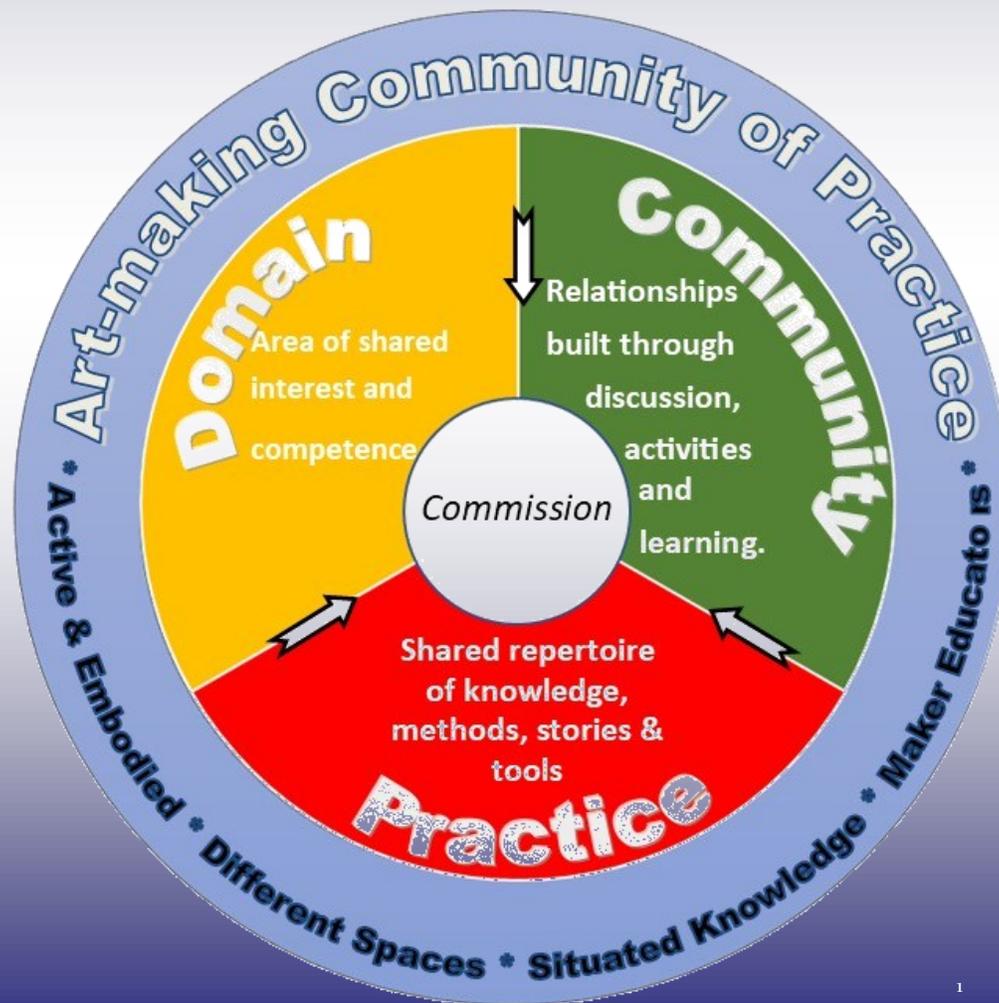


The Trowsdale Art-Making Model for Education (TAME)





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The TAME underpins our work on the Teach-Make project as well as other projects team members have developed (such as Coventry Young Producers). It brings together a large body of research into one manageable approach centred on the value of art-making. It is not a model of art education - but is founded on the view that human creativity expressed in art-making should underpin all of our educational curricula and ways of teaching. Its value lies in the fact that it:

- provides students with greater choice and freedom to pursue interests and make their own connections.
- invites them to self-direct elements of their learning
- signals a trust and value for student judgement, ability and personal engagement.
- gives responsibility to students and thereby fosters positive self-esteem and sense of capability
- requires collaboration whilst focusing on a task which builds a value for each other's strengths as well as generating opportunities for peer support and learning
- emphasises how you and learn and know through the body,
- values learning through doing and the wholeness of a person
- combines learning across different subjects, stimulating students to see connections and relationships and transfer knowledge and skills to different situations.

The model is centred on a commission, externally provided, and fulfilled as part of a 'community of practice' (CoP). The CoP has several important characteristics. It is first and foremost social, so relationships between people are central. It promotes active and embodied learning, different use of spaces, situated knowing, and the collaboration of teachers and maker-educators.

A **Community of Practice** (CoP) describes a group of people who 'share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly' (Wenger-Trayner, 2015). It is the social interaction of the members of the community that is at the heart of their learning. Lave and Wenger, who coined the idea in 1991, reflect that children learn naturally from the adult social world, by observing, copying and developing behaviours and practices from their parents and the other adults they encounter. All of us are part of multiple CoPs: a family (close and extended), a school or workplace, a sports club or other interest. In each of these, learning happens through relationships: we adopt talk and actions, and the extent to which we do is reliant on how invested we are in the group's interests and practices. Because social relationships are central, a community of practice organises itself on horizontal, potentially democratic structures. Of course, there are experts and leaders who control, organise and teach particular skills (like parents, teachers, coaches) but more time is spent working and learning alongside each other, working problems out together. Centrally such learning is practical: it emphasises that learning involves the mind, body and emotion.

The **commission** is what draws a community of art-making practitioners together: being tasked to work together to develop and complete something to a particular brief focuses practice in a particular way. The commission brief always encompasses learning opportunities, and can be more or less open and negotiated or designed to require particular types of activity and learning. The brief will specify purpose and significance, which can stimulate and emphasise connections to the locality, to particular peoples and their histories, cultures and personal lives. In the case of The Imagineerium, commissioners wanted to engage with the imaginative ideas of young people and their critical judgement about what ideas and stories about their city /

area were important for the city. In our current Teach-Make project, many teachers are focusing children's collective creative and critical thinking towards environmental issues. The commission draws also on aspects of Heathcote's 'mantle of the expert' where children are trusted as effective and important expert investigators into a 'problem' and take on responsibilities. It also has resonances with problem-based learning.

All forms of making are **active** and emphasise the **embodied** nature of learning. Art-making in a community of practising artists is a physical activity. Children are often up on their feet, working with large materials which require whole body engagement. Workbenches in Imagineer's makerspace are designed for standing height in recognition of this. Bodies, as excellent examples of human engineering, are also a medium for learning. Through physical theatre-based activities children might see and sense what is necessary to create strong and stable structures, how tensed and rigid or fluid and moving bodies effect the stability and flow of an action differently. The movement and action of our bodies are also intertwined with our emotions. Through drama children can imaginatively 'walk in the shoes' of another, imagining what it is or was like to experience something they have not actually experienced. In all of these ways, working through and with our bodies draws together body, mind and emotions in ways that intensify and deepen learning. In schools, writing has become the recognised means of showing how a child understands. In the TAME model, we focus upon developing the value of the body as a medium of learning and understanding. Drawing, manipulating materials and sensing through the whole body are promoted and developed through an art-making CoP.

Learning through a commission in an art-making CoP **situates and connects knowledge**. At times particular skills are taught or ideas are introduced, which children are encouraged to explore further, find out more about, understand for themselves as they apply and test them in relation to their response to the commission. Working on The Imagineerium, children learnt about particular ideas and experiences from histories of Coventry through hearing stories, researching facts and imagining themselves in particular circumstances through drama. When they learnt about how to build strong structures (both with their own bodies and with varied materials) they were

both experimenting and learning directed from more experienced members of the CoP. The movement of their prototype needed to work effectively as well as reflect the idea and appeal of their design. Children were learning more with each judgement they made as they explored and developed their design, each enriched and informed by the perspective of science, technology, design, aesthetics and their own sense of value and meaning.

We think of trained teachers as the legitimate educators: one adult who has expert knowledge and skills teaching a class of students. This places huge demands upon teachers. The burden of expertise can be shared with the support of **maker-educators**. Many people in arts and industry are willing and interested to engage with schooling, and have a lot to offer but the structures for doing so are absent. The TAME model can draw in such experts whether to work directly with children or as professional development supporters for teachers, co-designing an experience for students, as in Teach-Make. Often cultural organisations or freelance artists with experience in community settings have excellent brokerage skills in this respect which could be scaled up.

Different spaces. The environments for learning, both the physical spaces in which it takes place and the social, emotional and imaginative context of a learning experience is highly significant to the quality and character of the learning that takes place. Through The Imagineerium project teachers saw how inspired children were by the professional maker space, where there were open spaces to move, or where physical arrangement of space could be adapted to suit the project, bespoke equipment such as tools and workbenches invited making activities, where making resources were evident and varied. Work in school sought to echo some of these elements: seeking open spaces; adapting physical spaces so that whole body movement, collaborative writing, hands-on making and journaling were all possible within the same space and time period. Art-making becomes then a site, a crucible for learning across subject areas. Teach-Make likewise reflects these same principles.

Wenger-Trayner, E and B. 2015. An Introduction to Community of Practices: A brief overview of the concept and its uses. [online] <https://wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice>