Citation:
Dobson, T and Stephenson, L (2022) A trans-European perspective on how artists can support teachers, parents and carers to engage with young people in the creative arts. Children & Society. ISSN 0951-0605 DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12580

Link to Leeds Beckett Repository record:
https://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/id/eprint/8588/

Document Version:
Article (Published Version)

Creative Commons: Attribution 4.0

The aim of the Leeds Beckett Repository is to provide open access to our research, as required by funder policies and permitted by publishers and copyright law.

The Leeds Beckett repository holds a wide range of publications, each of which has been checked for copyright and the relevant embargo period has been applied by the Research Services team.

We operate on a standard take-down policy. If you are the author or publisher of an output and you would like it removed from the repository, please contact us and we will investigate on a case-by-case basis.

Each thesis in the repository has been cleared where necessary by the author for third party copyright. If you would like a thesis to be removed from the repository or believe there is an issue with copyright, please contact us on openaccess@leedsbeckett.ac.uk and we will investigate on a case-by-case basis.

Accepted: 20 April 2022

DOI: 10.1111/chso.12580

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Children & Society ncb WILEY

A trans-European perspective on how artists can support teachers, parents and carers to engage with young people in the creative arts

Tom Dobson | **Lisa Stephenson**

Leeds Beckett University, Leeds, UK

Correspondence
Tom Dobson, Leeds Beckett University, Headingley Campus, 208a Carnegie Hall, Leeds LS6 3QS, UK.
Email: t.w.dobson@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Funding information
Erasmus+

Abstract

Whilst the link between young people's well-being and the creative arts is strengthening, there is a lack of research which focuses on the roles that artists play to help teachers and parents engage young people in the creative arts. This paper explores the benefits of and barriers to artists working in education in six European countries (England, Iceland, Germany, Greece, Italy and Austria). Using the '5A's model of creativity' and a view of professional development taking place within 'landscapes of practice', the data were analysed in order to explain how creativity is operationalised in the different contexts. Our study highlights the need for policy at a national and transnational level to value the creative arts in order to help teachers cross boundaries and utilise the full potential of the creative arts in schools. Our study also highlights that further research is needed into how artists shape teaching and curriculum and how schools engage parents in the creative arts in order to build an evidence-base relating to young people's positive mental health that can affect policy at these levels.

KEYWORDS

artists in education, creative arts, creativity theory, education, landscapes of practice, parents and carers, teacher development

This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.
© 2022 The Authors. *Children & Society* published by National Children's Bureau and John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

INTRODUCTION

This paper is taken from the initial planning and audit stage of a 3-year European Union (ERASMUS+) funded project, the key aim of which is to transfer the knowledge and skills of artists working in education to school, teaching training and home contexts (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2014). Whilst the importance of young people's creative thinking skills is recognised globally (OECD, 2019), it is also widely acknowledged that the creative arts have been marginalised within European school curricula (Bamford, 2014; Wyse & Ferrari, 2015). By creative arts, we mean the full range of visual and expressive arts subjects, which include music, drama, dance, art, design photography, film and creative writing. Our project, arted, which deliberately adopts a lower case 'a', views artists working in education as one way of mitigating against this marginalisation of the creative arts.

Arted is set against the backdrop of a rise in mental health issues experienced by young people across Europe. Pre-pandemic, the World Health Organisation (WHO) reported a significant increase in poor mental health amongst young people, with 29% of 15-year-old girls and 13% of 15-year-old boys were feeling low more than once a week (WHO, 2018). There are no recent comparable data, but globally it is acknowledged that the pandemic has affected youths' lives, education, social interactions, hopes and dreams, posing a threat towards achievement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (Efuribe et al., 2020). According to the International Labour Organisation (2020) report, COVID-19 has disrupted the education of more than 70% of young people due to educational institutions' closures––this was initially worst felt in northern hemisphere countries where young people have lost one quarter of the academic year due to COVID-19 closures and has since been felt across other continents, including Latin America.

By transferring the knowledge and skills of artists working in education to school and home contexts, arted aims to build upon research within the project team which demonstrates how engagement in the creative arts can help young people to experience enhanced well-being through engaging more authentically in learning (Stephenson & Dobson, 2020). Across Europe, there is a range of evidence to support the link between the creative engagement of young people of all ages in schooling and positive well-being. With younger children, the EU Early Childhood Education and Care Project (2016) demonstrates how increased creative engagement helps foster a sense of self; with older children, research (Carson, 2019; Forgeard, 2019) shows how increased creative engagement impacts on poor mental health and can promote engagement in school which prevents early school leaving (Chemi & Du, 2018). More broadly, a literature review of 900 research articles commissioned by the WHO (Fancourt & Finn, 2019) puts forward compelling evidence that engagement in the arts improves mental health and well-being. In relation to promotion and prevention, the literature review identifies how 'the arts encourage health-promoting behaviours' and 'prevents ill-health'; in relation to socioeconomic status and positive mental well-being, the report concludes that the engagement with 'the arts affect social determinants to health including social cohesion and social inequalities' (Fancourt & Finn, 2019, p.7).

In order to realise the potential of the creative arts to promote well-being and prevent ill-health, arted draws upon the expertise of a wide range of artists (visual and expressive) practising in the six partner countries of England, Iceland, Germany, Greece, Italy and Austria. During the initial planning and audit phase, focus group discussions with key stakeholders, including teachers and artists, took place in each partner country. Rather than exploring the relationship between the creative arts and well-being, the purpose of the focus groups was to consider how the knowledge and skills of artists could be transferred through interactive guides to teachers, trainee teachers and parents and carers in order to help them to engage creatively with young people.

Our analysis of the six focus group discussions provides an illuminating insight into contextual differences and similarities between the six partner countries and what this means for the ways in which artists in education can impact positively on young people. In particular, recommendations are made as to how policy changes need to occur in order to provide the conditions for artists to work with teachers and parents and carers so that they can meaningfully engage young people in the creative arts.

THEORISING CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CREATIVE ARTS

The ultimate aim of the project is to provide young people with more opportunities to engage in the creative arts. The idea is that increased engagement in the creative arts will be achieved by artists transferring their skills and knowledge to the adults who are central to these young people's development––namely their teachers and their parents and carers. From an ecological perspective, therefore, the project focuses on the microsystem, the school and home contexts immediately experienced by young people through 'activities, roles, and interpersonal relations', as well as the mesosystem in the form of the 'interrelations' between the two (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 22–5). More broadly, the project explores the impact of the macrosystem in the form of governmental educational policy upon young people's opportunities to engage in the creative arts. By considering the effect of these different macro-, micro- and mesosystem contexts upon young people, an analysis of the focus group discussions explores and articulates how the creative development of young people can be sustained through what Bronfenbrenner calls 'proximal processes' (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). According to Rosa and Tudge (2013, p. 252), proximal processes are the relationships between people, objects and symbols and constitute the 'driving forces of human development'. Seen from this perspective, therefore, the project considers how these proximal processes can be optimised for the creative development of young people who interact with each other, artists, teachers and parents and carers over time.

The promotion of productive proximal processes is conceptualised in relation to a model of creativity which has been developed to 'explore the underlying structure of how creativity is operationalised' (Kaufman & Glaveanu, 2019, p.28). Indeed, as the initial focus group discussions focused on both the macro- and microsystems and their abilities to promote the creative arts for the creative development of young people in the six partner countries, models of how creativity are operationalised are highly relevant as they conceptualise the structural aspects of creativity. In their review of such models, Kaufman and Glaveanu (2019) discuss how the Four P's model (Person, Product, Process and Press) has been superseded by the 5A's model (Actors, Audiences, Actions, Artefacts and Affordances). In the 5A's model, as conceived by Glăveanu (2013), the structural elements which operationalise creativity are seen as more contextual, dynamic and interrelated than the elements of the 4P's model. Accordingly, creativity is operationalised through: an Actor, who has 'personal attributes in relation to a societal context'; an Action, which is a 'coordinated psychological and behavioural manifestation'; an Artefact, which is produced by the Actor and which includes the 'cultural context of artifact production and evaluation'; and an Audience and Affordances, which are 'the interdependence between creators and a social and material world' (Glăveanu, 2013, p.71). Seen from a 5A's perspective, productive proximal processes between people, objects and symbols in the context of the creative arts will serve to operationalise creativity for young people as they take on the identities of Actors with artistic Actions where the apprehension of a social Audience and the use of material Affordances help to shape their artistic Artefacts.

Whilst the 5A's model provides a way of thinking about creativity from a structural perspective, Holland et al.'s (1998) concept of 'figured worlds' (1998) is a useful additional lens to think about the agency of the individual participating in specific cultural contexts. Indeed, the concept of figured worlds has been used widely in education research in order to conceptualise the identities and agency of young people as Actors in the contexts of both home and school (Luttrell & Parker, 2001; Urrieta, 2007). A figured world is defined as 'a socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others. Each is a simplified world populated by a set of agents who engage in a limited range of meaningful acts' (Holland et al., 1998, p.52). If we consider School and Home to be key, microsystem level figured worlds where young people participate as Actors, then we can think about which kind of Artefacts are most valued and which Actions are deemed meaningful within these different contexts. Furthermore, with Holland et al. (1998) viewing identity within figured worlds as 'positional', consideration can be given as to whether the young people's identities are of high or low status in relation to the production of creative Artefacts and whether, therefore, proximal processes are productive. At both micro- and macrosystem levels, we can also think about how school and home practices as well as government policy impacts upon these proximal processes for young people as Actors in the creative arts.

Policy

At a macrosystem level, we view policy within a wider framework of neoliberalism whereby educational outcomes are made into auditable commodities through the processes of performativity. According to Ball (2003, p. 216), 'performativity is a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change based on rewards and sanctions'. It can be argued that this commodification of educational outcomes through performativity results in a narrowing of the curriculum where more technical and, therefore, measurable skills and knowledges are given precedence over the creative arts. For example, in the English National Curriculum for writing, a focus on grammar, punctuation and spelling as auditable commodities marginalises creative ideas and content, which results in making writing less meaningful for children (Lambirth, 2016).

Wyse and Ferrari's (2015) review of the frequency of the word 'creativity' in national curriculum of EU countries (p.36) demonstrates that four of our six partner countries have a below average emphasis upon creativity at policy level, with Austria the exception (Iceland were not part of Wyse and Ferrari's study). Within the project, we asked project leads to undertake their own review of policy relating to the position of the creative arts in the national curricula for 5- to 16-year-old and the status of artists working in education in their respective countries. What became clear from each of these policy analyses was that on the whole the creative arts were marginalised within the national curricular of the partner countries and, in line with this, the ways in which artists tended to engage with schools was 'fragmented' and 'piecemeal' due to 'a lack of funding'. The one exception was Iceland, where 'creativity' is one of the six fundamental pillars upon which national curriculum guidelines are based (The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2014). This means that in Iceland there is a much greater emphasis upon the creative arts throughout schooling (15.48% of the weekly timetable) and, as a result, more teachers who also consider themselves to be artists are developed within the teaching profession.

Boundary crossing: Teachers becoming artists

A key focus of the project is how the skills and knowledge of artists can be transferred to teachers and parents and carers. There is no research literature which focuses on this transference from artists to parents and carers, so here we restrict our discussion to the professional development of teachers in relation to artistic practices. Fundamentally, we view teachers' professional identities as the 'constitutive texture' resulting from participation in a landscape of practice (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2014, p. 19). Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner identify how this landscape is experienced in three ways: it is 'flat' because it is experienced by groups (e.g. teachers) in a way that becomes accepted as normal; it is 'political', because despite the lived experience of flatness, within this landscape there is always power and a hierarchy at play, with some identities silenced and others valued and heard; and it is 'diverse', in so far its texture also involves the participation of different professional identities all experiencing the landscape differently. This undulating landscape means that boundaries exist, which serve to keep diverse practices apart: 'because of the lack of a shared history, boundaries are places of potential misunderstanding and confusion arising from different regimes of competences and commitments, values, repertoires, and perspectives. In this sense, they are like mini-cultures' (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2014, p. 19).

Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner's (2014) key idea is that learning occurs through crossing boundaries and experiencing other mini-cultures––an often uncomfortable manoeuvre that involves moving away from the safety of the familiar and everyday experience of a flat landscape. For Clark et al. (2017), in order to create the right conditions to help individuals move away from the comfort of the flatness of experience, the hierarchies at play within a landscape need to be minimised as much as possible so that pure collaboration can occur. It is at this point, they argue, that boundaries between practices are not merely identified through difference but are actively surmounted and crossed so that 'hybridisation' of practice can occur. In relation to artists working with teachers, we would argue that both artists and teachers need move away from the flatness of their own practices in order to cross boundaries and experience difference landscapes of practice. This would enable the artist to become an artist-teacher and the teacher to become a teacher-artist.

In order to conceptualise how teachers experience their landscapes of practice and the boundaries they encounter, we also draw upon Clarke's (2009) model of teacher identity. For Clarke, there are four key operations in teacher identity: the substance of teacher identity (a belief in who you are as a teacher); authority sources (for example policy and testing); self practices of teacher identity (for example a teacher's pedagogical knowledge); and telos of teacher identity (a teacher's view of the ultimate purposes of their practice). Clarke's model is useful as it provides a way of thinking about the different structural elements relating to teacher identity at both macro- (authority sources) and microsystem (self practices) levels. For example, research by Reeves (2018) highlighted how authority sources at a macrosystem level shape the teacher as a "technician", who has lost touch with their ideological values in the microsystem in which they teach.

We also looked at research relating to teacher development in the creative arts which indicated some of the practical measures that could be taken in order to create a hybridisation of practice. Central to this was the idea of professional development as experiential, with teachers working alongside artists over a significant period of time. In relation to developing teachers' use of drama pedagogies, evidence from the US (Rosler, 2014) and New Zealand (Wells & Sandretto, 2016), emphasised a need for a longitudinal approach to teacher development whereby ongoing support from theatre educators was provided for the teachers. Even then, Rosler's (2014)

three-and-half-year project demonstrates how teacher immersion in drama pedagogy with theatre educators was not sufficient to transform practice. For Rosler, this underlined a need to facilitate teachers in reflecting upon drama experiences when they and the theatre educators were leading the sessions.

In the visual arts in Canada, Kind et al. (2007) show how reflection can be effective when spaces are opened up for teachers to talk and think about their own narratives of their dual identities as teachers and artists. Similarly, in the visual arts in Australia, the transformation of teacher identities is achieved through reflection but this time in communities of practice where teachers engage in dialogue with each other as well as visual artists to consider their professional development (Sinclair et al., 2015). All of this echoes with much of the more generic literature on teacher professional development in relation to coaching and mentoring. For Cordingley (2006), reflection through 'learning conversations' between a teacher and a mentor which involve the mentor 'actively listening' (2006) is key; for Lofthouse (2017), good mentoring involves 'stimulating', 'scaffolding' and 'sustaining' learning conversations.

Research questions

Given the literature and theoretical underpinnings outlined above, from a research perspective, undertaking focus group interviews with key adult stakeholders in our six partner countries enabled us to explore the following research questions:

1. At a macrosystem level, how does policy impact upon operationalising creativity through the creative arts for young people in the six partner countries?
2. At a microsystem level, how can Artists engage meaningfully in the figured world of School in order to help teachers cross boundaries to become Actors in the creative arts?
3. At a microsystem level, what kinds of positional identities are afforded to young people in relation to the creative arts in the figured world of School?
4. At micro- and mesosystem levels, what role can the figured world of Home play in the development of young people as Actors in the creative arts?

Project design and data analysis

This paper is drawn from the initial planning and audit phases of a 3-year project, where the trans-European team is working with artists to produce and publish open access interactive creative arts guides for teachers, trainee teachers and parents and carers. The project employs a participatory design methodology, involving key target audiences at different stages of the design process. For example, in phase two (co-design and production), artists are working alongside young people, teachers and parents and carers to produce materials for the guides.

In the initial phase, however, the decision was taken to restrict scoping discussions about the nature and content of the guides as well as the approach they should take to relevant adult stakeholders. This meant that focus groups of 10–17 people took place across the six partner countries. The groups were deliberately 'diverse' (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2014, p. 19) in relation to the expertise they included: artists; teachers; school leaders; preservice teacher trainers; preservice teachers; parents and carers; members of cultural bodies; and policy-makers. A breakdown of the make-up of the focus groups is represented in Table 1. It

TABLE 1 Focus group members by partner country

Partner country	University-based practitioner	Artist in education	Trainee teacher	Primary/ secondary school teacher	Primary school teacher	Secondary school teacher	Member of a cultural body	Policy-maker
England	4	4			2	1	3	
Italy		6			2	3	6	
Iceland	1	2	5	3	1			1
Austria	2	2			4	1	1	
Greece		3				3	2	2
Germany	1	6			2	1		

should be noted that the number and nature of participants varied due to pragmatic recruitment issues and, in particular, the pressure placed upon stakeholders due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, each focus group did include members of the key target audience groups, namely: artists, teachers and parents and carers. In each group, over a third of the participants were also parents or carers and as a result the category of parents and carers is not listed as a separate category below. Where group members had more than one role, their perceived main role only is listed.

All focus group members were approached as volunteers and, in line with the British Education Research Association's (2018) ethical guidelines, gave their informed consent online to participate. A partner briefing was held by the lead partner (England), who had secured institutional ethical clearance. Prior to the first focus group meeting, a training session was held by the lead partner to ensure all of the focus group meetings were undertaken ethically and that, for example, participants were given the opportunity to ask questions and understood they could withdraw from the project at any time and without penalty.

The focus group method was used by the project team in order to yield a 'collective rather than individual view' on the creative arts and in doing so help the project team to 'orientate to a particular field of focus' (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 532). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all focus groups took place online and where the number of participants was greater than 10, two focus group discussions took place. Prior to the focus groups taking place, questions were circulated to the group members around five key themes so that all members could come to the discussion with some ideas to enable the discussion to be 'focussed' (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 534). These themes were articulated as the following key questions: What do artists' practices look like in schools? What are the benefits of and barriers to artists working in schools? What should creative arts guides for teachers and trainee teachers look like? What should creative arts guides for parents look like? Do you have any other thoughts about the guides? Each focus group discussion took place online between January and March 2021, lasted about 1 h and was recorded.

After the focus group discussion, the project lead from each country wrote a detailed report of approximately 10 pages, capturing the key points and ideas against the five key themes outlined above. The reports and the recordings were then analysed for the purpose of this research paper against the four research questions listed above. In line with Miles, Huberman and Saldana, analysis involved a three-stage process of: immersion in the data; coding the data; establishing patterns in the data to identify themes (Miles et al., 2020). For example, the initial coding of the data across the six focus groups included the codes 'Financial constraints', 'Time

constraints' and 'Space constraints'. As the aim of our analysis was explanatory rather than descriptive (Lochmiller, 2021), we looked for causal relationships between the codes across the data sets and established a link between these 'Material constraints' and 'Government funding' and 'Government policy'.

To identify themes, we took an abductive approach by applying our theoretical lenses to the patterns in the codes, whilst also being guided by the patterns themselves when deciding which theoretical lenses to adopt. For example, discussions in the focus groups about the different structural issues which acted as barriers to accessing the creative arts suggested the use of the 5A's as a model for data analysis, which focuses on how creativity is operationalised. Equally, discussions of teacher and children's identities suggested the use of landscapes of practice and figured worlds as means of conceptualising professional development and identity, respectively. The categories where then identified as four key themes, which were tested and found to be evident in some way in all six data sets:

- Policy figuring Affordances for creative arts engagement in Schools;
- Difficulties in crossing boundaries for teachers as Actors in the creative arts in School;
- A tension in the positional identities young people as Actors in the creative arts;
- Varying Affordances in the figured world of Home causing uncertainty in the role of parents and carers as Actors.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Policy figuring Affordances for creative arts engagement in Schools

All focus groups discussed effective projects involving artists in schools, drawing upon a range of creative arts' expertise. The projects were diverse in nature and included the full range of creative arts subjects: drama; visual arts; textiles; photography; creative writing; the theatre of the oppressed; a Circus School; science and the arts; music; storytelling for history; media; festivals; outdoor games.

However, with the notable exception of Iceland, the creative arts projects described in the focus groups were not part of government policy and were not, therefore, compulsory. This lack of valuing the creative arts at a macrosystem level in relation to national curricula and government funding meant that in these five countries creative arts projects were not deemed to reach all young people and were not always effective in engaging young people. In Austria, for example, state funding was available but access was seen as 'bureaucratic' and 'time-consuming'; in England, a 'lack of time' to develop arts projects due to funding issues often prevented high quality projects taking place; and in Germany, arts projects involving artists were described as 'thin, out of reality, with visitors interrupting teaching', and extra-curricular clubs 'difficult to set up' due to policy-related bureaucracy.

The discussions of these restrictions at a macrosystem level alluded to neoliberalism and performativity, where education is an auditable commodity (Ball, 2003). It was acknowledged across the five countries that funding had to be justified in relation to outcomes and that this was problematic for the creative arts. In England, this aspect was particularly emphasised with one group member claiming that 'any collaboration needs to be justified in terms of impact upon the children' and another calling this a 'major challenge as creativity is difficult to measure and ultimately what is measured is not always what is valued'. For this participant, the compromising

of values caused by neoliberalism appear strike at the very heart of what Clarke (2009) terms the 'telos of teacher identity'.

At a microsystem level, these macrosystem level restrictions were articulated as highly restrictive of the proximal processes that young people require for development in the figured world of School. Crucially, all focus groups in these five countries spoke of a lack of material. Affordances, which are limiting both to the operationalising of creativity and proximal processes. These included 'physical resources' (e.g. for the making of visual art) as well as a lack of 'physical space' (e.g. for making drama).

From a policy perspective, Iceland was the exception with their government's *Art for All* policy meaning that all children, regardless of economic background, benefit from a range of arts-based experiences throughout their 10 years of schooling. The arts was described by one member of the group as having 'a main focus on culture for children and culture with children to give students, during their ten years of schooling, a good overview and insight into diverse forms of art across different eras and cultures, including the Icelandic cultural heritage'. As a result, there is an emphasis on mobilising local community links in order to generate material Affordances and develop Audiences for the Artefacts which the young people produce.

Difficulties in crossing boundaries for teachers as Actors in the creative arts in School

In line with research into teacher professional development in the creative arts, all of the focus group discussions to some extent emphasised the importance of artists and teachers working alongside each other at the microsystem level. This was seen as the key way in which both the teachers and the artists could transform their Actions as Actors in the figured world of School. In Iceland, unsurprisingly, this relationship was seen as key to developing creative arts learning as 'fundamentally time is important for collaboration between artists and supervising teachers'.

In the other countries, whilst this practice held to be highly effective in terms of professional development, it was seen as 'rarely' occurring due to some of the macrosystem level restrictions outlined above. In England, for example, where artists' practices in schools were 'sporadic' and 'not embedded', 'the relationship between the artist and the teacher being two-way' was emphasised so that 'artistic practices take root in a school'. Not only would this help the teachers 'embed artistic practices' in their classroom, but it would also help the artists view their work in schools 'as part of their artistic practice'. In Austria, it was acknowledged that 'usually the artist prepares everything but the personal commitment of teachers is the ideal'.

Aside from the macrosystem restrictions, another barrier to collaboration between artists and teachers in the figured world of School was seen as symptomatic of the different professional identities of the artists and the teachers. With the exception of Iceland, in the other five focus groups there was an identification of the different priorities, discourses and practices held by teachers and artists––a diverse landscape which served to create barriers which often prevented the teachers crossing boundaries. This tension was articulated differently in different focus groups. In Italy, the diverse of landscape was also political as teachers and leaders were seen as 'often finding it difficult to accept different ways of doing things. They can show a lack of interest or willingness to participate in the creative arts'. In Greece, teachers were perceived as 'not having the time to collaborate' in the planning and teaching of activities with artists. In Germany, there was a perception that within the figured world of School a young person's participation in the creative arts was part of a discourse of discipline––a 'reward for good behaviour and if you

do not have these, often students are pulled from the workshops or weekly art clubs'. Similarly, in Austria, teachers were seen as wanting to separate themselves from artists as 'teachers want to avoid chaos' in terms of behaviour management that artistic practices would bring.

At the same time, across the six focus groups there was an appreciation that where teachers collaborated with artists to transform their practices in relation to the creative arts, a change in teacher identity could precipitate a change in identities for the young people in their classroom. In Germany, for example, teachers who crossed boundaries discovered 'innovative ways to teach and learn and gain a unique perspective by taking on a different role when working alongside artists in the classroom'. In three of the focus groups, these 'innovative' practices meant that teachers were having 'fun' and, by taking on a different identities, were able to develop an 'emotional connection' with young people.

In the focus groups, teaching in this way was explicitly linked to the telos of teacher identity in the shape of promoting proximal processes relating to inclusion within the figured world of School. In Iceland, this was about the teacher as an Actor undertaking Actions to promote 'diversity' in regions 'where there was none'. In Italy, it was about the teacher lowering their positional identity as an authority figure within the figured world of School by acknowledging that 'sometimes teachers learn from the students themselves because students become the best when they feel the responsibility and they develop their own skills'. In England, it was felt that engagement in the creative arts could enable teachers to see young people as Actors and 'completely differently as different creativities become visible which are not always visible in the school classroom'. In this sense, teachers' engagement in the creative arts held the possibility of allowing the teachers to see young people outside of the macrosystem of neoliberalism which otherwise pervades the figured world of School.

In terms of boundary crossing and transforming teachers' identities in the creative arts, a difference emerged in relation to the 'self practices' of teacher identity (Clarke, 2009) between the focus groups in Iceland and Germany. In Iceland, where at a macrosystem level there is a clear valuing of the creative arts, one group member was keen to stress that 'you need to teach the foundation of the arts, not just combining it with other subjects because if you don't the arts will pay for that'. Here, the implication is that in order to teach the creative arts the teacher would need to develop their own expertise in the different creative arts and, in doing so, transform their self practices. In Germany, however, it was felt that the emphasis should be more upon teachers changing their self practices to make links across the curriculum so the creative arts becomes a 'recognised tool that is integrated into everyday learning experiences' by teachers.

The questions raised here relate both to teacher development in the creative arts and to what kind of Actors teachers of the creative arts might want to become in the figured world of School. In terms of teacher development, there is a suggestion that teachers first need to develop specific art-based expertise before integrating this across the curriculum; in terms of the curriculum, there is the potential for teachers to alter their identities as Actors either in discrete subject areas or across the curriculum as a whole depending upon their levels of expertise.

A tension in the positional identities young people as Actors in the creative arts

These discussions of the creative arts in relation to the curriculum as taught by teachers as Actors have clear implications for the positional identities of the young people in the figured world of School. As outlined above, there was the perception in the focus groups and that a change in

teacher identity could serve to give more agency to young people in the classroom as young people's respective positional identities change too. Central to this is the idea of the young people having more choice and control as Actors, producing Artefacts for their own Audiences.

At the same time, the teachers in all of the groups felt that the activities included in the guides needed to be linked at a macrosystem level to the subject curricula being delivered in the different countries. Indeed, all of the groups mentioned an approach where the creative arts activities could be linked to 'overall learning goals' or 'domains' of the respective curricula. The tension that arose here, however, was the extent to which the curriculum should figure the nature of the activities and the roles taken by the teachers and the young people in School. In England and Austria, a broad thematic approach to the activities was suggested in order to allow for easy links to make between the activities and the curricula in the six countries. However, adopting a thematic approach was seen by the group in Germany as potentially lowering the positional identities of young people. For this group, it was felt that the young people themselves should have the agency as Actors to 'decide' the theme and the Audience for their arts-based Artefact. From this perspective, a curriculum-led approach, even one that was thematic and integrative, was seen as figured at a macrosystem level by neoliberalism––young people as Actors would take low positional identities and the Artefacts they would produce would fit in with abstract Audiences and predefined outcomes.

In contrast to the subject-based curriculum approach, outcomes relating to the holistic development of the child as an Actor were discussed by each focus group. In Greece it was suggested that in line with a global move for policy change (OECD, 2019), the guides should be driven by skill development, which is absent in the Greek national curriculum: 'Soft skills should of course be the main element but it is difficult to talk about 2030 skills when the national framework is so outdated'. Across the focus groups, the skills that would be developed through the proximal processes facilitated by the creative arts included: collaboration; social confidence; empathy; emotional literacy; critical thinking; self-expression. Developing these skills through creative learning was thought to improve 'motivation' and 'enjoyment' of young people through a lived 'experience', which 'improves learning as the body can store the feelings' and improves positive mental well-being.

In England, the development of these skills through giving young people agency as Actors in the creative arts was seen as 'having the ability transform' young people's 'identities as artists who look at other artists and think *I could do that for a living*'. At a microsystem level in the figured world of School, this transformation of young people was seen as inextricable from the transformation of teachers in their landscapes of practice. Given the restrictions at a macrosystem level placed upon teacher development by authority sources in all partner countries except Iceland, it is perhaps easy to see why in the figured world of School the transformation of teachers' identities and, in turn, young people's identities often does not take place. A focus on increasing proximal processes through the mapping of soft skills and a weakening of the curriculum could help increase the agency of both teachers and young people as Actors in the figured world of School.

Varying affordances in the figured world of Home causing uncertainty in the role of parents and carers as Actors

Participants across the six focus groups were much less certain about how and if parents and carers should be involved in engaging young people in the creative arts in the figured world of Home. In Iceland, the very 'purpose' of involving parents and carers was questioned. In England,

it was felt that 'decisions' needed to be made by the project team as to whether they were 'encouraging access to the arts, providing activities for parents to undertake with their children, sharing creative learning ideas and principles or building cultural capital'.

In line with this articulation of a lack of clarity about the rationale for involving parents and carers as Actors in the creative arts, there was an identification across the focus groups that, depending upon the context of Home, there would be 'vastly different' material Affordances available to parents and carers and their children. Approaches to engaging parents and carers in the creative arts would, therefore, need to be mindful of the differences in material Affordances in order to avoid reinforcing social disadvantages and reproducing what a focus group member from England termed 'hegemonic notions of creative practice'. This is especially important in light of the research which demonstrates how engagement in the arts can affect social determinants to mental health, including social inequalities (Fancourt & Finn, 2019, p. 7).

In relation to creative arts learning at Home, in two countries it was felt that the mesosystem level, where School and Home become interrelated, should not be a key focus of the creative arts. In Greece, the focus group felt that young people should engage with the creative arts predominantly in the figured world of School and that the aspect of 'learning at home should be limited'. In Germany, the focus group expressed the opinion that often 'parents don't want to be involved'. What is clear from these discussions is that involving parents and carers as Actors in the creative arts with young people is more problematic than involving the teachers.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A limitation of this paper is that it only considers the perceptions of key stakeholders in relation to promoting the creative arts in the figured worlds of School and Home. Obviously, the next steps for the project team are to work with arts, young people, teachers and parents and carers to develop and evaluate creative arts activities in practice. This will enable the project team to consider what works in different contexts in relation to developing creative arts learning for young people.

Given the expertise of the diverse focus groups, however, some key conclusions can be drawn. First and foremost, it seems clear from the focus group in Iceland that at a macrosystem level, government policy is key in figuring creative arts-based opportunities for young people in School. Without the material Affordances of time, physical space and financial resources, quality arts-based projects will not be available to all young people in all countries. The continued marginalisation of the creative arts in School in Europe (Bamford, 2014; Wyse & Ferrari, 2015) negates the promotion and prevention benefits of the creative arts for young people's mental health (Fancourt & Finn, 2019).

Second, it is subsequently clear that macrosystem level change is needed in order to create the conditions for artists and teachers to collaborate. This requires time and funding, but also a change in the discourse of neoliberalism which acts as an authority source to shape teachers' identities in such a way as to devalue the often intangible, soft skill outcomes of the creative arts. As it stands, there is a sense that artists and teachers occupy very different positions in diverse landscapes of practice (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2014)––without these positions changing, there is little space for meaningful professional development and boundary crossing.

Third, there exists a tension in these discussions about the amount of agency that should be given to young people as Actors who produce Artefacts for specific Audiences. Within and

across the focus groups there were disagreements about whether creative arts outcomes should be figured by the curriculum in School or whether they should be figured by the young people themselves. At the same time, in line with the global focus on skill development (OECD, 2019), there was a commonly held belief that these outcomes could be mapped to soft skills in order to promote the productive proximate process that would lead to the creative development of young people.

Finally, the ways in which the figured world of School could interact with the figured world of Home was brought into question. Central to this debate was the acknowledgement that engaging parents and carers in the creative arts would bring into sharp focus differences in material Affordances and that any strategy for engagement could therefore serve to perpetuate social inequalities, with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to experience ill-health health (Fancourt & Finn, 2019).

Based on these conclusions, the project team will take on board the following recommendations as their project develops. First, arted will need to find ways of engaging policy-makers in its work. As outlined by the Icelandic focus group, changes in the figured world of School will only take place if there is change at a macrosystem level. Second, in producing interactive guides, arted needs to ensure that their approach is, as far as possible, in line with some of the core principles of teacher development as outlined in the focus group. This includes providing an immersive experience and allowing teachers time and space (Rosler, 2014; Wells & Sandretto, 2016) for meaningful reflection within a community of practice (Sinclair et al., 2015). Obviously, this is difficult to achieve with a two-dimensional guide. Third, in producing activities for the guides, arted will need to carefully consider the positional identities of young people as Actors and what this means in terms of curriculum mapping. What is key here is that young people have some control over their Audiences and Artefacts and that the focus is upon their skill development (OECD, 2019). And finally, careful consideration will need to be given about how arted engages parents without reinforcing differences in material Affordances which mean that arts-based practices are not available to all.

This research paper also highlights some key areas for future research. Given the increase in focus upon young people's mental health, further research into the impact of creative arts practices upon their mental health is needed. More specifically this should focus on creative arts engagement where young people are afforded high levels of agency as Actors as they work alongside artists in education rather than being engaged in creative learning per se (Fancourt & Finn, 2019). Growing this evidence base will help to shape future policy across Europe and, in turn, change the conditions for the creative arts in Schools at a macrosystem level. In relation to teacher development, further research could be undertaken into developing creative arts-based practices by teachers working alongside artists. Here a new line of enquiry could focus on the outcomes for young people in relation to whether teachers should develop specific arts-based practices as a foundational knowledge or whether their practices should be integrated across the curriculum. Finally, research which looks at intergenerational creative arts-based learning, both in the School and at Home, would provide a new starting point for discussions about how the mesosystem could be activated so that Schools can engage Homes and promote productive proximal processes in the creative development of young people.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to acknowledge the arted team for running the focus groups as well as the focus group participants for giving their time to this project.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

ORCID

Tom Dobson https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5354-9150
Lisa Stephenson https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7469-5640

REFERENCES

Ball, S. J. (2003). The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of Education Policy*, *18*(2), 215–228.

Bamford, K. (2014). Working with fragments: A performance art's archive. *Journal of Writing in Creative Practice*, *7*(3), 557–567.

British Education Research Association. (2018). *Ethical guidelines for educational research – 4th ed.*. Available from: https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2018-online

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments in nature and design*. Harvard University Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. A. (2006). The bioecological model of human development. In R. M. Lerner (Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology: Vol. 1. Theoretical models of human development* (6th ed.). Wiley.

Carson, S. H. (2019). Creativity and mental illness. In J. C. Kaufman & R. Sternberg (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of creativity – second edition* (pp. 296–318). CUP.

Chemi, T., & Du, X. (2018). *Arts-based methods and organisational learning*. Palgrave.

Clark, J., Laing, K., Leat, D., Lofthouse, R., Thomas, U., Tiplady, L., & Woolner, P. (2017). Transformation in interdisciplinary research methodology: The importance of shared experiences in landscapes of practice. *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, *40*(3), 243–256.

Clarke, M. (2009). The ethico-politics of teacher identity. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *41*(2), 185–200.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education* (8th ed.). Routledge.

Cordingley, P. (2006). Talking to learn: The role of dialogue in professional development. *Education Review*, *19*(2), 50–58.

Efuribe, C., Barre-Hemingway, M., Vaghefi, E., & Suleiman, A. B. (2020). Coping with the COVID-19 crisis: A call for youth engagement and the inclusion of young people in matters that affect their lives. *The Journal of Adolescent Health*, *67*(1), 16–17.

Fancourt, D., & Finn, S. (2019). *What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review*. World Health Organization. Regional Office for Europe.

Forgeard, M. (2019). Creativity and healing. In J. C. Kaufman & R. Sternberg (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of creativity – second edition* (pp. 319–332). CUP.

Glăveanu, V. P. (2013). Rewriting the language of creativity: The Five A's framework. *Review of General Psychology*, *17*(1), 69–81.

Holland, D., Lachicotte, W., Skinner, D., & Cain, C. (1998). *Identity and agency in cultural worlds*. Harvard University Press.

ILO. (2020). *Youth and COVID-19: Impacts on jobs, education, rights and mental well-being*. ILO: AIESEC.

Kaufman, J. C., & Glaveanu, V. P. (2019). A review of creativity theories: What questions are we trying to answer? In J. C. Kaufman & R. Sternberg (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of creativity – second edition* (pp. 27–43). CUP.

Kind, S., de Cosson, A., Irwin, R., & Grauer, K. (2007). Artist-teacher partnerships in learning: The in/between spaces of the artist-teacher professional. *Canadian Journal of Education*, *30*(3), 839–864.

Lambirth, A. (2016). Exploring children's discourses of writing. *English in Education*, *56*(30), 215–232.

Lochmiller, C. R. (2021). Conducting thematic analysis with qualitative data. *The Qualitative Report*, *26*(6), 2029–2044. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2021.5008

Lofthouse, L. (2017). Improving mentoring practices through collaborative conversations. *CollectivEd*, *1*(1), 10–11.

Luttrell, W., & Parker, C. (2001). High school students' literacy practices and identities and the figured world of school. *Journal of Research in Reading*, *24*(3), 235–247.

Miles, M., Huberman, A., & Saldana, J. (2020). *Qualitative data analysis – A methods sourcebook* (4th ed.). Sage.

OECD (2019). *PISA 2021 creative thinking framework*. https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/PISA-2021-Creative-Thinking-Framework.pdf

Reeves, J. (2018). Teacher identity working in neoliberal schooling spaces. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *72*, 98–106.

Rosa, E., & Tudge, J. (2013). Urie Bronfenbrenner's theory of human development: Its evolution from ecology to bioecology. *Journal of Family Theory and Review*, *5*, 243–258.

Rosler, B. (2014). Process drama and professional development. *Youth Theatre Journal*, *28*(2), 104–114.

Sinclair, C., Watkins, M., & Jeanneret, N. (2015). Mentoring teachers as artists in communities of practice: Immersive models of professional learning in the arts. *Australian Journal of Music Education*, *3*, 73–84.

Stephenson, L., & Dobson, T. (2020). Releasing the socio-imagination: Children's voices on creativity, capability and mental wellbeing. *Support for Learning*, *35*(4), 454–472.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. (2014). Compulsory School Act (Iceland). https://www.stjornarradid.is/verkefni/menntamal/namskrar/#Tab0

Urrieta, L. (2007). Figured worlds and education: An introduction to the special issue. *The Urban Review*, *39*(2), 107–116.

Wells, T., & Sandretto, S. (2016). "I'm on a journey I never thought I'd be on": Using process drama pedagogy for the literacy programme. *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, *19*(2), 180–195.

Wenger-Trayner, E., & Wenger-Trayner, B. (2014). *Learning in landscapes of practice: Boundaries, identities and knowledgeability in practice-based learning*. Routledge.

WHO (2018) *Adolescent Mental Health in the European Region*. https://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/383891/adolescent-mh-fs-eng.pdf

Wyse, D., & Ferrari, A. (2015). Creativity and education: Comparing the national curricula of the states of the European Union and the United Kingdom. *British Educational Research Journal*, *41*(1), 30–47.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Tom Dobson, Reader in Education, Tom's research focuses on the relationship between creative writing and young people's identities.

Lisa Stephenson, Senior Lecturer in Education, Lisa's research focuses on the affective relations between drama pedagogy and young people's well-being and critical thinking.

How to cite this article: Dobson, T. & Stephenson, L. (2022). A trans-European perspective on how artists can support teachers, parents and carers to engage with young people in the creative arts. *Children & Society*, *00*, 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12580