How to Practically Help Non-Specialist Teachers to Implement Various Ways to Better Integrate Art Education in Ordinary Classroom Practices: The French Program AlféArt, Between Research and Resource

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INTRODUCTION

In 2010, the University of Amsterdam ran a series of lectures, discussion panels and research workshops grouped together under the banner *Visual Culture and National Identity: A Symposium*. Without a discernible sense of irony, the organizers observed that to a modernist, art should be "autonomous, independent and separate from political and social developments". They conceded, however, that in reality, "nationalism and art and art history have always been closely intertwined" (art & education, 2010). Few political developments in Europe in the years that followed would have given the authors reason to

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question this assumption. For though there is intermittent talk of a 'European identity' one day challenging traditional national allegiances, Europe remains, as Orenstein (2015) observes, "a divided continent" (p. 531). Issues such as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, radical Islam, terrorism, Greek insolvency, the refugee crisis and a resurgent Russia have seen a sustained disinclination, or inability, on the part of national politicians to adopt a European perspective when confronted by common European challenges (Nixon, 2016).

The very notion of a shared identity can flounder on the fundamental issue of what is 'Europe' and what is not. Over a decade ago, Ash (2001) observed that the issue facing Europe was "not whether it would be a Europe of fifteen or twenty-seven states but whether it would be a Europe of forty-one or forty-two states". Turkey has long aspired to be part of the European Union, while Morocco and Tunisia, both former European colonies in Africa, have signed Association Agreements with the European Union, which has "never declared whether the designation 'European' is a cultural, geographical, moral, linguistic, historical, or religious one" (Orenstein, 2015, p. 532). Unsurprisingly, Putin's Russia is no supporter of Pan European ideals, and is increasingly belligerent and proactive in its opposition to an extended membership of the European Union that might one day include Moldova, the Ukraine and Belarus. The recent refugee crisis has opened "big fault lines across the Union … both east-west and north-south" (BBC News, 4 March 2016). Beyond even that crisis, Orenstein (2015) sees the emergence of two contrasting poles, "one Western, liberal, and democratic, another Eastern, statist, and autocratic" (p. 531). Overlaid on these contemporary developments are the traditional divides in Europe-Roman and non-Roman, Greek Europe and Latin Europe, Catholic and Orthodox Europe, Western Christian and Eastern Christian, Protestant and Catholic, those occupied by Napoleon and those not, and Communist and Capitalist states.

The task, therefore, of writing a chapter on arts and education, both contested fields with distinctly nationalistic agendas, on a continent-wide basis seems ambitious in the extreme. That the authors have chosen to focus on the AlféaRT project, a research network supported by a research initiative of the University of Lyon and the CNRS (French national science agency) recognizes a regional response to this multiplicity offers what educators might characterize as a teachable moment. In their efforts to embrace an international and interdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning in arts and cultural education, there is much that can be applied across a deeply complex environment.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT: AN ACTIVE AREA OF RESEARCH

Finding the optimal way to integrate *arts education and education through the arts* [hereafter AE] in educational programmes is a universal concern, as evidenced by the recommendations of international institutions such as UNESCO (UNESCO, 2006, 2010; Bamford, 2006) and the OECD:

> The Seoul Agenda calls upon UNESCO Member States, civil society, professional organizations and communities to recognize its governing goals, to employ the proposed strategies, and to implement the action items in a concerted effort to realize the full potential of high quality arts education to positively renew educational systems, to achieve crucial social and cultural objectives, and ultimately to benefit children, youth and life-long learners of all ages. (UNESCO, 2010)

This concern is of course deeply shared by European institutions, and has driven the European Commission to encourage deep changes in national school curricula (The European Agenda for Culture in a Globalizing World: EC, 2006, 2007; Eurydice, 2009). In its latest report on the impact of AE on "the skills that fuel innovation in the economy and society: creativity, imagination, communication and teamwork to name a few" (Ischinger, 2014), the OECD reviewed scientific studies (Winner, Goldstein & Vincent-Lancrin, 2013) that demonstrate that AE contributes to the development of skills, habits of mind and knowledge that are critical in today's society: how to live together with shared values and tolerance (behavioural, social and academic skills; Deasy, Catterall, Hetland & Winner, 2002; Kerlan & Langar, 2015) and sensitivity, creativity and critical thinking (Hetland, Winner, Veenema & Sheridan, 2013; Burke & McGuigan, 2008). Moreover, their unique contributions to skills considered 'fundamental' (including basic skills: literacy, numeracy) argue for giving them their rightful place: AE calls upon technical skills, including the broad conception of literacy in the wider sense of the multiliteracy extended to all types of language as described in *twenty-first century skills* (Barton, 2014; Deasy, Catterall, Hetland, & Winner, 2002; Duncum, 2004). AE is also inseparable from a cultural education, that is, to have been given as many opportunities as possible to encounter, experiment, analyse, discuss, appreciate or criticize an as large as possible range of works of arts and to create one's own personal museum and library of personal art experiences and documented knowledge.

Beyond these arguments, the report concludes that AE should be maintained as both a field of practice and a domain of specific and irreducible knowledge without the need for extrinsic justifications (McCarthy, Ondaatje, Zakaras & Brooks, 2004): "Arts have been in existence since the earliest humans, are part of all cultures and are a major domain of human experience, just like science, technology, mathematics, and humanities. The arts are important in their own right for education" (Winner, Goldstein, & Vincent-Lancrin, 2014).

Finally, the report reinforces the necessity of carrying out research into teaching methods that will allow AE to meet such demanding standards.

The Context and Issues in France: An Institutional and Professional Appeal

In France, arts and cultural education is inscribed in the school reform law 'Refondation de l'école' (art. 10) as one of the pillars of the *Common Core Standards in Skills, Knowledge and Culture* (MEN, 2013). The new French national curricula (MEN, 2015a, 2015b) encourages the development of

varied artistic practices, visits to artistic sites and encounters with artists in order to contribute to the acquisition of knowledge, skills (for example, digital and verbal skills) and habits of mind (curiosity, openness towards others, inventiveness, etc.), which fall within AE in and of itself, but also within other school subjects. Educators are encouraged to develop interdisciplinary approaches with this aim, through cross-curricular pedagogical projects and lessons. A new school subject has been introduced in the curricula of compulsory schools since 2008, in order to foster ambitious approaches to the history of arts (including popular and less legitimate forms of art, such as street and circus arts, garden and landscape design, crafts and applied arts) (MEN, 2008).

Educational institutions are urged to develop these projects in cooperation with cultural institutions through a joint call from both ministries, Education and Culture (MEN/MC, 2015). As a result, stakeholders in the arts and culture sectors, such as institutions and non-profit organizations, for example, take part in this shared educational mission. The issues arising from these requirements call for scientific reflection, in particular, with the objective of describing and understanding the resulting teachers' education and training concerns, as all stakeholders share the responsibility of designing research-based cross-training programmes.

The Barrier to Raise: Developing Research and Transfer

The OECD report finishes with a set of 'suggested areas of research' for future studies. One of those proposed is:

> [To] study the relative effectiveness of different kinds of pedagogies, assessments and curricula in fostering various kinds of learning outcomes in the arts and, possibly, simultaneous development of skills and habits of mind that can be used in other domains. (Winner, 2014, p. 259)

Although studies of this kind exist, few are available that specifically address the following questions: On what basis do teachers make pedagogical and instructional choices that they consider crucial when they *choose to integrate AE in the global educational project without sacrificing its own specific essence and contributions?* How do they define the priority issues in AE? How do they apply assessment criteria? And finally, what *resources* do they find useful in tackling the issue? In short, *what do they do in practice to develop the intrinsic and extrinsic educational potential of the arts?*

We contend that these practical questions are inseparable from the theoretical questions central to the sciences of art: 'What is art?' 'What is *culture* and *cultural transmission*?' 'What is it to *teach* art?' These questions call for further research into the area where the sciences of art(s) intersect with the social sciences, learning sciences and educational sciences, as well as the academic study of work and professional training, to investigate what potential impact a better integration of AE in teacher education and training might have.

Reviews of academic literature reveal the lack of fine-scale research into teaching practices: "Better understanding the relative effectiveness of different kinds of pedagogies in different art forms on the acquisition of artistic skills themselves is another key area for research on arts education" (Winner, Goldstein & Vincent-Lancrin, 2013, p. 261) and that the appropriation of these practices by teachers seems to be most problematic:

> Many educational systems rely on generalist teachers to teach arts subjects, especially to younger children. Teaching the arts to a high standard is challenging, so it is not surprising to find that primary teachers in particular lack confidence in teaching the arts. (Taggart, Whitby & Sharp, 2004)
>
>   There would appear to be a need to consider both the initial preparation of teachers to teach arts subjects and the arrangements for continuing professional development, to enable arts teachers to update their knowledge and develop their skills. (Eurydice, 2009, p. 10)

The design and trialing of resources grounded in research is in itself a major goal which will help empower stakeholders from different professional backgrounds, such as education, arts and culture, the vast majority of whom are not specialists in AE. This is why the AlféaRT project seeks to join fundamental and practical research.

Theoretical and Practical Objectives

The AlféaRT project aims to closely intertwine two goals using a translational approach (van der Laan & Boenink, 2015). The first aim is theoretical and strongly set in a multidisciplinary framework. It consists of collecting (clinical approach), understanding and problematizing (fundamental research approach) the questions posed by stakeholders (both teachers and their project partners) when they design, implement and assess AE teaching contexts and projects.

Initial research issues include: How does crossing perspectives from several academic disciplines allow a better understanding of the stakeholders' concerns (regarding sciences of art and 'sciences of art(s) education', social science, ergonomy, etc.)? How do stakeholders redefine the aims of AE, in particular, the issues of education and learning? How is art *actually* taught at school and *what art*? How do teachers tackle the twin requirement of developing AE *on its own terms*, with its own allotted time and aims, with the growing demand for cross-curricular projects? As Eurydice (2009, p. 12) notes, there is a "trend for more cross-curricular work, involving arts and other (non-arts) subject areas working together on creative and/or cultural themes".

The second aim is practical. AlféaRT considers the key issue in the field to be '[science] transfer', defined as the *appropriation by the stakeholders* not of the raw research results, but of the participants' methods, shared and validated using "design developed through use" based on collaborative research. The epistemological particularity of translational research consists of the inter-

twined development of a theoretical structure and an evolving and participative practical tool that is multi-user and multi-use, allowing links to be made between research input, analyses of data collected in educational contexts and user feedback, organized so that it is accessible for teacher training. The resulting resource will be based on the experiences of the stakeholders in educational contexts and draw on their points of view, developing their empowerment rather than simply imposing a rule of conduct on them.

Initial research questions include: At the design stage, how do the stakeholders define resources that they consider useful? In particular, which theoretical and practical resources do they find useful and how do they use them? At the prototype testing stage, how is the resource used/appropriated (ergonomic approach)? How would stakeholders like to see it evolve?

The intention of AlféaRT is not to separate these two objectives but to develop them jointly. The theoretical aspect of the project enables the investigation to be rooted in the multidisciplinary body of AE research, yet the project seeks to promote a continuous exchange between questions that fall within fundamental research and questions that fall within clinical and applied research. The goal is not simply one of transferring academic outcomes, because the transfer process itself will throw up questions that prompt renewed theoretical work; for example, by provoking updated feedback on fundamental questions about AE, beginning with its definition and anthropological functions, as well as the question of the real nature of 'AE'. Therefore, the process of applying the resource will in turn redefine the ongoing fundamental research process.

Project
Organization and Implementation—Methodology

The teams in the AlféaRT network are responsible for different areas of observation and experimentation depending on their professional context (for example, teacher training, specialist or generalist educators at primary or secondary level; monitoring extracurricular organizations or projects; monitoring collaboration between public schools and cultural institutions such as museums, theatre groups, dance companies). The first year of the project will focus on collecting, selecting and analysing the stakeholders' key priority issues, both practical and theoretical, in contexts that they consider representative of their professional concerns, arising from the implementation of institutional requirements using an ergonomic approach. The data collected might consist of videos, field observations or interviews based on a range of methodologies (for example, explanations, video elicitations, feedback on instruction tools or students' work). This investigation is the subject of a PhD project.

The second year of the project will focus on analysing the collected material according to the priorities identified by the stakeholders, as well as the collection and development of the solutions that they have produced (enriched by our research) and the resources they have provided (ergonomic approach). This

will allow a prototype of the resource to be created, based on cross-pollination between typical examples of 'professional questions' and typical situations that illustrate them (for example, using video materials with transcriptions, students' work and so on). This will require the production of a prototype of the future digital tool (using mainly videos, images and audio), transcriptions, analyses (post-doctoral work) as well as technical support to develop the tool itself (digital engineering services at Lyon's École Normale Supérieure). Given the time constraints, this will only be a working model or prototype.

The third year of the project will focus on user testing of the tool, either by individuals or in group training sessions, and so on. We stress that the aim of the resource is not to impose models of entirely transferable 'best practices' to copy, but rather to provide materials as the basis for reflection in self-study or group training. The approach is one of 'design developed through use' (Béguin & Darses, 1998). This part of the project (the study of the design and testing process) is the subject of a second doctoral project.

AlféaRT has been built as a consortium supported by the PEPS 2015 'Education' programme (*Projets Exploratoires Premier Soutien*, Programme Avenir Lyon St-Etienne), which supports research teams working in the field of education. Researchers come from different research institutions including the École Normale Supérieure in Lyon, Universities of Lyon 2 and Lyon 1, Aix Marseille University, and the University of Montpellier.

Project Impacts and Results

The originality of the AlféaRT project is to link the objective of creating knowledge (theoretical impact) and the objective of the transformative effect of this knowledge on professional practice in the field of education (socioeconomic impact). The value creation is not conceived as a final 'result', but rather the project from its very inception involves transfer by means of the collaborative and evolving design of the prototype in preparation for the later development of the resource. This approach is backed by the prior experience of the IFÉ/ENS Lyon in this area (they have developed a national website offering video resources for the training of beginning teachers http://neo.ens-lyon. fr/neo and a large video database open to educational searchers http://visa. espe-bretagne.fr/?visa. This prototype will be further developed in the future. One of its defining characteristics is to be multi-user: initially developed by researchers as a structuring and analysis tool, the data can be accessed through designed filters for use in training scenarios or as training resources, which can themselves eventually be designed by students in a 'learning by doing' process.

We believe that integrating these aims is essential in an educational research paradigm concerned with "understanding why pedagogical innovations have so much difficulty moving out of the experimental phase" (2015 ANR French National Call for projects). AlféaRT's answer is to design a knowledge transfer that does not consist of the raw dissemination of 'best practices', but rather 'empowers' stakeholders, by remaining as close as possible to their own con-

cerns, and the way they perceive and describe their own educational contexts. AlféaRT aims to conduct research in the area of AE that is both contextual (possibly generalizable) and collaborative (researchers, practitioners and decision makers are stakeholders, whose expertise is not conflated but linked together as usefully as possible).

The originality of AlféaRT is to support the *specific* contribution of AE aimed at the general improvement of school outcomes in France, building on the national and international research that demonstrates that AE contributes to "enhancing all forms of intelligence and skills", *on the condition that it retains its own learning space* (Hetland, Winner, Veenema, & Sheridan, 2013; Kerlan, 2007). If this condition is met, AE addresses fundamental educational issues specific to the arts as well as having an impact on non-art outcomes, for instance, learning that is considered instrumental (cultural development and multiliteracy, Alberts & Sanders, 2010) and fundamental (sensitivity, creativity, curiosity).

In this way, it contributes to knowledge production while avoiding two pitfalls. First, isolating AE and restricting it to an allotted space and time distinct from 'ordinary' space and time, uncoupling the pedagogic from the educational, juxtaposing practices, separating specialists and practitioners. And second, on the other extreme, exploiting AE under the pretext of taking advantage of its contributions, thus reducing its scope to the purely utilitarian and diminishing its disruptive effects.

By bringing together teacher education institutions and academic research teams with research experience in this area, AlféaRT aims to provide a unique contribution to research on AE. We want to maximize the role AE can play in education in our contemporary society, in which the cognitive, social and ethical benefits of arts and culture are increasingly in demand.

Conclusion

Falk and Katz-Gerro (2015, p. 130) describe European countries as being characterized by "several models of cultural policy that differ in their mechanisms for articulating policy". The difficulty inherent in this process is that there is an "absence of a real European system for cultural statistics" with "no harmonized specific data on culture" (European Commission, 2013, p. 8). This is consistent with the report of the European Commission into Initial Teacher Education (ITE) across Europe which found "wide heterogeneity in ITE across EU member states" (Franchi, 2016, p. 148). In seeking to identify and understand the theoretical and practical issues encountered by arts educators to inform the development of a multi-user multimedia resource for research and teacher education purposes the AlféaRT research network will provide important information for those working in this context. This approach aligns with Bruner's (1996, p. 38) contention that "education must help those growing up in a culture to find an identity within that culture". Given the local, cultural and regional variances in an area as large as Europe utilizing the transformative potential of the arts provides important insights into recogni-

tion and celebration of these differences. As Kuscer and Prosen (2005, p. 10) argue, "for schools to play a role in the development of identity, both national and European, they need to have some understanding of how children perceive themselves, how they perceive others and what they currently understand about their own nation and about Europe". Engagement with the arts in education provides transformative learning experiences and is an "immensely rewarding way of human knowing and being—of imagination, aesthetic knowledge and translation and expression of ideas" (Ewing, 2010, p. 5).

Though hardly 'high culture' the issues facing the Eurovision Song Contest organizers are the same as those which confront educators seeking cross national synergies in the arts. Established in 1956, this global phenomenon is now one of the longest running television shows in history. By embracing and celebrating diversity and by showcasing minority communities, it has become "a platform for the creation of national and European identities" (Eurovision, 2016). Yet participation eligibility is not determined by geography nor does it rely on membership of the European Union. Israel, Cyprus, Morocco and Australia have participated, while transcontinental countries with only part of their territory in Europe such as Turkey, Russia, Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan have also sent contestants. As a metaphor for cultural diversity and the importance of the arts in celebrating personal expression and cultural identity, the Eurovision Song Contest deserves serious recognition even if it is an "international orgy of clashing musical tastes and questionable fashion" (Whiting, 2016, p. 16). One of the countries geographically as far from Europe as possible, Australia, was represented at the Ericsson globe Theatre in Stockholm, Sweden by Danni Im, a South Korean-born, Queensland-raised, classically trained pianist. Im states that she was "honoured to be there as a Korean Australian, someone who embodies both the artistic and multicultural spirit of the competition" (Whiting, 2016, p. 16). The challenge for European arts administrators and educators is to embrace this same diversity even if their politicians remain wary of it.

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