Team teaching in an interdisciplinary context  
*Pilot project Royal Conservatoire The Hague, 2006-2007*

Final report

Ninja Kors, July 2007
Team Teaching in an Interdisciplinary Context
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Ninja Kors

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1. Introduction

The world can be a confusing place when you are sixteen. It is both inviting and challenging. Everything is possible but taking action can be very scary, particularly when you are facing your peers. Taking risks, showing yourself in a new role, doing things you are not sure you are capable of – these are daunting tasks for all of us at the best of times, but particularly at a time when you are trying to find and establish your own identity in the world. But when you are sixteen it is also the best time to find new ways, to challenge the conceptions of your elders, to test new borders, to explore possibilities. This world is, after all, a very exciting place.

Twenty sixteen year old fourth-graders of the School for Young Talent (School voor Jong Talent) in The Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Design, Music and Dance (Hogeschool van Beeldende Kunsten, Muziek en Dans) participated in a pilot project that combined music, dance and visual arts in a creative process. The project did not so much call upon their skills as violinists, ballet dancers or painters, but instead, it appealed to them as growing artists, making new art on a conceptual as well as a practical level. It opened up new possibilities for their future artistry and provided them with insight into the creative process where you do not only find your own way on the road to an artistic product, but also have to design that road yourself. For some it meant a break away from the usual regime of tough training to enter the professional realm of the arts. For some it was a true road of self-discovery.

A group of six teachers from three different disciplines guided the young artists. They worked together intensively over three months to establish effective team teaching and make new art works together with the young pupils. The teachers, in their role as coaches, were guided in this process by artist Horst Rickels. For them, as much as for the pupils, it was a process of finding their footing. They grappled with practical and methodological as well as conceptual issues as they guided their pupils in unfamiliar terrain.

This report shows how this process took place and indicates some of the issues that were encountered along the way. The aim of the project was to identify a set of competencies that teachers in the conservatoire or at the academy need in order to engage in team teaching in an interdisciplinary setting. A set of assessment criteria was designed during the course of this pilot project, based on aims, observations and earlier research within the framework of the lectorate Lifelong Learning in Music. Since this was a pilot project, these criteria will need to be tested in the future.

The first paragraph outlines the aim and scope of the project. The research question and methods are addressed in paragraph two, followed by a brief description of the main actors in this project: the pupils and the teachers, in paragraph three. The different stages of the project are described in paragraph four, followed by the main findings in paragraph five. Paragraph six lists some of the teacher competencies involved in this project. The conclusions can be found in paragraph seven, also including some practical pointers should the project be repeated.
2. Aim and Scope of the Project

This pilot project aimed on the one hand to provide insight into teacher competencies in the field of team teaching: creating a work of interdisciplinary art together with pupils, collaborating effectively as a team. On the other hand the aim was to gain insight into the added value of interdisciplinary work in the course of lifelong learning, specifically in terms of artistic depth and breadth.

The project had two focal points:
1. Interdisciplinarity
   It is assumed that experience and skills in interdisciplinary work will enhance artistic insight and development, and that it will contribute to artists’ employability. Questions within the framework of this pilot were for example about the relationship between this out-of-the-box interdisciplinary work and the usual programmes in conservatoires and academies that, particularly in the case of the performing arts, focus mainly on the technical and interpretational skills of the artist. Another issue was the aspect of teacher-as-artist: how much of the teacher as a creative arts practitioner can be felt in education where the artistic concept exceeds the limits of the disciplines?
2. Teacher competencies
   This pilot was part of a joint pilot with the conservatoire Groningen, which focused directly on integrated teaching and team teaching. Both pilots aimed to gain insight into the specific competencies required for team teaching between disciplines. More about this in the following paragraphs.

The project was a pilot project in many respects. This means that there was no ‘ideal’ research situation: in some ways the project was developed as it progressed. Overall, however, the pilot served very well as a test case for many of the questions and methodologies. Not only did it yield a number of assessment criteria and – closely linked – teacher competencies, it also brought up many of the issues that are central to the artistic nature of our institutions.

3. Research

Research question

Following the aim of this pilot project within the overall structure of the lectorate Lifelong Learning in Music, the research question was defined as follows:

   How does interdisciplinary work for young pupils contribute to their lifelong learning and what are the required teacher competencies to give shape to this optimally within a team (team teaching)?

The research question can be divided into the following sub questions:

1) What competencies are required for team teaching within an interdisciplinary team?
2) What competencies are required for coaching young talent in interdisciplinary work?
3) How does interdisciplinary work contribute to lifelong learning for young talented arts pupils (age 15-16)?

The following questions are also relevant but not at the focal point of the research:

4) What is the nature of the interconnections involved in interdisciplinary work: (team) teaching and learning?
5) What processes and models can be derived for application in higher education?
6) How does interdisciplinary work fit into the concept of lifelong learning?
7) How does artistry of the teachers relate to a) team teaching, and b) interdisciplinary work?

Research methods

The methods that were used:
- Practice-based research with the aid of those directly involved: teachers, pupils, coach;
- literature research.

The work of the researcher, Ninja Kors, was complemented by that of a student assistant, Jessica de Boer, who made an audiovisual document of the project. Anthony Zielhorst, head of music of the School for Young Talent, was instrumental in practical matters as well as being a sounding board for the assessment.

Research instruments:

a) Observation: conversations and interaction between coach and teachers, intervention by teachers and coach, intervision among teachers, interaction between teachers and pupils;

The researcher was present at almost all workshops and meetings with both teachers and pupils. The observation was aided by video materials that were produced by the student assistant. This made it possible to ‘be in two places at once’ and document the entire process.

b) Questionnaires: teachers

A questionnaire was handed out to the teachers four times. The first dealt with the starting points of the teachers and the way they entered the project: their backgrounds, expectations and what they perceived to be chances and challenges. (The questionnaires and interview questions are included in appendix 1.) The other questionnaires dealt partly with the same issues in order to identify possible changes, but it also included questions about the situation at hand: what was experienced during the workshop with the pupils and how did they (the teachers) react to it? The wording of the questionnaire was slightly altered to include some explanation because the specific intention of the questions was not sufficiently clear the first time. The responses to the questionnaires were processed by Anthony Zielhorst as part of the assessment. They also served as a starting point for the (semi-structured) interviews.

c) Semi-structured interviews: with teachers and coach

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1 For the sake of clarity, this text speaks of pupils, teachers (in their role as coach/facilitator to the pupils) and coach (guiding the teachers).
2 The audiovisual document is on the DVD that belongs with this project. It is included in the publication of which this report is a part.
Interviews with the teachers were based on their response to the first questionnaire, complemented by questions concerning their expectations and how they saw their own role in the project. Throughout the project there have been short interviews with the coach, Horst Rickels, about his perceptions of what was happening and the appropriate interventions.

d) Informal interviews: with pupils, teachers and coach
This is an important instrument for tracking the artistic and educational development of the project. There was time around the workshops to speak with the people involved: pupils and teachers. These interviews were not structured.

e) Literature and other sources

The teachers and the pupils were to keep a log during the project. The log of the teachers would be a tool for them to keep track of their own reflections and development during the project. The same applied to the weblog that was put into place especially for the pupils, with the slight alteration that it would be a group effort: pupils would post their own descriptions of the project and reflections, and others would reply. The pupils would have total ownership over the weblog. However, although the weblog was established and pupils were asked to contribute to it personally, it did not get off the ground and no entries were posted. Since this was mostly due to the pupils’ busy school schedule it was decided not to pursue it any further and their reflections were recorded by means of observation and informal interviews.

4. Pupils and Teachers

Pupils

The pupils came from the fourth grade of secondary education, aged around sixteen. They studied in the School for Young Talent. In that sense they were not representative for their age group: they received intensive tuition in their art specialisation and nearly all had the ambition to enrol in higher arts education. Directly correlating with the cultural make-up of the conservatoire and academies in The Hague, their cultural backgrounds and aspirations tended to be fairly homogenous: western music (mostly classical, one jazz musician), dance (ballet) or fine arts. Although they may have been involved in youth (street) culture outside the school, many of them would not bring this into the study room or studio with them.

This age group brings consequences in terms of methodology and group dynamics. Although the age group is not the principle area of study in this research project, it is something that needs to be taken into account: issues of motivation and discipline, and group dynamics that encourage risk taking on one hand but call for safety on the other. This ‘difficult’ age, however, also brings with it the creativity of youth and a tendency to experiment.

Teachers

The recruitment of teachers was arduous because of busy schedules inside and outside the institutions. Six teachers were found willing and able to take on the (rather
demanding) project. There were two teachers from each discipline. Short profiles of the teachers, based on their questionnaires and interviews, are included in appendix 2. The music and visual arts teachers were employed by the conservatoire and the academy on a structural basis. The dance teachers were occasionally employed by the School for Young Talent as guest teachers. They both work as dancers and choreographers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group I</th>
<th>Group II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Koosje van Haeringen (violin teacher)</td>
<td>Daniël Salbert (music theory)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Hirdes (visual arts: drawing and visualisation)</td>
<td>Thom Stuart (dance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keith Derrick Randolph (dance)</td>
<td>Pauline Schep (visual arts: graphic design)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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One of the key issues was to determine the role of the teachers during the pilot project. The teachers’ role was not solidly defined at the start of the project since it was one of the aims to find out what the ideal role would be: coach, facilitator, mentor? The situation was extraordinary within the usual structure of the conservatoire/academy setting. The teachers did not assume their traditional ‘teacher’ role but positioned themselves, as it were, closer to the pupils. They coached the pupils in finding their own way, concentrating on the group process of creativity and productivity but limiting their own input in terms of artistic content. (More about the role of the teachers in the following paragraphs.)

### 5. Description and Observations

#### Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2006</td>
<td>preparatory meetings, recruitment teachers and pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 October 2006</td>
<td>first meeting teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 November 2006</td>
<td>second meeting teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 November 2006</td>
<td>1st workshop with pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 November 2006</td>
<td>2nd workshop with pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 December 2006</td>
<td>3rd workshop with pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 December 2006</td>
<td>4th workshop with pupils, followed by reflective session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 January 2007</td>
<td>5th workshop with pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 January 2007</td>
<td>6th workshop with pupils (added)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-26 January 2007</td>
<td>project week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 January 2007</td>
<td>final presentations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specific meetings with the teachers were originally also planned, to evaluate and to give both the teachers and the supervising artist the opportunity to react. The dynamics of the project turned out to be such that the teachers took the opportunity after almost every workshop to discuss the progression of the project, to reflect and adjust. If these meetings were not arranged, then they took shape informally over a cup of coffee. The nature of the meetings was the same. In addition, the teachers created extra opportunities to prepare for the workshops by arranging meetings in their respective groups.
The stages of the project

The pilot project can be described in a number of stages, based on the dynamic of the working process. The stages are: start, stagnation, breakthrough, realisation, presentation, evaluation.

Start
The coach gave a short introduction about the project and its aims at the start of the project, including an introduction into the concept of interdisciplinary art. He did this by demonstrating a number of cross-arts products where movement, image and sound are interconnected. He also announced that the final presentation would be during the anniversary school party; the presentation would function as an ‘intervention’ during the normal procedures. The group was then split into two, equally dividing disciplines between the groups. One group went to a ballet studio, the other staid in the classroom that was normally used for art history classes. The teachers had prepared the session in their respective groups, and their approaches to sparking the creative process were different.

The teachers of group I, in the ballet studio, offered their own thoughts on how to connect the disciplines. A provocative suggestion came from one teacher who suggested the use of a drawing-pin (wat is dit?) to trigger responses from the other partygoers: shock, jump, scream! This would constitute the actual art work. The music teacher started with an association exercise about context and sound (sea, forest, classroom, street, etc.) to create an atmosphere. The dance teacher worked on the team with physical workshops about trust (blind following, catching each other’s fall). The teachers of group II started with further explanations about the project and also with small examples from the teachers: a rubber band to make noises and constructions, a picture, a balloon. Then the pupils were asked to make (visual) sketches on paper of ideas that came into their heads.

The different approaches in the groups were the result of the preparation sessions by the teachers, but both teams said that the rooms they worked in (i.e. a ballet studio and a classroom) also influenced the method they used. A room without tables or chairs, like the ballet studio, was inviting for movement in the workshops and more open discussions as the pupils and teachers sat on the floor together. The classroom, where everyone sat on chairs at tables, gave the workshop a more ‘school-like’ atmosphere, where the teachers would more easily be perceived as having a traditional teacher role.

At the end of the session, the pupils were asked to present to each other the results of the day. Group II showed their sketches and group I told about their activities. Each group gave feedback to the other, and the teachers asked questions about the ideas. Some ideas were prominent in the discussion. One girl (visual arts) suggested an elaborate set-up with an arctic theme: penguins, waterslides, ice cocktails, etc. Another pupil sought a way to work his fascination with the Pope into the project. Others were more practical and worked from materials: body-painted dancers with bells on their limbs, or shadow-play. All ideas were presented and discussed, and then the pupils were asked to elaborate on them further at home for the next session. The idea of the arctic theme (later named the penguin parade), originally by one girl from the visual arts department, was received with scepticism by the other pupils but because she clearly saw the potential it was added to the list of possible projects.
Stagnation

The development of ideas proceeded slowly over the following sessions. It turned out that the pupils’ study programme was very full over the weeks and the teachers found it hard to press upon them the urgency of the project, or even the creative energy that they would find in it. Sometimes pupils would not come back for the next session, or new pupils would be added to the group. This made it harder for the teachers to work on the relationship with the group, and to make progress with the development of the ideas.

It became clear that the project was suffering from decreased creative momentum. The sessions rarely exceeded the level of brainstorming, and the ideas remained no more than distant possibilities. The sessions consisted of a lot of talking and discussions about the ideas. The teachers found it hard to take the next step in the development of these ideas. They became frustrated (and, consequently, so did the pupils) and they sought ways to break the impasse. Both teacher teams tried to solve the problem by imposing a higher degree of discipline and pressure on the pupils. Assignments were given directly and personally to the pupils. It was pressed upon them that it was vital they did the work. This approach did not work well, and the frustration grew even further. Pupils started to complain about the lack of progress. They questioned the purpose of the project, which shifted increasingly to organising a successful dance party instead of a meaningful cross-arts project.

This stage was characterized by a lot of talking a little action. Although some of the concepts were tried out in practice, particularly by the group in the dance studio, the result was not inspired – or inspiring – for the pupils or the teachers. Although two teachers from the Interfaculty Sound and Image joined the teachers at this point for additional support in the area of electronic possibilities (video projection, sound recording and manipulation, etc.), this did not inspire new ways of realising the ideas.

The coach did not intervene in the process at this point. He found that the teachers had to find their own way out of the impasse, were they to learn optimally from the experience. He regretted this decision afterwards because his intervention could have given the project more momentum and he could have served as an example to the teachers and the pupils. His approach would have been to make the ideas more practical, for example by building scale models or trying out a shadow play with a provisional set-up. This would have given the pupils more room to experiment, also physically, instead of becoming the repeated abstract exercise in discussion that it became.

Breakthrough

The impasse described above was broken during the last session before the Christmas holidays. Peter Renshaw (member of the research group of the lectorate) visited the project and prepared a reflective session with the teachers. During the introduction Peter Renshaw asked the pupils about their thoughts and expectations of the project. It was significant that one of the pupils, a music student, then confessed that she did not know the idea behind the project. “Why are we doing this?” – a very crucial question in the project. The teachers tried to address this issue with the pupils earlier, mainly by explaining the central aim of the project. This was not effective at all, and the pupils were struggling with the project in the midst of their other studies: how to fit
this in when you are preparing for an important violin competition, or when you feel that what you really want to do is play the trombone in an orchestra?

The short introduction, of which the abovementioned question (‘why are we doing this?’) was the central point, brought an important matter to the surface: the teachers were still grappling with the rationale behind the project themselves. In the reflective session with Peter Renshaw that day, it became clear that the teachers found it difficult to bring their disciplines together in the sessions with the pupils. One of the reasons for this was that they did not know each other’s work and therefore did not know where the other teacher ‘came from’. It would have been helpful, the teachers remarked, if they had gotten to know each other in advance to draw out each other’s artistic vision. Now the interaction between them limited itself to discussions (talking!) where politeness came before inquisitiveness. It was agreed that they should encourage each other to open up (‘show the back of their tongue’) more, to each other and to the pupils, if they were to find anything like a shared artistic language.

Peter Renshaw’s introduction sparked a creative discussion in group I, which resulted in a more practical approach. The pupils showed each other their work, e.g. they played their instruments in front of each other, and came to a collaborative improvisation. Just like at the start of the project, this group chose not to split up but to address the challenge together. Group II did the opposite: the teachers decided to work as much as possible from their own strength in their own discipline, and split the group into even smaller working groups. Each of these smaller groups addressed a separate idea or aspect of it. Both approaches proved effective: progress was made and a certain degree of enthusiasm re-entered the project, for pupils and teachers alike.

Realisation
One of the main ideas in both groups was the concept of projection and shadows (silhouettes). The whole group came up with the concept of dividing the dance floor into two separate areas (at least at the beginning of the party) to make different atmospheres and to create confusion for the other party-goers. This idea was worked on in both groups, although group I made the best use of it in the realisation of their ideas.

The focus of group I became a joint improvisation by all pupils in the group. The improvisation included musical sounds by means of a grand piano (also used as a percussion instrument), violins and vocals. The dancers in the group moved around the musicians, responding to their sounds and drawing out new musical elements. A video recording was made of the improvisation with two different cameras (one fixed and one ambulant). This recording was then edited, first by the whole group and later by individual members of the group. They also took digital video cameras outside the school to shoot additional footage. One boy in particular, a pianist, was very enthusiastic about the video work he was doing and spent a lot of time on it. He shot some additional footage of trees in a high wind outside his bedroom window. At the instigation of one of the dance pupils, group I also prepared a dance number with Brazilian music. The choreography was done by the initiator, a very outspoken and active girl, who taught five other girls (among whom two musicians!) to do the dance. The final choreography was fine-tuned with the dance teacher.
Group II worked on a number of different projects that would take place throughout the evening. In some cases they were the ideas of a single student, who was then given the task of realising his or her idea. One of these was to post a Pope (i.e. the boy dressed as the Pope) at the entrance to the dance floor to divide the party-goers into two areas. This idea was not realised in the end because of personal problems with the boy in question. (See also further.) Another idea was a drum solo with lighting effects and a video projection by one of the musicians, who saw the principle in a theatre piece and wanted to reproduce it, with a twist. Two dance pupils, a boy and a girl, used the projection/shadow play concept to make a theatrical piece with coloured lights and a collection of musical samples.

The main effort by Group II was a dance number based on the original penguin idea. A music student (flutist), who joined the group later at the invitation of his classmates, took it upon himself to design a new piece of music on his computer. He used samples of oboe imitations of birds (seagulls etc.), played by one of his fellow music pupils. The composition was fine-tuned in a small group. The composition was used by the dance group (4 dancers, 1 violinist, 1 visual artist) to make a joint choreography. The dance pupils contributed several bars of dance steps and they were forged together into a choreography by the pupils under the guidance of the dance teacher. There was a lot of experimentation, and the penguin theme inspired a lot of silliness during rehearsal. This was also the cause of some insecurity among the pupils. One of the dancers threatened to step out but was convinced by the dance teacher to take back her place in the group. The visual artist in the group, who had come up with the penguin idea originally, was assigned to making beaks for the dancers. The costumes came from the costume department of the dance academy.

The main challenges at this stage were group dynamics, motivational issues, and pressure from outside, mostly time. The pupils were very busy since a lot of school activities were going to take place in the same week as the final presentation at the party. This did not help focus the pupils’ attention and it was difficult for the teachers to keep their attention. Pupils would go to another rehearsal during their scheduled time for the project or suffered from the pressure in different ways. Sometimes other school matters got in the way as well. In the case of the ‘Pope’, the boy refused at the last minute to impersonate the holy figure, claiming that he was his spiritual leader. It soon turned out that the boy’s principal study teacher did not like that the boy spent so much time on the project. Instead of discussing it with the subject teacher or the head of the department, the boy sought a way to get out of the project and thus please his principal study teacher. The incident caused some friction between teachers and pupil and unrest in the group. In the end ‘the Pope’ did not show up for the final presentation.

Presentation
The presentation went according to plan and was very successful. The screens in the middle of the dance floor were a big poser for the school mates and the grand opening by Group I, with the improvisation both live and projected on screen, followed by the Brazilian dance group, proved a worthy beginning of the school dance party. The act the performers dreaded most, the penguin dance, turned out to be one of the most successful parts of the evening. The pupils first feared that their projects might interrupt the party, but it turned out that they were in fact a good way to keep the party alive. When the guests’ attention for the dance party flagged, an act by their fellow
pupils would shake them up again and they would take to the dance floor with renewed enthusiasm. They were indeed ‘interventions’ as Horst Rickels envisaged them at the start of the project.

**Evaluation**

The evaluation with the pupils was done without their teachers or the head of department being present. Many pupils found the project very inspiring, despite some misgivings in the beginning of the project. There was a feeling that the project had taken up a lot of time, considering the outcomes. There was a lot of confusion in the process: what were they supposed to do, were they supposed to make one big presentation or a lot of separate ones, how did this contribute to their normal studies etc. One girl, a musician, remarked that she felt it had stolen away time from her music studies. Others did see the benefits. They remarked that it had helped them discover new ways to work together. The project had given them an opportunity to try out different art forms, e.g. the two musicians and one visual artist who took part in the Brazilian dance routine.

When asked about the working format, the pupils remarked that it might have been better to work in smaller groups with a well-defined assignment. Now it was not always clear what was expected of them and in a bigger group they tended to get lost. The pupils responded positively to the intermediate peer evaluations by showing each other sketches of their ideas. These were helpful in explaining to each other the ideas and to draw out reactions and make modifications. The interaction with the teachers was considered to be good but more clarity about the purpose and method would have been welcome.

During their evaluation, the teachers indicated that they felt that the main benefit of the project went to the pupils. The teachers had worked hard to make them feel that 1) it is not strange to try out new things that you want to do, and 2) that artistic interventions like these do not disturb the normal goings-on (e.g. at the party) but in fact reinforce them. There were also some successes to be reported about individual pupils who benefited greatly from the project, on a personal level and in their learning career. One boy, a musician, enjoyed the audiovisual production very much and wanted to explore that further. One girl, also a musician, found that she very much enjoyed the theatrical aspects of the production and decided to go further into that. Another girl, a dancer, had a chance to explore her artistic leadership skills through the project.

The planning and organisation of the final week was far from ideal. The pupils were busy with too many things to concentrate on the project. This meant that in the end the project did not become ‘special’ enough to the pupils – or to the teachers. It would have been better if the pupils had been more involved, either through better planning and more emphasis on this particular project, or through a better introduction to draw them in. The process, the teachers felt, should have been more practical: *making* installations, physically trying out things. Although the sketches were helpful, they were also limiting: there is only so much you can express on paper. The teachers felt that they had left too much to the pupils and did not set proper standards for them. In order for the pupils to take the project seriously, the teachers felt, they should have expressed their expectations in terms of quality and commitment. Now it was too much without engagement from the pupils.
The teachers indicated that they felt it would have been better to start with individual workshops by each of the teachers in order to show their potential and to give the pupils some insight into what was possible. These would have to be creative workshops in which the pupils worked on new ideas every time. Only after that would they concentrate on developing something for the final presentation. As the pupils indicated themselves, the full series of sessions as it was now, was simply not necessary to come to this end result. When asked about what they gained from the project, the teachers indicated that it was an interesting experience to work with teachers from other disciplines, mostly in terms of methodology. There were interesting discussions in the teacher teams about the nature of their disciplines, and the concept of creativity and how this was dealt with within their respective departments. The conclusion was that while their departments, disciplines and methodologies differed, the teachers felt they worked well together as a team.

6. Findings

The teachers in this project were facilitating the realization of an interdisciplinary work by/with pupils. At the same time they were coaching the pupils in understanding the creative process of making art, and therefore in helping them discover what it means to be a creative artist. This combined the roles of facilitator and coach, as described by Peter Renshaw in A Framework for Mentoring (Renshaw, 2006). Some of the key qualities he ascribes to a mentor also apply to the role that the teachers took in the pilot project, except for the reflexive aspects of mentoring. These aspects, which could be ascribed to the role of counselling, were not part of the teachers’ role. In Renshaw’s Critical issues arising from a case study of CONNECT (2005), he describes a frame of reference for judging quality in the area of collaborative creative workshop practice. This framework gives us some footholds when it comes to assessing the competencies in this project. In the same publication, Renshaw provides a frame of reference concerning the participants. This was useful for the purpose of this pilot in relation to the competence development of the teachers: what have they achieved with the pupils?

The pilot project was a test case for principles and practice in many ways. Literature about both creative processes but mostly about facilitating collaborative work provided a background for compiling a list of preliminary assessment criteria. This list was drawn up as a basis for observation and reflection. The criteria can be grouped into four 'pillars'. Each of these pillars carries with it a number of assessment criteria which in turn may lead to the identification of required competencies for teachers who take up this role. (A comprehensive list of the criteria is included in appendix 3.)

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3 Facilitating: Facilitating is a dynamic, non-directive way of generating a conversation aimed at enabling or empowering (a) person(s) to take responsibility for their own learning and practice. (Renshaw, 2006, p. 43)

4 Coaching: Coaching is an enabling process aimed at enhancing learning and development with the intention of improving performance in specific aspects of practice. It has a short-term focus with an emphasis on immediate micro issues. (ibid., p. 43)

5 Counselling: At the centre of counselling lies a conversation about personal development issues that arise from professional practice. (ibid., p. 42)
Assessment criteria:
I  The creation of a fine work of interdisciplinary art
II  The creation of a good learning environment
III  The facilitation of the reflective process of the pupils
IV  The establishment of effective team teaching in an interdisciplinary team

Creating a work of interdisciplinary fine art

Assessment criteria include the effectiveness of the teachers in:

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<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>empowering and encouraging the pupils to contribute to the creative process, taking into account the profile of the pupils: age, numbers, experience, arts disciplines;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>facilitating the emergence of a collaborative creative process;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>helping pupils build up a sense of ownership over the final product;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>inspiring pupils on the basis of one’s own artistic background.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The creative process was central to the pilot project. The process of collaborative creative work and the required competencies and key qualities of the person who facilitates this process (‘workshop leader’) have been addressed before by Sean Gregory (2006) and Animarts (2003). Their findings are applicable to the teachers in this pilot project in many ways. The Animarts report *The Art of the Animateur* works from a variety of arts disciplines, mostly theatre and music. It stresses the importance and impact of cross-arts (or: interdisciplinary) work.

“Where artists in one art form work on common themes with artists in another art form (cross-arts), fundamental re-thinking can take place with new perceptions being gained which affect individual artistic practice.” (Animarts, 2003, p.65)

However fruitful such collaborations may be, it does not guarantee that meaningful work will be done on an artistic conceptual level that transcends the arts disciplines. In other words: are you working with the combination of music, dance and visual arts – with all of their conceptual connotations – or are you dealing with sound, movement and image? Those are more neutral ideas that do not necessarily carry artistic meaning. To achieve interdisciplinary artistic work, you need to buy into the other’s artistic world, ‘artistic language’ perhaps, in order to understand their frame of reference and meaning.

As we saw in ‘The stages of the project’ the conception of new ideas was not the problem for pupils or teachers. The challenges were making meaningful connections between the ideas, and realising them: how to get from a wild plan to an actual workable and presentable (and interesting!) artistic product. The teachers struggled with this issue for weeks, and with mounting frustration. The teachers’ reaction was at first not to intervene in the creative process per se but to attempt to impose better discipline on the pupils and to apply a more structural approach in the development of the initial ideas. In group I in particular this jeopardized the creative spirit of the process. Considering the creativity theories of Guy Claxton (2007), you could say that the group went into a phase of revision and editing too soon, while a more intuitive
creative approach was still called for\textsuperscript{6}. A breakthrough was reached when a more practical approach was adopted and ideas were transformed into actual 'things', physical representations: not only sketches but sounds, choreographies, installations. It was agreed afterwards that this practical phase should have occurred much earlier in the project.

The amount and level of creative work in the institutions for higher arts education was a recurring theme in the teachers' meetings and conversations. While the opinion was also voiced that interpretation can be rated as a creative skill, the teachers agreed that the creation of new work is usually underexposed in the education programmes. This goes primarily for music and dance – in academies for visual arts and theatre creating new work is more at the core of the programme. However, this does not automatically qualify teachers from those disciplines for working creatively with other arts as well. Seeing how the teachers perceived creativity to be underdeveloped in higher (performing) arts education, creating new work in this interdisciplinary group was a challenge. In a pilot project such as this, one wants to work as much as possible from the participants’ strengths. However, this project called upon the least nurtured part of the pupils’ development as artists. Therefore empowerment was an important task for the teachers: they had great confidence in the pupils’ creative powers and took it upon themselves to challenge them and to support their growth.

To summarize:
- The creative process is central to interdisciplinary work in which shared meaning between disciplines is sought.
- The crux of the process was not the conception of ideas but the realisation of them into workable and presentable artistic products. Physical representation of ideas may be a helpful tool when applied early in the process.
- The creation of new artistic concepts is not at the core of education in the conservatoire and dance academy. Consequently, the teachers are not always equipped to take this on with pupils. Although it is part of the curriculum at the visual arts academy, this does not necessarily mean that those teachers are fully equipped to do cross-arts creative work too.
- Empowerment of inherent creativity is an important aspect of leading a (collaborative) creative effort.

Creating a good learning environment

\begin{table}[h]
\begin{tabular}{|l|}
\hline
Assessment criteria include the effectiveness of the teachers in: \\
\hline
a. developing a non-judgemental, non-threatening working relationship based on empathy, trust and mutual respect (relationship); \\
b. establishing a safe, non-judgemental, supportive learning environment (context); \\
c. creating conditions that encourage openness, honesty, informality and risk-taking; \\
d. defining boundaries and ground rules before commencing the process; \\
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\end{tabular}
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\textsuperscript{6} Claxton distinguishes two ‘modes’ for the brain: the creative/intuitive when the brain waves are evenly distributed in the brain, and the ‘mode’ which is used when revisioning and working through earlier conceived ideas and e.g. compositions. This is when the brain activities are more targeted and thought processes are more clearly channelled. This second mode inhibits creativity (Claxton address, RIME conference, April 2007).
A good learning environment reflects the ‘flow’ as described by David Elliott (see for example Elliott, 2005): the perfect balance between doing what one already masters and the challenge of something that is yet to be learned. The point where that ‘flow’ lies, differs for each person and it is constantly shifting as we learn and develop. The challenge is to find the fine balance between safety and risk-taking. Working with 16 year-olds in a group means that that point is sometimes very small: too much safety and they get bored and pull out, too much challenge and the situation easily gets out of hand. Pupils would either ‘close down’, not contributing another word to the conversation, or rebel and try to sabotage the process. Considering the very mixed group of pupils, in personality as well as personal development, it meant that this was sometimes quite a challenge for the teachers as they built a working relationship with the pupils.

Non-judgemental is not the same as non-critical. In the conceptual phase every idea was good, there were no mistakes or ‘wrong’ ideas. As the project progressed it became necessary to edit ideas and plans. Sometimes it was difficult to argue why one particular idea was considered good working material and another not as good. Also in the realisation phase there was a sense, or understanding, of what was right and wrong. Overall, the teachers found that although they were not in a position to judge pupils on their input or work, it was their job to comment and ask questions – in short, to enable the pupils to reflect on their own work. The working relationship between teachers and pupils had to reflect this: the pupils were free to contribute in any shape or form, but they were also expected to argue or defend their contribution.

The recruitment of suitable teachers at the start of the project did not go as planned, and some of the teachers joined the project only weeks before the start with the students. Many of the preparatory discussions had already taken place by then. Because of this, the project started in a kind of ragged manner for them, and for some time it was unclear to the teachers what they were expected to do. Their role was still to be defined, and consequently their attitude and actions towards the pupils as well. This became clear as the project progressed, but it cannot be said that the boundaries and ground rules were defined before the process started.

The same can be said for building a rapport and a clear understanding of who does what and why – this also became clear during the project. The teachers divided their tasks and roles among each other in meetings before the work with the pupils started. Sometimes the individual teaching styles and institutional cultures of the different disciplines meant that the arrangement was not understood in the same way by all teachers. For example: It was agreed among the teachers that they, as a team, would invite the pupils to bring their ideas and plans into the group; the teachers would look at them not from their respective disciplines, but from an interdisciplinary perspective. When the pupils did not readily come up with new ideas or plans and silence fell in the group, the teachers reacted in different ways. The visual arts teacher let the silence grow and waited to see what the pupils would do to fill it. The music teacher clearly felt uncomfortable, repeated the questions and came up with examples of his own to stimulate pupils’ response. The coach chose the middle road: delivering input on a more conceptual level (e.g. examples out of context, references) but was not afraid of silences.
To summarize:
- Working with a group of young people in their puberty means a balancing act in terms of safety and risk-taking.
- Non-judgemental is not the same as non-critical.
- In team teaching it is important not only to allocate tasks and roles, but also to discuss the way in which these are realised.

**Facilitating the reflective process**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment criteria include the effectiveness of the teachers in:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. encouraging pupils to adopt a critical perspective about the reasons and consequences of their practice;</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. encouraging and empowering pupils to explore new frames of reference for thinking about their practice in a wider cultural (and disciplinary) context;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. strengthening the pupils’ ability to challenge their preconceived views, to take risks, to make new connections and to shift their perspective;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. empowering pupils by asking neutral, open questions that encourage critical self-reflections and a sense of curiosity;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. encouraging pupils to develop profound standards of artistic quality.</td>
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</table>

At a certain point (described in ‘The stages of the project’), the question of ‘why are we doing this?’ came to the pupils’ minds. The point of the project had been explained to them at the start and it was addressed during the workshops by the teachers. The pupils had never really responded to those instances in the sense that they never asked questions. Sometimes they would express doubts about how the project would contribute to their development as violin players or ballet dancers, but the discussion did not reach a deeper level. It was not until the intervention by Peter Renshaw and the ensuing conversations in December that the pupils really got engaged in the question of ‘why this project’ in a verbal way.

As the project progressed it became clear that the ‘why’-question should have been addressed by the pupils themselves at an earlier stage of the project. Practical, creative work would have been helpful for the pupils in order to conceptualize for themselves the meaning of the interdisciplinary work they were doing with their co-pupils. This would have given the teachers more concrete footholds in the (verbal) reflective sessions. As it was, the teachers often found it difficult to connect the practical work with the need for reflection in the process. It was felt that asking too open questions would, as it were, ‘kill’ the process by breaking the concentration.

The issue of quality came up several times during the teachers’ discussions and also a few times when working with the pupils. The main concern was that the end result would never meet the usual artistic level of school productions: concerts, dance performances, exhibitions. The quality of the end product, however, was nowhere near as important as that of the working process. This is something that the teachers, at least, understood. For the pupils it was sometimes more difficult to grasp: they had to strive for quality but the end product did not have to be particularly good according to the standards they were used to. “So what standards are we using?”
The confusion over quality of standards was also heard by the teachers, who debated over the same issues. It was not only a matter of setting standards of quality, product or process, or even adjusting standards to ‘fitness for purpose’. The question asked by the teachers was whose quality criteria should be used. When coaching a process in which the participants have such a great part in process as well as product, is it not natural to let them, not us, define their own standards? How do we coach the pupils in that? In practice this means: how do we ‘un-condition’ the pupils to use the quality criteria they usually are encouraged to use in the school, and have them look at this interdisciplinary work in a different way?

To summarize:
- The reflective question of ‘why are we doing this’ should be addressed by the pupils from the start. It is something that they need to define by themselves and for themselves.
- It is important that the pupils themselves are responsible for defining and guarding the quality standards of the project.
- The teachers’ role in both instances is to encourage the pupils by providing material and asking open questions.

**Establishing effective team teaching**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment criteria include the effectiveness of the teachers in:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. using your experience and expertise as a musician/artist/dancer to add to the creative process as well as to complement the team;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. having the ability to be self-reflective and self-aware in order to nurture these qualities in others;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. being effective as a team in planning, structuring and providing the artistic leadership in all the interconnected elements of the process.</td>
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It became clear very quickly after the start of the project that the teachers came from different worlds. They observed in their conversations that the conservatoire, the dance academy and the visual arts academy are, at some points, like different countries: despite their common goal of the artistic development of their students, they have their different leaders, languages and ways. The teachers spent some time exploring these differences and expressed a wish to learn from each others’ methodologies in teaching. They were also interested in the various focal points of the institutions: craftsmanship or creative artistry? While conservatoire and dance academy focus primarily (but not only!) on skills and techniques, the visual arts academy puts more emphasis on the artist’s artistic expression. This is visible also in the admission criteria, where the uniqueness of the artist is a recommendation in the visual arts academy, while the ballet academy is looking for dancers who fit the profile as much as possible.

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7 There is a resemblance to the issues that are addressed in cultural diversity and multicultural/intercultural arts practice and education. Here also there is often an assumed commonality – notoriously: “Music is a universal language!” (ISME conference theme, 1996) – that dissolves when we reach a deeper, more conceptual level of engagement. The CDIME (Cultural Diversity in Music Education) network deals with these issues: www.cdime-network.com.
Coming from these different institutional backgrounds, the teachers exchanged many experiences and questions. While this was in some ways fruitful for the cooperation, it sometimes got in the way of the progress of the project, in the sense that each teacher became a kind of representative for their own institution. There was a tendency to stress the differences and see the institutions as separate from each other in their ambition to help young artists reach their full potential. The teachers within the teams tried to bridge the gap by focusing not on content but mainly discuss issues of methodology. For example: the ease with which visual artists ‘let go’ of their pupils was admired by the music teachers, while the visual artists in turn marvelled at the strict discipline that the dance teachers were able to impose on their pupils.

To summarize:
- It is unproductive within a teaching team to linger on the differences between institutional backgrounds. It is better to focus on the commonalities as creative artists.
- Team teaching in an interdisciplinary team requires a strong shared artistic concept.

7. Teacher Competencies

The assessment criteria as described in the previous chapter serve as a basis for a preliminary list of competencies for a coach/facilitator in interdisciplinary creative work.

I  Stimulate the creation of a disciplinary work of fine art

The coach/facilitator in interdisciplinary creative work with pupils/students has to be able to stimulate the creation of a work of interdisciplinary fine art, by:

- empowering and encouraging the pupils to contribute to the creative process
  - adopt an inviting attitude
- adjusting the pedagogy/methodology to the profile of the pupils/students
  - be aware of the learning development and needs of the age group
  - take into account the influence of group dynamics in the stages of personal development of the pupils/students
  - take into account previous experience with arts, both interdisciplinary and discipline-specific
- facilitating the emergence of a collaborative creative process
  - encourage initiatives of collaborations between pupils/students
  - facilitate the collaborative creative process by asking questions and encouraging pupils/students to question each other
- helping pupils/students build up a sense of ownership over the final product
  - give pupils/students responsibility over the execution of their own ideas
  - allowing pupils/students to take artistic leadership
  - encourage pupils/students to develop their own quality standards regarding their own work, and make them responsible for meeting them (see also further)
- inspiring pupils/students on the basis of their own artistic background
  - master their own art on a technical as well as a conceptual level
  - keep close to their identity as an artist
II Create a good learning environment
The coach/facilitator in interdisciplinary creative work with pupils/students has to be able to create a good learning environment, by:
- developing a non-judgemental, non-threatening working relationship based on empathy, trust and mutual respect
  - adopt a positive attitude towards the contribution of the pupils/students to the project
  - be prepared to accept the pupils/students’ notions of quality
  - be critical without judgement
- establishing a safe, non-judgemental, supportive learning environment
  - establish proper working conditions within the institution/organisation: staff support, scheduling, rooms, equipment, etc.
- creating conditions that encourage openness, honesty, informality and risk-taking
  - know how to ‘read’ the group
  - create a safe atmosphere (be inviting without forcing)
- defining boundaries and ground rules before commencing the process, and
- building a rapport and a clear understanding of who does what and why
  - structure the working sessions
  - give clear definitions of the roles of the teacher/coach and the pupils/students in the project
  - give comprehensive assignments to the pupils/students
  - make pupils/students jointly responsible for the success of the project

III Facilitate the reflective process of the pupils
The coach/facilitator in interdisciplinary creative work with pupils/students has to be able to facilitate the reflective process of the pupils, by
- encouraging pupils/students to adopt a critical perspective about the reasons and consequences of their practice
  - help the pupils/students connect the project aims and practices with those of their normal practice
- encouraging and empowering pupils/students to explore new frames of reference for thinking about their practice in a wider cultural and disciplinary context
  - providing alternative frames of reference for thinking about artistic practice
  - open pupils/students’ perceptions about what it can mean to be an artist
  - open pupils/students’ perceptions of other arts disciplines
- strengthening the pupils/students’ ability to challenge their preconceived views, take risks, make new connections, and shift their perspective
  - be able and prepared to challenge their own preconceived views, take risks, make new connections and shift perspective
  - be critical but non-judgemental
- empowering pupils by asking neutral, open questions that encourage critical self-reflections and a sense of curiosity
- encouraging pupils/students to develop profound standards of artistic quality
  - encourage pupils/students to express their standards of artistic quality
  - be critical but non-judgemental about the pupils/students’ standards of artistic quality
  - be prepared to accept pupils/students’ quality standards as valid
**IV Establish effective team teaching in an interdisciplinary team**

The coach/facilitator in interdisciplinary creative work with pupils/students has to be able to establish effective team teaching in an interdisciplinary team, by:

- using their experience and expertise as a musician/artist/dancer to add to the creative process
  - keep close to your identity as a professional artist
  - concentrate on your strength
  - trust your artistic instincts

- using your experience and expertise as a musician/artist/dancer to complement the team
  - share experiences and insights with others
  - be critical but non-judgemental

- having the ability to be self-reflective and self-aware in order to nurture these qualities in others
  - find the balance between ‘leading’ and ‘listening’ within the team
  - ask neutral, open questions that encourage critical self-reflections and a sense of curiosity

- making the team effective in planning, structuring and providing the artistic leadership in all the interconnected elements of the process
  - establish a clear understanding of roles within the team
  - let go of your ego
  - be prepared to take (constructive) criticism from colleagues

**8. Conclusions**

**Fluid teaching**

While the end ‘product’ of a project like this – in fact of all training programmes in higher arts education – is important, the process needs special attention when it comes to the development of young artists. Attention to developmental aspects of creating (performing, rehearsing, interpreting) a work of art are central to an optimal learning environment. In other words: it is not the destination that counts, but the journey that leads there. It is up to the institution or the teacher to ensure that the journey is interesting and inspiring. A different style of teaching may be necessary for every creative pathway that is chosen or created. The high level of flexibility and working, with very little solid ground to stand on, inspired Horst Rickels to refer to this kind of teaching as ‘fluid teaching’.

In fluid teaching it is unclear where the creative process will lead or, consequently, what the best strategies are to facilitate the pupil/student in this process. The teacher needs to shape the labyrinth that enables the student to learn the required skills, knowledge, attitude, etc. needed to complete the creative process. The labyrinth is constantly shifting as the creative process goes on. Fluid teaching has some correlation with theories of constructionism. It is evident that this fluid concept of teaching requires the teacher to be flexible, at the very least, but most of all to be able

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8 Lee Higgins challenges the assumption that the outcomes are unknown at the start of a creative workshop, at least for the workshop leader. (Higgins, 2007)
to let go of tried-and-tested paths that he/she walked before. A new road must be designed every time.

The concept of fluid teaching is explored further in the article *Of fluidity and solid ground* by Kors and Rickels. In short, there are two models for dealing with the fluidity of creative projects. In one model, the teacher provides an existing structure for the student to ‘fill in’. An example came up during the pilot project when one of the teachers proposed at the beginning of the project to use an art installation he used in a school project before. This would provide the structure and the materials. The pupils would then be responsible for the content: sounds, movements, images. The second model does not provide a structure but instead offers a central theme. The teacher will question the student about that theme (in a group, students would question each other) until they come up with usable ideas for a project. In this model, no materials are offered but only a direction for the conceptual art work. Both models are usable for creative work and in both models fluid teaching is applied. However, the first model may be better suitable for creative work with the age group of this project. They found the ‘open’ structure of the thematic approach difficult to work with and asked for more structure. Finding materials to fill in a framework was not a problem for the group.

**Interdisciplinary work in lifelong learning**

- How does interdisciplinary work contribute to lifelong learning for young talented arts pupils?
- How does interdisciplinary work fit into the concept of lifelong learning?

Interdisciplinary work at its best forces you to look beyond the borders of your own discipline – its techniques, preconceived notions of form and structure, standards for quality, etc. – to a more conceptual level. Interdisciplinary work goes beyond the combination of disciplines, like in a joint opera production or a fashion show. In interdisciplinary art, the disciplines in a way lose their own identity in order to come to a new artistic language. Examples can be seen in Horst Rickels’ work but also in today’s multimedia arts where music, design and dance (sometimes sports) are very much intertwined. Presentations of modern youth culture rarely limit themselves to one discipline only.

From the perspective of the young talents involved in this project, interdisciplinary work (as opposed to multidisciplinary work, which they had done before) presented them with a whole new way of working with artistic materials and ideas. They were not addressed as musicians, dancers or painters in this project but as creative artists. It was not the quality of the execution of the work that counted most this time, but the conception of it: the ideas behind it. For some pupils this was difficult to deal with. They perceived the project as a loss of time and energy, energy which could have been spent on practising their instrument. For some pupils this was not the case. The

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10 Again, a parallel with cultural diversity is visible. Huib Schippers described a continuum of engagement between cultures, from totally separate to full merger: monocultural – multicultural – intercultural – transcultural. (Schippers, 2004) Examples of transdisciplinarity work may be found in today’s multimedia art industries.
project presented them with new possibilities when it came to expressing themselves through art. One musician saw great potential in the audiovisual techniques that were used. Another musician found she was able to work in a more theatrical way with her music and musicianship, and was ‘finally’ able to use her body more.

Both these pupils may in time end up in sections of the music profession that are not the mainstream concert scene: audiovisual projects or the music theatre perhaps – or not. At least the project provided some pupils with new insights into their own interests and ambitions. Quite apart from the new musical professions this opened up to them, and perhaps will increase employability at a later age as a result, it gave them a wider perspective on what it means to be a creative artist. Musicianship (and other artistry) is not only about interpretation but about finding an artistic language – as described above, interdisciplinary work may contribute to this within the framework of lifelong learning.

This project also presented both pupils and teachers with a different way of learning than usual, particularly the pupils in the music and dance academies. The pupils were challenged by increased responsibility for the end product and the quality of the product. They were asked not only to ‘make’ the artistic product but also to design the ‘path’ leading there. This is a useful skill in the life of an artist with a lifelong learning career ahead of him/her. For the teachers involved in the project, a change of methodology and learning aim meant a re-examination of their own artistry and teaching.

It must be noted that interdisciplinary work does not contribute the same to everyone’s learning path. As described before, some students did not take to the project at all. Even of those who understood – to a degree – where the project was headed, some found it amusing enough for a while but did not want to seriously engage with the issues of interdisciplinary work. In any case, the question remains if this is the right age group for working on this kind of conceptual work. At the age of sixteen, pupils may be less likely to be open to it, choosing instead to focus on their own work: to practice and study their instruments or work on their sketches for hours on end. The project would have been easier, perhaps, with younger pupils that are closer to ‘play’ or with older ones who more readily see the point of this kind of work for their future development.

Consequences for the institution

As was pointed out before (under: Establishing effective team teaching in an interdisciplinary team), that the teachers perceived a gap between the different institutions. This would be on a practical level, because organisationally, the institutions in The Hague all fall under the same institution: the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Design, Music and Dance. The institutions are all within walking distance of each other. An interfaculty Sound and Image was established ‘between’ the academy of fine arts and the conservatoire. Its base is in the conservatoire, although many of the activities take place in the academy of fine arts, where it is possible to work on larger installations and projects. The interfaculty concerns itself broadly with technological (digital) applications in the arts. Horst Rickels, the coach in this pilot project, is interim head of the interfaculty.
So while all the right conditions for intensive contact between the institutions were in place, the teachers still remarked upon the lack of contact between them. There are few joint activities except for special projects like in the anniversary year when the opera production *Pontormo* was produced by pupils of the School for Young Talent. Within the normal curriculum, there are few instances in which the teachers or the pupils come into contact with the other disciplines. There are some cases of meaningful contact between teachers and pupils, but not on a structural level. This leads to unsatisfied curiosity at best, prejudice about each other’s institutional cultures and methods at worst.

The remedy would include – of course, within this report –more interdisciplinary team teaching. More space would have to be made in the pupils’ curriculum to allow for creative projects that bring the pupils together, not only for normal school subjects but also for their artistic development. This is very likely to contribute to their lifelong learning, as described above, under: ‘Interdisciplinary work in lifelong learning’, but also to the professional development of their teachers. The best way to learn team teaching is by doing it. By way of peer learning, the teachers would develop their skills in this area. To this end, however, the institutions would need to invest in the professional development of their teachers when it comes to creative work. The main challenge for teachers lies in facilitating the creative process in others, but this requires the teacher to be able to take the lead if the student falters. In other words, the teacher needs to be at home in the creative process himself. This will enable him/her to look beyond the boundaries of his/her own discipline to more conceptual artistic work, and make meaningful connections with other disciplines. If a common conceptual ground is not found, then the outcome will be a collection of disciplines (multidisciplinary) rather than a meaningful joining of disciplines (interdisciplinary).

**Some practical pointers for repeating the project**

1. In order to establish effective team teaching and to facilitate the realisation of a shared artistic language within the team of teachers, it is best to start the project with a creative workshop among the teachers themselves. The workshop is best led by a relative outsider first, so that all teachers experience the workshop in the same way. Then it may be helpful to have the teachers give each other creative workshops, with a clear division of roles (workshop leader & participants) so that the teachers are aware of each other’s leadership style and the creative-artistic ‘content’.

2. Reflective practice is vital to a project such as this. The question ‘why are we doing this?’ needs to be addressed early on in the project, by the pupils themselves. The teachers need to return to this central question several times during the project.

3. A practical approach to developing the conceptual work (ideas) into workable projects is recommended. You can make an idea tangible with simple means (e.g. use a lightbulb and a sheet of paper instead of a projector and a screen), but it makes it ‘real’ and something that can be handled more easily than an abstract idea.
4. Structured preparatory and interim-evaluation sessions within the teacher team should be planned around each workshop with the pupils. These sessions should include both discussions on the methodology/pedagogy of the workshops, and the conceptual progress of the project. This will not only benefit the progression of the project for the pupils, but also refer the teaching to the shared artistic language of the interdisciplinary team.

5. The environment in which the project takes place influences the project itself: it makes a difference whether a workshop takes place in a classroom or a ballet studio, or a multimedia laboratory. While all three kinds of spaces may be suitable for creative work, this point must be considered by the teachers!

6. The school schedule should allow the pupils to have enough time and attention for a project like this. It does not only require their presence at the working sessions, but also time to work on their assignments and ‘brain space’ to work on the conceptual layers of the project. A schedule packed with other projects and assignments hinders the involvement and commitment of the pupils.

7. The other teaching staff should be notified of the project and asked for support where possible. This may be only by allowing a student to spend some of his/her usual study time on the project instead.

A word of thanks

This project would not have been possible without the tremendous efforts and energy of all pupils and teachers involved. Anthony Zielhorst and Jan van Bilsen were very helpful in dealing with the everyday challenges of working with 16-year olds within the School for Young Talent. Jessica de Boer’s watchful eyes were constantly there. Particular thanks go to Horst Rickels, Rineke Smilde and Peter Renshaw – each of them helpful as ever in the functional and constructive derailng of my thoughts. This report was written in the first half of 2007, with background music provided by such musicians as Nina Simone and Room Eleven (for settling down), Edvard Grieg and W.A. Mozart (to dig in yet fly high), Within Temptation and Rammstein (when things got tough), and Otis Redding and Amy Winehouse (for flow and guts) – leaving aside the many other musicians from around the globe that contribute to my musical universe. This is, after all, a wonderfully confusing world.

Ninja Kors, July 2007
9. Bibliography

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10. Appendices

Appendix I: Questionnaire and interview questions teachers

First questionnaire: Teaching competencies, interdisciplinary and team teaching
October 2006

NAME:

Answers may be brief, we do not pay attention to style. Short key words may suffice.

1) What were decisive moments for your career as an artist (musician, dancers) and teacher?

2) Did you have any earlier experience with interdisciplinary work? If so, give a short description. Are there concrete things you have learned from that?

3) Did you have any earlier experience with team teaching? If so, give a short description. Are there concrete things you have learned from that?

4) In relation to this project:
   How do you envision the interdisciplinary project with the project will be realised? What are opportunities, where do you see challenges?

5) In relation to this project:
   How do you envision the cooperation with teachers from other disciplines will be realised? What are opportunities, where do you see challenges?

6) What is your main motivation for participation in this pilot project?

Second to fourth questionnaire: Teaching competencies, interdisciplinary and team teaching

NAME:

About what you experienced working the pupils today. Concentrate on the process of teaching/learning.

1) What is the most satisfactory moment for you? Why? How did this situation come about? Would you repeat this approach in this kind of situation?

2) What is the least satisfactory moment for you? Why? How did this situation come about? How would you change your approach in this kind of situation?

3) Have you had an opportunity to help or support your colleague? Can you give a concrete example (situation)? And vice versa: has a colleague helped or supported you? How?
4) How did preparation (in terms of content) go for today? How did you work together in this with your colleagues? What did you agree to do, e.g. regarding your roles in the group?

About this project as a whole, so far as you can answer at this stage:

5) What can you indicate you have learned as a teacher?
   a. In the area of cross-arts work
   b. In the area of teaching/coaching in a team (team teaching)

6) Are there things in the project that have gone differently that you originally expected?
   a. In the area of cross-arts work
   b. In the area of teaching/coaching in a team (team teaching)

7) What do you think are the main opportunities for the project at this moment? What are the biggest challenges?
   a. In the area of cross-arts work
   b. In the area of teaching/coaching in a team (team teaching)

**Interview questions teachers**
October 2006

These questions are based on the questionnaire that the teachers received earlier. The interview connected with their responses to that questionnaire.

1) How did you come by the motivation to work on this project? (Explain your motivation.)

2) What do you hope to achieve with this project? For the pupils and for yourself?

3) What do you think is the best way for you to contribute to this project? What are your strong points? What are your weaker points?
Appendix II: Teacher profiles

**Daniël Salbert** (music)

Daniël Salbert teaches music theory. He is also a conductor in his spare time and sings in choirs and ensembles. He is particularly interested in the meeting of art forms and disciplines. One of the most influential things in his career as an artist was a school visit to the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels, where a good guide explained the art works. Daniël sees an artistic quality that recurs in all art forms and all styles of music. As he puts it: ‘In essence there are no different disciplines, they are all manifestations of the same artistic expression: music can be explosive, just like a physical gesture or colours in a painting.’ Daniel has some experience with interdisciplinary work through his work with visual artists and classicists for educational purposes (development of methodologies) but not like in this project. Earlier experiences in team teaching have taught him to integrate more than one goal into his lessons – each teacher may have something else they particularly want to achieve. In this project Daniël is looking to be surprised by the students. He wants to inspire the students - also about the broad spectrum of the arts - and spark their creativity. He also wants to strengthen the connection between students and develop their respect for each other’s art forms, and perhaps take this to an institutional level. This project of team teaching, Daniël thinks, may lead to new forms of teaching in his current teaching practice.

*Strengths (please note: according to him/her)*
- I have an open attitude with no unbreakable barriers.
- I can get people motivated and interested.

*Weaknesses*
- I find it difficult to work with inflexible people or to deal with power struggles in a group.
- I sometimes want to go too fast and push on when I should not.

**Koosje van Haeringen** (music)

Koosje van Haeringen teaches the violin to different age groups. She is very active in PIVO which is a project to teach music/violin to very young children. Conservatoire training taught her that performing as a soloist or orchestra member is the highest achievable goal, but during a sabbatical Koosje found that this was not her ideal – it is teaching. She quit her job at the orchestra and started teaching at the conservatoire. Koosje finds working with children fascinating because of their creativity and she likes to see how thoughts spin in their minds. Koosje has no real prior experience with interdisciplinary work, only projects where no one really stepped out of their own discipline. Her dream is to have integrated education (thematic) but she realises that this would still not take teachers out of their own little box. PIVO is a form of team teaching and it teaches Koosje that there are many roads that lead to Rome; that keeps you flexible. It also shows that even a good team can easily be disturbed by influences from outside, and this is something to look out for in her opinion. In this project Koosje expects that she will need to see the world from a different point of view. She
trusts in the creativity of the students. They will need encouragement and help but they should take the lead in the creativity.

**Strengths**
- Curiosity
- Ability to stimulate children
- Ability to quickly respond to children

**Weaknesses**
- I reject ideas too quickly because I suppose they are not good enough – too perfectionist to take it through.
- I think too fast sometimes and then try to push people in my own direction – too dominant.

**Eric Hirdes** (visual arts)

Eric Hirdes teaches drawing in a wide variety of departments within the Academy: drawing, graphic design, visual arts, fashion/textile. After graduation from the academy, Eric received a grant to develop himself as a visual artist. This was important to his career as he was able to build up an oeuvre which in turn qualified him for a job at the academy. Eric is part of the team in several departments. ‘In a way,’ Eric says, ‘this is team teaching because we share the responsibility for the students’ development.’ It has taught him to look at the students’ work in new ways, each time from the particular viewpoint and requirements of that department. He has not worked with musicians or dancers before this project, and is curious about the differences in ‘cultures’ of the different institutions/disciplines. In this project Eric expects to find a mutual curiosity for ideas and angles that other teachers and the students bring to the situation. This should broaden his education vision. A particular interest in the project comes from the fact that several of Eric’s students participate. This gives him an opportunity to see their progress and development in this new situation.

**Strenghts:**
- Ability to let students discover and develop their own work
- Positive attitude, not critical

**Weaknesses**
- Sometimes not critical enough, it may be ‘good enough’ a bit too soon.

**Keith Derrick Randolph** (dance)

Keith Derrick Randolph is a guest teacher at the dance academy. He is originally from the United States but has lived in Europe for many years. He teaches classical ballet at the dance academy of Tilburg. First and foremost Keith is a choreographer, then a performer. He enjoys teaching because it is satisfying to be part of a young person’s development: ‘It is quite a responsibility but it is good to help shape the new generation of dancers.’ Keith has worked with other disciplines before (architecture, skateboarding, music), with varying success, and always from his role as a choreographer. He found that while working in a particular project with composers it was difficult to create a meaningful encounter, because it was not well set-up from the
start. Keith has no prior experience with team teaching, only coaching. He expects to find an opportunity to learn about other arts, other artists and himself as an artist. The big question for Keith in this project is: how do we steer the students without actually steering them? From the angle of interdisciplinary work, the challenge lies in thinking ‘out of the box’. As academies we can teach students the rules of the craft but we can also encourage them to think how to bend them, and apply them in new ways. We share this responsibility as teachers. As the African saying goes: it takes a village to educate a child.

**Strengths:**
- Frivolity: my crazy way of showing things, explaining, making a point. This is inspiring for students and forces them to look at things differently.
- Experience

**Weaknesses:**
- I should learn to open my mouth when I think I should.

**Thom Stuart** (dance)

Thom Stuart is a guest teacher at the dance academy. He has a dance company (De Dutch Don’t Dance Division: www.ddddd.nu) that deals with different art forms in combination with dance: the Dutch do dance, but not only that. Creating his own work for the first time, instead of carrying out other people’s choreographies, was a defining moment in Thom’s career. Currently he is a guest teacher or teaches in projects, mostly classical ballet. His experience with interdisciplinary work deepened during a professional development course abroad that combined choreographers and composers. It is something that he thinks should be part of the programme; it opens opportunities like in Arnhem where students from the fashion academy and dance students work together on shows and performances. There is also a need for fresh new influences in the dance academies. Although the dance scene has changed considerably over the past decades, this does not show in the academies. Thom has little experience with team teaching. He finds that within the team there is a kind of consensus: the teachers notice the same things but react to them in different ways and use different interventions.

**Strengths:**
- Practical attitude

**Weaknesses:**
- The same practical attitude, which means that sometimes I want to talk about concrete steps too soon.

**Pauline Schep** (visual arts)

Pauline Schep works as coordinator for the graphic design department of the academy. She also teaches adult evening classes, which is a great inspiration for her since it challenges her to learn along with the class. Defining moments for her were the acknowledgement of her work and the possibilities she received when she was offered a job at the academy. Having children was another defining moment, since it made her see the world through the eyes of a child again. Pauline encounters different
disciplines and team teaching within the visual arts daily in her work at the academy. She has no experience in working with performing arts. The different approaches towards the arts became apparent to her in her first encounter with the conservatoire and the dance academy, where creativity has a whole different meaning. Pauline is fascinated when students dare to think outside the box – e.g. when a new packaging for an egg is perceived as the sound that surrounds it, or when a student turns the egg inside out. It is this creative playfulness that is the core of the artistic process. The teaching challenge in this project lies with the age group. Group dynamics are strong when you are fifteen and it is easy to find something ‘stupid’ because someone else says it is. As a teacher it is easier to handle these dynamics on your own than in a team with teachers from different disciplines. But Pauline is excited to meet that challenge. She hopes to encounter new people, approaches and ideas.

**Strengths:**
- Enthusiasm!

**Weaknesses:**
- Taking that enthusiasm too far, I need to keep an eye on the dosage.
Appendix III: Assessment criteria (comprehensive list)

I Stimulating the creation of a work of interdisciplinary fine art

- empowering and encouraging the pupils to contribute to the creative process, taking into account the profile of the pupils: age, numbers, experience, arts disciplines;
- facilitating the emergence of a collaborative creative process;
- helping pupils build up a sense of ownership over the end product;
- inspiring pupils on the basis of one’s own artistic background;

II Creating a good learning environment

- developing a non-judgemental, non-threatening working relationship based on empathy, trust and mutual respect (relationship);
- establishing a safe, non-judgemental, supportive learning environment (context);
- creating conditions that encourage openness, honesty, informality and risk-taking;
- allowing the pupils to determine their own agenda;
- defining boundaries and ground rules before commencing the process;
- building rapport and a clear understanding of who does what and why.

III Facilitating the reflective process of the pupils

- encouraging pupils to adopt a critical perspective about the reasons and consequences of their practice;
- encouraging and empowering pupils to explore new frames of reference for thinking about their practice in a wider cultural (and disciplinary) context;
- strengthening the pupils’ ability to challenge their preconceived views, to take risks, to make new connections and to shift their perspective;
- empowering pupils by asking neutral, open questions that encourage critical self-reflections and a sense of curiosity;
- encouraging pupils to develop profound standards of artistic quality.

IV Establishing effective team teaching in an interdisciplinary team

- using one’s experience and expertise as a musician/artist/dancer to add to the creative process as well as to complement the team;
- having the ability to be self-reflective and self-aware in order to nurture these qualities in others;
- being effective as a team in planning, structuring and providing the artistic leadership in all the interconnected elements of the process.