the interpretation or synoptic analysis task (Jäger and Maier, 2016) of the analytic process, detailed in Figure 5. It is in the context of the methodological approach of Jäger and Maier (2016) that the final abstraction of the data is configured as discourse strands of Place, Practice and Academy. The abstraction of these three discourse strands from the data has followed an 'analytic path' conforming to what Spencer et al. have described as the creation of 'an increasingly higher order conceptual framework of interpretation of the data' (2014: 280). It represents a movement towards Jäger and Maier's (2016) third stage of the analytic process, that of synoptic analysis, and this will be examined further in chapter 5.

#### **Conclusion**

In keeping with the metaphor of the toolbox this chapter has outlined the tools and tasks related to the methodological strategy being used in this research. The 'analytic path' of Spencer et al. (2014) is particularly applicable to the initial management and organisation of the data. However, their theoretical focus on a substantive rather than a structural approach to the interpretation of the data, which is my preferred orientation, meant I had to look elsewhere for a theoretical approach to interpreting the data. Thus the final task of the analytic strategy, that of interpretation, is provided by insights from critical discourse analysis, specifically the work of Jäger and Maier (2016) and Schneider (2013), whose approach to critical discourse analysis informs the methodological perspective of the research. An analysis of the data extracts (or discourse fragments, in the terminology of Jäger and Maier), illustrative of the discourse strands, are discussed in the next chapter. The discourse strands constructed through abstraction from the initial analysis of the data, are Place, Practice and Academy, each of which is constitutive of a number of topics. These are discussed in the next chapter, beginning with the discourse strand of Place, followed by Practice and concluding with Academy.

## Chapter 5: Data Analysis: Accounting for the Data

### *Introduction*

As detailed in the previous chapter the interview data were abstracted into the discourse strands of Place, Practice and Academy, each of which is constitutive of a number of elements or topics. Broadly speaking, Place can be conceptualised as space that is invested with meaning, a location constructed by human action (Agnew and Livingstone, 2011), and in the context of this research Place incorporates the locations of the College, the School of Education and community-based arts settings. Practice focuses on the configuration of the MA *SEA+FE* and pedagogical practices associated with the provision of the programme. Academy concerns the wider structural and institutional arrangements of higher education within which socially engaged art pedagogical practices at the College are carried out. The discussion opens with an analysis of the discourse strand of Place, addressing its constitutive elements of, education for the practice in community-based settings; the move to the academy; terminologies for the practice; legitimisation of community arts practice; School of Education; development of the programme in the School of Education; FE sector changes.

### **5.1 Discourse Strand 1: Place**

#### **5.1.1 Education for the Practice in Community-based Settings**

The development of education for this field of practice in the particular location of the College was partly associated with inter-relationships between community arts organisations and the college. Thus the academicisation of the field of socially engaged art practice at the College has some origins in the social movement of community arts. In addition, education in the academy has forerunners in educating for the practice in settings outside the academy, in para-institutional and non-institutional contexts. As outlined previously, early initiatives in the area of community arts education were variously in the non-formal, informal, community-based, adult and further education sectors, most of which received substantial funding from EU labour activation programmes, and some of which were accredited by formal educational institutions. More than a decade after the first



community based education programmes began, in 2001, the first HE-based programme came into existence.

The literature records that a key motivating factor in developing community arts education programmes, in both the non-formal and formal sectors, was a desire to enhance the skills of community arts practitioners (Bowles, 1992; Hunt, 1999). The specific lack of provision for the practice in higher education is commented on in a group interview of arts practitioners and activists recorded in Cork in 2003, in a forum 'addressing the history and contemporary practice of community arts in an Irish context' and published in *An Outburst of Frankness*:

I think the colleges have failed miserably in the south. ... Until very recently it was the same experience that I had over twenty years ago. It depends on the individual tutor rather than being built in structurally. (O'Donoghue, 2004: 22)

In a similar vein participant P6 remarks:

So I went right through the 90s, and all of this community based stuff was happening, but it had no resonance at all in the college... and I found all that very frustrating because you know there was almost, pretty much a wilful ignorance in the Art School.

The feature of commitment by individual tutors in Fine Art, mentioned by O'Donoghue above, is also mentioned by participants in this research. Reflecting on her experience as an art student in the late 1980s/early 1990s participant P5 says she found 'absolutely no register' for this field of practice except for one particular tutor who was 'broad enough in her thinking to support me to go off down to Sherriff Street where I spent most of the last year. I was hardly ever in the college'.

Thus while education in this field of practice was not organised formally at the College prior to the 2000s, initiatives were being taken by individual students supported by individual tutors to develop community arts as part of their practice. The names of Dervil Jordan and Helen O'Donoghue, students in Fine Art at the College in the 1970s, are frequently mentioned in participants' accounts of the development of education in community arts practice in the College. For their degree show, Jordan and O'Donoghue created ground-breaking work in the college by carrying out a mural project with primary schools. This project went on to be taken up by the Arts Council, through an initiative entitled *Artists in Schools*. According to P6:

And the whole Arts Council scheme that followed on later on, Artists in Schools and so on, that really developed from the pair of them looking for money to do murals in schools,

something very simple really. And they developed their own practice, each of them from there.

### 5.1.2 The Move to Higher Education

In charting the chronology of the establishment of the first formal HE-based programme in community arts, in Ireland, and given the origins of community arts education provision in the community arts movement and adult and further education sectors, one question that suggested itself was whether the subsequent initiatives in higher education resulted from approaches from the community arts sector to the HE sector. Based on the interviews carried out for this research the influence of the community arts sector was a nuanced one. While there were personal connections, meetings and seminars held in the College, involving community organisations, including CAFE, Wet Paint, the Grapevine Arts Centre<sup>45</sup>, in the development of the programme, according to participants in this research, the decisive action to establish a programme in the HE sector came from within the college itself. As P5 remarks:

I think it's very largely driven within the institutions. It's not like, community organisations are making representations to the art college and saying listen, we're doing enough, you need to do something about this, you know – they're too busy doing other things.

P8 concurs with this saying that while there were many community groups which wanted artists to be trained in this field of practice, this aspiration did not translate into a formal forum to lobby for this provision:

It wouldn't have been a forum, let us say, where community groups met, and sort of said, well, can we have? But certainly it was linked to a number of groups where it had been talked of, where it was considered to be important. And so there would have been lots of interest in trying to establish a kind of formal provision in the area. But no, there wasn't a community forum that lobbied for it.

There was also a motivation from the perspective of students. P5 remarks, 'over the years there were discussions in the College about a Diploma in Community Arts because it was beginning to be obvious that a lot more students were interested in this field'. And more generally P1 says 'Art students pick up things ... they're not necessarily reading loads of theory but somehow they pick up stuff and so they start "to do"'.

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<sup>45</sup> The Grapevine Arts Centre was founded in 1973. It subsequently became City Arts Centre, in 1985, and in 2010 it was renamed City Arts.

And reflecting on the provision of education for the practice with regard to the community development sector, P7 says:

So potentially into the future, those skills can play a critical role in processes at a local, or at a bigger level, you know. Whether it's documenting the changing nature of a public housing complex, or street demonstrations, or helping running workshops about making things, or whatever. And, yea, I think that skill-basis is really necessary.

During the time-period between the provision of education in community-based settings and the move to the academy, changes were taking place in the practice, including with regard to how it is named. How this manifested itself in the context of the College programme is discussed in the next section.

### 5.1.3 *Terminologies for the Practice*

A significant expression of the evolution of the practice in the period from the 1980s is the proliferation of terms used to describe the field, extending beyond the term 'community arts'. These terms include 'socially engaged practice', 'social practice', 'public genre art', 'practice in participatory settings', 'arte útil'. It is interesting that these changes are mirrored in the titles given to the programmes at the College, the first programme, a one-year programme, (originally called a Higher Diploma and subsequently a Graduate Diploma)<sup>46</sup> which began in 2001 and ran for ten years, was initially called *Community Arts Education*, and subsequently, *Community/Arts/Education*. Referring to this particular change, P10 says:

But the title Community Arts Education was always contentious, even within our own staff, when we started the programme there were people who, the trouble is nobody came up with a better title at the time. We were playing around with participatory practice and various other things but you had to choose something. Community Arts Education was the term, after about four or five years I'd say we subtly changed it to Community/Arts/Education. Now that went unnoticed by the great majority of people but at least for those on the programme it seemed better to express the three component elements of the programme.

After ten years the Higher Diploma/Graduate programme was reviewed and was re-constituted as an MA, beginning in the academic year, 2013-2014, and at this point the title changed from 'community arts' to 'socially engaged art'. It was initially called *MA Socially Engaged Art (Further, Adult & Continuing Education)* (MA SEAFACE) and changed in the academic year 2017-2018 to *MA Socially Engaged Art + Further Education* (MA SEA+FE). Remarking on these changes P10 observes that the label of community arts 'was being

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<sup>46</sup> This was part of national education policy to change the title of Higher Diplomas to Graduate Diplomas.

discontinued by practitioners' because of its connotation as 'an inferior form of art ... people playing around with paints and producing things which are not artistic and creative'. In a similar vein P6 says that for some in Fine Art 'face-paint' was a metaphor for community arts. He describes there being a 'mantra' in Fine Art that community arts 'always ends up as boring as auld face-paint'.

P9 also comments on the change in terminology, arguing that in the ten years since the first iteration of the programme:

The field had changed, the paradigm of community/arts/education that had influenced the development of that course had developed and there was a whole set of new discourses and language, and most significantly practices had developed in a whole load of ways. And so we wanted to stay alive to that.

The changes in the programme titles, are reflective of additional sets of issues and concerns, including the fact that, significantly, the programme was established, and continues to be based, in the School of Education, and these will be discussed later. For now, the modification from 'community arts' to 'socially engaged art' in the programme's title is being mentioned because it mirrors changes that were occurring in the field of practice more broadly, nationally and internationally, and is illustrative of how the programme was responding to these wider changes. And as illustrated in the comments of P9 above, accompanying the proliferation of terms that name the practice, has come an enlargement of the theoretical and conceptual paradigms associated with the field and concomitant debates related to these developments. There was also attention paid to legitimising the field as a valid form of art practice and this is explored further in the next section.

#### 5.1.4 Legitimation of Community Arts Practice

The desire to legitimate community arts within contemporary arts practice and discourse in higher education is remarked on by a number of participants. P8 says its presence in higher education 'legitimises a practice that would have been seen as marginal' and perceived as 'poor or bad art'. P5 observes that 'historically it's been so outside the canon ... it's firmly in the canon now, but in those early years it was always outside the canon, lesser than, you know, well meant but lesser than, in terms of contemporary arts.' Reflecting on her own experience and those of her peers in the 1980s and 1990s, P4 says there was a clear need for interventions such as formal education to validate the practice because of the numbers of

artists and community workers working in environments that were 'unstructured, piecemeal and ad hoc'. For P5 the move to the academy was also a 'political thing' because it 'meant that the practice was valuable, that it was worth acknowledging, that you could train people to do it, that it was important, that it mattered'.

By the early 2000s there were some structural changes in the Fine Art department at the College with the initiation of a programme in 2002 entitled *Public Art Placement* in partnership with Create, the successor to CAFE, described on the Create website<sup>47</sup> as a response to 'the provocation – what happens when fine arts students collaborate with communities to produce an artwork?' It has been since re-named the *Learning Development Programme* and involves other art HEIs alongside the College – the Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art & Design & Technology, in Co. Dublin and the Tisch School of the Arts in New York and a municipal arts hub in Dublin city, the LAB. The emergence of the *Learning Development Programme* conforms to the scenario recounted above regarding initiatives in Fine Art in this field of practice, being one where the actions of particular individuals are significant. According to P5, the development of this programme can be attributed to action taken by one particular staff member in Fine Art:

I think he saw graffiti on the gate of the college one day or something ... it just struck a chord with him and he thought, well, we're completely protected in here, we're not really engaging with this world outside.

Although this research concerns community arts education programmes based in the School of Education, it is noteworthy that by 2002 a programme such as the *Learning Development Programme* was being developed in Fine Art at undergraduate level. The School of Fine Art did not go on to provide a dedicated post-graduate degree programme in this field of practice. This development took place in the School of Education. Nor was there a more comprehensive offering of SEA at Fine Art undergraduate level, a gap that needed to be addressed according to some participants. P5 remarks that 'undergraduate provision' is where we need to turn our attention' and P3 argues that it is important to consider 'where does this particular field sit in terms of core competencies and how they're defined for a degree' and he is concerned that 'there won't be an MA in this discourse if we don't start rethinking how it's taught in the undergraduate.' Comparing SEA with digital art P3 says 'if

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<sup>47</sup> <http://create-ireland.ie/learning-development/about-the-learning-development-programme>

we're going to introduce digital in first year, then why don't we introduce collaboration, these are the two really prominent discourses in the Fine Art world.' Notwithstanding these issues, P<sub>4</sub> says there were reverberations from the *Learning Development Programme* to the SEA programme in the School of Education, because 'there was a cohort of students coming through, who had that area of interest' from their undergraduate education and were interested in pursuing this field of practice at post-graduate level.

The way in which education for SEA developed in the College points to the pivotal role played by particular individuals in securing a 'fit' for it within their respective Schools. As P<sub>5</sub> says, the support of one tutor was an important catalyst in her being able to implement a SEA approach in her Fine Art degree show; the development of the *Learning Development Programme* grew out of the commitment of a particular staff member in the School of Fine Art. And similarly in the School of Education, the presence and commitment of particular individuals was decisive in the developments that took place in that particular School and these are discussed in the next section.

#### 5.1.5 School of Education

As noted earlier, it is significant that the institutional location for the programme is in the School of Education, rather than the School of Fine Art. P<sub>4</sub> recalls there was an attempt to base the programme in Fine Art where there would be a 'Fine Arts based socially engaged approach ... but the fact that it was in Education I suppose, it was slightly schizophrenic in a way!' She says there was a 'genuine constituency' in Fine Art but the crucial issue is 'who takes responsibility, who is prepared to put in the work' and it was in Education that this happened. P<sub>10</sub> echoes this in saying that there were people in Education 'who wanted it to go there' and 'the same energy, the same immediate interest wasn't emerging in any of the other departments' when the programme was being developed. Reflecting on the issue of disciplinarity, P<sub>10</sub> says since its 'defining characteristic' was one of a link between 'socially engaged practice and further education' it had either to be 'based in Education or jointly in Education'. According to P<sub>4</sub> a joint approach between Fine Art and Education was mooted in the very early stages, but:

the joint programme was just messy. And maybe messiness is, maybe we should have sat with the messiness longer or whatever! It got to a point where it just, it wasn't going to happen, jointly.

Echoing P6's view that there was 'almost pretty much a wilful ignorance' in Fine Art about the practice, for P5, apart from some individuals, a 'resistance' to the practice existed at that time, a situation which she says is now changed as 'there a number of brilliant tutors there now, who are really pushing for this area of practice'.

So although there were particular individuals in Fine Art who were supportive of the practice of community arts, the will and drive to establish a programme in community arts came from the School of Education, and it was there that staff members mobilised and were committed to bringing the programme into existence. P10 recalls that the School of Education wanted 'to contribute to developments' in community arts and, in addition, 'there was a desire to see Education in a broader spectrum' within the School of Education. Also, importantly, there were many personal connections, contributions and involvement of the community arts sector in creating the programme. But while according to P6 they were involved in carrying out a lot of the 'background work', it was also the case, as articulated by P5, that the community arts sector was not 'banging the doors', for the establishment of a formal higher education programme in community arts, or as noted by P8, there was not a 'formal lobby' campaigning for it. P8 also remarks:

Really, you know, the push must come from within a Department, or a School. And then it must go through certain formalities, School Boards, Academic Council. And yea, each time there would be a question of whether there's a demand for this, whether there's an interest in it, whether it will be sustainable.

However, although the community sector may not have been banging on the doors of the College, the impact of the community sector was still felt, through for example, meetings and seminars held with the sector, during the development of the programmes, as well as the fact that staff involved in developing the programmes included people who were themselves involved in community arts and the non-formal and informal sectors of education. For example, the Head of School at the time had previously been involved in the FE, adult and community sectors of education policy development, and a staff member involved in writing the initial Diploma and the MA programmes had previously been involved in developing education programmes in community arts in the non-formal sector. In addition, many of the staff teaching on the programme had connections to the community sector, for example, as community activists, community educators, artists with a community arts practice, activists using the arts in activist work. According to P8 'there was a genuine

sense that the curricula at undergraduate or postgraduate level, should reflect, I suppose, some of the changes that were occurring in community settings'. So while the setting for the programme was in an HEI, it was not without connections to the community sector. In addition, related to its location in the School of Education, the programme has consistently included students who come from community development, youth work, community activism as well as arts backgrounds. As P10 remarks, the programme cohort has included 'youth workers, teachers, community workers, who have a particular orientation or interest in the arts as a pedagogical platform'. And for P9 the programme 'fits quite interestingly' in the School of Education because 'if you look at education in the broader sense, there are of course many connections between education and practices and discourses occupying socially engaged art'. Thus there are particular interconnections between the discourse planes of education and art in the context of the location of the programme in the School of Education and these are discussed further in the next section.

#### 5.1.6 Development of the Programme in the School of Education

The institutional location within the School of Education has resulted in the programme being configured differently to what it would have been had it been located in the School of Fine Art. Being placed in Education meant it had to connect the disciplines of both Art and Education. P4 comments that 'the Community Arts programme kind of sat somewhere between the two'. With specific regard to the discipline of Education, historically programmes in the School of Education catered for educating students to teach art in second-level schools. With the advent of a programme related to community arts P8 remarks that it provided an opportunity 'to look at other forms of education that would be related to lifelong learning and informal and non-formal education', forms of education that had been 'very much on the periphery', but whose inclusion at this time allowed higher education to expand its student base. P8 also remarks that this expansion is not always exclusively about creating inclusivity, as it can also be motivated by the desire to bring in extra revenue, because, she argues, 'they have to balance the books' with the result that it is not always an 'educational philosophy' that is informing everything ... what could be informing it is whether or not this makes financial sense'. In a similar vein, P3 argues it is important to 'figure out' the logic of the academic institution and understand where its 'desire' lies:



Is it social justice ... sometimes I'm just not convinced that the academy's programme is social justice ... at least I'm sceptical about it ... so as a result of that I would be looking for other motivations that might be involved in validating that particular discourse at that particular time.

To initiate the investigation into the feasibility of a community arts/SEA programme, a Working Group, which included members of both community arts and community development groups, as well as members of the College staff, was established in 1999 in the School of Education. Its initial brief was to consider the addition of a module on Community Arts to the Teacher Education or Fine Art and Design programmes. However, the Working Group recommended instead the establishment of a stand-alone professional programme. The Working Group met between 1999 and 2001, and the outcome of its deliberations was to establish a programme at post-graduate level, in order to realise that objective. It was a one-year programme, a Higher Diploma (subsequently a Graduate Diploma)<sup>48</sup>, and it began in the academic year, 2001-2002. The Higher Diploma/Graduate Diploma ran for a period of ten years after which time a review of the programme was undertaken. P10 remarks that the ten year interval provided an ideal opportunity to evaluate the programme and the review process included both an internal and an external review. He adds that the external review included an 'international comparison as to what programmes were developing globally' with which the College programme might align itself.

#### 5.1.7 The Review Process and FE Sector Changes

Part of the backdrop to the programme review process, in broader policy terms, were changes regarding the post-graduate sector of HE and also changes in the FE sector. With regard to the HE sector and flowing from the Bologna Agreement, some post-graduate programmes were changing from one year to two years, for example the Higher Diploma in Education, the post-graduate teacher-training programme for second-level teachers. And as well as becoming a two-year programme, its name was being changed to the Professional Masters in Education (PME). These changes from Diploma to MA in the postgraduate Education programmes influenced the change from Diploma to MA in the SEA programme. As Pg remarks, this context was coincident with the review of the Diploma programme and it prompted those involved in the review to consider changing the programme into an MA:

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<sup>48</sup> This reflects the national education policy to change the title of Higher Diploma to Graduate Diploma.

The popular H-Dip to acquire a secondary school art teaching qualification was becoming a two year Professional Masters of Education. And so in that context, we were thinking 'let's turn it into an MA!'

Of possibly greater significance were the changes that were taking place in the FE sector, around the same time as the review of the programme. Of central relevance was that prior to 2013 it was not necessary to have a formal teaching qualification to teach in the FE sector, but after that date a formal teaching qualification became a requirement. P8 observes that 'in a sense it kind of overlapped with that development of the professionalisation of the FE sector'. This had particular consequences for graduates of Art as many of them worked in the FE sector, often for example, to supplement their income from their art practice, and it was also a sector accessible to others, such as community development workers, whose practice could encompass teaching in the FE sector.

The synchronicity of the timing of the review of the Graduate Diploma and the introduction of the requirement for a formal teaching qualification in the FE sector had a significant impact on the structure of the MA iteration of the programme. Inevitably, deliberations included considering the desirability of incorporating a formal FE qualification into the MA in socially engaged art practice. In this context, the external review outlined three options: (1) MA in Socially Engaged Arts Practice, (2) MA in Socially Engaged Arts Practice and Pedagogy/MA in Community-based Arts Practice and Education, (3) MA in Socially Engaged Arts Education. Ultimately it was decided to go with an option 2-type model. According to P9:

At the time, we did look at different models, whether to just run it as an MA in Socially Engaged Practice, and/or producing a Further Education Teaching Programme within the School, or a combination of both. We also looked at ways that you could just do Year 1 to get the teaching qualification and then progress to year 2 to top-up to the Masters in Socially Engaged Art, but we felt that the best choice was to thread it right through and incorporate the teaching components as part of a broader relationship with socially engaged practice.

Choosing to do this meant that programme validation required approval not only from bodies including the College authorities, but also the Teaching Council, since the Council is the regulatory body for the teaching profession and teaching standards in Ireland.

While the earlier Higher Diploma/Graduate Diploma had also included an education component it did not provide for a formal teaching qualification. Therefore the requirements regarding the education dimension differ quite significantly between the MA and its

predecessor, the Higher Diploma/Graduate Diploma, and consequently impact on the programme considerably. P<sub>3</sub> observes:

So you are in there, you are doing the MA and part of it is socially engaged art but in order to validate the funding structure ... you are an accredited worker in Adult and Community education. I think there's a lot of tension between the two.

This will be looked at in more detail later, in the discussion on the pedagogical practices aspects of the programme.

The final consideration of Place in this chapter relates to the physical location of the programme in the College. Although institutionally positioned in the School of Education it was the case that until the academic year of 2017-2018 the students were based in a number of physical spaces in the college related to the Art disciplines. According to P<sub>4</sub> the programme was 'homeless' in those early years. For P<sub>9</sub> the programme has been 'nomadic' and has struggled with 'where it belongs' in the College and while the first two cohorts of the MA were based in Arts-discipline spaces the third cohort is based in the School of Education buildings. P<sub>9</sub> says:

They are part of the School of Education, and this is where the staff and support is and in reality, their practices and identities as MA students didn't match up to either of the two spaces we have tried, and so we probably just needed to come back here and have that discussion, and have that challenge around different types of Education, and where we fit in relation to that.

So the MA became, both institutionally and physically, placed in the School of Education at the College.

Addressing the discourse strand of Practice, the next section discusses the MA iteration of the programme, examining its configuration and the pedagogical practices characteristic of the programme.

## **5.2 Discourse Strand 2: Practice**

As outlined in the previous section the arts practice terminology used in the title of the programme at the College changed along the way, from 'community arts' in the Diploma programmes to 'socially engaged art' in the MA programmes. The title of the MA itself was changed from *MA SEA FACE* (Socially Engaged Art – Further Adult & Community Education) to *MA SEA+FE* (Socially Engaged Art + Further Education) in 2017. The discussion of the discourse strand of Practice opens with an overview of the structure of the programme and

examines participants' views of the particular way in which the MA is configured. It then moves on to discuss, more specifically, pedagogical practices related to the SEA element of the programme, the particular field of practice with which this research is concerned. The topics constitutive of this discourse strand are, MA iterations: MA SEA FACE / MA SEA+FE; engagement with both art and education practices: 'marrying and modelling'; formal FE teaching qualification; marrying planes and sectors of art and education; SEA pedagogical practices. Each is examined below, starting with a discussion of the MA iterations of the programme.

#### 5.2.1 MA Iterations: MA SEA FACE / MA SEA+FE

The formal arrival of the field of community arts into the School of Education at the College in the early 2000s extended the range of education programmes that were offered in the School. With the addition of a programme in community arts, the School now offered education in this field of practice as well as initial teacher education for second-level teachers of art. From 2013 onwards, arising from the requirement to have a formal teaching qualification to teach in FE, there was a further expansion of teacher training in the School, with the addition of an FE teacher-training programme, a programme that was amalgamated with the SEA programme.

The requirement for a formal teaching qualification for the FE sector had particular repercussions for artist educators as many work in the FE sector, so the need to have a formal qualification was a major change in the working lives of these artist educators. P4 remarks this new requirement of the Teaching Council meant that people could no longer 'float around the fringes', thereby changing a sector that was formerly 'quite fluid' into one that is much more formalised and professionalised.

Given the hybrid nature of the MA,<sup>49</sup> and its position in the School of Education, its student body is not confined to students from an art background. Historically it has included school teachers, people working in arts institutions, and youth and community workers as well as artists, attracting as P4 says 'a broader base than simply artists'. There is also diversity among the staff who teach on the programme, including people who identify as artists, artist

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<sup>49</sup> Although based in a college of Art and Design the forms of art practice carried out in the programme are not restricted to visual art, and include other art forms such as the performing arts.

educators, community activists, educators and in some cases combinations of these different identities and occupations. Thus while all the participants in the research are, or have been, engaged in pedagogical practices associated with the MA, they are a heterogeneous group with various experiences, points of view and approaches to their work on the programme. Notwithstanding this heterogeneity they all share an interest in, and commitment to, the practice of SEA. All but two, are, or have been, directly involved in this field of practice, and they all have experience of contributing as educators to the programme.

The dual-discipline nature of the programme is mirrored in its day-to-day organisation. Practically speaking, it has two co-ordinators, one for the SEA element and one for the FE element; it comprises two sets of modules, each aligned with the relevant element of the programme and includes two Practicums, one devoted to FE practice and one devoted to SEA practice. The FE Practicum is done in Year 1 and the SEA Practicum in Year 2. The FE Practicum takes place in FE settings and must satisfy the requirements for a formal FE teaching qualification as set down by the Teaching Council. The SEA Practicum is not tied to formal education settings.

The inclusion of the SEA field of practice in post-graduate programmes in the School of Education and the expansion of the remit of the School beyond formal teacher education for the second-level sector were significant changes for the School of Education. Similarly, developing a programme devoted to the practice of socially engaged art, combined with a formal FE teaching qualification in a School of Education was a significant move in disciplinary terms for the field of socially engaged art. Endorsing the move and simultaneously identifying its lack of connectedness to other programmes in the School of Education, Pg says:

In reality however, the primary focus of the School of Education is based on teacher education for second level and there is no connection between our programme and other programmes here.

Balancing two forms of practice in the one programme as articulated in Pg's comment above, is a recurring topic in the Practice discourse strand and this is discussed in further detail below.

### 5.2.2 *Engagement with both Art and Education Practices: 'marrying and modelling'*

The metaphors 'marrying' and 'modelling' occur a number of times in the data, describing the task of bringing together the disciplines and practices of art and education, and the relative merits of each. In this regard P10 says:

If other disciplines were to look at the way Art and Design education teaches and learns, then it isn't just that we're sort of accommodating and positioning ourselves to fit into the system but we could actually be helping, not to take over the system, but to actually change the way it works.

Developing this further, he goes on to say that 'pure education' 'is actually closer to the art practice model than it is to the regulatory practice of our school systems'. One of the architects of both the Diploma and the MA programmes, he talks about the programme providing a real opportunity 'for modelling through an art practice approach' so that the 'creative practices of the art community can liberate the education', serving as a 'really strong model for other Education disciplines'. He argues an art practice approach departs from the notions of education 'as schooling, as syllabus exam oriented, instruction' and is instead 'something of a far more developmental and organic and participatory process'. P4 shares P10's opinion that SEA can enhance School of Education programmes. She is welcoming of the presence of SEA and refers to a desire to create greater 'synergy' across the various programmes in the School, through for example, incorporating the practice-based approaches of socially engaged art into the Professional Masters in Education (PME). Referring to the College's membership of the Institute of Education<sup>50</sup> P4 says 'we are looking at different kinds of ways of producing research dissertations and I think we need to be the one that's promoting the practice-based one, if at all possible, and there's a good model already in place from the socially engaged practice'. P10 also extols the value of practice-based approaches to research that are coming from the 'growing field of arts based practice' and says that an objective of the programme is to facilitate students 'to present their research in a way that is appropriate to their practice', and not be limited to the 'traditional bound thesis'. P4 argues that Art School and art environments are well-placed to demonstrate that options are not limited to the 'black folder with the gold letters'.

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<sup>50</sup> The College is part of the Institute of Education which also includes Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin and Marino Institute of Education.

In talking about the two disciplines and practices within the programme, P9 makes a similar point, describing the objective as being to 'create a specific paradigm for the programme, at the intersection of Socially Engaged Art and Further Education'. She observes that when developing the programme they decided:

... to look at the relationship between art practice and pedagogy, recognising the range of methodologies used in socially engaged practice that draw on educational concepts and forms and the important position of the FE sector in offering learning opportunities to diverse students ...

Notwithstanding this articulation of the association between the fields of SEA and Education, P9 adopts a critical position regarding the approaches to practice within the discipline of Education in the School. Her critique is linked to the historical situation whereby the School of Education offered teacher education for second-level schools only. The establishment of the MA programme signalled an expansion into both the practice of socially engaged art and formal FE teacher education and with that, according to P9, expanded ideas around the discipline of Education. She argues that it represents a 'contrast' and a 'challenge' to second-level teacher education and while this is not about 'having a big conflict' it is about having an awareness within the School of Education that 'not everyone would necessarily hold to Education in the same way'.

Thus there is an articulation of dissimilarities between the MA *SEA+FE* programme and the School's second-level teacher education programmes, since each has very different pedagogical requirements and objectives. According to P4 this gives the MA programme somewhat more latitude than that available to the second-level teacher-training programmes, because it is not as tied to a Leaving Certificate<sup>51</sup> examination-based curriculum, and there are therefore 'a lot less restrictions in terms of that they can do and what they can't do'.

While participants articulate expectations and aspirations as to what the MA *SEA+FE* programme has to offer, and can achieve, in pedagogical terms in the School of Education, the possible constraints on the programme's capacity to fully realise these aspirations are also expressed. Significant among these constraints are those relating to the incorporation of a formal FE teaching qualification into the MA programme. Although as P4 points out, the

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<sup>51</sup> The Leaving Certificate is the final examination in second-level education in Ireland.

FE sector might be less constrained by the demands of the Leaving Certificate curriculum than the second-level sector, the formal requirements for an FE teaching qualification, accredited by the Teaching Council, nonetheless signals a level of formalisation of the Education element that did not exist in Diploma iterations of the programme. P2 is of the view that:

Since the Teaching Council and the Further Education component has been strengthened, and since the course has changed its focus slightly, [from the Higher/Graduate Diploma] I might be a little bit more aware of the fact that, yes, we had to go through this process of being vetted by the Teaching Council.

Thus the inclusion of this formal teaching qualification highlights interesting points of discussion in the interviews regarding the 'marrying' of the fields of SEA and Education. Acknowledging that there is 'more tension with socially engaged art being embedded in Education' P3 is nonetheless of the view that it is 'more generative' for it to be based in Education rather than in Fine Art:

... there's more tension there, potentially, more of a threat to the discourse there, with it being in Education. But, then, also the opposite – if done right, there's more to be gained. I think socially engaged art has more to gain from an open and honest discourse with Education, its histories, its concerns.

The next section continues the discussion of marrying SEA and Education, examining some of the issues relating more specifically to the FE component of the programme.

### 5.2.3 Formal FE Teaching Qualification

While there are aspirations and opportunities for modelling practices from the field of art practice to the field of education on the MA, there is the dynamic of modelling in the other direction also, from education practice to art practice. This is most apparent in the context of what is required by the Teaching Council with regard to the FE teaching qualification. Because of the inclusion of the FE teaching qualification, the Teaching Council has a close involvement with, and oversight of, the programme. The curriculum for the programme had to be submitted to the Teaching Council for approval and was subject to a negotiation process, and, similar to other programmes in the School of Education, will undergo periodic review in the future.

Participants remarked that the combination of SEA and Education practices makes the programme quite unusual and certainly idiosyncratic from the perspective of the Teaching



Council, whose expertise is in the area of the practice of formal education rather than art practice. Commenting on the negotiation process with the Teaching Council P4 notes that while the Council was able to understand the concepts concerning adult education they had difficulty understanding socially engaged arts practice:

It was quite a piece of work to get it across the line I think, in terms of the Teaching Council trying to get their head around it, you know, understanding what exactly this business was about! ...what socially engaged art was and how it fitted in with Education ... because it was not just formal Adult Education or Life Long Learning, you know, it did incorporate elements but it was more than just that.

Particulars about the appropriate site for the placement for the FE Practicum formed an element of the negotiations with the Teaching Council. It was agreed that for the purposes of the FE teaching qualification students do their placement in recognised FE settings, which in the context of the Irish National Framework of Qualifications sets it at FETAC (Further Education and Training Awards Council) levels 5 and 6. Some participants would prefer that there was more latitude with regard to the settings for the teaching Practicum, so that it was not restricted to recognised FE settings. Commenting on the negotiation process with the Teaching Council P6 says it was proposed by some that the placement for the FE Practicum be a context that 'was as informed as possible' with regard to SEA, which would have meant it was not confined to FE settings. However this was not something with which the Teaching Council agreed. Although this was not acceded to by the Council, P8 hopes that nonetheless these FE settings will provide a 'multiplicity of experiences' and will inform students of the diversity that exists within FE. She is of the view that students have to be prepared for professional practice, and she emphasises 'they have to develop their sense of themselves as professional practitioners, as teachers' and understand what it means to be 'a teacher in the Further Education sector these days'.

#### 5.2.4 *Marrying Planes and Sectors of Art and Education*

The discourse planes of art and education are manifest in the running of the programme. Negotiating the tensions between the two fields of practice of art and education is seen as part and parcel of running the programme and participants describe the ways in which the tensions are negotiated and what is at stake in a SEA programme amalgamated with an FE teaching qualification and based in a School of Education. With regard to the education component, particularly from the perspective of those who teach the education modules,

participants say it is important that the students appreciate what is involved in teaching, and become competent and committed FE teachers. P8 says that staff hope that 'students would have a strong sense of why they have entered into this, being a two year course ... an area of practice that encourages some sort of educative aspect and that they are committed to that'. There is keen awareness of the necessity to meet the requirements of the Teaching Council. According to P8 'the curriculum is pretty much shaped by what the Teaching Council indicates are requirements for people who wish to become professional practitioners in the area'. P9 describes the type of obligations required of the programme that were created by the FE qualification:

It creates a dynamic that we have to work with, in the sense that because the Teaching Qualification is embedded there is a certain amount of time just has to be devoted towards teaching and towards understanding the conditions, the context, the language, the knowledge of teaching. And so that takes up a huge amount of the course, a lot of time.

The Practicum for the FE teaching placement entails one hundred hours and takes place in the first year. According to P9 this can be a struggle for some students. She says that it can be unsettling to come into a programme with 'socially engaged art up front and be so embedded in a teaching context'. For many students this is unfamiliar territory and they can feel out of their depth. However, countering this, P9 also says that a lot of students testify to the value of the FE Practicum, when they have completed it:

But I think a lot of people do find the teaching component a really valuable addition to your backpack of skills, whether you actually embrace it in terms of entering the FE sector, or whether you just draw on that for your own work as an artist or educator in informal/non-formal settings.

P8 states that students are actually quite cognisant of the teaching qualification saying that 'the first thing that people always ask me, either half way through the course, or at the end of the course, is when can I sign up for the Teaching Council'. Given the historical appeal to art graduates of teaching in the FE sector, and the requirement since 2013 to have a formal teaching requirement to teach in the sector, the opportunity to obtain the FE teaching qualification through this programme can be an attractive one.

There is also the financial income aspect to a teaching qualification. Given the cost of doing an MA, the securing of a teaching qualification is a useful thing, and P9 is of the view that it is a 'draw for people coming to the course, knowing they will get that teaching qualification'. She also says it is a bonus to have an FE qualification:

because when you have done the modules related to teaching, you can then completely embrace it, or adapt what you learned or reject it, but you have it, you understand it, and then you can work from there.

Looking ahead, P<sub>9</sub> says that if it transpires that students 'are not actually working in the FE sector', and 'vice versa with regard to socially engaged practice' then a review would be warranted, and as has happened in the past, the programme could change to suit changing sets of circumstances.

While the Teaching Council has quite a high level of influence with regard to the Education modules and their delivery on the programme, there is not the same level of association between the Council and the SEA part of the programme. P<sub>9</sub> maintains that while the Education part is 'curriculum-driven' the ethos of SEA is to be more open-ended and aims to consistently 'challenge the terms of its existence'. P<sub>4</sub> says that the SEA part is a bit 'looser' and for P<sub>9</sub>, while the broad thematic SEA areas are set down in the programme document, details will change over time because it is important to stay 'alive' and 'connected' to contemporary SEA practice. Local and visiting speakers are invited on to the programme to talk about their practice, and the SEA Practicum provides opportunities for placement in practice sites in both Ireland and abroad.

Since it is an MA there is a research requirement and the options provided for that reflect the dual nature of the programme. Thus, as mentioned earlier, it is possible for students to do a 'traditional' written dissertation or one that is practice-based. For P<sub>10</sub>, having this arts-based practice option is important so that 'the academy doesn't take over the inherent organic nature of arts practice'. P<sub>4</sub> also refers to the ongoing developments regarding the place of arts-based research in the academy, including the place of the written text in practice-based work. With regard to the MA dissertation she says that students can do practice-based work, for example, documentation of a particular project or a particular engagement with a community group', accompanied by a written component. Thus P<sub>10</sub> and P<sub>4</sub> would not dispense entirely with the written element. Rather, they argue there should also be scope for the inclusion of a practice-element.

Notwithstanding the tensions that participants talk about, there is also expression of an openness and a 'wait and see' attitude regarding positioning an MA incorporating SEA in the School of Education. For some, it relates to the pedagogical impulse contained in SEA. For

example, P8 would not see SEA practice as 'purely as an arts based practice' as it contains participatory education elements; she is interested in 'participatory forms of practice' more broadly, and for her the key thing to address is 'how people participate in practicing and get access to practice'. Given the programme's location at the 'intersection' between Education and SEA, achieving transdisciplinarity is a goal to which the programme aspires. Although P3 points to tensions between the two fields of practice he says that its 'transdisciplinary potential' is more likely to be realised in Education than in Fine Art:

Whereas if it was in the Fine Art Department then I think it would be enclosed within the Fine Art world and lose that real transdisciplinary potential.

P9 makes the point that while transdisciplinarity is not reliant on having an FE teaching qualification, the inclusion of the FE qualification is what makes the College programme different to other HE SEA programmes in Ireland. Other less sanguine opinions about the FE qualification are offered by P5 who says that while she understands why the FE is included in the programme, 'it wouldn't be the piece that lights my fire particularly about the course', and P6 who refers to it as the 'sticky-out bit' of the programme. Referring to the presence of 'risk' P9 says that while there are concerns attached to the way the programme is configured, the dynamics of the programme are still being played out:

So at the time I suppose we really believed it was worth the risk, and, still do. It would be a different course if students were coming in and didn't have the teaching aspect to it –then it would be a combination of research and socially engaged practice. And there would be a freedom in that that which in one way I would welcome, because you could do a whole load of other things. But I suppose the value of developing one's identity as both a teacher and a creative practitioner, is still playing out.

Thus the merits and demerits of the conjunction between the relatively less constrained SEA and the relatively more constrained FE is an evolving situation. The inclusion of a formal professional FE qualification in the MA programme has resulted in there being more of a distinction between the Education and the Art elements in the MA iteration of the programme than there was in the Diploma iteration. According to P4 there is now the 'Further Education piece and the Socially Engaged Art practice piece' and they are now 'more clearly defined than they were before'. While P10 is hopeful about the marrying of the two practices he acknowledges there are issues attached to complying with the Teaching Council requirements, saying it is 'a tightrope we walk' in combining both practices in the one programme. P4 remarks 'tensions between the two fields of practice' have not yet been 'fully

resolved'. P<sub>9</sub> makes the point that while the goal is to achieve an 'intersection of the two fields' this has not been fully realised as students tend to see the MA as a programme of two halves. She goes on to say staff have a responsibility in making the link between the two fields, thereby presenting students with 'a cross-disciplinary field'. She observes this is not an easy task, however, because there are 'different languages, and completely different values and ethos' at times' between the two fields of practice. According to her, this situation necessitates ongoing vigilance and is something 'we can never stop minding'. Notwithstanding these difficulties, P<sub>9</sub> remains optimistic about the configuration of the programme and argues that combining the practices of art and education is 'to the value' of the MA. In a similar vein, P<sub>4</sub> argues that although they are 'different constituencies' the challenges associated with these differences can be addressed with 'the right people driving it and enough contact across both areas and one recognising the value of the other'.

#### 5.2.5 SEA Pedagogical Practices

As indicated in the comments above, the disciplines of Education and SEA are quite separately configured in the MA iterations, with one manifestation of this being that staff teach either in Education or SEA. With regard to the students on the programme, they are both student teachers and student SEA practitioners. As pedagogies for socially engaged practice is a particular focus in this research I will examine in a bit more detail pedagogical practices related to SEA education on the programme.

The SEA staff, while not teaching the discipline of Education itself, are engaging with the field of Education in their work as educators of SEA practice. Some members of the programme's staff have formal qualifications in the discipline of Education, including those who teach on the FE element, but most do not, reflecting the situation whereby it is common for artists to teach as well as carry out an art practice, without having a formal teaching qualification. The SEA educators who took part in the research, (both current and past programme staff) have worked in a part-time capacity, and they have variously, art, community activist and teaching practices. Their approaches to the teaching of SEA is discussed below.

### 5.2.5.1 SEA Practice and Education Practice

P9 describes the importance to the programme of maintaining close connections with the field of SEA and of being personally 'rooted in the field of community based, collaborative, socially engaged practice'. Being 'rooted' in the SEA field of practice is both the place from which P9 came into the academy and the place which continues to shape her practice in the academy:

I think that has probably been the way I came in to this and the way that I respond is in the same way that I think as a critical arts practitioner ... so everything gets filtered back in terms of practice and my approach changes and grows and adapts.

And speaking of her personal way of working as an educator on the MA programme P9 says:

I find myself increasingly thinking as an artist here, imagining projects I would like to develop wearing this hat. So in truth I didn't set out with a guiding educational philosophy, but drew from the learning in my relational art practice and so would be seen by students primarily as an artist I would imagine.

The concepts 'instinct', 'intuition' are forms of expression used in a number of the interviews. P9 says, 'so I am at once responding just intuitively to the conditions of the practice, and then I'm constantly engaged with the field of socially engaged art'. Describing her educational practice P1 says 'teaching is the place where I'm at my most intuitive really'.

The capacity of the programme to 'make', to produce knowledge and contribute to the SEA field of practice is important to P9. In her view this is related to her 'natural instinct as an artist' whereby alongside the activity of educating students, both staff and students are making a contribution to the field of knowledge of socially engaged art. She observes: 'I'm thinking all the time about making from the course as well as educating the students we have. So, what can we say, what can we make?' An example provided of a tangible example of 'making' from the course is the publication *TransActions*<sup>52</sup>, a publication devoted to written and visual material on the field of socially engaged art, and contributed to by both students and staff. The first issue of *TransActions* was in collaboration with the Stockyard Institute in Chicago and published in 2016. The second was published in 2017, in collaboration with Fire Station Artists' Studios and Create, both based in Dublin. Another example is the

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<sup>52</sup> <http://transaction+publication.com/sample-page/>

screening of *Creative Time*<sup>53</sup>, which has been hosted by the programme in collaboration with organisations such as Fire Station Artists' Studios.

While Pg's desire is to be able 'to think as an artist within my teaching role' she feels that she hasn't yet brought her 'way of being a practitioner into the course' and that her practice 'hasn't found its way in on a deeper level'. She is of the view that:

the influence of my art practice on this educational role has been on the level of me bringing my connections, my experience to bear and the discourse and new practice I encounter through being committed to the field.

Looking to the future she says she would aspire to developing a practice that is not 'the typical separation of being an artist with an external practice who works as an educator within the institution'. Instead, her interest is to keep open the potential of developing a 'more hybrid practice' in her role as an educator on the programme. She cites the practice of the artist Suzanne Lacy, as an illustration of a practitioner who succeeds in 'blurring the territories' of art and education, through for example, making work jointly with her students. This is something Pg hasn't yet done and she says 'I wonder about the potential of what I might do next, and whether that line could get murkier?'

While not intentionally deciding to become an educator, P1 did so on leaving college, starting in the *Artists in Schools* scheme, and since then has taught in a wide variety of settings, formal and non-formal. She includes being an educator as part of her practice. Commenting on the education element of her practice, she says:

I never have the language to talk about it, even in job interviews, but at the same time I know I'm a really good teacher. I suppose without knowing it, I would have always had a little bit of, say Paulo Freire's notion of education as an emancipatory tool [...] so that probably was what I had at the beginning when I started.

For her, education has a 'radical emancipatory element', and while there are radical educationalists whose philosophies 'chime' with her practice 'it's something I've never really formalised linguistically'... 'I find it quite hard to talk about it or put it into words – it's quite intuitive, I suppose'. [...] 'I'm able to work the theory into it, but it is quite intuitive'.

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<sup>53</sup> Creative Time Summit, an annual conference-type event devoted to socially engaged art practice, live-streamed by the Creative Time organisation in New York: <https://creativetime.org/>

### 5.2.5.2 Formal Educational Qualification

In discussing where she would position herself with regard to pedagogical practices, P5 alludes to the fact of not having a formal qualification in Education. She says that unlike a colleague who is doing a degree in education and learning theories of education, this is 'stuff I don't know anything about. I just talk about stuff I'm enthusiastic about, which is very different!' P5 describes herself as being 'firmly rooted' in SEA, and out of that 'steps into' Education. Referencing the pedagogical turn in art, she notes that in contemporary SEA 'there has been a huge move towards education, pedagogy, as forming part of the practice'.

The phenomenon of the pedagogical turn also resonates in a comment by P1 who quotes the phrase 'those who can't do, teach', which she says was a form of disparagement of artists who teach, implying 'if you're teaching it's because you can't make it as an artist properly'. According to her this attitude changed in the late 1990s when it became legitimate to include education as part of an artist's practice, a change she says can be broadly linked to the social turn in art and other theoretical perspectives such as feminism:

I think it was, in a way it was through the same process that socially engaged or relational aesthetics emerged [...] it was through the social turn that it became clear but also other strands [...] like a feminist kind of argument for the acknowledgement of one's lived experience, one's lived practices, all the work that we do being recognised as creative work, and not necessarily this kind of capitalist compartmentalisation.

Describing the importance of this to her P1 says:

It was such a great relief when that happened, to be able to actually say the work I do in a school or whatever is just as much part of my approach as everything else that I do. It was very liberating to have that happen.

In a reprise of some of P9's ideas considered earlier about the contribution art practice can make to education, P1 identifies the field of aesthetics as an important influence on her education practice, because it takes account of affective domains of knowledge. Referencing Kantian ideas on aesthetics she argues that 'unless you facilitate people to actually work with aesthetic knowledge [...] you are not educating the whole person'.

Coincidentally, both P5 and P1 refer to nursing education as an analogous activity to SEA education. P5 says:

When you're training to be a nurse, you're trained to go into a room and not just look at the patient, but you're trained, in super split seconds to look at the entire environment. The



difference between socially engaged practice and studio based work, is that socially engaged artists when they come into a room, they have to look at everything, everything.

P1 discusses this in more detail, citing Barbara Carper's *Fundamental Patterns of Knowing in Nursing* (1978), which identifies four different types of knowing in nursing: empirics, aesthetics, personal knowledge and ethics. She says that Carper's work bolstered her view regarding the significance of aesthetic forms of knowledge and its equivalence with cognitive and conceptual forms of knowledge:

I feel kind of lucky to be able to call it aesthetic knowledge, because I come out of aesthetics and I don't know what people call it who come out of other disciplines, but I'm sure there's other language for it [...] so it's a great thing to be able to draw upon, it's not overly formulated, there's a lot of room for interpretation within that.

#### 5.2.5.3 SEA and 'community'

How the term 'community' is conceptualised is of central concern in SEA practice. For P7 it is a concept that requires interrogation as it is a concept that is 'wall-to-wall, without people thinking about it anymore' and his questions to the SEA students include 'what is community, what does it mean'; 'why is socially engaged arts necessary?; why do you have to socially engage with that group, and not this group?' Being aware and sensitised to the specifics of particular community contexts, and SEA practice in those contexts, is also addressed by P6, who says 'you really have to know the local story to know how to function in a community'. This is not something one can achieve by 'rote learning' as one cannot proceed without 'reference to the history and reality of the place' and it is this type of reference point that informs his teaching. He says his teaching draws on his personal experience of practicing SEA in his own community and this is further built upon through presentations by invited SEA practitioners and by visits to community-based settings of SEA practice.<sup>54</sup> For him, this is 'really valuable in a practical way' as it 'equips people to operate beyond the academy'. He considers that the module he teaches is 'not academic in the sense that it's about people's practice' but is 'academic in the sense that there's credit for the course'.

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<sup>54</sup> The programme includes visits to both urban and rural community settings.

#### 5.2.5.4 *Place of Critical Theory in SEA Practice and Education*

A common thread running through the interviews is the place of critical theory and criticality in SEA practice and relatedly in SEA education, and therefore attention is given to power and power relations. P9 says that her art practice 'is driven by core principles around power' and in her role as an educator she strives to draw on her 'critical thinking frame as a socially engaged/collaborative artist'; for P1 'where it all comes together is around the notion of criticality'; according to P3 'critical theory and critical pedagogies are an important 'touchstone' for the field of socially engaged practice and his own practice as an educator. For P3 'the discourse of critical theory is one of the key discourses with which to understand socially engaged art and participatory art in the 20<sup>th</sup> century'. Similarly, P7 says he starts with 'some of the classical theory' and moves on 'to more recent sort of empirical stuff, using a 'kind of Marxist framework, Weberian, some of Bourdieu stuff, to try and give people a broad sense'.

Although P9 comments that her art practice is centrally concerned with power she says there are limitations in this respect with regard to the programme:

I'm not in a position to approach this work in such a way – that's not the job of this MA. But I would draw from my own thought process as an artist, and my own kind of critical way of engaging and responding to the knowledge and experience in the room [...]

#### 5.2.5.5 *Pedagogical Theories*

Reflecting on his motivation to contribute to the programme, P7, a long-time practitioner of SEA practice in community development, says it relates to the 'challenge of teaching Sociology in the space' of the College:

I'm interested in the idea of becoming a good teacher, and seeing, yes am I good at that? And I would say that, I would have found that challenging especially in the early days. But I would say, and my sense is, I am probably better at it now than I was in the past.

Advocating an 'open and egalitarian' approach to teaching he says the transmission of 'knowledge and information' relevant to the practice of SEA is core. He describes the teaching process as engaging students in subject matter relevant to SEA. This 'exposure to material' such as 'critical theories and ideas in Sociology' might 'hopefully make them think about how the world is, possibly how it should be, or could be'. He argues this kind of

exposure 'can change people, and can change the way they think about things', even if they disagree with the material, and which may, or may not, be taken into their practice. For P7 it is necessary to provide a 'certain amount of information' but also to combine that with conversations in the classroom, so that the 'lightning rod is touching at both ends' and 'people "get" what you're trying to communicate to them, and that they will engage with you around it'.

An approach that more precisely articulates educational theory and practice and applies it to teaching socially engaged practice is also discernible in the data. This is characterised by an engagement with a range of contemporary debates and theoretical perspectives on education and a personal positioning within those debates and ideas. P3 says the dominant theoretical framework he relies on pedagogically is a 'constructivist logic' whereby you engage with students 'in deep understanding in such a way that allows them to develop their own understanding' with regard to the 'teaching that is being done' and the 'content you provide'. He also draws on art historical traditions, with the Brazilian and Russian avant-gardes' important influences on his practice. Although defining himself as a 'constructivist educator', he goes on to critique that position saying that while he 'used to be all for constructivism and against traditional lecture, I'm really against that binary now'. In this regard he refers to the critique of constructivism, identifying that there can be limitations to its methodology if it is 'done badly', in which case it can place restrictions on people's ability to acquire new knowledge:

In other words, the problem of new knowledge is it becomes dependent on context and on identity ... so how could they learn something new? If I give them something new to learn ... well then you would be imposing knowledge upon them – and they might not retain it, might not get it.

Referencing Freire's (1972) 'banking' model of education he pinpoints the risks associated with imposing knowledge on students and not acknowledging their personal experience of the world. Against that argument, he also acknowledges that the desirability of expanding students' knowledge beyond the horizons of their experience can be compromised by constructivist approaches. In addressing this dilemma he says:

So I'm on the side of students being able to be taught to listen, to receive, to be passive and to engage with intellectual ideas or how ideas are in the world. At the same time I'm for experiential learning and engagement [...]

In expanding the critique of constructivism P3 references Richardson's overview of constructivist perspectives and practices in her edited book *Constructivist Teacher Education* (1997) which for him argues that the most dominant version of constructivism currently being used is developmentalism, a kind of 'individualisation of constructivism which is very much aligned with the notion of human capital [...] thinking of the self as a commodity' and understanding education as an 'economic transaction'. He is opposed to thinking of students and education in these terms and is critical of the influence of these ideas on contemporary education:

We can talk about it in big politics but we live it in small politics and institutions – we live it every day, in the ways we are told to organise our classes, in the ways that we are supposed to think of our students.

For him critical pedagogies utilising critical theory's 'emancipatory themes' and its notion of praxis, is important in maintaining a 'link between education and emancipation' and keeping the political nature of the work in sight. He says these ideas can be 'difficult knowledge' so that:

[...] part of what your job is, to make difficult knowledge or traumatic knowledge in the sense of what Britzman calls it – to make it valuable and valid for the students [...] part of that is just making them historical thinkers.

Concurring with Biesta's (2013) critique of contemporary education as being forms of 'learnification', P3 describes the supplanting of 'education' by 'learning' as the reduction of education to a 'discrete set of skills and methodologies that can be just rolled out by anybody, and thereby, possibly not by, hopefully, preferably, not by a professional teacher!'. He considers students having 'sustainable economic lives' to be a legitimate goal of education, particularly acute in the case of art students, but argues there are alternatives to the human capital model. For him Biesta's (2010, 2014) tripartite model of educational goals encompassing qualification, socialisation and subjectification is a useful corrective to the human capital model, because unlike human capital theory it does not entail the 'negation of the social and the subjective'. And he expands the application of Biesta's tripartite model to socially engaged practice, contending it provides an 'important framework to think through that kind of practice'.

The third element of the analysis of the data relates to the discourse strand of Academy. The focus of this strand is on the wider institutional conditions within which the MA programme operates and this is addressed in the next section.

### **5:3 *Discourse Strand 3: Academy***

Reflecting Vandeputte's (2015: 12) question 'what is at stake in practices of study today?' the Academy discourse strand addresses what is at stake for higher education in the field of socially engaged art practice at this particular time, with reference to the College, but also including reference to higher education more broadly. These issues are commented on in both micro- and macro-type terms by the participants. The micro-level comments encompass the day-to-day institutional arrangements involved in running the programme, and the macro-level comments include the impact of neo-liberalism on higher art education in general, and higher SEA education in particular. The discussion is largely based on data drawn from the group interview, but data from some of the one-to-one interviews also are also included. Examination of this strand addresses the topics of, ecology of SEA higher education in Ireland; transdisciplinary academic territories; time; SEA life in the Academy; academic labour and precarity of employment; socially engaged practice and exhibition practices. It opens with a discussion of the ecology of SEA higher education in Ireland.

#### **5.3.1 *Ecology of SEA Higher Education in Ireland***

The availability of SEA programmes in three HEIs in Ireland and the impact of this on the College manifests a variety of responses from the participants. P9 is concerned about whether there is sufficient demand for three programmes, because it creates a situation in which you are 'actually fighting over the same group of students', and are being forced into competition with the other institutions for students. For P5 three programmes is not too many, when one takes into consideration the 'geographical spread' of the colleges. She argues this number of programmes demonstrates a 'real affirmation of the growth of the sector' and a recognition of the importance of creating 'the conditions for emerging artists to test and flex their muscles in relation to this kind of work'. While acknowledging she is not currently based in the academy and it doesn't fall to her to recruit students for the programme, she nonetheless advocates 'holding one's nerve' about the issue of recruiting students. She puts forward the view that Ireland has a good reputation for socially engaged

art practice and that it could become an international leader in educating for the field, attracting international students to study in Ireland. A contrasting view is put forward by P3, speaking, as he says, from a position inside the academy. He agrees with P5 that the field of socially engaged art is currently strong 'in the Irish context and the Irish community', but says this is not the situation inside the academy. He argues there is pressure on the discourse of socially engaged art within the academy, demonstrated in 'a reaction to it, a reactionary formalism, which is a type of artistic practice and a type of ethos which is pulling away from its expanded nature'. For him the struggle inside the academy is 'much more tense' than it was ten or fifteen years ago. In response, P5 again acknowledges she is not in the academy and accepts that within the academy it is a real 'battleground', but says this reactionary move should not come as a shock. She argues it should be expected 'there would be a turn going the other way' and what is therefore necessary is to decide 'we're in it for the long game', as this is what is required with regard to higher education in this field of practice in Ireland.

The specific ecology of the programme in the Irish higher education SEA landscape, in which the SEA programme is combined with an FE programme, creates a particular type of 'academic territory' (Tony Becher and Paul Trowler, 2001). Issues encountered by participants in navigating this particular academic territory, as well as the more general issues regarding SEA in the academy, alluded to above, are discussed in the next section.

### 5.3.2 *Transdisciplinary Academic Territories*

Notwithstanding the programme's distinctiveness in the Irish higher education context, discussion among participants identifies historical and contemporaneous connections between art and education in the wider sphere of the demarcation of the disciplines. Part of that deliberation revolves around discussion of the pedagogical turn in art practice in the early 2000s and its impact on socially engaged art practice.

P5 says it is timely to address the impact of the pedagogical turn on the field of socially engaged art. She argues there was a 'rush from socially engaged practice into the field of education in terms of critical pedagogy', a 'running into the academies, pulling what it could out of them, and running back out', because education had become 'the latest and most vivid territory'. Critical of this approach, she sees value in a more long-term and sustained engagement with the field of Education. She argues that knowledge exchange between

other disciplines and practices and socially engaged practice can help the field of socially engaged practice 'find a language around some of the processes and relational complexities and intellectual contestation' that inhere in this field of art practice. Working solely from an art perspective means 'we are only really in half the picture' and therefore there is a need to draw on 'other fields of knowledge'. Education is one such field of knowledge as are disciplines within the social sciences. She cites feminist post-colonial critiques of ethnography as 'one of the richest seams' for articulating the 'relational network in a collaborative project'. Relational networks can involve a lot of people and organisations and she says a mistake that is often made is 'that we don't talk enough about this as a field of power'. According to P5 the process involves navigating 'the micro-political territory of a field of practice' and disciplines outside of art are better equipped to educate for these aspects of the practice:

Like for example, some of the best training people get in this field is in conflict resolution! Some of the best training is in organisational skills because you can have very complex project structures that involve a lot of people and a lot of different organisations.

A practical issue in this regard is the nature of the contract that is drawn up, entailing as P6 points out, understanding the expectations of all parties involved and also 'teasing out' how 'an artist would work within community-based projects'.

Picking up on the points raised by P5 relating to the pedagogical turn, P3 remarks that issues related to the pedagogical turn and socially engaged art practice arise because the pedagogical turn 'became named as part of a curatorial discourse', rather than a discourse related to the art academy. P3 goes on to argue there was a 'long peripheral engagement' with education 'prior to it becoming formalised and named' within the context of the pedagogical turn, and it is this history, rather than the pedagogical turn, that is more relevant for socially engaged art in the academy. He says that although there are tensions related to its positioning in Education, there is greater scope for transdisciplinarity in Education than there would be in Fine Art, and contends that:

what we need to do is hold on to this much longer, deeper engagement, with the relationship between Art and Education. And let that other spectacular naming of the educational turn play itself out in the way that it does in the art world.

Speaking about the transdisciplinary nature of the programme P9 says the 'paradigm' for the programme is at an 'intersection of socially engaged art and education' which creates a

'transdisciplinary dynamic' across the two disciplines. She notes although a formal teaching qualification in FE is part of the programme, the programme's transdisciplinarity is not dependent on this, because 'you could maintain the transdisciplinary dynamic across art practice and education practice without embedding the teaching qualification'. Nonetheless, the inclusion of an FE qualification in the programme is important from the point of view of the institution, as illustrated in participants' remarks on factors involved in the re-naming of the programme from MA *SEA FACE* to MA *SEA+FE* in 2017. Participants comment that this re-naming was related to the 'google effect' which resulted in FE getting lost in the former title, thereby requiring a re-naming in which FE would appear in searches for the programme. According to P<sub>4</sub> the new title better meets 'the needs of the college and the institution in terms of attracting numbers'.

Participants report there are aspirations regarding extending the transdisciplinary reach of the programme within the institution, reflected in ongoing plans to have a joint module on socially engaged practice with the discipline of Visual Culture. The module would be taught by staff in Visual Culture and taken by both MA *SEA+FE* and Visual Culture students. This evokes contradictory feelings for P<sub>9</sub>, as she says there is a desire 'to step out into the institution' while at the same time 'wanting to protect and hold the space you have'.

A significant element of socially engaged art practice is its durational nature, described by P<sub>3</sub> as being a practice that is 'embedded in long-term thinking and acting'. Mike Parr and Edward Scheer (2014:49) define durational art as 'an art practice that accentuates the passage of time as a key to understanding the work'. The phenomenon of time in the academy more generally, and with regard to the field of socially engaged practice in particular, was articulated by participants and is discussed below.

### 5.3.3 *Time*

Referring to the term 'study', as used by writers such as Lewis (2014), P<sub>3</sub> remarks that it presents an alternative conceptualisation of education to the current hegemonic neoliberal model and is a conceptualisation that usefully critiques the neo-liberal model. For P<sub>3</sub>, Lewis's use of 'study' entails a 'space where students get to wander' in ways that were possible 'before education became much more instrumentalised' and it is a concept he finds relevant and useful in his practice. The work of Biesta (2010, 2014) and his concept of learnification is



also referenced by P3 and considered useful in explaining how education has been reduced to 'an ideology of efficiency'. Opposing the notion of efficiency are notions of 'messiness' and 'unpredictability', both of which can be conceptualised in the term 'study' as used by Lewis (2014). With specific regard to the field of socially engaged practice, P3 argues that 'slowness' is one of its features, which is in contradistinction to the hegemonic neo-liberal agenda of efficiency. He describes socially engaged practice as 'too messy and too slow' for the current neo-liberal order. For P10 these ideas point up the differences between the art and education elements of the programme, particularly with regard to the prerequisites of the Teaching Council regarding learning outcomes. He says that the Teaching Council was not being 'bloody-minded' in its requirements regarding accreditation, but 'they were certainly having a comprehension gap with the open-ended approach of the art practice'.

The reduction of the Fine Art undergraduate degree from four years to three years was discussed as an example of the compression of time in the current provision of art education in Ireland, and is related to the Bologna Agreement. According to P3 that diminution 'squeezes out the possibility of any kind of long-term durational project', and in keeping with the ideology of efficiency 'it's module, module, skill, skill, out the door into your MA'. Its reduction also had a specific impact on the field of socially engaged art in the College, because, according to P4, the decreased duration of the degree 'diminished the participatory practice' that students did with Create on the *Learning Development Programme*. In addition, this undergraduate opportunity exposed undergraduates to the field of socially engaged practice and in so doing helped to create a student cohort for the MA programme. This situation may improve in the future with the introduction of *Studio Plus*, an optional extra year in the Fine Art undergraduate programme. According to P4, *Studio Plus* could be an opportunity for students to get involved in socially engaged practice during their undergraduate Art education, restoring the extra year, albeit optionally, of the previous four-year programme. Although these are issues that relate to the Fine Art degree, there have been the above-mentioned side-effects for the SEA programme.

Modularisation and semesterisation are forms of organising time in the academic year and P3 argues that modularisation is a 'consequence of a neo-liberalisation of the academy'. The different systems regarding modularisation in the College are noted by the participants. In its recent history the College was amalgamated with University College Dublin (UCD) and a

significant point of disagreement in the amalgamation discussions concerned modularisation. The College did not want to introduce modularisation for its Fine Art programmes and it was successful in making this argument in the negotiations. There is no modularisation in Fine Art. It comprises one-year courses with assessment taking place at the end of each year. However, unlike Fine Art, there is modularisation in the School of Education, which according to P9 has certain consequences for the *SEA+FE* MA. She contends that students coming on to the programme are 'typically immersed' in a context of either community-based or education-based sets of relationships, but with 'assessment build-up' these relationships are 'pushed aside'. This is particularly the case in the first year of the programme, so that year two becomes an important time for 'building back up those relationships and immersing oneself again' in one's SEA practice.

Another aspect of the durational nature of socially engaged practice is expressed by P9 who aspires to provide more support, in terms of time, to students, after they graduate. She says she would like to see a more long-term connection with graduates, with the School of Education creating a kind of durational platform for graduates, post-graduation. According to her the 'parameters of the two-year Masters' are confining for students as they are just at the early stages of building collaborative relationships in their practice at the end of the programme. She would 'love to be able to find a way to stay on the journey' with them, 'keep the learning alive and generate longer spaces'. This could result in contact being maintained with former students, for example, through graduates feeding back their experiences of practice to the programme and the establishment of research clusters and alumni clusters. P10 concurs with the idea of what he calls an 'afterlife', through establishing research activity and possibly forms of continuing professional development.

Another thing that time will tell is where the students work after graduation. Since the professionalisation of the FE sector is a relatively new development, there is interest in ascertaining how many will go on to work in the FE sector. Another aspect of interest in the future is how the programme influences the field of socially engaged practice, since as P7 and P9 point out, the fact of educating for the field means the programme should have some influence. Also in a future-oriented frame, P3 observes that the field of practice will be different in the future, saying 'it's going to have keep moving and take on new thematics and discourses', for example, ecology, the Anthropocene, global conflict. Concurring with P3, P9

warns of the danger that the programme could 'create a pattern of practice', and in this way 'kill the field'. Thus for P9, 'staying alive' to new thematics and discourses is vital if the programme is to continue to 'challenge the terms of its own existence'. Reflections on how or whether this creates a challenge to the institution is presented below.

#### 5.3.4 *SEA Life in the Academy*

There was difference of opinion as to whether the field of socially engaged practice is in an agonistic relationship with the academy. P1 believes it is and argues there are different forms of relationship at play, which at times make it 'seem like you are working against the grain of the institution'. Thus she contends there is tension in educating for this field of practice in higher education because one can be 'in contestation with the very values of the institution you are working in'. She says one example of this is that although socially engaged practice is collaborative in its methodology, it is 'the learning of the individual and the investment in the self', i.e. the ideology promoted by neo-liberalism, that is valorised in the academy. She says that one instance of this is resistance to collaborative forms of assessment, so that 'ultimately there has to be some sort of individual'. Another variant on individualism is P1's view that it is an 'individually authored practice' that best 'fits the scheme of things'; if it 'strays outside' of this type of practice, it runs into difficulties. Expressing broad agreement with this view, P9 says practice that is durational, activist or 'slightly disruptive' and not authored, 'just doesn't fit a register'.

P3 doesn't underestimate the difficulties associated with educating for this field of practice, contending that it doesn't conform to the demands of efficiency that are currently hegemonic, because it is 'too messy and too slow'. However, he also argues it is not necessary to adopt a subversive position with regard to socially engaged practice. He maintains it is important to articulate that the history of the avant-garde is one of the bases for the practice and he advocates making the argument for the practice 'at the level of that discourse'. He also advocates an interdisciplinary approach, working with 'other departments, critical theory and art history', so as to affirm the relevance of the discourse today. He is of the view that students can, and should, be educated in this discourse at undergraduate level. In the context of the institution, he says he is 'reluctant to use the language of subversion' because the academy 'loves that language' and is quite adept at recuperating subversion. According to him the discourse of 'art into life' has roots in art historical traditions that are over one

hundred years old. Socially engaged art forms part of that discourse and therefore does not need to carry out this practice in an 'undercover' fashion in the institutional setting of an art college.

Taking another angle regarding this issue, P10 says he sees two 'fault-lines at work', one between socially engaged art and the art academy i.e. where socially engaged art fits within higher education in Art and Design. The other is how the disciplines of Art and Design in general, including the field of socially engaged art, can critique the instrumentalism of contemporary higher education. In his view, it is the latter that is the more important battle. Relatedly, P1 draws attention to another configuration of contemporary higher education that is currently being argued for, the 'institution as enterprise'. Her observation on this is that although some of those who work in higher education are dubious about the merits of this model for the sector, they are silent on the matter when it comes up for discussion at meetings in the institutions of higher education where it is being promulgated. Reflection on this topic led on to discussion of the phenomenon of precarity of employment in the higher education sector, since one of the reasons advanced for silence at meetings is related to the precarious employment position of many who work in higher art education, including SEA education.

### 5.3.5 Academic Labour and Precarity of Employment

Precarious conditions of employment, including those of academic labour, are a feature of the neo-liberal economy. According to P9 'precarity of staff has been a big influence' on the MA, resulting in the loss of staff to the programme, as they moved on from the College if they secured better conditions of employment elsewhere. The ways in which conditions of precarity shape behaviours in the workplace is articulated by participants. For example, lack of job security makes it more difficult to challenge and voice opinions. P9 comments that when you know you can potentially be let go from your job, 'it does affect what you can say in the room'. Conversely, she points out, secure employment doesn't automatically mean one becomes 'unruly' and a 'maverick'. P3 says it is difficult to have much influence when one is in precarious employment, because 'you are maintained in a position whereby you can only have so much say'. He argues that it is not possible, for example, to have an impact on core competencies in the Fine Art curriculum from a precarious position, an impact it is desirable to have in the academy with regard to socially engaged art practice. Thus he contends the

presence of staff in 'protected jobs' at meetings where decisions on curricula are being taken is necessary for the long-term sustainability of the field.

Participants report that historically there has been much part-time and temporary employment in the College, so while it has had a particular impact on the MA *SEA+FE*, it is not unique to this programme. P<sub>9</sub> refers to moves to address the vulnerability of the programme with regard to precarity. Contractual conditions for a certain number of staff are improving and this will be of assistance to the programme. Looking at things strategically, she says it is important to establish links with permanent members of staff in, for example, Visual Culture, to contribute to the programme, rather than relying entirely on 'people who work across institutions'. P<sub>3</sub> doesn't entirely agree that staff from other institutions should not contribute to the programme. Citing his own and peers' experience of precarious, unprotected employment and their situation of now holding permanent posts, he argues it is important that permanent employees don't 'fold back into our institutions and institutional positions'. Rather, he advocates they should transgress the contemporary competitiveness within, and between, institutions and the desire of institutions to have an exclusive 'hold over all your research outputs, all your discourse, all of your collaborations'. Being more fluid in institutional attachments also helps to create a 'culture of transdisciplinarity', challenges inter-institutional competitiveness and brings the benefits of collaborative working to the field of socially engaged practice.

### 5.3.6 Socially Engaged Practice and Exhibition Practices

The degree show is a key event in the art education calendar. Exhibiting the work of the students on the *SEA+FE* MA in a degree show context is a challenge, and as articulated in the group interview, it has not yet been satisfactorily resolved with regard to the programme. It has been handled differently by the two cohorts that have completed the programme to the date of this research. The first cohort exhibited what they termed their 'field work' and assignment work in a resource room-type setting. P<sub>9</sub> describes this display as more of a collective rather than an individual presence, and therefore different to the 'individualising nature of the way the rest of the college operates'. The second cohort initially wanted to do something different to the first cohort, an exhibition style closer to the degree show model. Ultimately this did not materialise, due to pressure of dissertation writing, as six of the eight in the cohort chose to write a full dissertation on their research based practice and two chose

a practice output. The two who did a practice output were involved in projects geographically distant from the College, and the form in which the practice was represented in the College was a research poster. P<sub>9</sub> is of the view that presenting research posters has a value but does not adequately satisfy the requirements of display of socially engaged practice.

One issue that arises in the context of the degree show element of the *SEA+FE* MA is that is not assessed for credits, unlike the degree shows of other art disciplines. Thus, as in the case of the second cohort, when there are the demands of an assessed dissertation and an assessed practice output, as against an unassessed degree show, the students chose not to invest as much time in an intervention in a degree show. As P<sub>4</sub> and P<sub>9</sub> remark, assessed work will take 'priority in a student's world'. The students' work had a presence in the degree show catalogue, which although a partial presence since they are not represented in the show itself, P<sub>9</sub> argues it fulfils a function of archiving the work of the programme. It is agreed that it is desirable to 'intervene differently' in the degree show, that this is something that needs more consideration by the staff and that it should be incorporated into the overall structure of the programme. P<sub>9</sub> says there is neither a desire 'to stay under the radar', nor a desire to 'conform to the exhibition mode'. P<sub>8</sub> observes that it can be difficult to depart from art traditions because those who are art practitioners will want 'to formalise it within an understanding of a tradition that they have been schooled in', so traditions associated with traditional art practice 'tend to creep in'.

### ***Conclusion***

Through analysis of the discourse strands of Place, Practice and Academy this chapter draws on the abstraction stage of Spencer et al.'s 'analytic path' and elements of Jäger and Maier's synoptic analysis, constituting, according to Spencer et al. (2014: 280), a 'gradual return to theoretical ideas or existing knowledge', which in the case of this research is aligned with the critical discourse analysis perspective of Jäger and Maier (2016) and Schneider (2013). Moving outwards from the configuration of discourse strands, their constitutive topics, and the discourse fragments which are illustrative of these in the interview texts, is their wider contextualisation in what Jäger and Maier term planes and sectors, since as they argue, a text always has a context, 'a genesis, a historical *a priori*' (2016: 121). A discourse plane describes

the 'social spaces' or context from which people speak. In the case of this research, those planes are configured as education and art, and are constitutive of, as outlined in this chapter, a number of discourse sectors. The next chapter draws text and context together in a discussion of, or what Jäger and Maier call accounting for, the findings of the research and their relationship to the literature concerning the research questions of this inquiry.

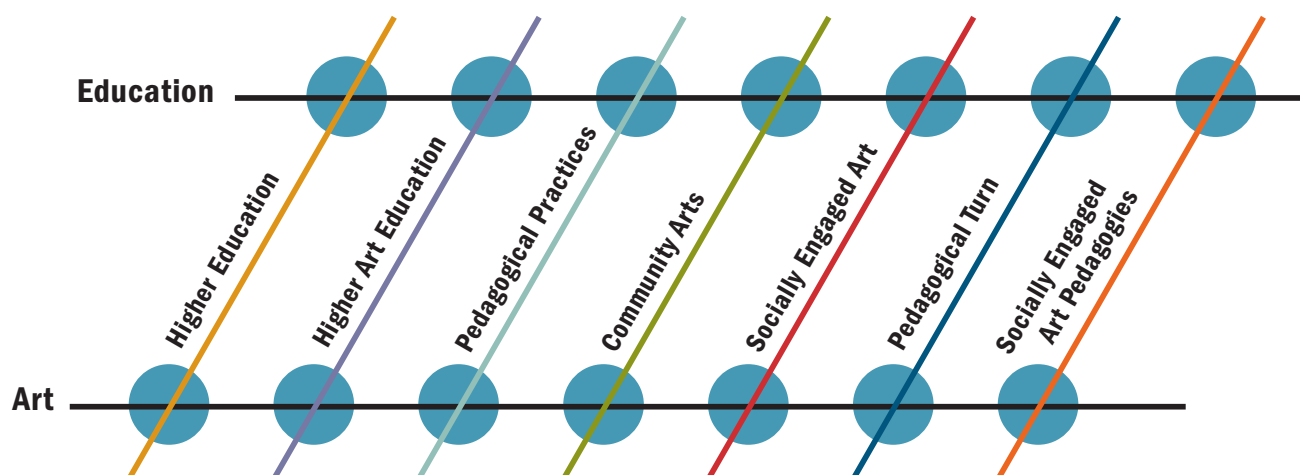
## Chapter 6 Discussion of Text and Context

### *Introduction*

For Whelan and Ryan the perceived need for 'training and accreditation' in community arts practice in Ireland contributed to the 'disciplining' of what had originated as a 'nebulous and unruly arena of experimental practice' associated with the social movement of community arts (2016: no page). Insights into the 'disciplining' of the practice in the context of higher education in Ireland are offered in this research, through an examination of when, why and how education for the practice came to be offered at the College; an account of pedagogical approaches being enacted on the programme; consideration of how the programme is impacted by the wider institutional arrangements of contemporary higher education.

Informed by models of analysis from Spencer et al. (2014) and Jäger and Maier (2016), the discourse strands of Place, Practice and Academy, were abstracted from the data collected through the interview process. These discourse strands are positioned within the more macro context of discourse planes and sectors, the 'social spaces' from which people speak (Jäger and Maier, 2016: 123). In this research, education and art are constructed as discourse planes, and each of these discourse planes is constitutive of a number of discourse sectors. In the plane of education, higher education, higher art education, pedagogical practices; in the plane of art, community arts, socially engaged art, the pedagogical turn, socially engaged art pedagogies. Although these different elements are configured as analytically separate for heuristic purposes, with particular sectors aligned with particular planes (including the provision of a framework for the literature review), there are interconnections across the different discourse planes and discourse sectors. To frame the discussion in this chapter, I have represented these interconnections as transversal-type relationships between the planes and the sectors, as illustrated in Figure 6 overleaf.





**Figure 6:** Education and Art Transversal Connections

### **6.1 Scope of the Inquiry**

In taking the form of an inquiry into one particular post-graduate programme, the study does not purport to represent Irish higher education as a whole, with regard to education for SEA practice. However, although the research is focused on one particular post-graduate programme it can speak to broader aspects of Irish higher education concerning education for socially engaged practice, and provide some insights into settings and institutions beyond those of the College. It can also speak to ways in which wider debates in contemporary higher education impact on education for SEA practice, debates discussed in chapter 2 and including the impact of neo-liberalism on higher education, the knowledge economy, the Bologna Accord, globalisation and theories of human capital. With regard to the programme more precisely, the research addresses the effects related to where the programme is located within this particular institution and its associated pedagogical practices. It does not entail an evaluation of, nor offer any particular recommendations, regarding the programme.

The first section of the discussion deals with the context of the programme at the College, the particularities of the setting of higher education and the implications for the programme of where it is positioned within the College. The subsequent sections discuss the

programme's pedagogical practices for SEA and the influence of the wider institutional arrangements of higher education on the operation of the programme.

## **6.2 Place: Spatial Context of the Programme**

### **6.2.1 Programme Origins at the College**

The conceptualisation of place offered by Agnew and Livingstone (2010), as space that is invested with meaning, a location constructed by human action, signals how place shapes and is shaped by the human activities and endeavours that bring it into existence. In the context of this research, place incorporates the locations of the College, the School of Education and community-based settings related to education for socially engaged art practice. As has been described in earlier chapters education for the practice began in a variety of informal, non-formal, adult and community-based settings, in the late 1980s/early 1990s, approximately a decade before it was offered in the formal setting of higher education. Accounts of these early developments in education for community arts practice in community-based settings in Ireland, are documented in a number of publications, including, Bowles, 1992, Hunt, 1999, Kelly, 1999, Carroll, 1998, 2002, Fitzgerald, 2004, Whelan and Ryan, 2016. A more limited amount of information about education provision in Irish higher education settings is available, in articles by, for example, Hunt et al., 2012, Murphy, 2012, Vaughan, 2017, Woods, 2017, Permar, 2019. However, a more thorough account of how and why a programme devoted to education in this field of practice was developed in an institutional setting of higher education has not been available up to now and is offered in this research.

Since CAFE and other community arts organisations represent first steps in education for the practice, and their programmes pre-date programmes in higher education, the programme at the College is of necessity in dialogue with legacies of community arts.<sup>55</sup> As is articulated in the data, although the community arts sector was not 'banging the doors' of the College nor constituted an 'organised lobby' for the provision of higher education in the field, there

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<sup>55</sup> Reflections on legacies of community arts, compiled by the Irish community arts organisation, Blue Drum Agency, available at: <https://thelegacypapers.wixsite.com/legacypapers/papers-1>  
*Archiving Activism*, exhibition by Breda Burns, The Model, Sligo and Inis Gluaire, Belmullet, Co. Mayo, Ireland, available at: <http://www.bredaburns.com/news.html>  
*Meanwhile in an Abandoned Warehouse: A Podcast on Cultural Democracy*, convened by Sophie Hope and Owen Kelly, available at: <https://miaaw.net/>

was considerable interaction between the College and those involved in the community arts movement in the planning and development of the programme in the College. And, although not uncontentious, the title of the first iterations of the programme was Community Arts Education, succeeded by Community/Arts/Education, thereby retaining the terminology of community arts. With the re-design of the programme from Diploma to MA after its first ten years in existence, the term community arts was replaced by socially engaged art, reflecting changes and debates that occurred in the field of practice during that decade. Its first MA iteration was MA *SEA FACE* and its second iteration, MA *SEA+FE*.

As some participants note, and as is documented in the literature (Bishop, 2006; Matarasso, 2013, 2019) there were connotations of 'bad art' attaching to community arts and as the new millennium progressed there was a move away by many practitioners from the terminology of community arts to other terminology, including that of socially engaged art. As is also documented in the literature, the evolution of the professionalisation of the practice and the repercussions from funding linked to labour activation programmes also contributed to the changes that occurred (Kelly, 1984; Whelan and Ryan, 2016; Hope, 2017). One participant recounts her desire to name herself as an artist rather than a community artist in her practice in community-based settings, in order to maintain a practice that is 'ideas-led'. Echoing these types of sentiments another says that a common critique of community arts was that the 'aesthetic dimension got lost, got overshadowed' and that higher education for the practice was one response to this.

Given its location in an art institutional setting of a higher education art college, those associated with the programme believed it needed to take cognisance of developments that were taking place in the wider art system. As articulated in the phrase of one participant, it was necessary to 'stay alive' to these developments. It is also the case that through its presence in an art institution such as an art college, it was seeking to claim the field as a valid field of contemporary art practice and to institute the field into other art historical traditions, therefore, becoming broader than, rather than solely co-extensive with the community arts movement. Thus a point of view articulated by some participants in this research is that while the practice has roots in the community arts movement, it also has roots in other traditions of art, including those of the avant-garde.

However, SEA practice is not identical with avant-garde traditions. For instance, it is not always or necessarily confrontational and it critiques the idea that art and the production of art is that of the singular talent and genius of an individual artist. As Murphy (2012: 160) points out, drawing on Kester's (2004, 2013) notion of dialogical aesthetics, the 'first pedagogical implication' in SEA education is that it is not possible for the 'art historical model alone' to 'provide all the necessary tools to navigate the field of socially engaged practice'. Nevertheless it shares with the avant-garde notions of 'art into life' and the politicisation of aesthetics, so it can be argued that seeking recognition of the field as a valid form of contemporary art practice is not necessarily a de-politicisation of the practice.

On the other hand, given that its antecedents include the counter-cultural movement of community arts and the paradigm of cultural democracy, institutionalised education is seen by some as a threat to the politics and activism characteristic of community arts (Crickmay, 2003; Hetherington and Webster, 2017). There were, and continue to be, concerns about the implications for the practice arising from education for the practice being based in higher education, and losing its connections to the politics and activism of the community arts movement. A contributor to Hunt et al. (2012: 280) emphasises that arts projects and residencies in community-based settings in Rialto in Dublin were initiated within, and were 'developed independently from the formal education sector' and therefore were not reliant on higher education for their development.

Furthermore, there is not unanimity in the field of community arts with regard to having the field recognised as a field of contemporary art practice. The argument made by Mulloy (2006) reflects a type of dissension regarding this move within the community arts movement. He asserts that this form of recognition undermines its social and political efficacy with regard to community development, and it is its efficacy in this regard, rather than its recognition as a form of contemporary art practice, that should prevail. For example, in his wide-ranging history of community arts in Ireland, he argues that 'recent debates about placing community arts as part of contemporary arts practice are to ignore its origins in the social movements and undermine its role in community development' (2006:181).

### 6.2.2 *Professionalisation*

For some practitioners the supplanting of the term community arts with that of socially engaged art is a cause for disquiet. This change is not particular to Ireland nor is it limited solely to the term 'socially engaged practice'. As mentioned in earlier chapters there has been a proliferation of terms for the practice since the 1980s. (Hetherington and Webster, 2017; Jeffers, 2017; Wilson, 2018). For Mulloy there are significant differences in connotation between community arts and socially engaged art. He argues that while community arts practice connotes 'collective creativity for social change', socially engaged arts practice connotes artists with a 'socially engaged' practice, who work with communities, often being commissioned to do so and premised on personal recognition for their professional skills (Mulloy, 2006:5). Sophie Hope (2017) agrees with Mulloy's description of the practice as being commission-based, but unlike Mulloy, she does not believe that artists being commissioned to work with communities is a negative aspect with regard to the development of the practice, since it is an art form allied with dialogical aesthetics as theorised by Kester (2004, 2013).

The participants in this research are not unaware of the challenges posed by the kind of argument made by Mulloy. One view expressed is that identifying as a professional artist with a socially engaged practice 'has to have some impact' because 'individually artists will still always promote their practice' and there can be tensions around 'the ownership of the practice'. Another says that 'professionalisation of the sector means that you either have a professional qualification or you don't' and having a professional qualification can be prioritised 'over experience when you look for work, for funding'. She quotes Rick Lowe, of Project Row Houses, in Huston, Texas, who advises it is necessary to be 'beware of the credential generation'.

The professionalisation of the practice is closely connected with the institution of higher education since it is an institution with authority to provide accreditation and thereby confer professional status on the activities it accredits. The argument that professionalisation contributes to a de-politicisation of the practice revealed different points of view in the research. One view conveys concern that this can happen and contends it is something 'we really have to watch'. Another participant doesn't 'obsess too much' about the professionalisation of the practice, drawing parallels between higher education for the

practice of community development and socially engaged practice, arguing that it can equip 'people a little bit more with some of the tools that they need'. Arguing that 'critical educational practice is a vital part' of higher education, Hetherington and Webster (2017: 195) maintain that there is no 'necessary link between the drive to accreditation and the depoliticization of training'.

### 6.2.3 *Place within a Place*

As indicated above, the community arts movement does not speak with one voice regarding the field being legitimated as a form of contemporary art practice or its professionalisation as a field of practice. Recognition within the academy regarding these matters is also not unanimous. With regard to the lack of unanimity in the College context, it is notable that the programme was not instituted in the School of Fine Art, but rather in the School of Education. From the data we learn that while there were some in Fine Art for whom the practice was as boring as 'auld face paint' and perceived as 'bad art', there were others who were supportive of the field of practice. One manifestation of the support of particular individuals in Fine Art was an initiative such as the *Learning Programme with Create*, which was based in Fine Art. So while there was motivation in Fine Art to support the *Learning Programme with Create* this did not extend to supporting a post-graduate programme in community arts/socially engaged practice. As pointed out by a number of participants, the level of organisation and commitment necessary to establish a stand-alone post-graduate programme in SEA came from Education rather than Fine Art.

In explaining the motivation of staff in Education, participants report that there was a desire to expand the School's remit beyond educating second-level teachers of art, as well as a desire to contribute to educating for socially engaged art/community arts. What is represented in the data is a commitment by a number of individuals to put sustained effort into developing the programme. For instance, the role of the Head of the School of Education in providing leadership, through for example, inviting a person with experience of developing education programmes for the practice in settings outside higher education, to contribute to developing the programme at the College. Expanding the range of programmes in the School of Education is also of benefit to the School by helping to increase its student numbers, including those who are interested in studying for an FE teaching qualification, which the School is interested in promoting. For example, the change in the

title of the programme from *MA SEA FACE* to *MA SEA+FE* represented an effort to make the FE element more visible and retrievable in online searches. Participants pointed out that the 'google effects' related to the former title didn't sufficiently highlight the FE element. Thus the placing of the programme in the institutional setting of the School of Education at the College has significantly shaped the structure of the programme.

Notwithstanding the fundamental role played by the community arts movement in developing this field of practice in Ireland from the 1980s onwards, including educating for the field, data from the interviews demonstrate that pivotal to the establishment of the postgraduate programme at the College was action taken by particular members of staff in the School of Education. While there was demonstrable involvement by members of community arts organisations in making the case for an education programme at the College, through attendance at meetings and other events relating to establishing a programme at the College, mobilisation within the college itself was a decisive factor. There was a desire within the School of Education to offer a post-graduate programme in the field, which involved dialogue with members of community arts organisations, but which ultimately depended on action within the School of Education for its implementation.

However, although this institutional action was an important lynchpin, connections to the field of practice were, and are, significant and influential. Most of the staff have had, or currently have, an involvement in community arts/socially engaged practice. In addition, liaison with community-based organisations, both community development and arts oriented, is necessary for the realisation of the programme. Hetherington & Webster (2017) describe a similar situation with regard to their experience of running the MA in *Community and Participatory Arts* in Staffordshire University in the UK. They say they "learned on the job" and can 'make lanterns, write funding bids and know the value of a community cuppa in times of crisis!' (2017: 183).

#### 6.2.4 FE Teaching Qualification

As mentioned earlier, the first iteration of the programme in the early 2000s took place at a time when it was not necessary to have a formal teaching qualification to teach in FE and the later MA iteration at a time when it had become necessary to have this formal qualification. In this scenario (when the programme was being revised from 2010 onwards) expanding

teacher education provision beyond second-level education entailed formal teacher training provision for the FE sector. The synchronicity of this new FE requirement and the desire to re-model the programme into an MA created the context out of which the MA offers formal qualifications in both SEA and FE. The end result is a postgraduate programme, uniquely in Ireland, that combines formal qualifications in the fields of both further education and socially engaged art. The ways in which SEA pedagogical practices are organised in this particular configuration are particularly pertinent to the discourse strand of Practice and are discussed below.

### **6.3 Practice: Pedagogies for SEA**

#### **6.3.1 *Marrying and Modelling***

The discourse strand of Practice concerns how pedagogical practices for SEA are being shaped in the programme at the College. Since the programme combines FE and SEA and is based in a School of Education, it not surprising there are references in the data regarding the relationship between art and education. A key instance of this is the use of the metaphor 'marrying' to describe the task of bringing together the two different fields of practice in the one programme. Combined with the use of the metaphor of marrying is that of 'modelling'. The metaphor of 'modelling' is illustrative of the argument regarding the importance of art *in* education, i.e. that art is axiomatic to good education practice (Dewey, 1934/2005; Read, 1943/1970; Greene 1995; Eisner, 2002; Barone and Eisner, 2012; Biesta, 2017a). This privileging of art-based pedagogical practice is furthered illustrated in remarks in the data on the capacity of art to confound the 'dead hand' of education, and the capacity of the SEA programme to enhance and expand pedagogical practices in the School of Education. As one participant says there 'is a real opportunity for modelling through an art practice approach' because of the risks posed by the 'dead hand' of education. With regard to SEA more specifically, it is observed it is necessary to 'stay alive' and 'connected' to the changes and developments that take place in the field of practice more broadly.

In the context of literature relating to the art system and the art world, the phenomenon of the pedagogical turn (Rogoff, 2008; O'Neill & Wilson, 2010) is pertinent. It was a topical discussion from the early 2000s, contemporaneous with the development of the programme at the College and is discussed by participants. This pedagogical turn in art, although



oriented towards curatorial and museum education (Graham et al., 2016), is another manifestation of the close connections between art and education, and also illustrative of the reality that art education is not restricted to educational institutions. A belief in the capacity of art to educate has a long history, but the so called 'pedagogical turn' is a particular manifestation in current debates.

If it can be said that art in general has pedagogical aspects, it is especially the case with regard to the field of socially engaged art (Helguera, 2011; Bruguera, 2009/2017; Sholette, Bass & Social Practice Queens, 2018). Given this close connection it is noteworthy that the disciplines of art and education are formally combined in the College programme. The existence of the connection between education and art is presented by some participants as a positive aspect of the location of the programme in the School of Education. For example, somewhat rhetorically, P<sub>9</sub> states 'we really believed it was worth the risk, and, still do', while P<sub>3</sub> expresses the view that it is 'more generative' for the programme to be in Education than in Fine Art, because it has 'more to gain from an open and honest discourse with Education, its histories, its concerns'. For P<sub>5</sub> 'the work really ought to be about how those two things are going to come together' and in a reprise of the argument that valorises arts-based approaches to pedagogy, P<sub>9</sub> and P<sub>4</sub> say that the presence of SEA has the capacity to enrich pedagogical practices in the School. However, as the programme is relatively new and the SEA and FE elements are currently configured quite separately to one another, this is more future-orientated than contemporaneous.

Returning to the present-day situation, the discussion now moves on to consider pedagogical practices as currently carried out on the programme. That is the topic of the next section and the focus is on the pedagogical practices relating to the SEA element of the programme.

### 6.3.2 *SEA Pedagogical Practices*

The discussion of pedagogical practices on the MA *SEA+FE* addresses participants' articulation of how they go about the task of teaching the practice of SEA. The academy is but one setting in which education for this type of practice can take place. As referred to in earlier chapters, it also takes place in settings outside the academy, institutional and para-institutional, and in formal, non-formal and informal settings. There is a limited amount of

literature relating to pedagogical practices for socially engaged art, across these different settings, (Murphy, 2004, 2012; Helguera, 2011; Hunt et al., 2012; Hetherington & Webster, 2017; Sholette, Bass & Social Practice Queens, 2018; Microsilons et al., 2019; Permar, 2019), and further, only a small amount of this literature relates to higher education in Ireland, a gap this research is addressing.

From the data in this research I propose it is possible to construct two distinct positions with regard to SEA pedagogical practices on the MA programme at the College: (1) arts-based pedagogical practice (comprising the practices of art *in* education and education *as* art) and (2) pedagogy-based pedagogical practice. Although these two positions do not capture the entirety of what was articulated in the data, since not all participants explicitly expressed a particular approach to pedagogy, they do represent distinctly discernible perspectives on pedagogical practices used in the programme.

The arts-based pedagogical practice can be said to be embedded in aesthetics and the art practice of SEA. Its co-ordinates draw significantly from the field of art practice and aesthetics and it is less reliant on the field of education for its pedagogical principles. Contained within this approach are resonances of both the significance of art *in* education and education *as* art. In contrast, the pedagogy-based pedagogical practice, a position adopted by a minority of participants, engages with a range of contemporary debates in the field of education and articulates how these inform pedagogical practice on the programme. I will first discuss the arts-based pedagogical approach.

### 6.3.3 Arts-based Pedagogical Practices

The close relationship between art and education has particular resonance with regard to the arts-based pedagogical practices of the programme. Both the place of art *in* education and education *as* art are articulated in the data, the former emphasising the particular contribution art makes to education (John Dewey, 1934/2005; Herbert Read, 1943/1970; Maxine Greene, 1995; Eisner, 2002; Eisner & Barone, 2012; Biesta, 2017a), and the latter to the use of educational tropes, such as lectures, readings rooms, publications, schools, in art practice (Podesva, 2007; Bruguera, 2009/2017; Bishop, 2012). The valorisation of the contribution of art to education has been mentioned earlier with regard to views about the

capacity of SEA to enhance the approach to education in the School of Education. In this section the focus is on participants' accounts of their arts-based pedagogical practices.

### 6.3.3.1 *Art in Education*

Privileging the identity of artist and the role of art in educating for SEA practice is one manifestation of participants' enunciation of the place of art in education. These are articulated in statements such as: 'I'm lucky to have aesthetics' as a way of being an educator; 'without aesthetics you are not educating the whole person'; students 'see me as artist'. The notions of intuition and affect, closely linked with artistic sensibility, are also articulated, for example, in remarks about responding 'intuitively to the conditions of practice' and describing teaching as 'the place where I'm most intuitive really'.

The framing of pedagogical practices through art discourses is also articulated in the attention paid to what the programme 'makes', as posed in the questions 'what can we make, what can we do?' This is manifested in a desire that students and staff contribute to knowledge production and knowledge reproduction activities regarding socially engaged practice. As described by one participant, making and doing are related to her 'natural instinct' as an artist.

These activities are akin to models of arts practice related research.<sup>56</sup> For example, *TransActions*, the publication produced by the programme is devoted to discussion and analysis of socially engaged practice, both nationally and internationally and includes contributions by both students and staff. It has been compiled in collaboration with international partners such as the Stockyard Institute in Chicago and national partners, including Fire Station Artists' Studios and Create. Another example of what the programme makes is the screening of *Creative Time*, which is hosted by the programme in collaboration with organisations such as Fire Station Artists' Studios and features a public screening of this event, accompanied by talks and panel discussions with invited speakers.

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<sup>56</sup> In a discussion about the relationship between art and research Linda Candy (2006:1) distinguishes between 'practice-based' and 'practice-led' approaches. In practice-based approaches creative artefacts form the 'basis of the contribution to knowledge'. If the research 'leads primarily to new understandings about practice' it is defined as practice-led. Irit Rogoff (2017) adds a third category, which is 'practice as research', meaning that practice itself constitutes research <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WZR5o-5Oy8>

Drawing attention to the fact of not having a formal qualification in Education, while working as an educator of socially engaged art practice, is another signifier of educational practice being led by art practice. A reluctance to assume the identity of an educator is captured in the comments: 'I didn't learn, I didn't train to be a teacher, so I feel dubious about the title'; 'I'm rooted in art practice' and from there 'step into my role as educator'. Similar sentiments are expressed in a study of art and design educators in Britain by Phillipa Lyon (2011). According to Lyon the participants in her research 'struggled to find the connections between their professional work as teachers and the theories espoused in pedagogical literature' (2011: 70). In a related comment P6 remarks 'I don't know what a pedagogy is in some ways, other than, giving people some skills that they then take on themselves and use themselves'.

Teaching in order to supplement an art practice was, and continues to be, a common form of employment for artists, and teaching in higher education, and until recently further education, does not require a formal teaching qualification. The requirement to now have a formal qualification to teach in FE represents a big change in educational employment options for artists, and, as discussed in earlier chapters, since it is an element of the MA with socially engaged practice, it has particular resonances for students on this MA, since their education as socially engaged artists includes a formal education in becoming education practitioners.

### 6.3.3.2 *Education as Art*

Commenting on education as art, Bruguera says:

I'm not so interested in art as education as in education as art. I'm interested in exploring the ways in which things become art. I'm interested in seeing what makes a moment art, a moment that comes from the realm of the political. (2009)<sup>57</sup>

Bruguera's<sup>58</sup> formulation above, of education as art, as well as the phenomena of art's social turn (Bishop, 2006) and pedagogical turn (Rogoff, 2008; O'Neill & Wilson, 2010), elucidate

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<sup>57</sup> In an interview with Pablo Helguera at MoMA, New York: <http://www.taniabruquera.com/cms/239-0-On+transpedagogy.htm>

<sup>58</sup> Examples of this aspect of Bruguera's practice include *Institute of Artivism/Instituto de Artivismo Hannah Arendt*, Havana, Cuba (ongoing); *School of Integration*, Manchester Art Gallery, July 5-20, 2019; *Cátedra Arte de Conducta* in Havana, Cuba, a self-organised art school for socially engaged practice, which Bruguera ran in her home from 2002 until 2009.

this second aspect of the arts-based approach to pedagogy articulated by the participants. For one participant, the late 1990s was significant in this regard, because these turns signalled that 'one's lived experience, one's lived practices' could be recognised as 'creative work', and for her this included education. She describes this development as 'a great relief' because 'I was able to say the work I do in a school or whatever is just as much part of my approach as everything else I do'. Another describes her enthusiasm for teaching as 'almost performative'.

Negotiating the boundaries between art and education is also reflected in another participant's desire to be 'able to think as an artist within my teaching role', a position she says she is not currently able to put into practice. Her ambition is to create a more 'hybrid' practice, having a 'murkier' line between the practices of education and art. This would be different to the current situation, typical of which is being an artist with an art practice outside the institution and being an educator with an educational practice inside the institution. Citing the practice of artist and educator Suzanne Lacy, this participant says one practical option of blurring these boundaries is making work with students, pointing to a possible future direction for work on the programme.

As well as operating on the borders between art and education practices, SEA pedagogies in the academy negotiate boundaries between conventions in other fields of art practice and SEA art practice, one of which relates to the degree show, the display mode of higher art education. Given the processual nature of SEA art practice, it is not as amenable to an exhibition format as other forms of art practice, so there are there questions with regard to how best to display SEA art work in the context of a higher education art college. As recounted in the interviews this has not yet been satisfactorily resolved, representing another liminal space occupied by SEA with regard to protocols in the art academy. Nor is the College alone in this regard. According to Permar (2019: 51) the criteria for the degree show 'are woefully inadequate and inappropriate for social art processes and outcomes'.

If the positioning of both education *in* art and education *as* art are characteristic of pedagogical approaches that can be called arts-based pedagogical practices, pedagogy-based approaches are also discernible in the data. As the term suggests, this approach is more explicitly led by education rather than art, and is discussed below.

#### 6.3.4 *Pedagogy-based Pedagogical Practices*

Unlike the arts-based approaches, the pedagogy-based approach is anchored in the field of education and articulates what is educational about education (Biesta, 2010, 2013) for this field of art practice education. Given that socially engaged art practice has an orientation towards emancipatory forms of politics, pedagogical perspectives from radical and critical education are among those most frequently referred to in the data, with Freire the most commonly cited. These perspectives also conform to SEA practice genealogies in the more recent community arts movement and in the avant-garde traditions which began in the early twentieth century.

Commenting about art education more generally, Bishop (2012) makes the point that the ruptures that happened in art and in art education in the 1960s were contemporaneous with the development of critical and radical perspectives in education, and provided pertinent and popular theoretical models for the changes that were taking place in the institutions of the art world at that time, including art colleges. In the context of that argument it is not surprising that critical models prove popular with practitioners of socially engaged art, including the participants in this research.

Concomitantly, achieving a dialogical, participatory and egalitarian environment is an important objective, since participation and collaboration are core elements of the field of socially engaged practice (Kester, 2004, 2013; Murphy, 2012; Wilson, 2018; Bruguera, 2019). These types of broad-brush pedagogical adherences are a general feature of the data in this research. Less commonly articulated is consideration and application of pedagogical theories and practices from education literature.

While less commonly addressed, the content of the data concerning education literature reflects engagement with a range of contemporary debates in education. The use of traditional transmission approaches are presented in both overt ways and in more nuanced ways. For some, an important task is to convey information about the field of practice and cognate areas such as the social sciences, to give students 'a certain amount of information'; to keep new information going into the space'; to equip people with 'some of the tools' necessary for the practice. Reflecting on her own education in art, another participant

comments on the importance of information saying 'that's how I learned myself, it's how I picked it up'. However, it is not entirely monological, as the dialogical, through conversations in the classroom is also an element of practice, described as 'being less about imparting knowledge and much more about sharing it and sharing experiences'. Tending towards a constructivist approach, though without using that terminology, is one participant's example of asking students to make a timeline of their experiences and 'things that matter to them and helped form them as an artist or practitioner'.

As well as implicit reference to constructivism, there is also explicit reference to it, including reference to the critiques in the literature of this approach. These include its limitations regarding knowledge i.e. how new knowledge enters into the pedagogic encounter if it is based on the experiences that students bring with them (Todd, 2003; Biesta, 2014; Vlieghe, 2016). In an engagement with these debates P<sub>3</sub> argues against the binary of transmission/constructivism. He says that an element of his practice includes the transmission approach of 'getting students to sit and listen', so as to create the space for new knowledge to make its appearance, thereby addressing the issue of how a place is made for new knowledge in pedagogical practices. And, going beyond the binary of transmission/constructivism, he advocates for the tripartite model of qualification, socialisation and subjectification proposed by Biesta (2010, 2014).

Biesta's model addresses another, often contentious, contemporary educational discussion, that of the hegemony of instrumentalist and human capital approaches to education (Harvey, 1998; Rogoff, 2006; Gielen and De Bruyne; Lynch, 2012; Simons and Masschelein, 2012; Docherty, 2015). The necessity for students' education to take cognisance of future employment is not ignored by Biesta, but it is argued that this should not be the dominant feature of higher education. Biesta's (2010, 2014) model offers a more nuanced and useful approach, because it allows for an appropriate calibration of the social, personal and occupational domains of students' lives, so that the economic and occupational is not out of kilter with the personal and social domains.

### 6.3.5 Transdisciplinarity and Pedagogical Practices

The necessity for transdisciplinarity is commonly remarked upon in the data. The field of socially engaged art itself is not a medium-specific practice, as it includes practices across the visual and performing arts, although individuals may practice in one particular art form. Commenting on the situation in the UK with regard to education for socially engaged practice, Hetherington and Webster (2017) say that at the moment the most viable higher education programmes are in medium specific practices, most particularly in music and drama. There is a different situation regarding the MA *SEA+FE*. Although based in a visual art college, the MA *SEA+FE* is not medium-specific to visual art. As Pg points out, the field of socially engaged art at the College is reflective the field's 'multiple genealogies, traceable through the history of art, theatre, social movements as well as community development and education practice'.

In addition to extending beyond individual art forms, education for socially engaged practice extends beyond the disciplines of both education and art, to include other human and social sciences. As well as arts-based skills, participants contend that the practice requires interpersonal and management skills. Working on collaborative and participatory projects is a complex organisational task, both creatively and administratively. As one participant remarks, a component of any education programme in socially engaged practice should include learning the skills of conflict resolution and the dynamics of power relations that are an inevitable part of any socially engaged art project. In the current era where artists are often commissioned to carry out socially engaged art projects, there is an increasing range of stakeholders to whom they have to report, and balancing the requirements of both process and product can be very difficult. As Murphy (2012) argues, the practice of SEA involves the navigation of various fields of power, at both micro and macro levels. It is also reflective of the professionalisation of the practice, with individual artists self-identifying and practicing as socially engaged artists, often in the context of an artist's commission in response to the brief of an organisation (Mulloy, 2006; Hope, 2017).

There are also various fields of power at play in the academy and these sets of power relations are addressed in the final element of the discussion. According to Hansen and Vandeputte (2015) 'the field of education is now a point of convergence for a multiplicity of



different stakes and struggles'. The next section examines a number of issues that participants consider as being at stake in the MA *SEA+FE* programme with regard to the contemporary landscape of higher education and higher art education.

#### **6.4 Academy: Contemporary Landscape of Higher Education and SEA Education**

In a macro context, significant in the shaping of higher education at a national level in Ireland, as elsewhere, is neo-liberalism, the hegemonic ideology of the contemporary era, and cognitive capitalism and its associated knowledge economy mode of production (Harvey, 1998; Boutang, 2012; Lynch, 2012; Walsh, 2014; Holmes, 2015). Another important feature of the Irish higher education landscape is the European context via the Bologna Accord of 1999 and successor policies relating to the configuration of Europe in the context of the global knowledge economy, for example, the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Research Area (ERA) (Van Der Wende, 2000; Huisman 2009; Lemke, 2010; McMahon, 2014).

Commenting on the politics of education, P<sub>3</sub> observes there are both 'big' politics and 'small' politics at play in contemporary higher education. This includes education for SEA and discussion of this follows, beginning with the issue of academicisation of the practice.

##### **6.4.1 Academicisation of the Practice of SEA**

As indicated in earlier chapters, a desire to develop education for SEA in higher education was influenced by a range of interests, including the community arts movement. However there was not unanimity within the movement regarding this development, with concerns raised from some within the community arts movement that academicisation of the field would lead to its de-politicisation (Crickmay; Mulloy, 2006; Hetherington and Webster, 2017; Permar, 2019). Whether the field should be instituted into a wider set of art history traditions is another point of contestation, as not everyone in the community arts movement would agree that this is an appropriate goal for this field of art practice (Mulloy, 2006). Part of the academicisation of the field entails its institution into the art historical traditions of the academy. Participants refer to a history of at least one hundred years, including the avant-garde movements of the early twentieth century. Participants also refer to the incorporation of disciplines outside of art history, including the social sciences, critical theory, as well as training in management and organisational skills. Commenting on this issue, Bruguera

(2019: 7) points to the need to be open to new ways of conceptualising socially engaged art practice, arguing it is necessary 'to create a concept that fits our practice now and not try to impose one from art history or from the nineteenth century' and she terms this concept 'political-timing-specific art'.

In the context of higher education as discussed in this research, instituting into formal art historical traditions is deemed a necessary, but not sufficient component of the academicisation of the field of socially engaged art practice, as the remit of the academy for this particular field of art practice needs to be broader than the conventional art historical traditions. Participants' views on the ways in which the HE institution in this research is responding to the requirements of SEA education, in the context of the contemporary higher education environment, are varied and discussion of these opens with a consideration of the rationale and standing of SEA in the College.

#### 6.4.2 *Place of SEA in the Academy*

According to one participant, alongside the desires and positionalities of the individuals who created and contribute to the programme, there is the desire and positionality of the institution itself with regard to the initiatives it chooses to develop. Manifestations of this with regard to SEA practice include (1) how the practice is being institutionalised in the College and (2) its status as a field of art practice relative to other fields of art practice in the College. Thus a view articulated regarding the institutionalisation of SEA in the academy more broadly and in the College more particularly, is that it is not 'necessarily being recognised and accepted as a legitimate of Fine Art institutional dialogue' and is being 'institutionalised as a pragmatic practice that can be used effectively within the context of a creative capitalism'. One participant comments that the social justice claims of academic institutions can be closer to creative capitalism and its ideology of amelioration of social and economic inequalities, rather than the radical emancipatory promise of the politics of SEA. Thus what constitutes the community engagement agenda of the academy requires close examination as to the content of its position regarding emancipatory politics and, relatedly, how this impacts on the type of SEA practice that is carried out in the context of an academic programme.

A related discourse is that of the 'new spirit' of capitalism (Luc Boltanski and Éve Chiapello, 2005), i.e. the adaptation of the flexibility, mobility, innovation and self-managing traits of the ideal-type artist, as the template for workers in contemporary capitalism, one characterisation of which is the gig economy. Thus, not only the art academy but higher education in general is positioned to be instrumentalised to meet the needs of capitalism in the neo-liberal era. Additionally, as argued by Slaughter and Leslie (1997) the contemporary academy can be characterised as a system of 'academic capitalism', which, in the context of the knowledge economy in neo-liberalism, involves the commodification of knowledge and the cultivation of attributes of entrepreneurialism and enterprise among staff in higher education. The recounting by some participants of an invitation to think of the 'institution as enterprise' reprises some of these ideas on the role of the contemporary academy and its associated subjectivities of performativity (Ball, 2003) and the 'entrepreneurial self' (Simons and Masschelein, 2012).

The human capital approach to education, with education understood as a private good and a form of self-investment (Lynch, 2012; Docherty, 2015; Holmes, 2015), is also an instance of this new spirit of capitalism. However, as pointed out by participants in this research, the issue of student employability after graduation cannot be ignored. Employment for art graduates can be more difficult than for other graduates and, as remarked by one participant, the issue of graduates having 'economically sustainable lives' must be a consideration in higher art education.

#### 6.4.3 Status of SEA in Higher Art Education

There are nuanced views with regard to the standing of SEA vis-à-vis other art disciplines in the academy. One view is that SEA practice is not currently taken as seriously as other fields of art practice in the academy. In contradistinction to the vitality of the practice outside the academy in Ireland, one participant argues the struggle is 'much tenser' in the academy now than it was ten or fifteen years ago. He argues there is currently a 'reactionary formalism' in the academy that is not amenable to expanded practice such as SEA and an unwillingness to put resources into SEA practice. For him, there is a kind of 'conservative battening down of the hatches'. Although not necessarily in disagreement with that assessment of the current situation in the academy, another view is more optimistic with regard to its longer-term

academic development. As expressed by another participant, this conservative reaction should not come as a surprise, arguing that it is necessary to stay 'for the long game', as the field of practice itself and education for the field will take some time and will include 'educating the educators'.

There are three SEA post-graduate programmes in Ireland, a relatively large number for a small country<sup>59</sup> and there is concern about the viability of sustaining these three programmes, particularly in light of the discussion in the previous paragraph. Looking to the future, participants aspire to working together collaboratively, rather than competitively, with colleagues across the other programmes, but acknowledge the institutional pressure to 'suck up' as many applicants as possible for their particular programme. Given the current HE recruitment context a competitive scenario is more likely than a collaborative one. Fees for post-graduate education are expensive and it is a competitive recruitment environment. The MA *SEA+FE* is a part-time, evening programme, reflecting, as one participant notes, the necessity for students to work in order to pay the fees. In a world where employment in the art world can be scarce and precarious, the FE qualification is believed by some participants to be a 'draw' to prospective students. There is also a desire on behalf of the institution to ensure the visibility of FE in the programme, as evidenced in the name change from MA *SEAFACE* to MA *SEA+FE*, in order to improve the google effect for the FE element. As the programme is relatively new and has a relatively small number of graduates thus far, it is too soon to ascertain how things will develop in the future and the relative attractiveness of the two different elements of the programme.

#### 6.4.4 *Institutional Location in the School of Education*

As has been detailed earlier, the institutional location of the programme is in the School of Education, due to the requisite mobilisation emanating from that particular school rather than from Fine Art. There are some institutional differences that arise for the programme by

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<sup>59</sup> Ireland has a population of 4.9 million people. There are 7 universities, 1 technological university, 11 institutes of technology and a number of other HEI's, for example art colleges and teacher training colleges. See Government of Ireland report, *Ireland's Facts and Figures 2019*: <https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/othercsopublications/irelandsfactsandfigures/> According to HEA data the total enrolments for the academic year 2018-2019 was 223,743. See HEA: [https://hea.ie/statistics/data\\_visualisations/bar-chart-race-total-enrolments-by-field-of-study/](https://hea.ie/statistics/data_visualisations/bar-chart-race-total-enrolments-by-field-of-study/)

virtue of it being based in Education, one of which is modularisation. In the view of one participant modularisation is a 'consequence' of the neo-liberalism of the academy. Referencing the reduction, via the Bologna process, of the undergraduate degree in Fine Art, from four years to three years, he describes modularisation as 'module, module, module, skill, skill, skill, out the door, into your MA', reflecting the efficiency ethos of the neo-liberal academy, an ethos, he argues, that is anathema to the 'messiness' of the SEA field of practice. In the context of the college in this study, there are different arrangements regarding modularisation. As recounted by participants, modularisation was successfully 'resisted' in Fine Art, at the time of amalgamation with UCD, and this situation still obtains. The situation with regard to the MA *SEA+FE* is different, as its programme is modularised. As described by P<sub>9</sub>, it is a system that results in assessment 'overload' for students, leading to a diminution of time for community partnerships in Year 1, which then need to be re-engaged with in Year 2.

Not directly associated with modularisation, but concerning institutional differences between the disciplines of art and education in the College, is the place of the degree show in the MA *SEA+FE*, i.e. the issue of how the SEA art practice of the students is to be represented in exhibition format, the conventional display mode for art programmes in the academy. Historically,<sup>60</sup> students in the School of Education, training to be second-level teachers of art, were not required to make art as part of their programme. Therefore the issue of a degree show had not arisen in the School of Education. With the introduction of an art practice element into the second-level teacher education programme in recent years, the issue of exhibition has arisen in the context of student art teachers in the School of Education.<sup>61</sup> The presence of the MA *SEA+FE* also raises the issue of exhibition practices in the School. As recounted in the data, creating an appropriate mode of display for the SEA element of the programme has not been successfully resolved. There are difficulties attaching to how to represent/exhibit the processual nature of SEA practice (Permar, 2019) and difficulties attaching to the short duration of the work carried out, due to the constraints of the MA being a 2-year, part-time programme. However, there is also a desire to 'not

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<sup>60</sup> It used to be the case that Education students, training to be second-level art teachers, did not engage in art practice. As one participant noted, these students were at Art College without making any art. This situation changed recently and their programme now includes art practice as well as education practice.

<sup>61</sup> These students exhibit their art-work in the studio space of the art disciplines, rather than in the School of Education space/building.

conform' to the traditional art exhibition mode, and instead to 'intervene' differently at the 'degree show moment' in the School of Education, thereby contributing new forms of display practice to the College.

The issue of the exhibition practices of the degree show manifests what Granville (2011: 349) has described as 'art practice at the edges of art education, and art education at the edges of education practice' with regard to the MA *SEA+FE*. It reflects the practical and material tasks associated with accomplishing transdisciplinarity in the institutional arrangements of the College, mirroring the transdisciplinary goals of the SEA programme's curriculum and pedagogies. For Chiapello and Fairclough (2002: 187) transdisciplinarity is more than bringing together 'different disciplines and theoretical-analytical frameworks'; rather it entails a dialogue between disciplines and frameworks which has as its goal the 'development of both through a process of each internally appropriating the logic of the other as a resource for its own development'. In recalling the development of the programme, participants noted that one option was to organise the programme jointly between the Schools of Education and Fine Art, an option that did not materialise. However, efforts to develop a transdisciplinary approach, such as that proposed by Chiapello and Fairclough (2002), are taking place within the School of Education, for example joint initiatives with Visual Culture.<sup>62</sup>

#### 6.4.5 *Institutional Power and Individual Agency*

Bruguera (2019:10) has observed that 're-purposing the institution' is possible, and ways of negotiating institutional power and forms of agency within the institution are instanced by the participants. There is recognition that institutions are place-holders of power and it is therefore important to have a presence in them, as argued by writers such as Henri Giroux (2007). For example, as an art educational institution it can contribute to the validation of the field of SEA as a legitimate form of art practice and thereby to forms of professional status for SEA practitioners. In an alternative analysis, Moten and Harney (2004) do not valorise the power of the institution to be a purveyor of professionalism. Rather, they value the university

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<sup>62</sup> Other arrangements, for example, joint teaching of a SEA-related module with Visual Culture are also indicative of initiatives to work in a transdisciplinary way.

for the opportunities it presents regarding its resources being appropriated by the Undercommons, an analysis that can be usefully applied to the forms of community engagement that are a feature of SEA practice. Less optimistically, Duncombe (2018:143) identifies the ways in which the appropriation goes the other way, in his observation that the university can recuperate critical and radical ideas, turn them into a seminar, and thereby convert them into a 'commodity of knowledge' that is 'thoroughly contained'.

The question of agency is not monolithic, in the sense of either having agency or not having agency. As described by one participant there are spaces of 'micro-agency' within which individuals can operate. Another argues that there is academic freedom in teaching SEA, because integral to its pedagogy is critical theory. While it can be argued that there is 'power to' operate in these micro ways in the institution, for example, through having autonomy in one's classroom, agency in more macro ways are delimited. For example, because of the prevalence of precarious working conditions, and therefore low occupational status of staff on the programme, it can be difficult to contribute to, and impact upon, wider policy and curriculum development in the College.

### ***Conclusion***

In this chapter the analytic configuration of the discourse strands of Place, Practice and Academy, and the transversal notion of the ways in which the planes and sectors of education and art intersect with one another, provide a framework for a discussion of the research. The chapter discussed issues pertinent to the positioning of the programme in the School of Education within the College and the School's pivotal role in the development of SEA education in the institution; the pedagogical practices that are shaping the programme, identifying the two approaches of arts-based pedagogical approaches ( which comprise two elements of art *in* education and education *as* art) and pedagogy-based approaches; and the impact of the macro context of higher education policy on the workings of the programme and the institution, including the hegemony of neo-liberalism, the knowledge economy, the Bologna Accord and the prevalence of human capital models in contemporary higher education. Existing literature on the topic, both regarding Ireland (and elsewhere), is limited,

and this study offers a more thorough account of SEA higher education in Ireland than has been available heretofore.

The overall aim of the research is to provide an account of when, why and how the practice of community arts became formally taught in higher art education in Ireland, and in that process becoming named as the field of socially engaged art. Focusing on one particular higher art institution in Ireland, an account of this development is offered in this study. In the next and final chapter, the conclusions reached in the study are discussed.



## Chapter 7 Concluding Comments

### *Introduction*

This research investigated the topic of education for socially engaged art in higher education, focusing on a particular post-graduate programme in one higher education art college in Ireland. The study was framed around the following three questions: (1) what was the historical context out of which higher education in this field of practice in Ireland emerged; (2) how are pedagogical practices for the SEA field of practice being shaped in this particular programme; (3) what are the pedagogical, political and aesthetic issues that arise in the institutional setting of higher education for education in this field of practice.

This chapter reflects on the insights and implications that can be drawn from the knowledge constructed in the analysis of the data gathered in the course of the research. It considers both the contribution, and the limitations of the contribution, the research makes to existing scholarship on higher education for this field of arts practice. Its relevance to future research and practice is also considered. It begins with an account of the knowledge produced in the study.

### **7.1 Discourse Strands**

The knowledge produced in this study is based on data derived from ten face-to-face, one-to-one interviews and a group interview, with current and past staff members of the programme. Through the analytic process used in the study, the data were abstracted into the discourse strands of Place, Practice and Academy, demonstrating a social constructionist and non-positivist approach to educational research. These discourse strands function as heuristic devices to analyse and construct an account of the data, so although organised as distinct discourse strands they also display interconnections and overlaps, or entanglements in the terminology of Jäger and Maier (2016). An overview of the knowledge constructed from this analytic process begins with the discourse strand of Place, which is associated with the question of the historical context out of which SEA higher education was developed in Ireland, and subsequently addresses the discourse strands of Practice and Academy.

### 7.1.1 *Place*

Higher education for SEA in Ireland was preceded, by approximately ten years, by education in community-based and adult education settings, involving formal, non-formal and informal forms of participation and, on occasion, formal accreditation. The desire to have higher education for the field of practice was mooted by arts practitioners and educationalists during this period and the first higher education SEA programme began in the College in the early 2000s, beginning with a post-graduate Diploma and succeeded by two iterations of an MA. The establishment of the programme involved inter-relationships between people involved in the community arts movement and staff in the College, but the decisive factor in the establishment of the programme lay with the College. Furthermore, the mobilisation within the College was in its School of Education, rather than in its School of Fine Art. The placing of the programme in the School of Education resulted from the efficacy of the mobilisation in that particular School at the time of the establishment of the programme in the early 2000s. The same level of commitment to establishing a SEA programme was not activated in the School of Fine Art, a location and context which would appear to be more appropriate for a programme in SEA.

There were implications for the programme related to it being placed in the School of Education, including changes that occurred in the field of FE in the early 2010s, which required those working in FE to have a formal teaching qualification, a requirement not previously necessary. The introduction of the requirement for a formal teaching qualification in the FE sector had a significant impact on the structure of the MA iteration of the programme, which began in 2013-2014. This is reflected in titles of the MA iterations, the MA *SEA FACE* and the MA *SEA+FE*. In the day-to-day operation of the programme the two disciplines of SEA and FE function as essentially two separate elements, and students gain formal qualifications in both SEA and FE. The location of the programme in the School of Education, combined with the formal qualification in FE being integral to the programme, means that the Teaching Council of Ireland has a significant level of input into the accreditation of the MA programme. In an overlap regarding the impact of this on practice, some participants are of the view that this has the effect of stymying the autonomy of the SEA element of the programme, but conversely it was also argued by participants that the

presence of SEA in the School of Education can contribute to the broadening of pedagogical horizons in the discipline of education.

### 7.1.2 Practice

The inquiry into the question of how pedagogical practices for SEA are being shaped in this particular College, focuses on the SEA element of the MA iterations of the programme, and is associated with the discourse strand of Practice. The changes that were occurring in the art world more broadly are reflected in the titles of the MA iterations of the programme, in the use of the terms 'socially engaged art' as opposed to 'community arts', which was the terminology used in the Diploma iterations, signalling a move that would not be favoured by all practitioners in the field of practice (Crickmay, 2003; Mulloy, 2006). Mirroring this divergence is the relationship of SEA to Education in the College. In particular, it is indicated in the integral nature of the FE formal teaching qualification within the overall programme and its institutional location in the School of Education, which instances, as mentioned earlier, an overlapping with the discourse strand of Place. This institutional alignment receives an ambiguous endorsement by the SEA staff. They simultaneously advance the notion that there *is* a fit between the disciplines of SEA practice and education practice because of the pedagogical elements of SEA, and a *lack* of fit to education practice in the School of Education because of SEA having different approaches to education. There is a certain valorisation of the SEA approach to pedagogical practices by SEA educators on the programme, in proposing that the pedagogical practices of SEA can be usefully modelled by the teacher-education programmes in the School. Thus there are tensions between the two fields of practice of art and education on the programme. These need to be negotiated in the day-to-day operation of the programme, but are alleviated to a certain extent because of the separateness of the operation of the two elements of the programme.

Different pedagogical practices by SEA staff are discernible in the data, which I propose can be constructed as (1) arts-based pedagogical practices, which comprise two elements: art *in* education and education *as* art and (2) pedagogy-based pedagogical practices. The first approach is rooted in aesthetics and SEA art practices and is less dependent on the field of education for its pedagogical principles. Art *in* education draws on the scholarship that extols the necessity of art and art practice in educating the 'whole' person, as exemplified in the work of writers on education such as Dewey (1934/2005) and Read (1943/1970) in the earlier

part of the twentieth century to contemporary writers such as Greene (1995), Eisner (2002) and Biesta (2017a). Education as art is more rooted in the practices of art, reflecting the work of artists such as, Beuys (Podesva, 2007; Bishop, 2012) and Bruguera (2009, 2017) who propose that educational activities can be a form of art practice. As articulated in the social turn in art and its re-positioning of art practice and art institutions, all social activities have within them the propensity to be what Bruguera calls 'a moment' of art. In contrast to the arts-based approach, the co-ordinates for the pedagogy-based pedagogical approach are more centrally derived from, and engage with, contemporary educational discourses and debates; these include constructivism and the critiques of constructivism; critical pedagogies; the knowledge economy; the impact of neo-liberalist ideas on education, including the decline of education as a public good and the rise of human capital theories of education as a private good.

The arts-based pedagogical practices are the dominant forms of pedagogical practice articulated by the participants. The pedagogy-based forms of practice are clearly enunciated but very much a minority articulation among the participants. In including attention to the broader educational context within which the programme is positioned, the issues articulated in the pedagogy-based approach represent overlaps with the discourse strand of Academy and this aspect of the research findings is addressed next.

### 7.1.3 Academy

The institutional setting of higher education is the topic addressed in the third of the research questions and it is associated with the discourse strand of Academy. This strand of the analysis relates to the landscape of contemporary higher education and how this is imbricated in participants' day-to-day lives as SEA educators. As articulated in the data, SEA staff negotiate both 'big politics' and 'small politics' in their work on the programme. The macro big politics impacts on the micro small politics of the day-to-day. A significant framing is the hegemony of neo-liberalism and its reverberations through protocols such as the Bologna Accord and related collaborations such as the EHEA, and the configuration of the knowledge economy in an era of cognitive and academic capitalism. The efficiency ethos of neo-liberalism is contrasted with the 'slowness' and the 'messiness' of SEA practice. A notion of 'study', etymologically applied in the literature (Simons and Masschelein, 2012; Lewis, 2014) as a form of wandering without explicit focus on defined ends, is proffered as a

necessary antidote to the efficiency and instrumentalist ethos of current neo-liberal approaches to education. It is also extolled as a more appropriate pedagogical approach to the teaching of SEA practice. Modularisation is an example of the negative effects of the Bologna process, because it constrains the slowness and the messiness of SEA. The College successfully resisted modularisation with regard to its arts disciplines but not the discipline of education, so, by virtue of being in the School of Education SEA is organised in a modular fashion, creating a source of dissatisfaction among SEA educators.

Most of the SEA staff in this study do not have formal qualifications as educators. This reflects a situation whereby artists often work in a variety of sectors in education, combining an education practice and an art practice without necessarily training formally to be an educator. Most who work on the SEA element of the programme do so on a part-time, non-permanent basis and all have variously, art, teaching and community activist practices. By virtue of the contract these SEA staff have with the College there is a precarity attached to their work on the programme. This is not an uncommon characteristic of contemporary academic labour. It is a feature that impacts negatively on both the staff and programme, with regard to, for example, security of employment as well as the status of staff within the hierarchy of the College, which can limit the amount of power and influence the programme and its staff have within the College.

However, the presence of the SEA programme in an institution of higher education does confer benefits on the SEA field of art practice. It is a significant contributor to the recognition of the field as a legitimate form of art practice and it can accredit the field accordingly, so that it has parity of esteem with other art disciplines. It also provides a professional qualification in this field of art practice. While SEA has roots, via community arts, in cultural democracy and counter-cultural and community development politics and practices, its presence in a higher education art college contributes to an expansion of this paradigm to one that includes other art historical traditions, particularly those of the avant-garde. However, SEA aims to institute the avant-garde 'otherwise', for example, as articulated by Wilson (2014), through 'making authorship diffuse within a community', thus rejecting the trope of the individual creative genius in favour of collaborative forms of practice and educating students accordingly. The programme also seeks to disrupt traditional forms of the exhibition of art. For example, through pursuing alternative models

of exhibiting in the degree show, which although not yet achieved to the satisfaction of the staff, remains an ambition. Thus academicisation of SEA entails engagement with art historical traditions beyond community arts, disrupting legacies of avant-garde traditions, and departing from certain art historical traditions in the College.

## **7.2 Contribution to Knowledge**

Topics related to the planes of education and art, including the sectors of higher education, higher art education, pedagogical practices (including SEA pedagogical practices), the pedagogical turn, community arts and socially engaged art, are core aspects of the literature relevant to this inquiry. The contribution the study makes to knowledge relates to the when, the how and the institutional logics of higher education with regard to education for SEA practice in Irish higher education, as well as higher education for professional practice more broadly.

With regard to the 'when' aspect, the study expands on previously documented knowledge on education for SEA practice in the setting of higher education. For example, it extends what was previously known about the establishment of the programme in the College, providing greater detail as to when and why the programme was instituted in the College in the way that it was and its negotiation with legacies of the community arts movement in Ireland. A general outline of the initial development of higher education for the practice in Ireland is available in existing literature (Murphy, 2004, 2012; Hunt et al., 2012; Whelan, 2019), but is not as detailed as that offered in this study.

The 'how' aspect concerns its contribution to existing scholarship on higher education for SEA, scholarship that is modest and in a small number of publications, with regard both to Ireland and elsewhere. Writing in 2011 Helguera remarked that the conceptual and theoretical development of SEA was outstripping the development of the practice element, a lacuna he addressed in one of the earlier publications on educating for SEA. As well as being one of the earliest publications that addresses SEA education, putting forward the idea of transpedagogy, it is one of the few that specifically addresses pedagogical practices and also, until recently, one of the few book-length treatments of SEA pedagogical practice. Thus there has been very little precise attention paid to pedagogical practices in the literature, until relatively recently. With the exception of Helguera (2011) and some articles in recent

edited collections by Sholette, Bass, & Social Practice Queens (2018) and Microsilons, Guarino-Huet and Desvoignes (2019), a key characteristic of the literature relates to information about curriculum content as opposed to pedagogical practices. For example, in one of the few publications about the Irish context, Murphy (2012) addresses the transdisciplinarity of SEA and what should be included in a SEA curriculum, but does not specifically refer to pedagogical practices for implementing this curriculum. Similarly, while Whelan (2019) identifies 'active learning' as characteristic of SEA education, more in-depth attention is not paid to pedagogical practices, which is a significant element of this particular study.

In addressing the institutional logics of SEA education in the College, the research represents the ways in which contemporary policies and politics of higher education shape the programme, how they are perceived by the participants and how they impact on their pedagogical practices. The research recounts the reception of topical debates, in particular critiques of neoliberalism, in contemporary higher education in an Irish context, with particular reference to higher art education and how these play out in the operation of the MA *SEA+FE*, but having wider significance also. Although the inquiry examines just one particular higher education art programme, it nonetheless provides relevant qualitative data and analysis of views more generally of individuals currently working in Irish higher education.

The critiques the participants offer with regard to contemporary higher education in Ireland are based on their experiences of one particular setting within Irish higher education. However, the critiques they offer can be extrapolated beyond that specific setting, to include issues of the relationship between theory and practice in educating for professional practice more broadly, both in Ireland further afield. Hetherington and Webster (2017: 183) describe how they 'learned on the job', following which they moved to academia, and observe that, unlike them, most of their students would be initially encountering SEA in an academic context rather than a practice context. According to Whelan (2019: 374) professionalisation of the practice can leave the practice in the grip of being 'named, framed and funded' in particular ways, thereby necessitating a requirement 'to hold open the space of not knowing and avoid determining the future of the field of practice'.

### ***7.3 Implications of the Study***

As indicated above, although the study may have resonances beyond the particular instance of the SEA programme in this research, there are limitations related to the study being based on one programme in one particular HEI, and on the experiences of staff associated with that programme. In this regard I propose, below, other possible areas of investigation, which are amenable to qualitative and non-positivistic methodologies, and which would make a valuable contribution to research on, and practice in, Irish higher education.

There are currently three SEA post-graduate programmes in Ireland. Each programme has its own genealogies and institutional arrangements and configurations, so those other two programmes have potentially different stories to tell to the one examined in this study. For example, the SEA programmes in each of the other two institutions are post-graduate programmes based in Fine Art rather than Education, and offer a single qualification, in art, rather than a dual qualification in art and education.

Since SEA is a collaborative form of art practice and students engage with community partners in the Practicum element of the programme, research on the experiences of community partners' involvement in the Practicum projects would also be relevant to understanding the value, or otherwise, of SEA education. Similarly, the views of the students on how SEA is taught and how beneficial it is to them in their practice as SEA practitioners is also a relevant topic of research.

At the end of the group interview conducted in the research, one of the participants remarked that the discussion which had taken place in the group interview was valuable and raised issues that are not normally discussed in the context of their day-to-day work. The research activity for this study stimulated for them, reflection on what is at stake in contemporary higher art education and its role in educating for SEA practice, with regard to higher education in general, the programme in the College and their pedagogical practice. Thus the group interview was particularly effective as a reflective exercise, as it successfully created a dialogical dynamic to the discussion among the participants. The observation on the usefulness of the discussion signifies the lack of space and time given to these types of discussion in the contemporary HE environment, as well as identifying the desirability of



creating opportunities for such discussions to take place, as one mechanism for dialogically reflecting on SEA education.

Also in the context of practice, the trajectory of artists becoming 'accidental teachers' as described by some of the participants, brings discourses of art into the discussion of pedagogical practices, and vice-versa. As demonstrated in the analysis of the data there is a strong articulation of participants' arts-based approaches to pedagogy, regarding both art *in* education and education *as* art. This includes an advocacy for art being a model on which education can be based, because of its capacity to develop 'the whole person' and its modus operandi of being open to uncertainty as opposed to certainty, suitably illustrated in the title of the book edited by Microsilons et al. (2019), *Uncertain Patterns/Motifs Incertains*, and in the notion of 'potentiality' as opposed to prescriptiveness, as proposed by Rogoff (2006).

Biesta has written about the need to understand and practice what is 'educational' about education and in his book *Letting Art Teach* (2017), illustrated with photographs of performance art by Beuys, extols the place of art in educational practice. I think this resonates with the arts-based approaches to pedagogy articulated in this research and is an invitation to consider what is 'artistic' about education as well as what is 'educational' about education.

#### **7.4 Finally ...**

Outside of the formal research situation I meet with artists and community groups who are committed to developing collaborative arts projects and these encounters lead me to believe there is a value attaching to formal education in SEA practice. As is demonstrated in this inquiry, education for the practice does not necessarily have to be in higher education. This is evident in community and adult education initiatives preceding those of higher education in Ireland, and the operation of higher education 'avatars', historically and contemporaneously, for example, *Black Mountain College*, *Copenhagen Free University*, Chto Delat's *School of Engaged Art*, Bruguera's *Cátedra Arte de Conducta* and *Institute of Artivism/Instituto de Artivismo Hannah Arendt*.

Equally however, formal higher education can be a location in which education for the practice takes place. It is not desirable that higher education evades engagement with SEA, and/or it can constitute a place from which SEA fugitives of the Undercommons, (to adapt

the theorisation of Harney and Moten, 2004), can appropriate what they need to carry out their practice. Contained in Moten and Harney's subversive strategies regarding the contemporary neo-liberal university is an analysis that can be usefully applied to SEA higher education. Their proposal of not abandoning the university because of its exclusionary practices and instead, appropriating what it has to offer for emancipatory purposes, has a general application, and also a particular application to SEA in HE. Their figuration of the fugitive is a useful challenge to the workings of contemporary higher education, including SEA education. Higher education is not indispensable to SEA education but it can have its uses, in both its conventional institutional guise and an unconventional fugitive guise.



Figure 7: Another University is Possible. Akwugo Emejulu, 2017, Verso Books.

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## Appendix 1: Ethics Approval Letter



Downloaded: 19/10/2015  
Approved: 16/10/2015

Ann Lyons  
Registration number: 110115193  
School of Education  
Programme: EdD (Higher Education)

Dear Ann

**PROJECT TITLE:** Educating for Socially Engaged Arts Practice  
**APPLICATION:** Reference Number 002546

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 16/10/2015 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 002546 (dated 09/10/2015).
- Participant information sheet 1012536 version 1 (09/10/2015).
- Participant consent form 1012537 version 1 (09/10/2015).

The following optional amendments were suggested:

*In general, this is a strong application, and thank you for considering issues such as the anonymity of participants with such care. There are a few small points noted by myself and other reviewers. These are: 1. Methodologically, considering the potential advantages of involving current or future students in the research; 2. Confirmation that the documents you will be analysing are all in the public realm; 3. Continuing to think-through any reputational risks to the institution in having their programme as an object of research; and 4. The layout of the consent form, which is a little wonky. In essence, I think you might re-design the consent form to match your particular needs, rather than try to adapt the original template. The content of the form, to be clear, is absolutely fine. Thank you again for this application, and good luck with the research!*

If during the course of the project you need to [deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation](#) please inform me since written approval will be required.

Yours sincerely

Jayne Rushton  
Ethics Administrator  
School of Education





## Appendix 3: Research Information Sheet

### Title of Research Project: Educating for Socially Engaged Art Practice

#### *Invitation to take part in the Research*

I would like to invite you to take part in this research project because of your involvement in the development and/or delivery of the **MA Socially Engaged Art** and/or your involvement in the community arts movement. Your knowledge and experience of this programme and/or the broad area of community arts are central to realising the aims and objectives of the research and your participation in the research would be most appreciated. You are of course, free to decline the invitation and additionally, should you initially agree to take part in the research but subsequently decide you do not wish to continue, you are free to withdraw from the research process at any time without any negative consequences.

#### *Aims & Objectives of the Research*

The overall aim of the research is to examine the formalisation of socially engaged art practices in the context of third-level visual arts education in Ireland, examining how (i) pedagogical practices are being shaped, (ii) the aesthetic, political and ideological issues that arise in the higher education pedagogical context and (iii) the historical background from which formalisation of socially engaged art practice in Irish higher education has emerged. The research will take the form of a case-study of the **MA Socially Engaged Art** at the College. The objectives of the project are to analyse the:

1. Theoretical, philosophical and aesthetic perspectives informing the pedagogical practices of the programme.
2. Perceptions of staff on their practice and identity as educators.
3. History of the formalisation of socially engaged arts practice in visual arts higher education in Ireland, making particular reference to the case of the College.

\*Note: the research is not concerned with an evaluation of the programme – its aim is to document the phenomenon of the formalisation of pedagogies of socially engaged art practices in a higher education setting in Ireland.

#### *The Context of the Research*

The research is being carried out in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a doctorate in Education (EdD) at the University of Sheffield, in the UK. The data collected will be used for this purpose and subsequently may also be used in public presentations and articles in popular and academic publications.

#### *The Research Process*

The main method being used in the research is audio-recorded face-to-face semi-structured interviews, which will be dialogical in style. The recordings will be transcribed and transcripts made available to each participant for review and amendment as deemed necessary by participants. Confidentiality is guaranteed regarding these recordings and transcripts – the recordings will be stored on an encrypted USB and they and the transcripts will be kept in a locked office in NUI Galway, to which only I have access. The recordings and transcripts will be kept for period of three years and subsequently disposed of.

Data sources will also be consulted including, programme syllabi and policy documents, higher education policy documents, government arts policies and documents relating to the community arts movement in Ireland.

Participation in the research is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. In addition, should you not wish to answer any particular question(s) you are free to decline those questions.

As mentioned above, the research is being carried out for the purpose of a doctorate in Education at the University of Sheffield. After the formal requirements for submission etc. have been carried out, I will make a copy of the dissertation available to all participants who would like to have a copy.

#### *Confidentiality & Anonymity*

All data collected will be treated confidentially and while every effort will be made to provide anonymity, this cannot be guaranteed, for the following reasons: it will be stated in the dissertation that the research is a case-study of the College, the specificity of the research topic and the relatively small group of people connected to this topic of research in higher education in Ireland.

#### *Ethical Approval*

The research has received ethical approval from the School of Education, University of Sheffield and follows the University of Sheffield's ethics procedures.

#### **For further information & queries**

I hope this information sheet has given you an idea of what the research project is about, but if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: [ann.lyons@nuigalway.ie](mailto:ann.lyons@nuigalway.ie) and telephone: 087 7677080

#### Appendix 4: Participant Profiles

<b>Participant Profiles</b>				
<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Institutional Affiliation</i>	<i>Duration of Interview</i>
P1	Female	Artist & Educator	Part-time/ Temporary	1 ½ hours
P2	Female	Adult Educator	Part-time/ Temporary	1 hour
P3	Male	Artist & Educator	Part-time/ Temporary	1 ½ hours
P4	Female	Lecturer in Education	Full-time Permanent	1 hour 20 minutes
P5	Female	Arts Administrator & Artist	Part-time/ Temporary	1 hour 15 minutes
P6	Male	Lecturer & Artist	Part-time/ Permanent	1 ½ hours
P7	Male	Youth & Community Worker	Part-time/ Temporary	1 hour
P8	Female	Lecturer in Education	Full-time Permanent	1 ½ hours
P9	Female	Artist & Educator	Part-time/ Temporary	1 hour 20 minutes
P10	Male	Lecturer in Education	Full-time Permanent	1 ½ hours

## Appendix 5: One-to-One Interview Guide

### Research Topic

The formalisation of socially engaged art practices within the institutional setting of higher education in the Republic of Ireland, focusing on visual arts education. The inquiry will address:

1. How pedagogical practices for socially engaged visual art are being shaped
2. The aesthetic, political and ideological issues that arise in the higher education pedagogical context
3. The historical background from which the formalisation of socially engaged arts practice in Irish higher education has emerged.

### Research Questions

1. WHAT is taught?
2. HOW is it taught?
3. WHY do you do this type of work; WHY do you do this work in the way that you do?
4. How did socially engaged visual art practice come to be included at the College?
5. WHAT are the institutional conditions in which this SEA programme is taking place?

	<b>General Questions for Discussion</b>
<b>Q.1 WHAT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What are some examples of the kinds of things you teach/issues you address in your teaching?</li> <li>▪ Describe the material you teach; the writers, critics, theorists, the artists?</li> <li>▪ What forms of assessment do you use?</li> <li>▪ What knowledge is created &amp; exchanged in the process of teaching?</li> </ul>
<b>Q.2 HOW</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Describe your practice as an educator - what perspectives/philosophies inform your work as an educator?</li> <li>▪ How would you describe your approach to teaching &amp; learning?</li> <li>▪ What educational legacies are your drawing on?</li> </ul>
<b>Q.3 WHY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Why did you become a Socially Engaged Arts educator?</li> <li>▪ Where does teaching fit into your practice as an artist?</li> </ul>
<b>Q.4 HISTORY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ When did Socially Engaged Arts begin in the College?</li> <li>▪ What were the 'drivers' for this development?</li> <li>▪ What was the historical context from which it emerged?</li> </ul>
<b>Q.5 CONDITIONS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What are the gains for Socially Engaged Art as a result of entry into the academy?</li> <li>▪ What are the losses?</li> <li>▪ What do you find feasible to achieve in the academy with regard to your philosophical position concerning Socially Engaged Art?</li> <li>▪ What do you find difficult to achieve?</li> <li>▪ What is the contribution of the art academy to SEA?</li> <li>▪ Is it possible to build a critical practice within an HEI?</li> </ul>

## Appendix 6: Group Interview Guide

### Brief for group discussion

The first stage of the field research was the one-to-one interviews and this group discussion is the second stage of the field research. While there was an emphasis in the interviews on individuals' personal narratives and practices, the emphasis in the group discussion is on the wider socio-political frame regarding contemporary higher education in Ireland. Significant in the shaping of contemporary higher education in Ireland, as elsewhere, is neo-liberalism, regarded as the dominant ideology influencing the world today. Another feature of the Irish higher education landscape is the Bologna Declaration, passed by the EU in 1999. These are some of the wider socio-political conditions impacting on Irish higher education and they are topics of debate and discussion in the literature on contemporary higher education. According to Hansen and Vandeputte (2015) 'the field of education is now a point of convergence for a multiplicity of different stakes and struggles.'

It is in this context that I propose the general question, 'what is at stake in practices of study related to socially engaged art practice in higher education in Ireland today?', for the group discussion. Since individual institutions are inevitably shaped by wider socio-political conditions, I am interested in exploring with you the ways in which you think the college, the MA programme and your day-to-day work situation are impacted by these conditions. For example, what are the stakes and struggles currently at issue, in the institution more generally and in the MA programme in particular? How does one respond to these stakes and struggles? Is there an environment for critical, emancipatory practices on the MA? Are there opposing conceptions about the nature and purpose of education in the institution – have these changed over time and likely to change in the future? These questions are suggested as a way to frame the discussion and do not preclude other questions or issues that may arise in the dialogue that takes place, as what is valuable in group discussions is the potential for insights and information to emerge from the group interaction that occurs.

The discussion will take place on Wednesday April 26<sup>th</sup>, 10.30am to 12.30pm, in Room 206, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Design Building. Sincere thanks for agreeing to take part in this discussion – your participation is most appreciated.