

# Personal relationships: Survival for artistic education at the school

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## Abstract

The following is an analysis of cooperation difficulty at education centers regarding artistic education, and how to solve this problem through strategies based on healthy personal relationships. We will start by considering some fundamental keys to understand the problem, analyze the situation, parting from proposing a resistance attitude as a survival, and adjustment flexibility to methodologically contribute to the survival.

Taking such attitudes as the basis, we understand that several situations may surge to promote cooperation among education levels which would result in collective learning. We present and analyze two circumstances; the first one is the formal relationship through participation at education centers having adopted the Learning Community model; and the other is to establish an informal relationship by means of an agreement among the various level teachers, from infantile through college, who associate to schedule joint activities which make education practice profitable, and provide collective learning for all attendants. One of the most direct consequences, that we present as a conclusion, is that all students, teachers, infantile education, or primary education, within the real context, at observing how teachers act in active commitment, and specially in our case, regarding artistic education. Another important consequence of cooperation is to support ourselves on the struggle to keep artistic education in progress. Loneliness does not help such weak standing held by creation and aesthetic education in the state education system. Cooperation keeps us united, provides us support before indolence of everything surrounding us, to consider artistic formation as an imprescindible line for the community. Methodological plurality and strategy diversity is another cause calling for cooperation, since by increasing the number of participants, examples are multiplied.

**Key words:** Artistic education, cooperation, complicity, learning community, survival.

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## Introduction

This article is a reflection on the necessary strategies to achieve the opportunity of working at the school of artistic education. We are a college artistic education teacher team, intending to approach university students to the professional reality: future teachers.

Therefore, we constantly seek how to take training practice at education centers, in order to relate with other teachers, students of stages where they will perform, and definitively, the reality of education system.

As Ramirez Contreras (2012:10) claims: If we were not talking about this country, Spain, where artistic education included in formal education state curriculums is not considered important, and is located at the last place”, we would be talking about any other place, since such situation is repeated in other countries, as well.

Guerrero Seron (1996) reminds us XVII Century as one of the “great enclosure” through consolidation of institutions that will be in charge of “gathering together” the population: hospitals, asylums, jails, quarters, and schools. The author explains that each of these “places” are organized to keep, “clean the street”, from a group of social disturbers, hence insitutionalizing a system which will turn popular classes, insurreccional and dangerous into docile and useful within healthy bodies belonging to controlable and obedient community. (Moreno Montoro, 2012).

Therefore, such state apparatus, recruits and traing teachers who agree with its purposes, and trains them to serve the system with no resistance. Artistic education does not seem to be included in training plans for students, and it is not included in teacher training plans either.

Higher education plans, both in the career for infantile and primary future teachers, and in the various degrees for specialists who will teach secondary education, do not perform a critical analysis of hidden objectives or the curriculum, and the first plans do not consider aesthetic formation as basic. Everything related to artistic education for the teacher is a hard battle which field is fought little by little, and almost always losing.

In this manner we are arriving in a situation where from specific areas of artistic education at the university, we seem to be acting as gifted people, who try to preach this faith of arts that we consider beneficial for humanity, and we have undertaken a great campaign for mass conversión, but failed to be successful.

Considering the main purpose of this article, to review relationship and contact within the education center, to discover and study the center of difficulty for

cooperation at schools to artistic education activities, and taking into account the foregoing paragraphs, it is necessary to establish some fundamental keys to understand the problem, always from the Spanish perspective, since, although the situation for artistic education is generalized, as stated above, there may be variations in each country, and it is worth to mention that we do so, from the perspective we better know:

- Inclusion of artistic courses in compulsory education, as we have stated: infantile, primary and secondary, is testimonial, to become none in some cases, since the effective date of the next general law of education, thanks to which, from education centers artistic education may be provided if parents are given the choice it would be probable for us to win in "cases, from the effective date of french or technology, among other. We would believe that if students selected, perhaps we would gain in "clients" for artistic education, but, organization needs, and administration interests being the ones in charge of choosing, we would find ourselves at disadvantage.

- In this manner, neither education centers, nor spaces, or teacher conscience are prepared for an education activity which considers the artistic as an embodied way and natural, in daily activity of the education center.

- The result is that creative and aesthetic development are not paid homogeneous attention at the school, since the decision is made by teachers and director teams, in function of personal interest in this issue.

In addition to these keys on origin of the problem, we should also assume the two principles or purposes on which we addressed our action and intervention at education centers from resistance as way of survival, and interactivity as a dynamic mode of methodology, which encourages students and teachers interested in participating to develop introduced proposals.

Before this panorama, demand for concepts of rationality and dialogue builds all of our action, because success of action we undertake will depend on proper understanding.

### **Survival, attitude in the challenge**

At this state of things, bearing in mind our responsibility in the area of artistic education at the university (concretely at Jaen University, Spain, in this case), we have to find strategies for personal relationships with other level teachers bearing artistic traits, and ready to accept us has their cooperators. Resistance to annihilation encourages us to grasp cracks between slabs as grass seeking the most hidden food. (Gila 2013).

Survival is understood as the ability to make artistic education achieve sense in higher education, and do not disappear from the other education levels. And survival is aesthetic and creative development to produce a healthy population and ideologically critical. It is to keep the flame burning, expecting new times to come. In definitive, it is a subversion way, as stated by Ramirez (2012)

Resisting is maintaining creative works, not manual, but through intellect and personal and artisan creation, which is fundamental to avoid reproductive attitude which premanufactured products drive us because, as Ramirez holds:

Mercantile logic surges in education project of a society crossed by capitalist crisis and natural environment, by development of devices, and communication means which achieve development founded on technological devices. (Ramirez 2013:91).



A student of Santa Teresa Doctora de Linares School (Jaen-Spain), during an activity realized by members of group Hum 862, in cooperation with teachers of such school<sup>1</sup>

Creation promotes attitudes walking on directions opposed to non-controlled consumption, helps processes comprehension, and therefore understanding others' productions, since producing artistic creations is good not only because of its information, but the process it starts, since, following Tirado de la Chica we highlight:

Art communication function, related not only to transmission of a concrete message, but very specially to the dialogue established by the work, when the spectator approaches it and questions himself in front of it. In these enigmas and how to face them, we find art work as a learning tool (Tirado de la Chica, 2012:35).

<sup>1</sup> Santa Teresa Doctora de Linares School (Jaen-Spain) is organized as a Learning Community

People begin to be interested in others' productions parting from understanding their own ones, and mechanisms used to realize such productions as well.

### **Plurality and interactivity in the way of acting**

As stated by Lopez-Pelaez (2013:274), current education should be “supported on Methodological plurality”, because “it promotes metacognitive automous learning driving the student to learn his own learning process, understand what he learns, and know how to apply it, thereby turning into director of his teaching-learning process”.

It is a matter of not desiring for artistic education the journey denounced by Goodson for subject matters along the curriculum, in which they pass from marginality of low status to utilitarism, and to end being defined as disciplines composed of a knowledge rigid body (Goodson, 2000).



A student of Santa Teresa Doctora de Linares School (Jaen-Spain), during an activity realized by members of group Hum 862, in cooperation with teachers of such school, working in cooperation.

If we follow Callejon (2012), another factor to be considered is the possibility of promoting cooperative work/learning, group interactivity, encouraging mutual support, ideas exchange, ect., and therefore, enriching learning process.

### **Relationship and dialogue**

Relationship and dialogue are two concepts, without which we could not support neither theoretical nor methodologically our proposal. Relationship and dialogue are the basis of our acts in every sense. Because, for us to move on any of the two ways that we propose, either to find accomplices at education

centers, or enter as volunteers into learning communities, relationship and dialogue are the basis to understand our introduction in education centers on healthy and cordial basis.

And because preventing rigidity against which Goodson warns us, interactivity recommended by Callejon or Lopez-Pelaez, or integral dialogue mentioned by Tirado de la Chica regarding artistic action, is supported on relationship and dialogue, as stated by Bourriaud:

Art, because it is made of the same material as social exchanges, holds a particular place in collective production. A work of art holds a trait which differentiates it from the other products of human activity: its (relative) social transparence. If achieved, a work of arts always aims beyond its simple presence in the space; it opens itself to dialogue, discussion, to that way of human negotiation that Marcel Duchamp named "Art coefficient", a temporal process which is developed here and now (Bourriaud, 2006:49).

Coherence is a part of this integral immersion in concepts, in the same manner as artistic action and educative, and refers to "being" all the time.

The concept of rationality is the manner of understanding current art in front of the contemplative in the perceptive process, governing the relationship established by canon art. If this concept is worked once assumed full and hermeneutically, then action, either be just creative, educative or communicative, is rationally articulated, placing into action agents involved in the proces.

### **The welcome**

For successful development of any activity, in which results become satisfactory for all involved agents, volunteer individuals should be enthusiast and happily welcomed by the education center. These individuals, who in our case are a teacher team, members of hum 862 research group, students of our artistic education classes, for Primary Education, and Infantile Education, perform our activity from a researching activity but do not earn any remuneration for such activity. We cooperate moved by the conviction of performing actions which contribute to survival of artistic education at education centers, and to deepen and keep fresh and close a good research field, both for us, and for those approaching us, interested in learning about artistic education, or requesting joining us in order to take graduate and doctorate studies.



A poster at the entrance of Santa Teresa Doctora de Linares state school (Jaen-Spain), welcoming visitors and volunteers of the center; below it there are works prepared with students of such school, parting from an activity performed by hum 862 research group, in cooperation with the education community, composed of students, teachers, and volunteers, involved in the process for any reason.

As a general rule, we are not victoriously welcomed by the whole education community from the entrance. It is not a natural situation of arriving in any education center having agreed any activity in which the cooperating visitor is received to feel at home. The habitual thing is to find resistance to our presence. Comfortable life of teachers performing monotonous and routine activities, which generally does not include practices which “stain” tables and students’ hands, it is not welcomed that, in addition, such interruptions to normality, come from ideas not created by themselves, not even other peers of the education center, by foreign individuals who come to “teach them how to do things”

So far, we have found two ways to enter ourselves in centers to work for artistic education, and to enjoy a research field.

One way is planning and developing projects prepared on jointly basis with teachers of the education centers who share our interests and education ideology. In this manner, we join efforts and achieve results by working in cooperation with students of their classes and ours. The education center staff welcomes us when the proposal is properly organized from such center by cooperator teachers; we become accomplices in the action that may unnormalize “normality” of the journey. The other way is entering as volunteers in the general proposal which from the project “Learning Communities” of CREA group, Special Center of Research on Theory and Practices to Overcome Inequality of Barcelona University, is politically supported by state competent organs involved in education.

## Accomplices

Cooperation among education levels is fundamental, taking into account various causes; one of them is to connect work dynamics for school reality to become a part of students who will become teachers. In addition, higher education loses its sense should it fails to connect to the context which all degrees are dedicated to.

Another cause is because all of us learn; students, and teachers at every level, because sharing experiences, programs and joint actions, in which boys and girls participate, is a learning space that turns into a formation action, both initial for teachers under formation, and permanent for active teachers of all levels, involved in such experiences.



Primary education students, teachers of the various levels, and pedagogic students shared activities of all International Week of Artistic Education in May 2013.

It happens that teachers bearing research interests, seeking constant improvement of their daily practice, both in university context and basic education, end finding accomplices in the various levels, and associating themselves to cooperate and perform actions to improve education and benefit students, while all of us learn good practices.

## Learning communities

These education contexts are a social and cultural transformation project of an education center and its surrounding, for all people to access information society, and its based on dialogic learning (Fecha,1997; Habermas, 1987; Hargrave and Senechal, 2000).



Transformation of an education center in Learning Community contributes to overcome school failure; what we would have to ask ourselves is, in what terms failure is measured, and in what other terms its recuperation parting from this project.

Through our experience, we have found that a concept of efficacy and measuring student success in instrumental terms: language, mathematics and languages, also technology, is subjacent in learning Communities. Therefore, we ask ourselves whether dialogic learning is not focused toward the same objective as any other official structure of education system: Effective citizenship that reads and properly perform mathematic operations, that properly uses the ICTs, (Informatic and Communications Technology) and know languages in order to multiply effect of their efficacy.

In the struggle against inequality, the school plays a key role. Community Learning centers are supposed to transform socio-educative reality of the school and its environment by direct or indirectly involving all people in student learning.

Notwithstanding, the purpose of this project, such as elimination of school absenteeism, by ensuring student permanency and continuance in compulsory, and post-compulsory teaching, or standardization of cohabitation through conflict resolution by dialogue (Fecha, Garcia and Gomez 2013), which we may see as complying with Guerrero's precepts (1996), aimed at institutionalizing education system since XVII Century, do not have other choice but being seen as beneficial for the society. It is the endless dilemma about the education system, and its use by the state and citizens, between submission and development opportunity.

Any learning community should be conceived as an open space, freely accessed by all agents of the education center. The education community composed by students and teachers, together with administrative staff of the education center, and, also, families, neighbor associations and culture, neighbors and cooperators, and those generally interested, with an intention and ties to the center for participation. Theory of these education communities present a transdisciplinary curriculum founded on learning education projects where dialogue cooperates without exercising dominion (Aubert, Fecha, A, Garcia, Fecha, R. Racionero, 2008).

And in any case, it is a context presented to us ready for artistic intervention. We would almost state that because of their principles they may not deny. The reality may be that a directive team of an education center struggling for learning community, is interested in developing the artistic activity. Santa Teresa Doctora state school, in Linares (Jaen-Spain), which images we present in this article as evidence of welcome and support they provide us, is one of the various education

centers, member of Learning Communities project, where we cooperate, and where teacher participation and interest are general, at least in centers which we have cooperated to.

## Conclusions

As a conclusion, or an end of this reflection, we propose some principles of actuation, or proposal to face challenges posed by times for artistic education:

- a) In front of attitude of claim or resignation, we propose to act.
- b) Union is the first action we should assume. Seek cooperators at the various education levels.
- c) Approach to colleagues of other contexts from good relationships and dialogue. It is not wisdom what we have to share, but seeking comprehension and assistance among all of us.
- d) Setting the example is the best education practice, using art in education to promote relationships and dialogue, and in turn, support on these ones, success of achieving our goals, and placing them in a reality context, will become the best practice we may provide to our students.

After a review of relationship that we establish with education centers to find where difficulty for school cooperation with artistic education activities is, we see that the most important thing is to achieve dialogue and cooperation. Cooperation, dialogue, and relationships is not just a concept or a good practice to talk about to our students, it is an attitude that we should adopt, and it is so important that since the initial phase of its formation we should make clear that education levels must not be separated.

We do not care that structure is formal, as a learning community or, informal through personal relationships. A good relationship is established in our attitude, no matter the system structure, although the form of such structure helps us to be officially better accepted, and facilitates presentations.

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