



Collaboration with Artists as a Prerequisite for the Development of Teachers' Creative Practice: a Case Study¹

Colaboração com artistas como pré-requisito para o desenvolvimento da prática criativa dos professores: um estudo de caso

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ABSTRACT

Within the broader framework of curriculum reform and changes in education in the Czech Republic, the author examines the collaboration between teachers and artists in formal education and the possibilities of this collaboration for the development of creative pedagogical practice. It explores the adaptation of artistic practices, techniques and approaches to the context of teaching in formal education to develop pupils' creativity. She asks: 1. How does collaboration with artists develop the creative practice of teachers? 2. What artistic practices and approaches can be adapted into teaching to develop creativity? The research project has the character of a multi-case study. In this paper, the author presents the preliminary results of qualitative research of the first case of teacher-artist collaboration informed by the findings of selected international studies. The research is part of the author's dissertation project.

Keywords: Teacher-artist Collaboration; Possibilities of Art; Case Study; Formal Primary/Secondary Education; Teacher's Creative Practice

RESUMO

Dentro do quadro mais amplo da reforma curricular e das mudanças na educação na República Checa, o autor examina a colaboração entre professores e artistas na educação formal e as possibilidades dessa colaboração para o desenvolvimento da prática pedagógica criativa. Explora a adaptação de práticas artísticas, técnicas e abordagens ao contexto do ensino na educação formal para desenvolver a criatividade dos alunos. Ela pergunta: 1. Como é que a colaboração com artistas desenvolve a prática criativa dos professores? 2. Que práticas e abordagens artísticas podem ser adaptadas ao ensino para desenvolver a criatividade? O projeto de pesquisa tem o caráter de um estudo de caso múltiplo. Neste artigo, a autora apresenta os resultados preliminares da pesquisa qualitativa do primeiro caso de colaboração entre professores e artistas, informada pelos resultados de estudos internacionais selecionados. A pesquisa faz parte do projeto de dissertação da autora.

Palavras-chave: Colaboração entre Professores e Artistas; Possibilidades da Arte; Estudo de Caso; Educação Formal de Primeiro e Segundo Ciclo; Prática Criativa do Professor.

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1. Problem Formulation

Creativity is a key cross-cutting skill for the 21st century² and an important educational goal (Fryč et al., 2020; Venckutė et al., 2020; Vincent-Lancrin et al., 2019). The arts provide the means and create a stimulating space for learning and developing creativity (e.g. Claxton et al., 2012; Stevenson & Deasy, 2005; Thomson & Hall, 2014). Teachers can provide the conditions and learn strategies that foster pupils' creativity through the arts. In order to confidently support pupils' creativity through this approach, they need to understand the nature of working in the arts and develop their skills through experience. Stevenson & Deasy argue that transformation of pedagogical approach is best achieved through partnership with the artist in the classroom (2005).

Czech education is currently undergoing curriculum reform, raising many expectations among those in the field. The emerging form of education emphasises skills such as creativity which, unlike some knowledge, does not become obsolete (Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy, n.d.). The author asserts the importance of supporting this topic with research focusing on teachers who can be agents of change in education.

The text describes the first study of teacher-artist collaboration. It serves as pilot research for two further case studies. It aims to:

- Investigate the process of teacher-artist collaboration in the classroom;
- Explore the possibilities of this collaboration

2 It is one of the so-called 21st Century Skills. It is a set of competencies, life skills and learning dispositions that are considered essential for success in educational, social and work spheres in the 21st century. They focus on skills that will help students succeed in a changing digital and globalised society (Dede, 2009).

for developing teachers' creative practice;

- Identify practices, techniques and approaches from artistic practice that can be adapted into teaching in order to develop pupils' creativity.

2. Current State of the Art

Most OECD curriculum documents include creativity among expected learning outcomes³, and it is also listed as an integral part of key competences in the *Strategy for Education Policy of the Czech Republic 2030+* (Fryč et al., 2020). However, systematic development of creativity in schools is still rare (Venckutė et al., 2020) and it often remains unclear for educators what this means in practice for supporting the development of creativity in their pupils (Vincent-Lancrin et al., 2019).

Introducing practices and techniques from artistic practice into the classroom to develop pupils' creativity through collaboration with artists was one of the aims of the *Creative Partnerships* programme⁴. The programme was developed in the United Kingdom⁵ and has spread to dozens of countries worldwide, including the Czech Republic⁶. A number of studies have emerged in the wake of the programme, most of which document the positive impacts of the programme on pupils' creativity and other competencies (e.g. Collard et al., 2016; Hunter, 2019; Pollmuller & Sercombe, 2007), and several have also tracked the deve-

3 The Curriculum Framework for Primary Education (RVP ZV) identifies the development of creative thinking as one of the objectives of primary education, while creativity is mentioned in the context of complementary educational disciplines and cross-cutting themes (Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy, 2021).

4 Creativity, Culture & Education, n.d.

5 2002-2011.

6 E.g. in Lithuania, Norway, Germany, Hungary, Pakistan or Australia.

lopment of teachers' creative practice. Studies mention that through partnerships with artists, teachers began to regularly incorporate arts techniques and activities into their teaching across core subjects, gained confidence and assurance in adapting arts activities and resources to different topics, explored connections through the arts, and tended to be more open to experimentation. The model of integrating the arts into the curriculum became an important component of school practice. The artists asked different questions and enabled teachers to look at things from new perspectives (Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education, 2019; Claxton et al., 2012; Richards & Hadaway, 2020; Stevenson & Deasy, 2005). "The personal impact of the project has been enormous. It has helped me to think more creatively in all areas of my work" comments one teacher (Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education, 2019, p. 8). The transcultural aspects of collaboration are elaborated by Iezaki & Novotná (2022). They ask how a collaborative educational arts project can reconcile two culturally distinct pedagogical approaches, "Continuous communication between cultures through art and culture education could play a significant role in the cultural understanding and mutual enrichment of cultures" (2022, p. 14). In the Czech Republic, research on the development of creative practice of teachers through collaboration with artists has not yet been conducted.

"To unleash the potential of the arts [...], teachers need to have a deep understanding of the nature of work in the arts," write the authors of the *Third Space* research project (Stevenson & Deasy, 2005, p. 66). Teachers need to develop skills and gain confidence in working with the arts, to create stimulating environments for

creative tasks and the development of creativity. Teachers' prior experience with the arts varies. In the aforementioned project, teachers attended one-off workshops, ongoing art lessons, and working directly with an artist in the classroom, the latter of which was found to be the most effective (*ibid.*). Artists bring their advanced skills in the arts to the classroom as well as their experience of personal growth and development through their artistic practice. By collaboratively planning, developing, and implementing lessons involving the arts, teachers are able to learn and develop their own creative practice.

According to the NACCCE report (1999), the creative abilities of young people are best developed in an atmosphere in which the creative capacities of the teacher are fully engaged. When teachers express their own ideas, this in itself can foster children's creativity (Craft, 2005). Saebø et al. (2007) point out that new challenges are constantly emerging in teaching and creative teachers manage these challenges very successfully because they are already used to constantly reinventing themselves professionally and adapting their teaching styles and strategies to different situations as needed. Therefore, if we want to change education to foster creativity, it is necessary to build creativity in both pupils and teachers.

The Durham Commission describes teaching for creativity as "Explicitly using pedagogies and practices that cultivate creativity in young people" (2019, p. 3). Lucas (2004) mentions ways of teaching that support and respect individual creativity:

- Being respectful rather than dismissive;
- Encouraging active not passive learning;
- Supporting individual interest rather than

standardized curriculum;

- Engaging many learning styles not one;
- Encouraging and exploring emotional responses;
- Posing questions not statements;
- Offering ambiguity rather than certainties;
- Being open-ended rather than closing-down;
- Being known as surprising rather than predictable;
- Offering many patterns rather than a standardized model;
- Moving the “classroom” to varied environments;
- Recognizing multiple intelligences;
- Including visual representations as well as auditory ones;
- Including tactile and experienced-based activity;
- Stimulating social as well as private learning (p. 40).

Craft (2005) lists the following pedagogical approaches and strategies⁷ to stimulate pupils’ creativity:

- Developing children’s motivation to be creative;
- Encouraging the development of purposeful outcomes across the curriculum;
- Fostering the study of any discipline in depth, developing children’s knowledge of it, to enable them to go beyond their own immediate experiences and observations;
- Using language to both stimulate and assess imaginativeness;
- Offering a clear curriculum and time structure to children, but involving them in the creation

of new routines when appropriate, reflecting on genuine alternatives;

- Providing an environment in which children can go beyond what is expected and are rewarded for doing so;
- Helping children to find personal relevance in learning activities;
- Modelling the existence of alternatives in the way information is imparted, while also helping children to learn about and understand existing conventions;
- Encouraging children to explore alternative ways of being and doing, celebrating where appropriate, their courage to be different;
- Giving children enough time to incubate their ideas;
- Encouraging the adoption of different perspectives (p. 43).

Fischer (2004) considers the most important keys to individual creativity to be:

- Motivation – the things we want to do, that absorb us, that we feel passionate about and give us purpose. It is fed by internal encouragement and external stimuli.
- Inspiration – being inspired by ourselves and others. Creativity is fostered by curiosity, new stimuli and a wide range of knowledge. We stimulate curiosity by observing and asking questions.
- Gestation – to provide ample time for creative ideas to emerge. We need time to think things through on a conscious and unconscious level, giving space for insight and intuition.
- Collaboration – stimulates and enhances our creativity. We need to provide space to think, explore, create and share ideas together, and we need creative partners to do this (p. 14–16).

⁷ This is a summary of research conducted between 1984 and 2004 (Craft, 2005).

3. Research Methodology

The research design of the case study best suited the intention of the research, as it allows the complexity of the case to be captured and the relationships to be described in their entirety (Hendl, 2005). A case encapsulates a specific phenomenon in its real-life context. The case study method focuses primarily on “contemporary cases in an ideally contemporary sense in the present,” with the aim of clarifying, understanding, or accepting their identities, entities, or specificities (Chrastina, 2019, p. 55). The case study illustrates a specific period of collaboration between a teacher and an artist in the classroom. Its intention is to understand the process of teacher-artist collaboration and its possibilities for the development of creative practice for teachers. At the same time, it also introduces and clarifies practices, techniques and approaches from artistic practice that can be adapted to teaching in order to develop pupils’ creativity.

In the research investigation, the author followed three teachers and four collaborating artists. The choice of cases was based on the condition that it was the teacher’s first experience with the *Creative Partnerships* program as redesigned by the Society for Creativity in Education. The research framework was the three-year *Schools for the Future* project (2020-2022), which developed participatory teaching methods using the arts. Its educational objectives were to promote creativity⁸ and develop competencies for sustainable development⁹ through creative activities. The project provided long-term support

to teachers, working with artists to learn new approaches to teaching. This paper presents the first case of teacher-artist collaboration, namely Lola and Mary. The case is studied in a multi-case study and will serve as a starting point for the analysis of the other two cases. The case is considered an exploratory pilot study.

“A case study is a holistic research method that is usually informed by multiple sources of data evidence to analyse and/or evaluate a particular phenomenon” (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998). Data collection was conducted continuously in two phases, defined by two project cycles. The author conducted semi-structured interviews with the actors involved and conducted focus groups and observations of their classes. These were conducted repeatedly during and at the end of the project. Class project planning and evaluation forms, and teachers’ and artists’ reflective journals were analysed. The research used mainly qualitative methods, with the exception of the initial data collection, which was quantitative in the form of a questionnaire. Its aim was to select appropriate research cases.

Interview transcripts and documents were coded using *Atlas.ti* software using an open coding method. Data were analysed continuously as the project developed, with the aim of adjusting the design of the instruments and fine tuning interview questions. Through this approach, the author was able to identify several phenomena (keywords) which were applied as categories in further textual analysis. These included collaboration, pedagogical approach, artist input, art practices and approaches, space, attitudes, creativity and transformation of creative practice. Further analysis led to the confirmation and addition of categories. The author applied the analytical

8 Using the *Creative Habits of Mind* model (Lucas et al., 2013)

9 As defined by UNESCO (2017)

procedure of constant comparison, during which data, statements, information and content are continuously compared in order to identify either similarities or differences (Chrastina, 2019). The focus was on recurring themes and possible differences in the actors' statements. Finally, findings were compared with theoretical models and previous findings from selected research (mentioned in the "State of the art" chapter).

4. Meet Lola and Mary

The main actors in the case are the teacher Lola and the artist Mary. Lola is a young teacher who, at the beginning of the project, has four years of teaching experience. She teaches history and civic education at a public primary school. At the time of the project, she was a class teacher of grade 6, i.e. pupils aged 11-12. Her experience includes studies in Humanities and Adult Education and Personnel Management, and a degree in Education Studies. She has worked in primary prevention and has participated in informal training courses for youth workers as part of her professional development. She is interested in, and open to implementing interesting cross-cutting themes and innovative approaches in her teaching practice.

An experienced visual artist and educator, Mary supports the development of creativity in schools and teaches the use of creative work for self-expression. She grew up during the conflict of war, the experience of which has developed a particular insight, empathy for and passion for working with children and young people in the vulnerable period of adolescence. Her practice is rooted in a collaborative approach which emphasises the development of soft skills

such as respect and active listening skills. She also focuses on socially engaged arts and the use of the arts for social change. She already has experience with the *Creative Partnerships* program.

The collaboration took place in a large elementary school in the central area of Prague, Czech Republic. The school is pro-inclusive, promoting equality in education. It offers multiple educational programs: general, bilingual, a program inspired by intuitive and Waldorf pedagogy, and a program for pupils with special educational needs. It describes itself as a progressive, democratic, creative, open and respectful school. The context of Lola and Mary's collaboration was two class projects focused on education for sustainable development through creative methods.

4.1. Before Joining the Project

Lola's pedagogical approach is based on heuristic teaching methods. She plans the framework of the lesson in advance and focuses on the educational objectives during the teaching process. Lola designs activities directly in the classroom depending on the learning situation and the needs of the pupils. She does not elaborate detailed preparation: "I find it completely out of place to teach like that ..., they¹⁰ always wanted us to do [this] and I actually spent most of my time planning something that you weren't going to do anyway because the group then functioned in a completely different way than expected." This approach clashes with the needs of working in a teaching tandem. She is flexible with time and space within the limits of the 45-minute lesson, but there is no time for activities that support pupils' self-expres-

¹⁰ University teachers in the field of pedagogy.

sion in creative activities. “It’s really great when the kids get that space for themselves, which I don’t do a lot of, as I don’t really have a lot of space for that or I don’t manage to get around to it for some reason.” She believes that her role is to stimulate the pupils, taking advantage of the possibilities of group work. She sees openness, creating a safe space for sharing and trust, communication, listening, sensitivity and nurturing the classroom collective as important aspects of her teaching.

Lola sees collaboration in school as an opportunity to develop and reflect on her own pedagogical approach. Her experience includes tandem teaching, where Lola’s spontaneous approach to responding to the collective and the needs of the pupils, as opposed to preparation and planning in advance, proved problematic. Lola has no previous experience of working with an artist, and expects to develop her teaching skills and inspire her teaching.

Lola considers herself to be a creative educator. She occasionally incorporates creative practices (e.g., storytelling) into her teaching, but tends to have ideas that she does not implement for various reasons (including space, time, unfamiliarity with artistic processes and techniques). She defines a creative teacher as a person who develops the creative thinking of pupils, who are then able to solve tasks and challenges independently. Creative teaching, she argues, should aim to combine creativity with the development of cognitive skills. The teacher’s creativity can also be observed in a certain state of flow¹¹, connecting to the class during the teaching. It is in these moments that her best ideas come to her: “... for me it

happens right there. I tune in, and things start to connect, and I just kind of throw it in there. But if I prepare it in advance, then I’m disconnected [and] I don’t know.” Engaging intuition and trusting your instincts are aspects of the *Creative Habits of Mind*¹².

In the initial, preparatory phase of a project, the educator and pupils choose an art form they would like to learn and incorporate into their learning. Lola expressed an interest in dance, but the pupils were interested in art and film, a suggestion which Lola was open to. We approached Mary, a visual and video artist and together they planned and developed a project.

4.2. Implementation

In total, there were nearly 50 meetings with the artist in the classroom, lasting between 30 and 90 minutes¹³. The collaboration was characterised as follows: Mary’s main role as an artist was to bring experience, knowledge and creative activities from her artistic practice into the teaching process. Mary was in charge of the lesson planning, drawing on the provided background materials on the lesson content, and consulted her plans with Lola. During the lessons, Mary led the art activities, and Lola followed up with the educational content, tailoring the activities in relation to the subject matter. The teacher also had an organisational and management role, and ensured the content of the classes was in accordance

11 The concept of “flow” is developed by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in his book *On Happiness and the Meaning of Life* (Csikszentmihalyi, 2015).

12 *Creative Habits of Mind* are based on the premise that creativity is learnable and, supported by expert literature in the field, offers a holistic definition of creativity for use in schools. The key prerequisites (habits) of the creative mind are: imagination, curiosity, discipline, persistence, and collaboration. The model was developed by the Centre for Real-World Learning, United Kingdom (Lucas et al., 2013).

13 Longer meetings were not possible due to the hourly allotment of courses and the strict pandemic situation.

with the curriculum.

There were two cycles of the project. The first one was focused on filmmaking process, with the theme “Personal Stories,” and in the following one were pupils exploring themselves with wider range of artistic media and through themes of social justice, with the central theme of “Who am I?”.

The first cycle of the project ran from February to June 2021. Sustainable development issues were linked to the contents of civic education and history lessons, and pupils were given space to express themselves on those issues individually through the creative process. Under the theme of “Personal Stories,” pupils recorded and reflected on their own perceptions and explored their emotions. The creative film-making process and the carefully nurtured safe space of the classroom community allowed the deepening of pupils’ self-awareness and self-esteem. They learned about the process of filmmaking through storytelling and story writing, storyboarding, learning about filmmaking theory and audience psychology, camera work, filmmaking and post-production.

Examples of activities:

- Visual storytelling: pupils told stories through collage, comics and video. They learned about the history and structure of storytelling through examples from Greek mythology.
- Storytelling: pupils wrote and told personal stories, incorporating personal perceptions of the world, society and things they would like to change in the world into their stories. The stories served as the basis for film scripts.
- Storyboard: using drawings and collages, pupils created the visual form of the story.



Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4. Examples of activities.

Filming, editing, sound work: pupils filmed their stories in the field, including interviews with the public. They explored the connections between the personal themes of the films and sustainable development issues. The second cycle of the project took place between November 2021 and May 2022 during civic education and career development classes. The aim was to explore the self through themes of social justice, with the central theme of “Who am I?”. Civic education topics (human rights and democracy, legal foundations of the state and the European Union, the war in Ukraine) the pupils explored through creative and reflective activities. They chose the artistic media (visual storytelling, drawing, collage, painting, creative writing, new media), and related the topics to their experiences. The career development classes aimed to provide a place for pupils to strengthen their self-awareness and self-knowledge to inform their choices and next steps in their education. Using the theme “where I’m from and where I’m going” the pupils were guided towards an awareness of the role they envision for themselves in the world.

Examples of activities:

- Caricature making: pupils drew caricatures on the theme of how we perceive the world around us.
- Video interview with themselves in the future: pupils filmed a video interview with themselves, answering the questions: what would you do to improve life here? What changes would you like to see?
- Positive event: pupils expressed themselves through the medium of drawing, painting, poems on the theme: what positive event happened in our society or in the world this year?
- “Who am I?”: pupils created a concept, sket-



Figures 5, 6, and 7. Examples of activities.

ches, worked on the topic in the artistic media of their choice (drawing, painting, collage, video, story writing, lapbook), in a continuous cycle of discussion and reflection.

- Video reportage on Charles IV and Prague Castle: pupils filmed historical news in teams.
- Searching for the President: pupils watched the documentary film “President Wanted” and dramatised conversations between citizens and the President.

5. Main Findings

5.1. Benefits and Limitations of Collaboration

- The cooperation between teacher and artist proved to be functional and beneficial, and the quality of the cooperation was determined by the high degree of flexibility of both teacher and artist, as well as their openness and ability to tune in and react to each other during the implementation of the activities.

- The author identified clear communication as an important element of the collaboration: 1) between the artist and the teacher, for greater efficiency in planning activities, 2) with the pupils, to make it clear that the artist and the teacher have an equal relationship in the teaching tandem.

- In the first stage of the collaboration, the challenge was to sufficiently integrate the curriculum and sustainability themes into the art activities; there was a need for more advance planning and more consistent communication of the content of the activities that the teacher and artist wanted to focus on.

- The tandem with the artist enabled the design and implementation of a project that ex-

ceeded the teacher’s capacity in terms of expertise and time. Lola had ideas, but did not have the capacity to develop them due to her lack of knowledge of creative tools and approaches, and organisational and time demands. Working with Mary encouraged her to pursue her ideas and expand her repertoire of artistic tools and approaches: “several times [Lola] said that she found it inspiring how we analysed photographs, how we discussed visual things like that, and that it could be used very very well in other contexts” (Mary, 2021).

- There were clearly defined roles within the tandem, Mary bringing methods from her art practice, Lola taking an organisational and management role and providing curriculum content. The delineation of roles gave Lola the opportunity to get to know her pupils better, from a new perspective, and to be inspired with new ideas and learn new approaches.

- The teacher positively evaluated the benefits for her professional development. Mary brought new, creative methods of work, a different way of relating to pupils, a new communication style, and innovative ways of presentation teaching content.

5.2. Creative Teacher

- According to Saebø et al. (2007), one of the keys to personal creativity is openness to receiving inspiration and perceiving new stimuli and being curious. Lola showed a great deal of openness at the outset, which was supported and developed during the work.

- The collaboration provided Lola with important support in developing her own creative potential. Through her own creativity and flexibility, she was able to tune in to the artist, and directly

respond to and complement the artist's activities in the classroom.

- Lola experienced a new kind of collaboration, and collaboration, as Saebø et al. (2017) notes, develops creativity, "because we normally are more creative when we have others to support us" (p. 212).

- Lola was proactive, bringing in important themes (e.g. children's mental health and well-being¹⁴), engaged, enthusiastic and inquisitive.

- Collaborating with Mary greatly developed her creativity: "Yes, definitely ... I was really thinking up stuff that I wouldn't normally think of." She also sees the overall atmosphere as an important aspect of stimulating personal creativity, "that kind of creative spirit ... so that the class is set up for that" (Lola, 2021).

5.3. Developing Creative Pedagogical Practice

- Lola realised the importance of creative activities in the classroom for the development of pupils' creative learning¹⁵. She reflects "this was good for me, [...] you could see that actually the whole learning process happens the moment they step out of the school and they actually start doing something¹⁶," "so I found it rewarding in that there are some activities that can really support their creative learning, their creative activity" (Lola, 2021).

- She adopted new creative methods and approaches to support pupils' self-expression. An important finding was the need to give pupils

the space and freedom to express their individual creativity: "actually the moment you don't give yourself a completely closed goal or boundary, there's actually quite naturally and subconsciously that space where they start to share these things because they feel that there's trust for that and that the other person is open" (Lola, 2021). Pupils were encouraged to explore topics from their own perspective, offered tools and resources to express themselves individually in creative work.

- We verified that 45 minutes is a very short time for a stress-free creative activity. Lola requested that learning be organised in two-hour blocks because of the project experience. Unfortunately this couldn't be done during the project due to pandemic restrictions.

- The creative environment and collaboration with Mary inspired Lola to come up with ideas for creative activities that she would not have come up with on her own: "I gave them storyboards about the life of Caesar and ... then I had the idea to do an Instagram of Julius Caesar with the whole class on the whiteboard," she also involved the medium of photography to map manifestations of vandalism.

- Art creates an environment for the development of creative thinking in pupils: "I then started to see it as being about creating [...] a framework, some kind of protected free space that these kids can move around in, within some kind of set task, and just waiting to see what kind of comes up." Providing a stimulating environment encourages creativity: "the classroom is just set up to just be open to it."

- Because of her new experience, the teacher sees the connection of creative activities to educational content as essential to developing pupils'

14 A timely topic given the pandemic situation, extensive distance learning and interrupted social ties

15 Craft (2005) defines creative learning as any learning that stimulates students' creativity.

16 The pupils filmed original videos.

creativity. It involves a greater degree of planning, due to the time constraints imposed by the unit of instruction.

- She realised that it was important to put the “emphasis on intrinsic motivation, clarification of objectives and meaningfulness of tasks,” and to support pupils by introducing new approaches: “Incorporating creative methods led to grasping topics in a new way, which may have been motivating for some pupils.”

- The creative activities provided a natural space for spontaneous and guided reflection: “The reflection, for example on the stories, was self-generated, the children were giving themselves feedback.” Lola sees reflection as an important tool for monitoring learning progress.

- The activities were authentic but sometimes harder for pupils to grasp. Lola was aware of the children’s need for concretisation: “Some of the content was challenging for them: it was abstract and they [the children] are still thinking in concrete ways.” She supplemented the art activities with specific examples and tied them to the content of the course, “Or if [Mary] was talking about an art topic, for example, I would bring in a concrete example that [we] could maybe observe, but that also overlaps with civics.”

6. Discussion

Teacher and artist interviews, class observations and document analysis revealed insights that indicated that thanks to the collaboration with Mary, with her wide experience and knowledge, and the incorporation of practices, techniques and approaches from art practice into teaching, new ways of working, communicating and thinking had been introduced. These led to the develop-

ment of creative pedagogical practice, which was evident in a number of ways:

Collaboration

Lola has experienced tandem teaching before, with mixed results and experiences. In terms of her development as a teacher¹⁷, compared to previous experiences, we evaluate the collaboration with Mary as positively impacting her personal creativity, attitudes towards creativity and learning a range of new approaches and methods. The *flexibility and openness of the actors*, as well as the *ability to respond to each other directly in the classroom*, emerged as important prerequisites.

Another important area is *communication*, both towards the pupils and between teacher and artist. In the first phase of the collaboration we encountered the problem of insufficient engagement with the curriculum content. The tension of this situation was exacerbated due to the unexpected cancellation or substitution of classes due to the pandemic. The solution was more consistent planning and communication of content between teacher and artist. Mary’s role and status in the teaching collaboration needed to be communicated more clearly to the pupils. They initially did not perceive the artist as being the teacher’s equal. The main barrier to establishing this relationship was the complicated circumstances of teaching during COVID-19 and the fact that the first meetings were only online. The importance of communication proved crucial to the smooth running of the collaboration.

¹⁷ The findings also point to the development of the artist’s own artistic and pedagogical practice, but these are not the subject of the study.

The *clear delineation of roles* in the tandem also emerged as a functional aspect. Mary was in charge of the artistic side of the teaching, Lola was in charge of the organisation and content of the curriculum. With the support from the artist, she had the opportunity to see and get to know the pupils better through the lens of artistic practice, to be inspired and learn new approaches. The results were evident: Lola began to engage beyond her teaching role, bringing in ideas that were inspired by her collaboration with the artist.

Lola perceives working with Mary as beneficial to her professional development in terms of developing her creative practice. Mary's *expert knowledge and skills, creative thinking, activities and tools, her empathic approach to, and respectful communication with the pupils, and innovative ways of presenting content* have created space and provided resources for developing both Lola's and the pupils' creativity verified directly in the classroom practice.

Creativity

Motivation, inspiration, gestation of ideas and collaboration help us develop and build individual creative capacities. Mary brought a passion for creativity to the collaboration, offering meaningful activities which *motivated* the pupils and the teacher to be creative. She continually brought new stimuli in the form of creative approaches and activities as well as interesting information from the art world, thus stimulating the educator's curiosity and interest. Fischer writes that "The best kind of *inspiration* comes from involvement. We must involve people in creative activities" (2004, p. 15). Through active participation and expanding openness, Lola found support and

a safe space to develop and fulfil her own creative potential. *Ample time allowed*, among other things, the spontaneous development of activities directly in the classroom. In relation to the speed typical of Western culture, Claxton (1999) identified the importance of what he terms the "undermind." He describes his as a faculty reserved for quiet contemplation, prolonged thought and the unconscious elaboration of ideas. The fourth key to creativity is *collaboration*, according to Fischer (2004). Lola experienced a new kind of collaboration that supported the development of her own creativity, but also a stimulating environment and fertile ground for generating and testing ideas.

How was Lola's Creative Teaching Practice developed?

The author compared the findings with previously validated teaching approaches that stimulate creativity (Craft, 2005; Lucas, 2004). The approaches, practices and techniques that the artist brought into the classroom proved to be functional in establishing a stimulating environment and developing creativity.

Working with Mary helped Lola to better understand and realise the importance of art and creative activities to fostering pupils' creativity in the classroom. She sees that linking of creative activities to educational content is essential, as well as the associated need for more consistent planning. The collaboration further enriched her range of approaches and methods from art practice, which she had the opportunity to try out and reflect on. It has inspired her, boosted her confidence and provided her with the means and resources to further develop creative activities in her teaching. It enriched her professional

knowledge, specific skills and artistic practices, and increased her interest in, and the value she placed upon, ongoing reflection.

We have identified ways of teaching that promote pupils' creativity and that can be used in the teaching of different subjects:

- *Pupils' motivation to be creative* can be developed and encouraged through creative activities which are unusual and innovative in the classroom context. It is important that they are based on situations, experiences and ideas which are authentic and relevant to the pupils to ensure they are meaningful to the children.

- This creative practice *gives pupils the space* to explore, discover and try different points of view without being afraid to take risks in their thinking and expression, and *provides them with the resources, processes, and tools* to express themselves in creative work. It is important to respond to and support pupils' individual interests.

- Creative activities engage *different learning styles* (visual, auditory, movement, etc.), encourage pupils to be actively and holistically engaged and provide a stimulating environment for *creative learning* and the development of *creative thinking*.

- Teachers can also inspire and encourage pupils to be creative through the *use of their own creativity and the expression of ideas*.

- This practice *diversifies the learning environment*, not confining learning to the classroom, but providing a variety of environments and *ample time* for pupils to develop their ideas.

7. Conclusion

The notion of the solitary thinker still appeals to

those moulded by the Western belief in individualism. However, a careful scrutiny of how knowledge is constructed and artistic forms are shaped reveals a different reality. Generative ideas emerge from joint thinking, from significant conversations, and from sustained, shared struggles to achieve new insights by partners in thought. (John-Steiner, 2000, p. 3).

The author presented a pilot study of teacher-artist collaboration in which the process of artist-teacher collaboration in teaching was studied. She asked: 1. How does collaboration with artists develop the creative practice of teachers? 2. What artistic practices and approaches can be adapted into teaching to develop creativity?

In the area of collaboration, the author observed the process itself, its functional aspects and possible limitations. The successful collaboration between Lola and Mary was largely conditioned by the flexibility and openness of the actors, their mutual respect and ability to spontaneously react and develop activities directly in the classroom. Communication became an important point. Due to the limited time together, the need for consistent planning and negotiation of content arose to ensure that the curriculum was sufficiently engaged in the creative activities. The teacher and artist had clearly defined roles in the tandem, which gave Lola the space to learn new approaches, gain inspiration and contribute her own ideas. Lola confirmed the benefits of collaboration for her professional development. The artist brought new knowledge, skills, ways of thinking, acting and communicating, creative activities and tools to the classroom, all of which developed Lola's creative practice.

Working with Mary provided Lola with the support and space to develop her own creative potential. She motivated the teacher (and

the students) to be creative, stimulating their curiosity and interest through new stimuli and creative approaches. The influx of inspiration and time enabled Lola to develop her own ideas. The collaboration set an environment that stimulated creativity.

It can be said that the collaboration with the artist developed the creative practice of the teacher in many ways. It helped her to better understand creativity and the importance of creative activities and the relevance of art in developing creativity in teaching. The collaboration has enriched her knowledge of new methods and approaches, and provided opportunities and support to develop and reflect on them. It has broadened her expertise and specific skills in the arts, and fostered an interest in ongoing reflection.

Comparing the findings with the outcomes of previous research confirmed that Mary brought in new ways of teaching based on a creative approach and artistic activities that encourage and respect the creativity of the students. The approaches and strategies can be used in teaching a variety of subjects and can encourage and develop:

- Motivation through unusual and innovative creative activities in the classroom context;
- Emphasis on authenticity, personal relevance and experience;
- Space and means for self-expression, risk-taking, adoption of different perspectives;
- Opportunities for pupils to explore their own interests;
- Incorporation of visual, auditory and movement-based learning styles;
- Pupils' active engagement in the learning process;

- A stimulating environment for creative learning and the development of creative thinking;
- Inspiration and encouragement through engaging teachers' own creativity and ideas expression;
- Diversification of the learning environment;
- Ample time to develop ideas.

The author presented a pilot study of teacher-artist collaboration in which she studied the process of artist-teacher collaboration in the classroom. She explored the potential of this collaboration for developing teachers' creative practice and investigated what practices, techniques and approaches from art practice can be adapted into teaching to develop pupils' creativity. The case study allowed for an in-depth exploration of the case for teacher-artist collaboration. The diversity of informants' perspectives and the range of research methods ensured clear insight into the reality of the situation, offering a more holistic view of the phenomenon under investigation and increasing the credibility of the findings. In the study, the author suggests possible practical applications for further elaboration.

Due to the limited capacity of the study, the author deliberately did not focus on the benefits and impacts of collaboration on artists. However, research does in fact provide data on this theme, and may be one possible focus for future research. Another interesting question for future research is the progress made by the teacher over time in developing their creative practice. This theme offers research questions such as, what impact does collaboration with an artist have on the educator's future practice? Is the adoption of new approaches and methods sustainable? Further research may offer answers to these questions.

The pilot case was studied as part of a multi-case study and will serve as a starting point for the analysis of the other two cases. “By examining one case in depth, we can better understand other similar cases” (Hendl, 2005, p. 104). In the follow-up research, in-case analyses of two more cases of teacher-artist collaboration will be conducted, and the similarities and differences between the cases will be explored using a cross-case analysis method to support empirical generalisations and theoretical predictions, and to present possibilities for practical applications. The author believes that in the context of curriculum reform, these case studies will contribute to a better understanding of the importance of creativity in Czech schools, and provide concrete, applicable guidance on how to develop it.

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