

# artwork

## Education, arts, and culture: A manual for collaborative learning and working



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## Content overview

This manual is addressing artists / cultural practitioners on the one hand and education staff in adult education and beyond on the other. It is designed to support them in developing mutual activities in education and training for the benefit of different beneficiaries, and to enable them to learn with each other, from each other and about each other's sector. By learning and working collaboratively, the knowledge already present individually shall become known to all parties involved: from distributed knowledge to shared knowledge.

The manual is based on experiences by the artwork project consortium in collaborative learning environments. It shall enable the users to create their own ways of learning from and working with each other in multidimensional groups.

The manual contains the theoretical framework of collaborative learning and working as well as practical advice, suggested methods for collaborative actions, experiences and practical examples from project partners, and promising approaches for a successful evaluation of mutual activities.

## Learning Objectives

This manual aims at providing you as an artist / cultural worker / education practitioner with skills to develop spaces for collaborative learning and working.

Particularly, by applying the methods and activities from this manual, you will:

- get to know the principles of collaborative learning and working,
- learn practical methods and tools - both face-to-face and digital - for collaborative learning and working, and how to apply them,
- profit from shared experiences of practitioners in collaborative working and learning,
- learn about practical examples of collaborative teaching between artists / cultural workers and education practitioners,
- learn how to assess and evaluate collaborative learning outcomes.

# 1: Introduction

Values associated with education have often to do with tangible results, aiming at shaping individuals to fit into society. The practice of art is not a discipline of learning, but a practice of being in the here and now, which primarily aims at the development of the self. But is this really a contradiction?

Education often means to react to current individual and societal challenges. The openness of art and culture is particularly suitable to respond to these needs. Learners can more easily adapt information in informal processes outside of the traditional institutions designed for learning. As a matter of fact, throughout Europe, there is increasing number of mutual activities between artists / cultural workers and teachers when it comes to applying new and creative learning methods.

Typical examples are:

- Second language learning combined with artistic activities, like i.e. storytelling, acting, painting;
- Cross-cultural learning using filming as a means to improve cultural understanding.

From the perspective of teaching and training, it is often the teachers / trainers as educational experts who set the curricular framework and the learning objectives in mutual activities. The artists often take on a supporting role without influencing the pedagogical content actively. To enable cooperation at eye level, a learning process on both sides is suggested by the artwork project consortium prior to the implementation of mutual teaching and training activities:

- Artists / cultural workers should learn the basics of adult education in order to engage in pedagogical activities.
- Adult education teachers should learn about the possibilities and benefits of artistic/cultural contributions in learning processes.

Collaborative learning processes can help to enable participants to share their individual knowledge about basics of education and training with artistic and / or cultural such as curricular work (i.e. learning environments, learning objectives, different teaching and learning styles, quality management and evaluation of learning processes), and enhance the mutual cultural and artistic understanding (i.e. getting to know cultural and artistic approaches suitable for learning, such as theatre pedagogical approaches, visual arts, creative writing). This will lead to the improvement of teaching / training opportunities, incorporating the abovementioned actors at eye level.

## Collaborative vs. cooperative learning and working

What is the difference between cooperative and collaborative learning and working? Both terms - collaborative and cooperative - are often used synonymously but are different from each other: Collaboration means that all members of a group are together in constant exchange on a project and its solution; in cooperative settings, a project is divided into sub-projects among the specialists and their respective results are put together at the end.

Collaboration occurs when two or more people work together to accomplish a shared, common goal. Collaborative learning and working encourages interaction between members of a learning and/or working group, and thus fosters an intensive and reflective engagement with the subject matter. Group members have to cooperate with each other and constantly review their cooperation. This also supports the further development of social competences.

Cooperative working is oriented towards the desired outcome of a group's learning process. In this way of working, everyone in the group is responsible for a partial aspect of the result. In the end, the sum of all partial aspects results in the outcome of the whole group. Sharing or joint development of knowledge is not necessarily envisaged.

In collaborative learning and working, the process of a group is in the foreground. Sharing and developing knowledge together and the interaction of the individual members lead to a holistic result.



Group dynamics (Picture © VNB)

## Collaborative learning and working: creating a third space

If we talk about learning and working collaboratively between artists / cultural workers on one hand and educators on the other, where does this happen: in the arts space, or in the education space or in a third space?

As a matter of fact, the Third Space theory which was originally introduced to the higher education sector in 2008 by the British higher education researcher Celia Whitchurch, is based on the idea that additionally to the classical order of higher education institutions with academic and administrative staff, a *Third Space* has emerged where boundaries between administrative and academic work are blurred<sup>1</sup>.

Transferred to the relationship between artists / cultural workers and education experts, the actors participating in a collaborative process enter a constellation of working and learning relationships that can develop special dynamics. The Third Space can establish a more intensive contact of the actors from different sectors than was previously the case between arts, culture, and education. Moreover, the Third Space participants can mediate between representatives of the artistic / cultural / educational sector, being agents of a new collaborative way of learning and working together.

## The 4 Cs of transformative learning

Through artistic approaches, learners of all ages can make aesthetic experiences, and train and reflect their aesthetic perception. Symbols and signs in their diversity and ambiguity enable them to explore the world. When those working in arts and culture follow a concept of "cultural education", this can equally be an expression of a critical pedagogical and social attitude, applying principles of cultural education like participation and error-friendliness. Because of these elements, artistic work in educational environments has a great transformative potential.

Artists, cultural workers and educators have a range of individual competences and experiences, embedded in one's own already confirmed assumptions, perspectives, ways of thinking, and habits of thought. But how can we manage to make these competences available for successful collaborative work?

One way can be to start a mutual learning process between the group members, in which these presuppositions are transformed into shared knowledge. Transformative

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<sup>1</sup> Whitchurch, C. (2008): p.378f.

learning focuses on a change of perspectives<sup>2</sup>. This process is supported by active participation in discourses in which one is confronted with the experiences and assumptions of others and in this way can expand one's own habits of thought and patterns of interpretation.

The central competences for transformative learning in the 21st century are considered to be *the 4Cs: communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking*.<sup>3</sup>

### **Communication**

Communication is expressing thoughts clearly, crisply articulating opinions, communicating coherent instructions, motivating others through powerful speech. To work effectively, it is required to communicate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively to different audiences using various media and formats. Group members must communicate effectively to support personal and group learning and share information efficiently using appropriate media and environments.

### **Collaboration**

As mentioned above, collaboration means that two or more people work together to accomplish a shared, common goal. To reach this goal, the team members must work effectively with different groups of people, including people from diverse cultures, be flexible and willing to compromise with team members to reach a common goal; and demonstrate responsibility working towards the shared goal.

### **Creativity**

Creativity in the sense of learning is the ability to produce new, diverse, and unique ideas. Thinking creatively means looking at things from a different perspective and not being restricted by rules, customs, or norms. Creative skills include a wide range of idea creation techniques to identify new ideas. It includes the capability as well to elaborate, refine, analyse, and evaluate own ideas in order to improve and maximize creative efforts. Working creatively will help participants to make tangible and useful contributions to the field in which the innovation will occur.

### **Critical thinking**

Critical thinking comprises logical thinking and reasoning, including skills such as comparison, classification, sequencing, patterning, webbing, analogies, planning, hypothesizing, and critiquing. Today's learners need to develop critical thinking

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<sup>2</sup> Mezirow 2012: p.81

<sup>3</sup> The 4C model goes back to the US initiative P21 (Partnership for 21st Century Learning), in which experts from business, education and politics have joined forces to reflect on education in the digital age. With the 4C they have described the so-called "four competencies for the 21st century"

skills by learning to use different kinds of reasoning, such as deductive and inductive, to understand a situation. They must gather relevant information, ask important questions that clarify points of view and help solve problems. After selecting appropriate criteria, learners must make decisions or identify alternatives to make reliable choices.

In recent years, critical thinking as a pedagogical-didactic discipline has increasingly been further developed to be a matter of norm-critical thinking. It is in the very concept that *norm-critical thinking* aims to be critical to societal norms and structures that are fundamentally expressions of the majority's attitudes and the majority's right to define the normal and the deviant. In practice, these are often gender norms, sexual norms, and views on ethnic-cultural minorities, which in school and teaching can seem oppressive and excluding to certain students - and teachers for that matter.

## **The role of artists in trans-professional contexts**

Art doesn't have to be a privilege for the few. What if arts were understood as public service, accessible to anyone? What could be the role of artists in collaborative education environments, and where are obstacles that need to be addressed? It is not easy to conceptualise and describe the attitude and role of artists or those working in the arts and culture in this complex and multi-layered web of systems, actors and media.

To find answers, the University of the Arts Helsinki (Uniarts) conducted the ArtsEqual project<sup>4</sup> funded by the Academy of Finland's Strategic Research Council (2017), initiating a pilot programme to accompany artistic interventions in other organisations. In the project, the Uniarts team examined the professional role of artists in different organizations and work fields, and how they communicated their artistic approaches. In particular, the project aimed at:

- examining arts and art education as equal basic public service from a new, holistic, and systemic perspective,
- examining how art as a public service could advance equality and well-being in society,
- analysing new kinds of art and art educational interventions implemented at schools, in basic art education, in eldercare, in multicultural youth work, in disability services and in prisons, and their effects on equality and well-being,

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<sup>4</sup> A comprehensive report about the ArtsEqual project and its outcomes can be found here: <https://www.academia.edu/49232207>



- making new art and art education based social innovations visible, and examines the expanded roles of art and art education, as well as their social impact, and
- encouraging to cross institutional borders (between art, education, social, care, culture).

One important conclusion was that artists' work in trans-professional contexts often leads to a merging of artistic competence with other competences, e.g., critical thinking or other key competences from adult education. Furthermore, the project identified tensions between artists' own discourses and those of the organizations, that may lead to identity conflicts when working trans-professionally. This may challenge rather than encourage the learning of a new professional artistic practice in educational contexts.

To avoid such identity conflicts, the ArtsEqual project team states that it is extremely important to make arts students aware of the historical specificity and cultural specificity of the discourses that are underlying artistic practices, and of the role of the hybrid artist in contemporary contexts that are extremely diverse and rapidly changing, making it necessary to critically discuss the relationship between professionalism in more traditional artistic practice on one hand, and the expanding professionalism of hybrid artists in new trans-professional realms on the other hand.

## Getting into a collaborative “flow”

Working collaboratively sounds like a promising approach. How can we manage to find the right mood for it?

One way is to get into a collaborative flow. The term "flow" was introduced by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, one of the key actors in positive psychology<sup>5</sup>. According to Csikszentmihályi, the occurrence of the feeling of flow requires clear objectives, full concentration on the activity, the feeling of control over the activity, the harmony of demand and ability beyond anxiety or boredom in apparent effortlessness. He called this particular experience "flow" because when interviewed, many people described the sensation of being carried along by the current of a river.

According to Csikszentmihalyi, there are eight key factors that contribute to the flow state:

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<sup>5</sup> See Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly (1996)

- Clear goal setting and immediate feedback
- Intense, focused concentration on a specific task
- Balance between skills and demands
- Sense of personal control and agency over the task at hand
- Loss of reflective ego-consciousness
- Distortion or altered sense of time
- Deepening of action and awareness
- Autotelic experience (i.e., the flow state is intrinsically rewarding)

Transferred to collaborative learning and working environments, primary key factors for Getting into a collaborative “flow” are:

- Clear common goals and immediate feedback between team members
- Focused concentration of each team member on the specific tasks
- Balance between the skills and requirements of all actors
- Sense of control and influence over the task at hand among team members
- Formation of a reflective "we"-consciousness
- Distortion or altered sense of time between team members
- Deepening of collaborative action and awareness
- Autotelic experience

## 2: Methods for collaborative learning and working

Active collaboration takes place when all stakeholders bring together the structures, processes, and skills necessary to achieve a higher level of collaboration: strategically as well as operationally, and culturally as well as interpersonally. But how can we achieve this? As a matter of fact, there are several methods available. Some of the most promising approaches are presented below.

### Peer learning

Peer learning is a type of collaborative learning that involves participants working in pairs or small groups to discuss concepts or find solutions to problems on eye level, learning from each other and educating each other. Peer learning breaks with old images of learning: Every participant is called upon to get involved, to temporarily take on the role of knowledge provider, and to step back again into the role of the learner.

Peer learning only works when participants feel safe enough to share their thoughts, experiences, and questions. They need to be open and empathetic enough to accept constructive input and have the courage to give honest feedback. Peer learning thrives on the fact that all participants are engaged and bear responsibility for the common learning success. Group interaction is a core element of peer learning.

An advantage of peer learning is that it is not bound to any training method. A mix of formal and informal events, job shadowing, mentoring, and coaching or self-directed learning with discussion of the results in the group usually proves most effective.

### Design Thinking

Design Thinking is a tested methodology for the practical and creative solution of problems, with the intent of producing a constructive result for the future. The goal of this human-centred approach is to discover and understand real needs, pains, and boundaries. The process involves methods that enable empathy with people. The steps of the process seek a balance between analytical and creative thinking.

Design Thinking is useful, when:

- You have a problem / challenge to tackle,
- You have a lack of information,
- You are ready to get rid of assumptions.

The Design Thinking process can be divided into six steps<sup>6</sup>. The first three phases (understanding, observing, and synthesizing) shape the space in which a problem is identified and analysed. The following three phases (ideating, prototyping, and testing) can be summarized as the solution space, in which ideas are generated, built and tested. The Design Thinking process is iterative, meaning that it is not just possible but even encouraging to jump back and forth in the process.

The advantage of Design Thinking is that the process builds on multi-disciplinary teams, leading to sustainable and realistic solutions for the end users (in this case: learners who profit from the collaboration between arts / cultural work and educators). On the other hand, it must be stated that Design Thinking requires a lot of preparation, facilitators that lead through the process, and time.



Scenes from a Design Thinking workshop (© VNB)

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<sup>6</sup> A complete introduction to Design Thinking in (adult) learning processes and a practical workshop guide (in 6 different languages) can be found at [d-learning.vnb.de](http://d-learning.vnb.de)

## Flipped learning

Flipped learning or inverted learning is a learner-centred approach that builds on the learners' previous experiences, interests, and backgrounds. Flipped learning aims to create more space for interactive collaboration with learners and to shift the classical explanation phases into self-study (Kim et al. 2014).

At the centre of all considerations is the idea that particularly due to the increased number of digital media available for everyone, the basic learning can be done previously by individuals, while the actual shared learning space can be used for active exchange, discussion or practical exercises. Based on self-directed learning, flipped learning requires a considerable amount of self-discipline as well as a pre-determined set of topics.

An advantage of flipped learning is that participants can work through the content at their own pace. Audio-visual materials, for example, can be watched or listened to as often as desired. Learners are also encouraged to research directly if something is not clear to them. On the other hand, less commitment of participants can lead to only a part of the group doing the preparation at all, causing a situation in which the knowledge level prior to the mutual learning phase is extremely different.

## Open Space

Open Space creates a methodological framework in which many people can work on their concerns together in a self-organised way. Developed by Harrison Owen in the mid-Eighties, the Open Space methodology is primarily a method for structuring conferences suitable for groups of about 20 to 2000 participants<sup>7</sup>.

Open Space is characterised by openness in terms of content:

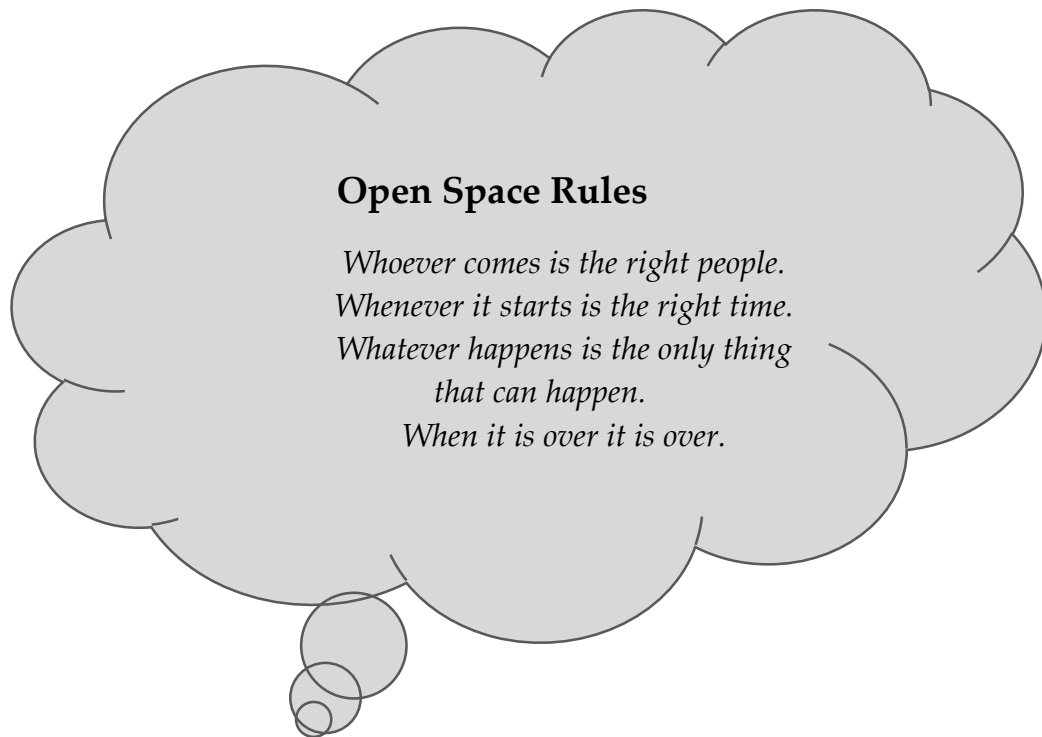
- Participants introduce their own topics to the plenum and form a working group for each topic.
- Possible projects are developed in these groups.
- The results are collected at the end.

There are no predefined individual topics. Everyone can push forward a concern that is particularly close to their heart. The method, if carried out correctly, enables broad participation in a spirit of optimism. It generates mutual understanding and energy for the implementation of the jointly developed ideas. Depending on the general

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<sup>7</sup> A multi-lingual explanation and guide of Open Space Technology can be found at: <https://openspaceworld.org/wp2/>

objective, an Open Space event can end with an action plan in which participants agree to implement ideas from the working groups.



## **Barcamp**

A Barcamp is a form of facilitating larger groups with similarities to Open Space but is more loosely organised in lectures and discussion rounds which are coordinated by the participants themselves. All participants are invited to give or organize a lecture.

Barcamps can as well be organized online by using tools for collaborative online work. However, the spontaneity as one of the decisive characteristics of a barcamp is then only partially considered.

A specific form in Education is the so called EduCamp, an open conference format which mainly deals with media pedagogical issues, as well as forms and methods of teaching and learning in general. As with the Barcamp, schedule and content are developed by the participants themselves during the conference, although this principle of a largely self-organising and free "join-in conference" is supplemented at the EduCamp by established conference methods such as panel discussions and Open Space.

## 3: Tools for collaboratively learning and working online

In recent years, the number of online tools suitable for collaborative work has virtually exploded. Here you will find a brief selection of tools that have proven to be good in practice. You may use them for discussing and brainstorming together, editing texts and other files, managing projects, or learning together virtually.

### **Padlet**

Padlet is software that creates a digital noticeboard where text, images, videos, links, voice recordings, screen recordings and drawings can be stored, enabling collaborative working. Padlet is available in more than 40 languages worldwide.

*<https://padlet.com/>*

### **Etherpad**

Etherpad is a web-based editor for collaborative working in a text document in real-time. With Etherpad, several people can edit the document at the same time, and all changes are immediately visible to all participants. The changes made by the different editors can be differentiated by colour. Another convenient function is the ability to chat in the editing window while editing text.

*<https://etherpad.org/>*

### **Google Drive**

Google Drive is a file hosting service provided by Google LLC. It allows users to store documents in the cloud, share files and edit documents together. Google Drive includes an office software package that enables collaborative editing of documents, spreadsheets, presentations, graphics, forms and more. Files shared publicly on Google Drive can be searched using internet search engines.

*<https://drive.google.com/>*

### **Miro**

Miro is an online whiteboard on which several people can collaborate. Texts, graphics, notes, existing Google Docs, and videos can be added or embedded to the interface and individually edited or commented on. The tool also offers pre-filled whiteboard templates, i.e., for brainstorming or feedback scenarios. It allows users to

present ideas, collaborating both asynchronously and in real time. The online whiteboard can also be used to brainstorm ideas, facilitate meetings. or, run agile workshops and classes.

<https://miro.com/index/>

## Google Jamboard

Google Jamboard is an interactive whiteboard designed for collaborative teamwork. The simple tool is embedded into Google Drive and was originally designed for Google's cloud-enabled hardware whiteboard but can be used independently on personal computers and mobile devices. Like Miro, it allows users to collaborate both asynchronously and in real time. You can use it easily while having an online meeting at the same time.

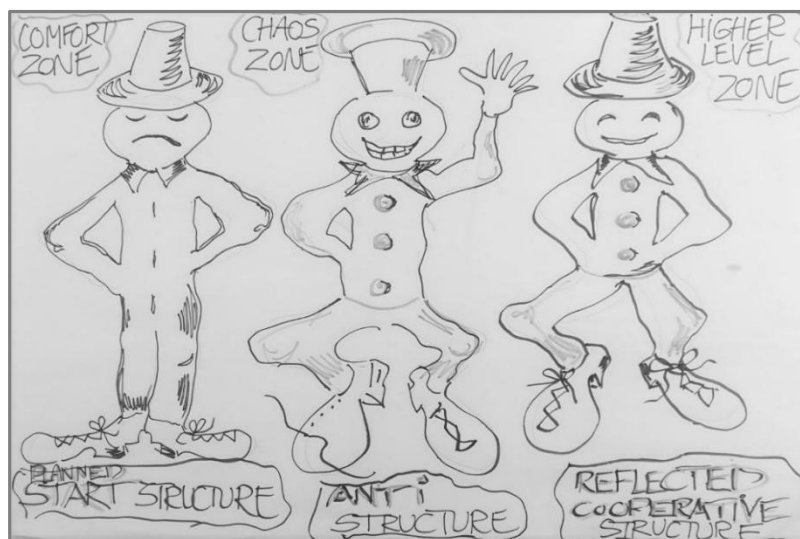
<https://jamboard.google.com/>

## Moodle

Moodle is a free course management system and learning platform. The software offers the possibilities to support cooperative teaching and learning methods. Moodle provides virtual course rooms; working materials and learning activities are provided in these.

In addition to other communication modules such as chat, forum, and the messaging system (messenger), Moodle also includes a wiki function that enables joint work on texts. In this respect, Moodle is also a platform that enables collaborative learning.

<https://moodle.org/>



Leaving the comfort zone (© Picture: artwork)



## 4: Collaborative learning and working - exchanging experiences

In Summer / Autumn 2021, the artwork project partner organisations met locally with artists and educators in discussions to gather information about their experiences in collaborative learning and working. The outcomes give a comprehensive picture of the entire field, and how it can be able to learn and work collaboratively for the benefit of young and adult learners.

### **Awareness raising toward transversal collaboration**

The informants, across their professional affiliations, agreed that it would require an awareness process among artists as well as among teachers, educators, and social workers:

*“It is also about distance between the different professional groups. It is about being able to convey to the colleagues in my social pedagogical world why it is important to use art and collaborate with artists who, on a deeper level, can strengthen our young citizens’ relationships with themselves and the outside world, plus their mutual responsibility in a sustainable community. It is important to cope with this central argumentation...”*

### **Process-oriented vs. target-oriented: creating mutual activities**

*“In the process something really beautiful emerged and we still tried to squeeze it in [into] this structure that we had come up with beforehand. [...] I was very unhappy with the result [...] the feedback of the participants matched that too. They were not so happy either and did not really find themselves in the product.”*

Artistic processes need a frame and structure which is open to unpredictable events, spontaneity, plot twists, and coincidences. Difficulties arise if there is too little time for process-oriented work or if the goal moves away from the participants. The whole process is considered as essential for learning experiences. The presentation of the product and the reactions to it, the confirmation and appreciation of one's own work, the feedback from an audience not only makes the participants visible – shine – but also contributes to strengthening self-efficacy. Beyond that, however, it is also seen as part of the reflection on the experience or on what was learned.

## **Art as a key to learning how to feel and to identify feelings**

*“Many have never been in contact with their feelings and have a great need to feel them and talk about them. E.g., they don’t know why they’re angry and must learn to identify and understand their feelings... But it can be difficult for them since they never learned, and it often has to happen indirectly through other activities. Same goes for identifying their own needs...”*

Several of the artists participating in a group discussion in Denmark stated that they already had several experiences of working in a pedagogical and/or social professional field. Thus, they were already familiar with the thoughts and perspectives associated with the basic idea in the artwork project of “merging” both conceptual and practical collaborative approaches and methodologies across the artistic, creative, pedagogical and social areas of professions. This is especially true in relation to the work with vulnerable target groups of young people and adults:

The informants point to two key challenges for the target group of vulnerable youth and adults: identifying feelings and identifying needs. A safe space must be created around the target group, where they gradually dare to be in contact with their feelings and furthermore, dare to be trustful in a sharing process. Common conversations, sharing and feedback can take place over some time, to be followed up regularly and taken seriously through a variety of expressions exceeding professional areas: written key words on a blackboard, making of posters, collages and drawings, movement, dance, bodily expressions, poetry, dramatization etc.

## **Creating new forms of collaboration in a “Third Space”**

*“I provided installations at various schools. The students were generally very open to this renewal. The teachers, on the other hand, were more reserved: Where is our agency! In fact, they helped complicate the process. My experience is that it is usually the established institutional framework that is the challenge...”*

Some informants stated that it would be necessary to build new educational curriculums and plans within the various professions. It must be curricula and educational plans that systematically integrate artistic and creative methods in the professional educations and through specific learning objectives and teaching guides provide concrete examples of how artistic/creative approaches and methodologies can be incorporated into the professional learning processes, for instance for future teachers, educators, and social workers.

In the mixed teams, in which different professionals work together, it is possible to try out new techniques or methods, that one did not know, or to which one did not yet had access to. In a collective it is easier to experiment with new things because

the new is very tangible and close, which provides easier access to new techniques or experiences.

### **The role of the educators and social pedagogics**

*"There must be an intermediary between users on one hand – the young people – and the artists on the other hand. This would be the social pedagogical professionals. Therefore, we need to develop and implement transversal development workshops for artists, educators and social workers, where they jointly develop further combinations of professional approaches and methodologies to strengthen the relational learning process among young citizens, thus to create a third common together ..."*

Art and cultural practitioners bring individual and thus singular aesthetic levels of perception to the joint work with learners, thereby supporting them and giving them recognition. In the pedagogical context, a distinction is made between teaching "technique" and didactic elements on the one hand, and an "attitude" relating to the individual personalities of teachers and learners, on the other.

*"As a teacher and group leader I have my own goals in the process of course and I am happy if I see that the practices, I use help the participants to achieve these understandings or emotional feelings I expect them to experience – like bigger relaxation, self-confidence, better connections with colleagues, increased openness and readiness to share their problems with their colleagues."*

In relation to artistic-pedagogical action, "attitude" can be understood as an open process of balancing one's own and others' perceptions, which is always oriented towards the respective situation and in which feelings are essentially involved. In this way, art educators and social pedagogics follow an understanding of teaching and learning that develops from the insight into the complexity and the learning processes that can only be controlled to a limited extent. The subjectivity of learners and the potential of relationships with each other are central to this.

### **Conclusions**

- In the conversations between artists, cultural workers and educators, the complexity of the artistic ways of working becomes apparent in the intertwining learning processes of all participants.
- Collaborative and participatory processes are experienced by the participants of the group discussions as enriching: On the one hand, the contact with different social environments becomes possible. On the other hand, it is the collective artistic activity that allows new experiences.

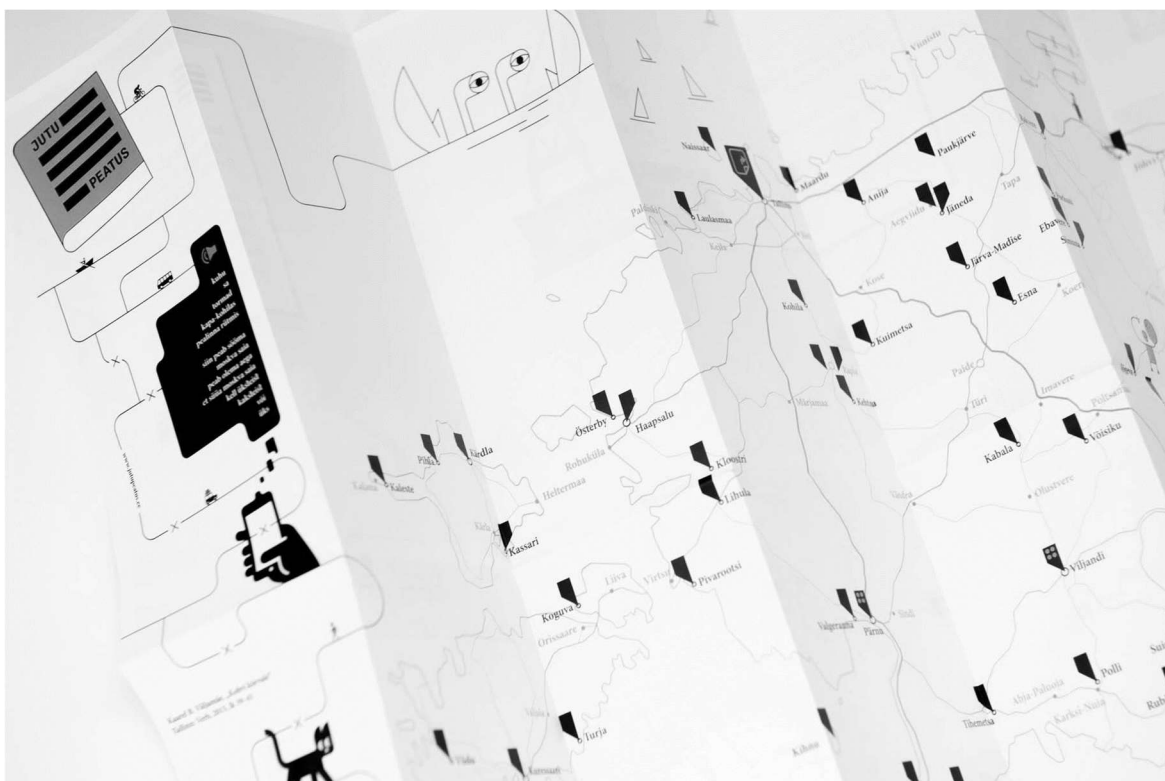
- To collaborate successfully at eye level, the mutual development of education projects by artists and educators from the very beginning is an important approach.
- It must be taken into consideration that artistic work, cultural work and educational work in general have different objectives, reaching from individual artistic expression to mutual learning outcomes. Thus, in a first step, to develop successful collaboration between arts and education the different parties have to agree on common objectives.
- Through artistic performances and other artistic expressions, it becomes clear that art is a sustainable way to create awareness around the meaning of relations. This applies to both the relationships between people and the relationship between people, nature, and the climate.
- Art in all its expressions represents in practice an alternative pedagogical path to raising awareness of vital societal issues, both on a personal, social, and societal level.

## 5: How to? Collaborations between education / arts / culture

Active collaboration: how does it work in practice? In the following you will find 3 examples from the Artwork project consortium.

### Estonia: Chat Stops

The Chat Stop project was organized in 2017-2018. It was related to the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Estonia. The project team selected 100 important Estonian literary works from the history of Estonian literature that were related to a place - whether the literary work was inspired by that place, or the place had inspired writers. Each Chat Stop had a label or poster with a reference to a literary work related to that place. With the help of the QR code, everyone could immediately start reading a passage from the book on their smartphone, listen to an excerpt from the selected book, view other locations of the nearby Chat Stops. Everyone could take a trip near their home region or all over Estonia and study places related to Estonian literature and literature in more detail.



Chat Stop map (picture © Tartu Centre for Creative Industries)

The project was aimed at a wide range of target groups. As the labels created within the project were placed outside in a hundred places all over Estonia, they were and are still seen by everyone who walks by. However, the main target groups were teachers and school children, and special educational programs were provided for the teachers at the webpage of the project, where children could go and listen to excerpts from top works of Estonian literature.

*„I think that the goal of the project was reached, and no real obstacles were met... For me, it was a very exciting and educational project – first to make librarians aware of so many valuable literary works and then the broader audience. I received then and I still receive so many letters to my e-mail address. People are thankful and pleased. They said that they were emotionally touched, and the project helped them to realize how much beautiful poetry and literature do we have in Estonia – especially at their home places. Also, the overall website traffic was remarkable.”*



1 out of 100 Chat Stops (picture © Tartu Centre for Creative Industries)

The project received several awards. The authors of the visual design received an European award for design. The Librarians' Association awarded it the annual prize as a literary project of the year. Tourist guides have included these storytelling places with labels in their own city tour schedule.

*“The process of finding the places was also really interesting. We invited teachers and local librarians to work with us and propose different places. We tried to find intriguing sentences or passages. For example, Runnel’s poem Earth must be filled with children. This label was placed in front of the old maternity hospital and two lines from the different poems of the author were used: “Earth must be filled with children” and “Life is all temporal”.*

## Germany: Culture and Language Camps

Reorienting oneself and arriving in a new country - sometimes with traumatic experiences in the country of origin as well as long and sometimes dangerous escape or migration routes - requires personal reappraisal. Language camps as non-formal learning opportunities offer the possibility to combine language teaching with personal reflection and to contribute to the empowerment of adolescents and young adults through the use of different media and artistic forms of expression.

Since many years, the VNB is organizing culture and language camps in school break seasons for pupils with a migration or flight background. As an example, in 2018, a two-week youth camp was organised where 20 young people with a history of flight or migration met under the title "What's up? Democracy!" in the village of Barnstorf in North-West Germany. The offer gave young people in rural areas the opportunity to exchange ideas with each other, to locate themselves and to express their own wishes and demands.

Democratic education was the focus of the camp. Essential elements of democracy such as co-determination, voting, negotiation of interests and the like were put into practice and thus experienced. The experiences were reflected on in discussions. The focus of the content came from the young people themselves, fed by their experiences. In various workshops they had the opportunity to learn and try out a form of expression for their thoughts and opinions, e.g., with art, music, or a video production. They also went public in a journalism workshop and a graffiti workshop. During the graffiti workshop, statements like "No War" were sprayed on the street with chalk paint. In the journalism workshop, the young people interviewed passers-by in small groups on topics such as racism, discrimination, peace, and justice.



Pictures from the Culture and Language Camp (© VNB)

The conclusion after the camp was positive. During the two weeks, a great group atmosphere developed, and the participants gained more confidence and security in expressing their opinion and representing their point of view.

Language camps pursue a conceptual principle: adolescents and young adults should be given and use the opportunity to orient themselves to their utopias and dreams and to express themselves in their new, transcultural life context. The main task of the educators in the language camps is to offer the participants opportunities to deal with the central theme of a radical new beginning and a good arrival. They express themselves individually in written language and dialogue, through media use and design, through painting or other visual arts, music, body language and performance, and - very importantly - work on a joint group product.



Participants from the Culture and Language Camp (Picture © VNB)

Language camps offer learning processes that are reflected in everyday life, in life-world spaces, in the cultural context, in the educational institution, in leisure time and in the context of the peer group. Creating language opportunities often implies informal, self-directed and self-determined learning. Overall, in the best sense, this is immersive learning for and with youth and young adults.



Exemplary methods are e.g. the exploratory excursion with the help of photography and interviews, where text and sound have both a documentary and conceptual character. Research, depth of field, word finding, interview strategy, going out and movement are important elements of the working process of the youths and young adults. In the way the interview is conducted, or the structure of the recording and the later presentation of the results, intersections of the private and the public, the foreign and the familiar, the environment and nature reveal themselves.

The connection between spoken language and expressive language enables creative forms of code switching: a phenomenon that is consciously encouraged in our language and culture camps and especially leads to further developing one's own multilingualism with the demands of diverse communication situations. The methods mentioned above show that holistic promotion of multilingualism, as practised in the language camps, does not only refer to standardised learning procedures.



Invitation to a youth camp in Autumn 2020 (Picture © VNB)

*“Here, art was used for empowerment, not for better learning results primarily. That is something not every artist is able to do. You must be able to work with relationships between and with young adults. It is not enough to be good in your profession i.e., as a painter. As well, the educators must have an approach to art and creativity in cooperation with artists. You should develop the concept together in a team, not “buy” an artist for your project.”*

## Austria: LERNKUNST



LERNKUNST \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ is learning in artistically creative processes.

\_\_\_\_\_ opens up space for encounter and dialogue.

\_\_\_\_\_ broadens the horizon and changes perspectives.

\_\_\_\_\_ develops strategies for transcultural education.

\_\_\_\_\_ makes social participation concrete and tangible.

\_\_\_\_\_ strengthens one's own agency.

As part of the program LERNKUNST ("art of learning"), artists and educators of the KUNSTLABOR Graz engage in questions on the interconnection of artistic and pedagogical processes.

Artistically creative processes take participants' individual environments as their starting points, offer countless opportunities to facilitate casual learning processes,

challenge people to act, invite to take a stance, to adopt and try out different perspectives, and enable participants to formulate and discuss their own questions via heretofore unfamiliar work processes. They are fun, foster curiosity and raise motivation.

LERNKUNST applies the work strategies of contemporary art to do research, to visualize perception and experience, and to develop collaborative work processes based on participation; that is, stories will be invented, room for imagination opened, participants will work on collages and mash-ups, multimedia installations, photography, audio described images, theater plays or stop motion films.

The presentation of the artistic results in front of an audience plays a vital part in this process as it promotes visibility, recognition and feedback. The Reflection of changes, experiences and new ways of agency too proves crucial for its success.

LERNKUNST has so far realized numerous artistic projects and published its methods as a so-called Methodenbox (box of methods).

*Film LERNKUNST: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbrQjEMa-Sk&t=3s>*

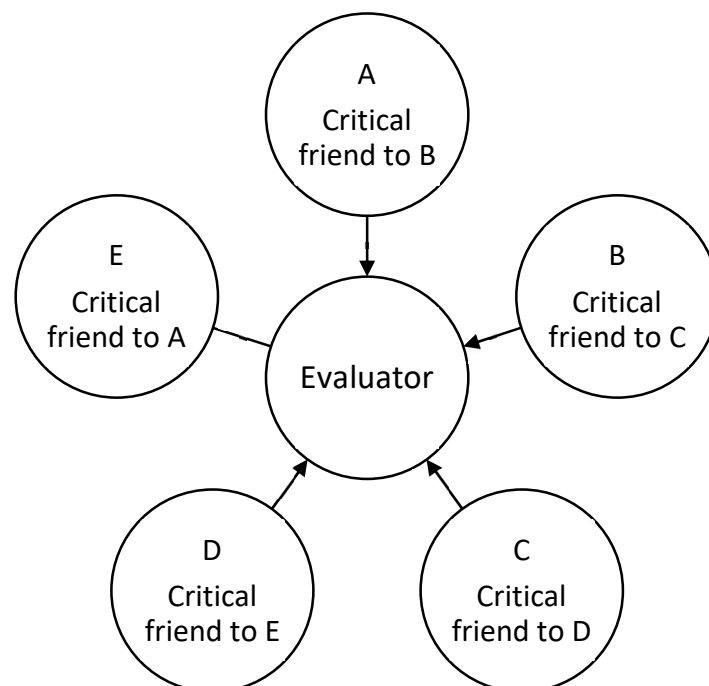
## 6: Evaluation of collaborative learning and working processes

During and after collaborative learning and working processes, an analysis of the group interaction in the context of goals and desired outcomes is needed. The following approaches from the practice of the artwork partner organisations will help you to understand and analyse the collaborative processes, to identify good practices as well as weaknesses, and to improve your future activities.

### Circle of critical friends

The “Circle of Critical Friends” is a tried and tested methodology that in a simplified version can be used to offer ongoing reflection on a project’s development. It was originally developed for collegial dialogue in schools and universities.

The model is based on the identification of a critical friend for each group member, and asks each group member to act as a critical friend to a different group member. The evaluator (this could be someone selected from a group) offers some key questions at times throughout the project’s work.



Circle of critical friends (own depiction)

The group members make responses and forward their responses to their critical friend who then offers feedback. The results are returned to the evaluator, then collated and analysed, so that any highlights or problems can be effectively identified and, if necessary, addressed.

This feedback / feed forward methodology is preferably suitable for groups up to 10 persons, otherwise the amount of information gathered from the circle would need a more elaborate procedure.

### **Aesthetic diary**

The aesthetic diary is a method which is particularly addressing artists working in creative processes for the means of communication with different groups, i.e. young adults, marginalized or vulnerable groups.

The method can be used to initiate and frame these processes, to design environments where people can develop their ideas and competences and reflect on their experiences. Different methodological approaches (e.g., action research) are employed for this purpose.

A detailed description of the aesthetic diary methodology has been published separately by the artwork project.



Scene from an aesthetic diary workshop in Tartu /Estonia (picture © VNB)

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## Project partnership & disclaimer



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- Austria: UniT GmbH (Lead partner / [www.uni-t.org](http://www.uni-t.org))
- Germany: Verein Niedersächsischer Bildungsinitiativen e.V. ([www.vnb.de](http://www.vnb.de))
- Estonia: Tartu Centre for Creative Industries ([www.lmk.ee](http://www.lmk.ee))
- Finland: Uniarts ([www.uniarts.fi](http://www.uniarts.fi))
- Denmark: MHT consult Aps ([www.mhtconsult.dk](http://www.mhtconsult.dk))



Verein Niedersächsischer  
BILDUNGSINITIATIVEN e.V.



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