

A high-angle photograph of a group of approximately ten young people sitting in a circle on a wooden floor in a room with wood-paneled walls. They are all playing drums, including several djembes and two snare drums. The group is diverse in age and appearance. The text "ARTS EMPOWERING YOUTH WORK" is overlaid in large, bold, orange capital letters across the center of the image.

ARTS EMPOWERING YOUTH WORK

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Strategic partnership project under Erasmus+ programme

This booklet was made as a result of action research conducted by Lauri Heikkilä MA during the project. Partners in this project were five youth and cultural organizations Gaiac, PT; Circolo Arci la Quercia, IT; Arttrain, DK; A.C.T.O.R, RO and SDPL Helsingin ja Uudenmaan piirijärjestö ry/Helsinki Pioneers FI. All partners are also members in Drums for Peace -network and are organizing various youth exchanges every year where participative arts are used as a tool to connect young people from different parts of Europe and various backgrounds in the environment of an international youth exchange.

This research and booklet is not to give a template on how to run a youth exchange with artistic workshops but to give an view point to the common creative process that is happening in the workshops and to look at patterns that connect in a youth exchange project. We are not making rules but we are sharing a possible frame or a toolbox that can help in analyzing the art we are making, tools to facilitate the work done in the workshops, connect people with different skills and backgrounds to a common creative process in order to build up intensity and good energy by making art. Connecting not correcting.

We believe that the common creative process in DFP workshops is creating a time-space where there is a possibility for everyone to participate in the way they want in a safe, supporting environment.

We hope this booklet will inspire you to try out the ideas described in the following pages. It's a handbook where you can pick up what you want or what catches your eye.



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SDPL Helsingin ja Uudenmaan piirijärjestö ry
Helsinki Pioneers
<https://www.sdplhkiuusimaa.fi/>

ARTTRAIN
<http://www.arttrain.dk/>

GAIAC
<https://www.gaiac.pt/>

A.C.T.O.R.
<https://actorromania.wordpress.com/>

CIRCOLO ARCI LA QUERCIA
<https://www.facebook.com/ArciLaQuercia/>

DRUMS FOR PEACE
<http://www.drumsforpeace-network.org>



"Happiness is being together with people"

Franz Kafka

Connecting not correcting

Art in empowering youth work. Participative arts.

This article is about how to create cultural space in an artistic way, which connects people and allows them to learn in creative way and in the level of skills they have at the moment.

Instead of studying the world we should study according to the ways we study it. By changing our ways of knowing we create new, richer stories and alternative ways of thinking. .

Meanings are our stories we tell. One purpose of this article is to create understanding that many times happenings which allow spontaneity and improvisations are also meaningful and very useful. They create energy. In action research we create "Mind at large." It is the pattern which connects. And its side product is collateral energy.

Theory creates the big picture and in this way it creates and reveals the meanings. The purpose of this is to understand that having a dialogue with other people, with our society and its culture in itself is very important and it opens new possibilities.



ACTION RESEARCH is the production of knowledge to guide practice with the modification of given reality occurring as part of research process itself. Within action research knowledge is produced and reality modified simultaneously: each occurring due to the other. (Rowan)

There are three basic metaphors of mind, body, and culture.

These metaphors can be separated only at the theoretical level, in practice they are intertwined.

It is important to understand, what kind of knowing these metaphors create in participatory research.

There are three important questions.

What are we doing?

This gives direction. Output is not input. Just giving a command is not enough. Participation creates internal discipline.

How do we do it?

What kind of skills do we need? What are the guiding principles?

Why are we doing it?

The purpose of it? What kind of theoretical understanding we need? The philosophy of the project?

Every type of cultural performance: ritual, ceremony, carnival, theater, poetry, participative research is explanation and explanation of life itself. (Turner)

The Medium is the message.

The Art metaphor

"The meaning of art is at doing it"

Cy Twombly

In this metaphor we study the time-space we live by.

People are subjects and active agents.

Their own experience is the proof. They must feel safe and at the same time they are challenged. They learn something that they are able to learn, but they could not be able to learn it by themselves.

Everybody learns different things. Highly skilled people and beginners can work together.

The time-space is physical, psychological, spiritual and so is the environment we build on.

Fun is not a dirty word. Create a space which allows people to express themselves in their own way.

We are allowed to use metaphorical and analogical language. Meanings can be clarified and created in the process itself. Rules can be changed as well as forms of action.

Learning happens in a different kind of activities and in the leisure time people spend together. Actually, learning can happen anywhere. And we can be learning something that is not planned beforehand. The quality of process is not ruled by the outcomes which have been defined beforehand.

The context rules.

When I was a kid we used to play the Finnish baseball in the field next to the school. Everybody was accepted to join the game. The big guys hit the ball and small kids run from base to base. Everybody was allowed to take part in this game. It didn't matter who won and who lost. This kind of heritage is vanishing in our culture.

The game lasted till we got bored. A living ritual is a purpose in itself.

In the art metaphor there are no mistakes or failures. There are no fixed hierarchies. Everybody can be a star.

Rules rule in the game and people are subjected to the rule. In the play rules can be changed and they are subjected to people. What matters is the Intensity, the joy; participants own experiences of the play. This is also what we mean by time-space.

All forms of logic are accepted and appreciated.

In the Art metaphor people and their culture is the living context, which follows the logic of dance. The present determinates the steps which to take.

And if we let it lead us it will take us to wonderlands, which is the source of energy and joy. Subjectivity rules.



The Communication metaphor

In this metaphor we study everything as a form of communication. Even things which we think are dead, communicate.

The medium is the message. Our tools and extensions can be seen as forms of communication.

How do we build the setting? What kind of communication methods do we use? Is the performance we are creating something people want to be involved in?

This can be called **reality principle**. Everybody is a part of process and they can influence on it. They are the context and active agents in this creative process.

For example the powerpoint neglects the context we are in. It follows only its own logic. It can tell us something we already know and thus it can be a waste of time. It can be something that we do not need at the moment and then we consider the information trivial. Using powerpoint can be quite risky in that respect.

The schedules rule by defining when we have to have breaks. But we can also have a break when we feel like it.

The Medium is always the message.

Every extension we use creates its own rules. We must be aware of it. They are not wrong, but if they control us, it can be misleading and we lose many important things.

We must rule them instead of letting them to rule us.

We must also respect those concepts people, whom we are connecting with, use. If we use different concepts they must be clarified. Dialogue is a part of the process. The most important thing is that people understand our intentions positively.



The real message is on implicit system. Meanings of the words are not only in the intellectual understanding of words but also how they have been manifested in the practice.

In the communication metaphor sensibility means that we are connecting to other people by hearing, feeling, seeing, sometimes touching and acting and in this way we are able to create connection and develop ourselves. This can be called the logic of dance. Knowing means a relationship between people.

In Japanese culture they have a word Suki. It means a skill to communicate with people in symbolic way. It also means the source of light. Some teamsters were able to build a tea ceremony according to the guest's character and taste.

Sensibility needs sensitivity. Understanding is a form of action, which all the participants learn in.

The knowledge is created in the communication process between participants. This forms relationship, in which most important thing is get connected. There is no absolute truth, but the connection rules. The better connection we have the better results we are able to achieve together.

Reality is between people not in people.

It is the skill to be able to create common understanding with all the participants who are involved.

People also have different kind of rules of how things should be done. Planning is a good tool in many contexts, but in participatory research it can be restrictive. One must know when to plan and when let the improvisation lead. If we do not understand it as a form of creation, it will be our tyrant. If we do not understand it, our extensions and tools start to live a life of their own.

Good teams develop their own concepts, practice and humor. It is a part of the process. They are involved. Every process creates different outcomes and is a source of intensity, the reason why it can always be interesting.



A friend of mine used to work with many teams and they always changed. So when he met the team first time after the formal introduction he said that before "we start I want to hear what everybody in this team sees as a form of good conversation".

This approach of fifteen minutes created a very good conversation. The rules of every day performance were established.

When we are connected to each other and we have a common purpose, vision or target of our interest, it itself creates internal discipline. It is the pattern which connects. Creation is a mental process.

The Medium is the message. The message is in the implicit systems. Get connected by using patterns which connect.

- For Intercultural evenings , which is a common part in the youth exchange programme, we usually have country or culture presentations with food tasters from participants countries in different tables. To create a connecting pattern in this event it's a good idea that all food taster are placed on one table and we sit down together around the table, eat together like a family and let the food lead the discussion. -

- The country presentations can be quite formal and even boring sometimes. Participants being forced to represent a culture or something that can be far away from their everyday life. In order to create a pattern that connects we suggest for example that every country group is given a task to make a performance using as a topic the theme of the whole project. This presentation is to be made in beforehand using some art form music, theatre, poetry, dance etc. and brought to the intercultural event. It can contain some local culture of course if wanted or something from "my block", school, hobby or how we spend our freetime with friends. The connecting pattern being the given common task thus avoiding the participants to become representatives of culture stereotypes. As one participant once said in their presentation before they started their compelling dance performance. "i'm not giving you any figures about how many we are in our country and so on. If you really are interested in that data just google it". -



The Machine Metaphor

This is the dominant metaphor of Western culture. It is based on our heritage of the ancient Greek culture where salvation by rituals was replaced by abstract reason.

This approach was the beginning of our modern society, which is based on the idea that we see the world as a machine which follows mechanistic principles.

The Causal "either or" logic and algorithms rule. We are trying to find the right way to do things. The absolute truth is the answer. Classifications are very important.

Trained experts are the leaders and others are objects, which only experts are able to fix, educate or cure.

The experts have monopolized the truth, in which higher power is the source of change.

External discipline, rules, the law and bureaucracy are the manifestations of it.

The Utopia-principle, the idea of how things should be, rules.

There is a very strong hierarchy of knowledge. The abstract, conceptual language is used and considered as a form of science. We are not part of this society, if we are not able to use this language. This approach is highly ruled by the rules it has developed by itself.

In this meaning abstract reason is a living thing.

The machine metaphor is at present everywhere in our lives. It is not important to fight against it, but to just understand how strong it is. The idea of one truth has very strong influence in our culture and without alternative stories it makes our lives boring and dull.



We need also alternative metaphors to develop our cultures, in order to create new ways to study and research our world.

Gregory Bateson describes our world with two concepts: creatura (living) and plemora (dead). The latter is predicted and based on natural laws. The former one is dynamic, and results can't be predicted. It is very complicated and it has many faces. It becomes reality only by ways we study it.

In the Greek mythology Metis is a small fairy, which is able to fool even Zeus. Metis is also a word for art and creative thinking. Metis also means ability to break rules. Every system has its own rules, its own logical pattern. To break these patterns we have to change the rules to create new pattern. The difference makes the difference.

There is a pattern to understand creation, one way is that it is run by High power, who creates it according to a planned schedule and it is ready-made. There are also other stories which say that if we just open the doors of creation, it will be organized by itself and there will be no perfection, but joy. It is just a relationship of wonder and intensity. It is a time-space.

We also need the machine metaphor, techniques, skills and theories. These three forms of metaphors can not be separated.

Lauri Heikkilä



TYPES OF LOGIC

All of these logics can work simultaneous. This is just a license for playing.

Abductive logic.

In this context abductive logic means that we proceed just by guessing. The feedback you get is the proof. In this way you will hit something. Sooner or later. You can start whatever ideas you have. If something works, do it more. If it does not work, try something else.

Fuzzy logic.

Things are not either or. They are both and. The same phenomenon can be good or bad, it depends on the context.

Inductive logic

We start from a detail to general. In artistic context this means we start from details and climb up to higher more abstract levels. This makes meanings visible.

Deductive logic

We start from general and go down to details. I want to be a healthy person and that is the reason why I eat cereals. We are able to illustrate our ideas in concrete practice.

Antithesis/thesis logic

Things become visible through their opposites. This can be dynamic or lyrical.

Ideas and examples that participants came up with during the trainings and research in Arts Empowering Youth Work -project:

- try guess what instruments the kids would like to play, making them trying on the instruments.

- Bass player
- Yess - maybe

- Start from "abstract idea" work on details to make it come real.

- Start from personal choices+then find a way to complete the band
- forming the performance from personal pieces of art
- there were details in the song that completed it in the end
- work individually on details to combine them and to create a performance

- making different kids work together
- police vs thief
- quiet kids playing drums
- in dance there was a contrast between the too shy boys and the girls
- make different kind of activities.
For ex. Try to switch from social to practical, group, individual, movement, intellectual
- Dreams&Nightmares in the same time



Causal logic

Every system creates its own rules. Many times we start something with an idea, which takes us to a new idea, but it has to be abandoned in the final solution. You have to kill your darling. Also every experience has its own logic.

- making performance from nothing; changing songs, changing choreography
- we tried a song and after a while had to leave it (forget about it)
- we let go (in circus) of: 1. theatre, 2. kids, 3. vision
- when you have nice moments, but they don't fit in the song and you work on something new



Poetic logic

"Dance makes the beauty of gravity visible" One combines facts so that they create new meanings. For example creating a new formula in cooking is a good example of poetic logic.

- kids giving you a drawing
- getting shy kids to enjoy performing
- painting a three from hands
- Body, art and music expressions always tell something about the person and their feelings / state of mind



Off the wall -logic

There are no empirical logical connections, but somehow it touches people. For example old religious writings. It is the source of mystery. It is a form of logic which is not connecting to the reality of every day life, but somehow it fascinates or amuses people. Buster Keaton is a good example of it and also Monty Python.

- Luis playing bass horizontally
- Visual arts & playing double bass like a guitar
- The fencing love story had no connection to the rest of the movement (or moment?) but it works!
- Mina's whole dance workshop
- teasers for the workshop: we changed the activity everytime in theatre, the dance was ripped of from somewhere else and not reflecting the theme
- 2 girls juggling to the music in the performance
- asking the kids in theatre what story they want (the plan was to decide for them)



Bodhisatva was asked what is the real essence of the universe. S/he answered: "even the trouts, who are playing in the wild stream, make mistakes."

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