Collaborative methodologies: a resource for research.

This is a live poster. The live posters are intended to tell a very short tale about a moment of research, perhaps from a longer research project. That's certainly what this is – to offer a moment of research.

I'm PI of a three-year AHRC funded project, 'Challenging concepts of 'liquid' place through performance practices in community contexts'. Using recently devised performance practices, the research asks to what extent contemporary theories of dislocation and transience are evidenced in certain 'real world' contexts, how performance practices can be used to consider relationships to place and if dislocation might be eased through such practices. The projects will – hopefully - stimulate models of practice for further dissemination to community arts organisations. Using current academic thinking about place and mobility, the project also raises theoretical questions about how we understand and experience place and 'dislocation'.

As I say in my abstract, this research is dependent upon constructive working relationships between three community performance organisations and two academic institutions (Central and Aber University – Mike Pearson and Margaret Ames). OTW, Half Moon and Cyrff Ystwyth will be working with their own 'communities' and with us, of course, using research ideas originally emanating from academics. This is a sensitive relationship, therefore, and not straightforward.. I had put into the grant application a two-day intensive 'planning' session near the beginning of the project with a view to initiating the research and the practical projects. The short DVD I'm going to show simply gives a sense of what took place.

It was on watching back the filming of the two-days and reflecting upon how this academic and practitioner conjoining of 'resources' operated that I retrospectively pinpointed what had concerned me in establishing what needed to be a motivated, coherent research team. First – hierarchies of knowledge and second – elaborated codes. The first I think is obvious – how might we position knowledges as of equal value. (There's a touch of this in the video when Chris talks about how industry hasn't appreciated the academy.) The second, elaborated codes, <u>may</u> be familiar but I'll quickly explain.

Basil Bernstein – a grand education theorist – wrote of elaborated and restricted codes, using this to describe the challenges in education of the 'teacher/pupil' relationship. He suggests that– people who are familiar with each other for whatever reason - use restricted codes when communicating. They do not need to employ extended language because meanings are understood swiftly. One of the challenges of education, he suggested was that 'teachers' used one code and pupils another. To communicate, therefore, teachers have to use elaborate codes to convey thoughts and ideas as they don't speak in the same restricted codes that the youngsters do.
I think I was wondering to what extent 'elaborated' languages might hamper the flow over the two days albeit nowhere near as pronounced as Bernstein intends. After all, Chris taught at central at one point and James was a student there. Mike and I might understand what is meant by the contemporary cross-disciplinary trope of 'mobility' but neither of us would immediately understand when Chris or James spoke of the different access opportunities between an arts council client and a local council run theatre workshop. These different histories of knowledge might even lead to what Amanda suggests – that we do not even share understandings of, for example, seemingly simple terms such as collaboration.

This short DVD is part of a more extended series of 'cuts' that represents the two day intensive in July. On analysing the two days, the 'journey' becomes clear as, first, a set of offerings – where each individual from the steering group presented, second – a shift towards more open exchange and discussions and third, a sense of moving forward to creating research methods (if not yet a comprehensive methodology). And, hopefully, the DVD shows something of a shift from a quite formal delivery of one's own field, an offering, to exchanging and sharing ides and knowledges to finding a way forward (towards a collaborative methodology).

DVD

For myself, two things struck when reflecting on the two-day intensive. First, there was actually a pleasure in the elaboration that took place, from 'learning' through individuals' offerings, to unravelling what might possibly be meant by social media and its uses (something that I'm certainly not deeply familiar with). Second, how important that two-day period was – in retrospect – as an opportunity for developing shared languages – or *less* elaborate and *more* restricted codes. There is an issue now of continuing that of course and I'm not entirely sure *how* we do that as we move to our separate projects, Kind of – how do we build on this rich resource longer term.

Matches with the *zeitgeist* – the Connected Communities symposium in Cardiff where you go with your 'community partner'…