

Decoding Tacit Knowledge with SECI

Codification

How do we teach tacit forms of knowledge? See: Polanyi, M. (1966). *The Tacit Dimension*. Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday

To acquire tacit knowledge we generally learn experientially by copying someone who already has mastered the practice that we wish to master. This is why so many 'skills-based' professions are learned on-the-job through master/apprenticeship models of education. Think about where this model of teaching applies: crafts, most forms of skilled labour such as plumbing/carpentry etc., nursing, art, design, music, acting, dance, law, sports, it's a very long list.

If we can't learn through the close contact show-and-tell of apprenticeship (particularly difficult when social distancing is in place), what other options do we have? Can we *codify* tacit knowledge as if it were a recipe or a score for others to follow? *Make Gold* brushed up against this challenge. This is something for you to investigate further. How are tacit forms of knowledge related to, say, palliative nursing or playing a muted trumpet, codified so that they can be taught without resorting to a master/apprentice model?

Tacit knowledge, moreover, doesn't just reside in knowledges that we associate with haptic or embodied skills, it exists whenever we internalise a learning practice through its regular practice. We learn to absorb and embody such forms of knowledge in ways that, while often seeming self evident to us, are opaque and even mysterious to others. We need to find ways of 'decoding' this sort of tacit knowledge if we are ever to effectively share it with others. That requires a degree of

self-awareness and, crucially, a full awareness of what it is like to be on the receiving end of our 'teaching'.

SECI Model for De/Coding Tacit Knowledges

This short video explains the SECI model of organisational knowledge creation – Nonaka's and Takeuchi's practical adaptation of 'Nishida philosophy'. Please watch it and, while viewing, think about how it might apply to the types of tacit knowledge creation and transfer that take place in art schools. How do we socialise what often begins as "personal" artistic knowledge, how is it externalised, how is it combined, how is it internalised?