Artist as Pedagogue Developing an Educational Model Using Practitioner-Trainers in Non-Formal Learning Contexts

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1. Introduction
This paper presents an educational model that has been developed through the consideration of the practice of the artist-as-trainer working with learners in non-formal learning contexts. This model was developed through a Leonardo funded project called, Euro-Aspire. Three key principles emerged through the research, which the authors consider important and relevant for consideration in shaping education for the future. These principles will be articulated and the benefits of the wider application of the artist or practitioner in mainstream education will be identified.

2. The background to the Euro-Aspire project
The Euro-Aspire project examined learning in non-formal contexts such as the work place or community, delivered by practicing artists. The project partnership consisted of *Collage Arts*, UK, *WAC*,UK , *MuLab*, Italy, *ArtQuimia* ,Spain, *New Arts College*/*New Arts Experience*, the Netherlands who are all employers of artist trainers and *VIA University College*, Denmark who have an expertise in social pedagogy using arts and creativity. [1]
Three significant problems affect the use of artist trainers in education in Europe. The lack of directly relevant qualifications for experienced and new trainers, the lack of a common system for employers to evaluate their skills, experience and knowledge and no external industrial or educational framework for identifying equivalent value and level of skills, knowledge and expertise. Euro-Aspire partners developed an employer-led framework and reference points in response to these problems. [2]
The primary research of Euro-Aspire (EA) included an understanding of each of the partner organizations, their community and institutional capital. It examined the relationships between learners and artist trainer and the working contexts. It probed the concept of internal and external legitimacy and cultural fit of current assessment mechanisms and validation systems through both small focus groups and the partnership forum. The results provided some very rich qualitative data that did not fit neatly across the categories but did give clear directives in terms of the project direction. The partnership gained an understanding of the knowledge-field, stakeholders, and how to uphold the integrity of the sector. It also developed strategies to facilitate and further the validation and progression using the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).[3]
The process of mining the tacit knowledge-field of the artist-as-pedagogue was achieved through workshops, video presentations and examining live practice in different contexts in 4 countries. The knowledge-making tasks, which were videoed, were achieved through several strategies which included, enterprise context analysis; individual reflective practice; professional discussion with co-workers of varying levels of experience; a multi-vocal 'community of interest' forum involving managers, researchers, experienced and new trainers including those that had started as service users. It was a continuous goal of the partnership to get the balance right between organic, non-linear features of learning in the sector and the rigour, confidence, replication of standards and quality assurance required of a validation process.[4].
Research constraints included limited budget and time of individual participants from the partnership organisations and the limited sample size of 5 organisations and their respective trainers, from 250 to just 3. Testing the framework was indicative in the EA project, however, further testing was carried out with similar organisations in partner-countries and there is a plan for further broader testing, later this year.[5]

3. The Euro-Aspire educational model

3.1 The artist or creative practitioner as pedagogue
The Euro-Aspire framework, profiles and assessment strategies led to the development of an educational model of the artist as pedagogue. Artist trainers demonstrate how knowledge and skills are applied in action in a range of contexts. They demonstrate *knowledge-in-making*. They belong to a professional community of practice and as such are social repositories of community protocols and practice relationships and so also demonstrate *knowledge-in-interaction*. They are learners, who have developed effective communication and dissemination skills, alongside their own specific practices, which facilitate the learning of individuals in their practice community; this can be seen as demonstrating *knowledge-in-sharing*.[6]

3.2 Pedagogical areas in the Euro-Aspire educational model
The EA project uncovered definite educational, professional and social pedagogical areas, invisibly integrated within the tacit practice of the artist-as-pedagogue. These areas informed the three-dimensional model and are critical to the work with learners in the EA non-formal contexts. These areas were conceived as key roles in the framework. These roles are the *Artist (practitioner), the Learning facilitator and the Social pedagogue*. [7] The

model also required to solve the three significant problems articulated above, by the referencing of this 3D model to the EQF and this was achieved by developing three profiles of proficient, competent and trainee artist trainers or pedagogues with demonstrable competencies located in certain zones in the 3D model. These zones were referenced to the EQF at levels 3,4, and 6.

The assessment methods and procedures involved were selected because they were already partially embedded within the organisations e.g. organic, blended and fuzzy learning, video and performance-based assessment, use of professional dialogue, narratives and enquiry.

3.3 Principles of the Euro-Aspire educational model

The educational model is based on 3 core principles:

a) Learner identities are social constructs: The identity of the learner exists in the community of the specific social space and therefore, learner behaviour, characteristics and achievement can change with the specific social space. Post-modernist thought holds that selves are socially constructed through language and maintained in narrative. The self is regarded as a process or activity that occurs in the space between people and not inside an individual. [8] Communicated values are strong drivers in the success of transformation in relation to the social space and advocates need to be wholeheartedly convinced that personal difficulties are social and personal constructions.[9]

EA organisations work with and facilitate transformation of 'hard to reach' people, who can not engage in mainstream learning institutions. A key element of that transformation is that the learner is engaged in something bigger than the self and that they are valued as members of the community by the institution, their sub-groups and other practitioners, however experienced.

b) Learners can engage with and develop pluralist democratic values: The presence of and engagement in multi-vocality in the learning context models a pluralist democratic society and develops the right of individuals in civil society to question dominant and culturally supported narratives [10], whilst also acknowledging and including local and more excluded narratives, that are subject to the status of deviance or abnormal through the normalisation processes of social and political institutions. This multi-vocal and inclusive approach addresses the negation of identity and inequalities in social and economic power and constructs social capital through the building of community cohesion, by asserting the rights of individuals to express their own narrative and hold opinions that are then seen as adversarial rather than these being silenced leading to seemingly destructive or overtly hostile behaviour. [11] Outside formal education, the use of electronically mediated communication emphasises multi-vocality in its texts and engages audiences in the practice of self-constitution but this is monologist, self-referential and context free.[12] The Euro-Aspire educational model embeds this multi-vocal aspect within the contexts of practice and a practice community.

c) Learners need a tool that is both an atlas and a means of measuring their learning that is multi-direction i.e. a sat nav of learning: Learners in a community of practice are able to locate themselves in a learning-field continuum of this practice and to use agency to negotiate the purpose, method and direction in which they wish to travel in, through, up, down or out of this learning field. They can choose a destination and the 'sat nav' of learning will indicate multi-directional routes to that destination. Learners can also evaluate their own practice in relation to the modelled practice visible in their community by those with more or less aptitude or experience than themselves. They can have direct access to opportunities providing diverse types of input, collaboration and feedback sources and be more proactive in using their agency to negotiate the purpose, method and direction in which they wish to learn. In the Euro-Aspire educational model, specific artistic experiences or creative practice events have a range of learning outcomes, some intended, some unintended, some independently driven by the practitioner-as-learner or the practitioner-as-trainer, and some incidental to the environment and circumstances. All of these learning outcomes are recognised and valued in their own right through a continuous assessment model. This, develops the agency and self-motivation of learners, and situates all practitioner-learners in a multi-directional learning field with opportunities for cross-fertilisation of knowledge types and engagement with different knowledge-making sub-communities e.g. musician, dancers, film-makers etc, and builds the experience, skills, confidence and achievement portfolio of the learner beyond compartmentalised and narrowly-focused goals. Marchand describes this process of practitioners and interlocutors structuring their places of learning using activity and dialogue in spaces that they define and organise.[13]

4. Can this be applied to other practices and other educational contexts?

The use of trainers in mainstream education could expand learner awareness from a framework of knowledge-as-fact, predominantly perceived as context and value free to a more critical and richer knowledge-as-action framework with articulated values and embedded in context. The presence of practitioner-as-community member and learner-as-community member, rather than the practitioner-as-teacher and learner-as-pupil, signals to individuals, groups and institutions that they are entering a 'new and different social space'. The invitation to 'act' as a participant in a community of practice is at first presented, then extended and then, assumed as membership with rights and responsibilities is negotiated. This process is not to be confused with a one off arts or creative event or a single visit by a practitioner trainer. This is a more strategic and longer term intervention. It is the

beginning of a new type of relationship and creates a new social interface for interactions to take place as a member of a community of practice. [14]

Fig.1 Diagram of the educational model of learning in the Euro-Aspire organisations
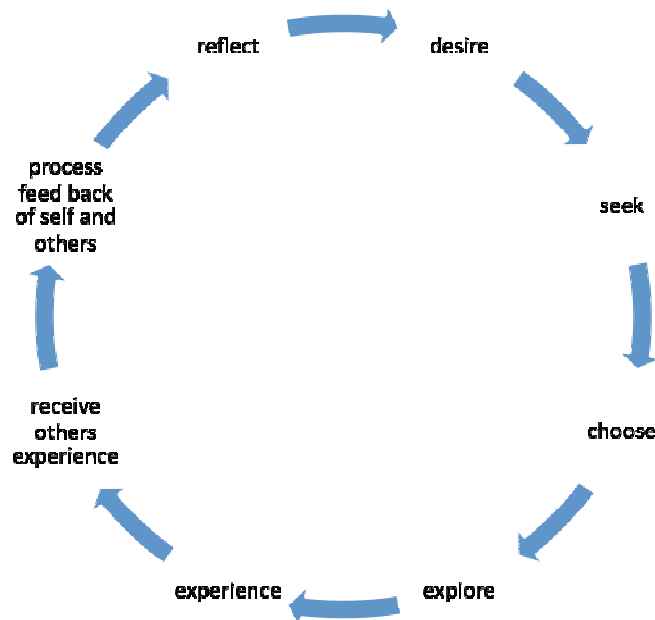
In Fig.1, the artist trainer interacts with the learner in this process stimulating motivation, activity, productivity and reflection. A continuing process of negotiating meaningfulness occurs that facilitates experience, encourages interaction, provides feedback and supports choices.

This process contains elements of play, trial and error, being in and managing chaos, working with boundaries and structures, discovery, uncertainty, taking risk, being outside the comfort-zone, changing contexts, working with constraints, testing limits, developing artistry, making artifacts. It is an organic and non-linear process. The learner is in a process of negotiating narratives: prior narratives vs. new narratives. The trainee makes progress in artistic practice, individual learning and social participation.[15]

5. Conclusion

The Euro-Aspire educational model of the specific context of the artist as pedagogue in non-formal learning contexts is based on principles that could be applied to broader educational contexts. These principles concern the identity of the individual in the social, the need for pluralism and multi-vocality in the learning context and the facilitation of learners to be able to locate themselves in a learning-field and to use agency to negotiate the purpose, method and direction of their learning. The process of developing the 3D organic framework and profiles for the sector resulted in the European community of artist trainers seeing itself for the first time, adopting a shared terminology and frames of reference without sacrificing or modifying individual organizational biographies, missions, focus and direction. This process, itself, can be viewed as a model of community development and cohesion, embodying the pluralist democratic values of the organizations, at a new macro level.

The transferability of the Euro-Aspire framework, which was developed specifically for artists and creative practice trainers in non-formal learning contexts is currently being tested for its application to other practices and formal learning contexts.

References

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