Joe, Social Worker at Street College

How do you define p2p education?

p2p education is at the heart of our work. We understand this to mean that for a learning experience to be successful for all involved, all the actors should be "close together". Being "close together" in this case can refer to age, subculture, language, gender, religion. Our aim is to be close to the people we are trying to reach, in order to pave the way for an intense and constructive collaboration. Equally important are the mutual relationships of learning and teaching, which mean that both "students" and "peer-teachers" always teach and learn with and from another. They key for the success of this type of learning depends not only on the engagement of the target group but also already the preparation and the acceptance of their role by the peer-teachers is a very important element and already a goal in itself.

What are your experiences with p2p learning? What are the biggest benegits?

Many of the workshops are passed on to previous students after a while. They become peer teachers who pass on their accumulated knowledge to groups or other individual students. Because of their age, the peer teachers have a very direct connection to the students. Shared language (slang, body language, rituals), shared life experiences and cutural identities play a major role in this identification. My experience has been that this "proximity" of peer teachers with the students makes the access to the students easier and makes it possible to talk about certain topics that would otherwise be off limits.

What are the limits of p2p education?

p2p education approaches can be applied in an academic/school context, but the existing institutional structures make it hard to make it a focus of mainstream education. Professional teachers, having to teach a number of different subjects, are rarely able to establish such a personal rapport with their students such as peer-teachers. In order to still establish p2p education approaches in mainstream education settings, it is recommended to support the close collaboration between educational institutions and professionals from the different fields, who are interested in sharing their knowledge with the students.

What do you think is necessary for successful p2p education to happen?

See above