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# Creative processes in education – from a conference in Namibia, August 2006

Special issue editors: Per-Olof Erixon & Hans Örtegren

## *för lärarutbildning och forskning*

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# Tidskrift för lärarutbildning och forskning
# nr 2 2007 årgång 14

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**Cover: Dunes between Swakopmund and Walvis Bay, Namibia.**

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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

# Editorial

A bilateral exchange program has existed for five years between the Department of Creative Studies at Umeå University, Sweden, and the Department of Visual Arts at Windhoek College of Education, Namibia as part of *The Linnaus-Palme Exchange Programme*. Students and lecturers from both institutions have participated in the programme which had the added aim of providing staff from both countries with the opportunity to conduct research at Master level. Seven Namibian teacher educators and eleven students visited Sweden, while nine teacher educators and fourteen students from Umeå University had the privilege of going to Namibia. Collaboration between the two institutions has been particularly beneficial in the creative subjects

As special part of the exchange programme an international conference was held in Namibia in August 2006 entitled *"Reinforcing Education for all: Learner Centered Education through Creative Processes" (7–9 August 2006, NIED, Okahandja, Namibia)* in order to promote research into creative processes in education. The planning of the conference started in 2004, and was pursued and developed during exchange visits to Namibia and Sweden in 2005. The conference brought together teachers and educators from different aesthetic subjects, such as Visual Arts, Music, Drama, Crafts, Technical Studies, Textiles and Home Economics. The conference participants were drawn from different institutions in Sweden, South Africa and Namibia.

The conference focused on creative processes in educational practice as a means of reinforcing the "Education for All" principle, and in that respect, was an attempt to bridge the imagined gap between intellectual, emotional, and creative learning processes in formal education. Themes of the conference included "Access, Equity, Quality & Democracy through creative learning"; "Good practices in creative processes

in Arts and Culture beyond subject borders"; and "Media and ICT: enhancing learner-centered education and creative learning". This issue of the *Journal of Research in Teacher Education* contains articles based on papers presented at the conference.

The first article by David Andrew entitled "Learners and artist-teachers as multimodal agents in schools" focuses on examples of art work in Johannesburg, South Africa. It is argued that understanding and activating the dispositions that go towards the artist's sensibility support the creation of the conditions for learner-centered creative and critical teaching and learning.

The second article is entitled "Creative Processes in Technology Education; Namibian Solutions to Namibian Problems". Here Andrew Clegg argues for the importance of teaching Design as a creative subject. Thus the twin subject "Design and Technology" as developed in Namibia involves a "revolution" in pedagogical practices, in the classroom as well as in assessment, that will have implications far beyond the confines of the subject.

Liesl van der Merwe's argues in the third article "Assessment in the Learning Area Arts and Culture: A South African perspective" that assessment in Arts and Cultural studies could be a useful tool to improve teaching and learning, because assessment is an integral part of the learning and teaching process. If assessment is carried out in the appropriate manner, students are able to experience a safe non-judgmental environment in which they feel free to be creative.

Hetta Potgieter in the fourth article entitled "The 'I' in multicultural music education" provides an example of how to include learners' local culture in music education. Because educators in South Africa are also concerned about discipline in schools, she finds the recognition of the music of learners as a way of showing acceptance of a person or group of learners, and a good grounding for the development of mutual respect. The search for identity, she claims, is of critical importance for young students.

In the fifth article," Assessment for Learning Creative Subjects", Kajsa Borg concludes that if teachers reflect on ways in which assessment can support learning, students find it easier to recognize the direction of their course of study. It is important in creative subjects, therefore, to involve students' intentions and decision-making in such a way that students' active par-

ticipation in the assessment process will gradually lead to "learner-centered education".

In the next article entitled "From Written Text to Design. Poetry for the media society", Per-Olof Erixon draws on a project concerning the development of "new visual literacy", where pictures and layout have emerged as especially important to school students. It is shown that students bring with them experiences, strategies and competences from different media when they write and perform poems in a school setting. The article illustrates how young people today are able to extend their possibilities of communicating meaning.

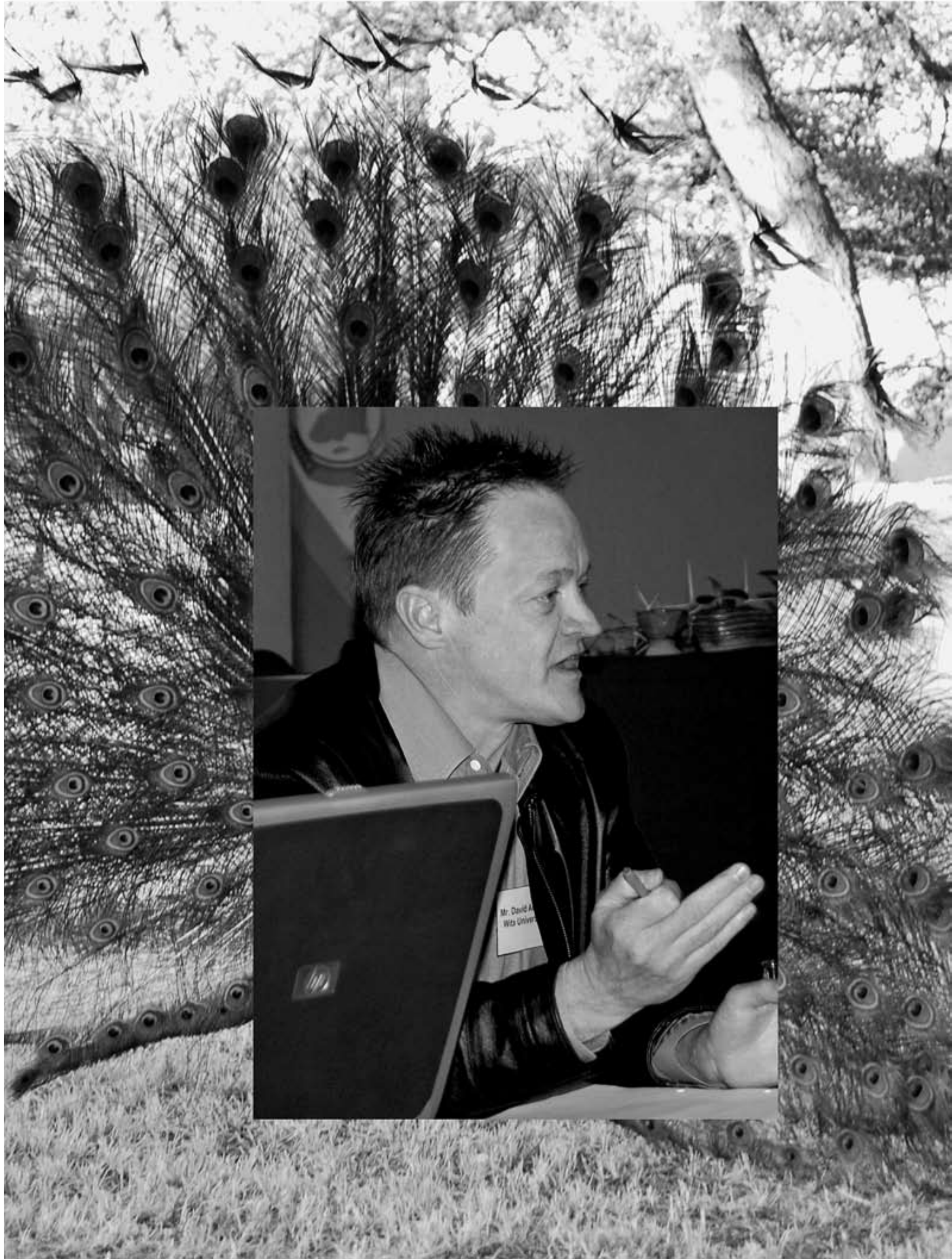
The final article by Hans Örtegren "Formative Evaluation of Projects in Art Pedagogy" contains three empirical examples that deal with the relationship between aim, method of conduct and evaluation strategy. It is argued that for art-pedagogical projects, it is rewarding to utilise formative evaluation as a means of raising awareness of what can happen when art is used to promote learning.

Alongside these seven articles, the issue also contains photographs taken at the conference by Magnus Wink.

## *Acknowledgements*

In particular, we wish to express our gratitude to the efforts of Mrs Erina Junius and her colleagues for making the conference possible and to the National Institute of Education in Namibia (NIED) for providing accommodation for conference participants. We hope to continue into the future our discussion of creative processes, assessments and multimodality in teaching and learning as they apply to creative studies.

*Per-Olof Erixon & Hans Örtegren*



# Learners and artist-teachers as multimodal agents in schools

***David Andrew***


## *Abstract*

This paper focuses on examples of work taking place in Johannesburg, Gauteng, that I believe hold great promise for a different conception of mainstream teaching and learning in South Africa. My interest in these examples lies in the manner in which the presence of what I am describing as the *artist's sensibility* promotes multimodal teaching and learning. It is in these moments of learner subjectivity being actively recruited with the mediation of artist-teachers that a deeper learning begins to take place. What is argued in this paper is that an understanding and activating of the dispositions making up the artist's sensibility supports the creation of the conditions for learner-centred creative and critical teaching and learning.

The sites referred to in this paper include:

- The Visual Literacy Foundation Course, Wits School of Arts
- Foundation phase programme, Olifantsvlei Primary School, Freedom Park informal settlement, south of Johannesburg
- A grade 11 English class, Lamula Jubilee Secondary School, Meadowlands, Soweto


## *Insertion*

How do we ensure that criticality and creativity achieves a more central place in the education of learners? This is a question that has been close to my thinking for some time, and, I am sure, many others too. Today I hope to share some thoughts towards answering this question. As an initial provocation I offer the following question asked by Felix Guattari, the long-time collaborator of Gilles Deleuze, quoted in an article by Sam Sellar of the University of South Australia: "How do you make a class operate like a work of art?" (Guattari, 1995: 133 in Sellar, 2005: 1). Sellar goes on to ask: "How can teachers create the conditions for innovative changes in pedagogy and how can these conditions be sustained?" (2005:1).



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Let us frame what follows with these three questions.

What I intend to try and do in this paper is the following:

- Set up a conversation between what I refer to as the 'artist's sensibility' and multimodality and identify a reciprocity between the two positions
- Outline briefly the Multiliteracies pedagogy and give a brief definition of 'multimodality'
- Begin to tease out some of the dispositions found in the 'artist's sensibility' in order to arrive at a working profile of sorts
- Briefly look at a number of projects where I believe the reciprocal conversation between the 'artist's sensibility' and multimodality is present.
- Surface the problem of this reciprocal conversation, or the practices emerging from this conversation, becoming codified

And lastly:

- Reference recent research into Arts and Culture teacher practises in a South African context

Since 2000 I have been part of the Wits Multiliteracies research group. In the late 90s the leaders of the group, Pippa Stein and Denise Newfield[1], showed a keen interest in what we were doing in the Visual Literacy Foundation Course[2] at the University of the Witwatersrand, as an example of multimodal pedagogy in what was then the emerging field of Multiliteracies. These initial conversations both introduced us to a further theoretical framework, that of the New London Group, from which to situate our practice, and affirmed the work that we had been doing since 1996. In the view of Stein and Newfield, what we were doing with students in this programme was an example of successful multimodal teaching and learning. I began to ask myself: what is it that allowed us to teach and learn in this way? The more I have deliberated over this question, the more I have become convinced that it is the reciprocal relationship of what I refer to as the 'artist's sensibility' and multimodality that provides a possible basis for a form of teaching and learning that begins to answer the question posed in the introductory paragraph to this paper.

The attraction the Visual Literacy Foundation Course has had for members of the Wits Multiliteracies group and those staff members at the University interested in situated learning has always intrigued me. At the same time it has seemed a very obvious coming together.

It seems the ways of working on this course incorporated multimodal approaches before we were aware of the growing interest in this area. Why was this interest present? Arguably, multimodal approaches have had, consciously or not, a presence in good teaching and learning in many different contexts for some time. But to answer the question, I suspect that one of the reasons was the presence of *artists* working with students, and in this teaching and learning situation, the presence of an 'artist's sensibility'. Or to put it in Donald Schön's terms, the course benefited from the presence of critically "reflective practitioners". This is the way many of us artists work – and this is a way of working that is to be found in other professions and walks of life too. Is there then something in this 'sensibility' that needs to be captured, 'less' succinctly of course, to address the politeness of so much arts and culture education? Further to this, shouldn't this 'sensibility' be at the forefront of arts and culture education programmes? Certainly something to be considered is the expansion of this 'sensibility' beyond arts and culture education.

My thinking emerges from the premise that there is something present in the way some contemporary artists practise or work, an 'artist's sensibility' if you like, in their studios and increasingly in more public situations, that warrants attention for teaching and learning more broadly. When this sensibility[3] is brought into conversation with a teaching and learning situation, this 'way of working' often seems to unleash a learner artfulness (Schön: 1983, Ross *et al:* 1993) and a state of multimodality, which, in combination, makes for a teaching and learning reciprocity of cognitive and metacognitive[4] significance[5]. This significance increases when the recruitment of learner subjectivities is acknowledged and given primacy (Cope and Kalantzis, 2000). Given this, if this admittedly volatile sensibility can be even partially identified and observed closely, then it seems to me that a number of things are opened up for teaching and learning:

- Qualities that should be part of an arts and culture[6] educator's repertoire
- Qualities that arguably should be part of all educators' repertoires
- Qualities that further the multiliteracies project

A further prompt for this paper is the growing realisation that South African arts and culture education programmes at school level are often in need of an insertion of an 'artist's sensibility' into how they are delivered and performed. This

position is based on my observations during nine years of teaching at the senior level of the GETC phase and also at the FETC phase, and subsequent involvement as an internal moderator for practical art subjects at grade 12 level.[7] This further prompt also has its roots in the following statement made by Ross, Radnor, Mitchell and Bierton in their book *Assessing Achievement in the Arts*:

> *"It could be argued that arts teachers need to behave more like real artists and less like bureaucrats. School art, at its worst, is the art of the bureaucrat: neat, safe, predictable, orthodox. School art adds up: the real thing rarely does."* (1993:162)

Ross *et al* write from their perspective as art educators in the United Kingdom in the early 90s, but their observation is equally relevant for South Africa, and I would argue, other countries, in the 21st century.

How do we get art teachers to 'be' more like artists and less like bureaucrats?[8] In meeting Ross *et al's* challenge, my claim is that the reciprocal relationship, or understanding, of the 'artist's sensibility' in tandem with multimodal pedagogy begins to address this situation – and also suggests a thinking space for a different conception of educating arts and culture educators. Indeed, what happens when the language or numeracy teacher works more 'artfully'? Which does of course occur occasionly. Perhaps it is important here to stress that I am not setting up a competition between artist and teacher, and am certainly not claiming the 'artist's sensibility' as I shall describe it, as the sole domain of the artist. As I have noted already, there are instances of these dispositions being present in other professions and workplaces too.

You may well ask: why the insistence on the centrality of a Multiliteraces pedagogy and multimodality? Why is it this particular pedagogy that is deemed purposeful for teachers and learners at this particular moment? And why the bringing together of what it is that the contemporary artist does with multimodality? This decision is based on a conviction that multimodal pedagogy has a critical role to play in both teaching and learning at school level, and also for the training of teachers. The Gauteng–based case studies that support this position are numerous: the Visual Literacy Foundation Course, University of the Witwatersrand (Brenner, Andrew and Collins; 2004, Brenner and Andrew 2007 forthcoming), a project at the Olifantsvlei Primary School, on the southern outskirts of Johannesburg (Stein : 2001, 2002)

and a poetry programme at Lamula Jubilee High School (Newfield, Andrew, Maungedzo, Stein: 2003). It is these three projects, or programmes, that I shall refer to in order to try and exemplify the relationship between the artist's sensibility and multimodality.

## *Multimodality*

So. What is this multimodal framework? In answering this question it is necessary to define the two 'multi's', namely 'multiliteracies' and 'multimodal'. Briefly, the understanding I bring to this piece of writing is that 'multiliteracies' refers to the broad project of redefining notions of literacy. 'Multimodal' refers specifically to the identification of a further mode within the range of modes available to us for making meaning. I would argue that this further mode is often central to the repertoire of some contemporary artists. What seems of some importance is to identify, to some degree at least, how multimodality is played out – and I use the word "play" purposefully here.

It is important, and I think helpful, to acknowledge the four interchangeable stages of the Multiliteracies pedagogy: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice:

Situated practice: actively using learners' lifeworlds as a key part of the learning programme

Overt instruction:all the active interventions on the part of the teacher and other experts that scaffold learning activities; that focus the learner on the important features of their experiences and activities within the community of learners.

Critical framing: learners stand back from what they are doing and adopt a critical distance in relation to context – and act upon this action

Transformed practice: learners transfer their practices into other contexts and cultural sites while all the time developing a critically reflective practice

Similarly, I acknowledge the inherent democratic imperative and the promise of 'designed futures' in the Multiliteracies project.

At the same time it seems equally important to note that which has emerged during my involvement with the Wits Multiliteracies group. Here I am referring to examples such as the following:

- The creation of free or un-policed zones in tandem with those of a more academic nature in teaching and learning
- The value of projects involving multiple collaborative moments and processes
- The recognition of how different modes afford learners different opportunities to test, acquire, adapt and make public, skills, knowledge and values
- The use of familiar cultural objects and moments as salient teaching and learning nodes
- The recognition of the learner archive (history, experience and expertise) as being crucial for the teaching and learning process

Writers from the broad multiliteracies movement such as Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen claim that Western culture has privileged "monomodality", to the exclusion of other modes that are part of daily existence ( Kress and Van Leeuwen: 2001, 1). This, they contend, has begun to change in the latter part of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century.

Kress and his more recent collaborator, Carey Jewitt define mode as “a regularised organised set of resources for meaning-making, including image, gaze, gesture, movement, music, speech and sound-effect” (2003:1). They go on to assert that it is rare for any mode to be used singularly, and that speech and/or writing is not necessarily central to, nor sufficient for, learning to take place (2003:3). All modes in isolation are “partial” and thus it becomes important to determine what it is that a particular mode can or cannot do (2001:3). This seems to be the key and this is, arguably, central to the repertoire of the contemporary artist. How is this repertoire developed, sustained and nurtured?

Jewitt and Kress emphasise that their understanding of multimodality is informed by the social semiotic theory of Halliday (1978) and Hodge and Kress (1988). Central to their pursuit of multimodality is the role of individuals and groups, of people, in meaning-making (2001:9). Rather than people just being consumers within existing systems of meaning, they are actively engaged in producing meaning. An individual’s agency is deeply rooted in their understanding of social semiotics. They go on to explain:

> *“From a social semiotic perspective, people use the resources that are available to them in the specific socio-cultural environments in which they act to create signs, and in using them, they change these resources. In other words,*

> *signs are not viewed as arbitrary. Rather, signs are viewed as constantly newly made, in a process in which the signified…is realised through the most apt signifier … in a social context."* (2001:10)

Again, does this not remind us of the contemporary artist and the way in which she/he works? As noted before there is a heightened sense of changing resources; of aptness; of the newly made. It is this disposition that needs to be part of the repertoire of the artist-teacher in the classroom.

Jewitt and Kress also note that semiotic theory often positions the subject as using resources rather than changing them (2001:10). This is the connection I am making: contemporary artists invariably *change* their resources. They are in the business, as it were, of ever refining their sense of aptness. The contemporary artist has a heightened sense of what Kress has termed "aptness" and "affordance". This sensitisation comes from an ever-increasing engagement in extending a repertoire of "moves".

## *The artist's sensibility*

Some of the qualities present in the contemporary artist's practice and way of working with learners are listed in what follows. Note that learners often reciprocate these qualities once they are in these moments, indeed, perhaps this is one of the stimulating things for the artist – learners often provide remarkable moments of 'makeshiftness'. Let us mark this word "makeshiftness" as I shall return to it later. Perhaps the task is, increasingly, to assist learners to understand and extend these moments. And then again, to grow teacher confidence in recognising these moments 'in the moment'.

What I would like you to imagine then is, to borrow a moment from Kwame Anthony Appiah, a mapping/massaging of the text[9] of the artist's sensibility into that of multiliteracies project, and back and forth, giving and taking.

1. In his conclusion to his article "Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?" Appiah refers to a "less-anxious creativity" (2001: 357). This is my starting point because it seems to me that this "less-anxious creativity" is what some contemporary artists bring to teaching and learning. It is borne out of on one hand a confidence in their own practice, and on the other, an acceptance and celebration of the often innate curiosity of subjects, in this case learners, in the collaborative process. It is also registered in an

attitude that does not insist on knowing the path beforehand, but instead acknowledges that the next step might be an unexpected one. Coupled very often with this is an interest in the idiosyncrasies displayed and made manifest in various modes, by learner subjects. Their interest is in that which is curious, and in curious individuals.

2. They are able to 'think on their feet' (Schön, 1988, in Ross *et al* 1993:160) and take this on as an integral part of their practice and interaction with learners on various levels. There is a revelling in the challenge of the multiplicity of moments that making –reflecting – making – reflecting (teaching and learning) is, and rather than closing this multiplicity down, there is an ongoing to-ing and fro-ing between the different moments – and often the tendency is to instigate a shift beyond this into territory new to the learner. The self-reflexivity that is often integral to the contemporary artist's practice is modelled and communicated to, and with, learners.

3. The contemporary artist is often convinced of the knowledge-making process that he or she is involved in – and that this encompasses multiple modes. This conviction is carried through to interactions with learners.

4. They are playful in their process and often engage in game-like generative moments, or recognise and applaud these moments when learners initiate them. Many writers in the fields of education, philosophy, aesthetics, business, to identify just some, have identified 'play' as a critical element in what we might term 'everyday life'. This need seems to be even stronger given the repeated calls for a very different set of dispositions embodied in the citizen of the 21st century.

This playfulness often includes the encouraging of risk-taking and the entertaining of sometimes anomalous, ambiguous and contradictory moments in a supportive environment. At times these playful moments are filled with humour and might be characterised as disruptive, even transgressive and irreverent. There is the existence of considerable flexibility and digression in their processes and ways of working. Rather than insisting on predetermined processes and solutions, there is a readiness to entertain indeterminacy and see this as a value. There is no insistence on right or wrong, but on a multiplicity of possibilities, many being equally valid. With this 'makeshiftness', the free or unpoliced zones valued in the Visual Literacy Foundation Course and other Wits Multiliteracies projects emerge. This is often the way in which contem-

porary artists work – perpetually creating, or attempting to create these free, unpoliced zones. Note however, that discipline is not absent from these processes.

A more ludic engagement seems to emerge from these suggestions. "Play" as an underlying, or more central component of teaching and learning has always had some purchase amongst certain educators. Mark Pike an English lecturer at the University of Leeds is one of the more recent proponents of this way of working which I consider to be fundamental to the manner in which many contemporary artists and "reflective practitioners" work. Further to this, there seems to be an intimate relationship between "play" and multimodality and learner subjectivity being increasingly present. Pike presents his position as "aesthetic teaching".

Coupled with this interest in 'play' is an appreciation of contingency and the value of the chance encounter as a generative moment.

5. They often exhibit a finely tuned awareness of affordances available to them and with this the confidence to work outside these affordances and accumulate further repertoires. Coupled with this is a confidence in realising the power of improvisation and the inventiveness that often results.

This awareness of affordances manifests itself most palpably in the manner in which contemporary artists make shifts from one medium and/or material to the next. This capacity is often translated into ways of practising with learners. There seems to be recognition of the dehierarchisation of both medium and mode. There is an active encouragement to make the shifts – and learners seem to respond to this invitation.

6. When working with a group of learners they invariably begin with that which is familiar to the group. Practice is often situated in the lifeworlds of the learners and this is valued as fundamental to the process of meaning making. Responses are elicited based on the learners' past experience, history and expertise. The various nuances of learner identity often provide entry points, and moments of learning, for artists working with learners.

7. Processes are often negotiated and renegotiated – and then again. Often the strategy adopted is one of conversation with learners and also with ideas, processes, products and reflections. There is a "searching for how to

talk to and listen to" the learner. While the teacher often takes on the role of the authoritarian, stern gatekeeper – the artist seems to perpetuate a series of involvements that challenge this manifestation of authority and allow for an interchange and sharing of power. Again, the teacher often seems to be scripted into this role. Rather than a relinquishing of authority on the part of the artist there seems to be an appreciation of when a 'backing off' stance is necessary.

This 'negotiation' and 're-negotiation' seems to point to the possibilities proposed in the writing of 'dialogical' and 'relational' aesthetics.

8. The processes engaged in by contemporary artists often seem to be about asking questions and problematising situations.

9. There is often an interest on the part of the contemporary artist in making public that which they are involved in – in being 'public intellectuals'.

10. And lastly, to return to a word I have used before, 'makeshiftness'. I came across this word in a new way through the writing of Barry Schwabsky, the critic, who used it to describe the work of a number of installation artists whose work "…is always based on careful observation of what happens, however arbitrarily, to be there in a particular situation". This seems to have a strong resonance with how arts and culture teachers need to work, if not all teachers, as I have already observed.

This extension of the artist's sensibility in terms of relishing the encounter with what is there, 'in' the classroom, is suggested in the manner in which Noelle McAfee brings together the writing of Jurgen Habermas and Julia Kristeva with that of Jean-Luc Nancy. Her explication of community as *"clinamen"* (2000:187) is of some import for a more involved artist's sensibility. *"Clinamen"* here is understood as "…leaning toward the other…" McAfee goes on to posit the following:

> *"The word deliberation comes from the Latin word for pound, as on a scale. It means to weigh carefully all the possible understandings and courses of action. Deliberation is not concerned solely with the "force of the better argument" or even with regulative ideals of equity and noncoercion (though of course these are important). Unlike debating, which calls for a clinging to one's own position against those of all interlocutors, deliberation*

*means being willing to release one's own view and adopt another".* (190)

*"Deliberators literally seem to be inclining to the other. Deliberation is an openness to what is other. In deliberation, even the term "one's own" loses meaning in the sense that being-open-to-otherness becomes one's attitude".* (190)

*"When subjects are relational, when agency is complementary, and when discourse is deliberative, we can create new possibilities, meanings, and purpose".* (190)

The brief accounts above begin to establish the 'sensibility profile' alluded to in the introduction to this paper. There are many moments from the projects identified in the abstract that seem to support this profile.

## Projects

I have already referred to the Visual Literacy Foundation Course as embodying the reciprocity between the 'artist's sensibility' and multimodality. As we will remember, this is a programme designed for entry-level students at the University of the Witwatersrand. What follows are two further sketches, each one working with a different age group:

### The Lamula Jubilee Secondary School *Thebuwa* Cloth and poetry project (grade 11)

This sketch involves Robert Muangedzo, an English teacher who was faced with the challenge of teaching poetry in a school where poetry had long been forgotten, to grade 11 learners who were at best, resistant to this syllabus requirement. Maungedzo has worked with the Wits Multiliteracies group for some time.

Partly in desperation I suspect, and hopefully because of his involvement in the Multiliteracies group, Maungedzo decided to allow for alternative entry points into the study of poetry. Accessing learner repertoires and interests was central to this pursuit. Learners were encouraged to begin to write about their own interests and experiences as a way of beginning to delve into this thing called poetry. At the same time, they were encouraged to use different modes to manifest their ideas. Many students wanted to write, and make, about themselves – their loves, their losses, their hopes, their families, about the HIV-AIDs pandemic, about Soweto and Johannesburg, and about other parts of South Africa and other worlds. And so a project about the multiplicity of identities present in this grade 11 class began to emerge. Photographs were taken by the resident class photographer, maps

were drawn to explain family origins, drawings were made, identity dolls constructed – and all of these visual components were brought together in what was to become the Tebuwa cloth – Tebuwa being a hybrid word referring to the act of speaking. And all through this, the learners were writing, and writing and writing – and reading and presenting – and singing in relation to the emerging ideas. Each lesson was introduced with a reading of most recent poetry by learners. To read a poem during these sessions became an honour; a matter of pride. Many learners adopted hybrid genres comprising traditional praise poetry and hip-hop. A healthy competitiveness was present.

So successful was this project that an anthology of learner poems was published. Launches were held at both the school and at the University. Learners, as a result of the project, were invited overseas to participate in related projects.

And, as an aside, yes, all the learners passed their grade 11 poetry exams. But perhaps something far more important had taken place through this project.

### The Olifantsvlei Fresh Stories project (Grades 1 and 2)

Here, another two teachers associated with the Wits Multiliteracies group, Tshidi Mamabola and Ntsaoke Senja, embarked on a story telling programme using a number of different modes, particularly the visual and performative. There is much to be learnt from this example but I would like to focus on something that happened more inadvertently, as it were. Just as much as the presence of different modes suggests, for me, the beginnings of an 'artist's sensibility' there seemed to be the recognition of learner agency and what it was learners brought to the project. The learners' understanding of "affordance" and "aptness" was, to say the least, sophisticated. After realising that the teacher's recipe for *papier-mache* was not providing the expected results, the learners took it upon themselves to draw on their own resources to create the doll-like figures representing characters in the stories they were to tell. Four aspects of the "artist's sensibility – multimodality" reciprocity stand out for me:

1. The learner resourcefulness in understanding what was afforded them in their seemingly limited circumstances (situated practice)
2. Their acute understanding of the aptness of material choices

3. Their drawing on doll designs rooted in tradition – and then the re-designing of the dolls (transformed practice)
4. The teacher's recognition of the value of learner responses and subsequent creation of space for this process to be encouraged, extended and made public – in spite of the divergence from her own plan and the absence of overt instruction on her part. Perhaps one could make an argument for the overt instruction coming from the extended family.

## Codification and orthodoxy

While there are aspects of South African outcomes-based education that I would want to engage with critically, I am concerned that there is a tendency to interpret outcomes in such a way that results in a codification leading to orthodoxy. I wonder whether the self-reflexivity often exhibited by the contemporary artist, something which I have tried to unpack today, does not provide an antidote to this orthodoxy in the way that William F. Hanks writes about the work of Etienne Wenger and Jean Lave:

> *"One of the basic moves of such approaches has been to question the validity of descriptions of social behaviour based on the enactment of prefabricated codes and structures. Instead, the focus on actors' productive contributions to social order has lead to a greater role for negotiation, strategy, and unpredictable aspects of action….The challenge, it would seem, is to rethink action in such a way that structure and process, mental representation and skilful execution, interpenetrate one another profoundly"* (Hanks in Lave and Wenger, 1991: 16)

## "On the road to Durban"

A recent PhD research project by Don Glass at the University of the Witwatersrand perhaps offers a conclusion to this paper – and at the same time asserts a space for artist-teachers and learners as multimodal agents. Glass's fine-grained study of the processes of three South African Arts and Culture teachers points to how top-down outcomes-based hierarchies are jettisoned, and effectively at that, for a more bottom-up approach that draws on repertoires accumulated from different sources. In chapter six of his extensive research, Glass rigorously explodes outcomes-based myths in relation to Arts and Culture teaching and learning and presents findings that, in many respects, were known by many Arts and Culture educators for some time: namely, that the technical-rational, linear "design-down" process of curriculum design is often replaced by a far more dialogic

process that shows that "… curriculum elements other than the learning outcomes played stronger roles in influencing design decisions" (2005:1). His concluding argument is for a far more flexible interpretation of outcomes-based design. A further argument might be that artist-teachers and learners immersed in practices that nurture the reciprocities identified in this paper will be even more agilely adept to enter this dialogic space. And it is perhaps then that classrooms will become, both literally and metaphorically, artworks.

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## Footnotes

[1] Pippa Stein is the head of the Applied English Language Studies Department at the University of the Witwatersrand, and Denise Newfield is in the Department of Languages and Literature at the same institution.

[2] The Visual Literacy Foundation Course at the University of the Witwatersrand was offered from 1996 until 2005 when it was placed in abeyance as a result of decisions to cut student funding. The course provided access to students through an extended curriculum that included this foundation programme. The course was co-ordinated by one of the leading contemporary painters in South Africa, Joni Brenner.

[3] Here I acknowledge the work done by Donald Schön on 'professional artistry' (1990:22) and Ross *et al* (1993:160) who reference Schön in their writing.

[4] I understand metacognitve in the sense described by Blagg *et al* (1988:18, in Quicke, 1999:39): "metacognition refers to an area of self-knowledge involving, 'more conscious awareness of cognitive processes' which is at the top of the hierarchy of cognitive strategies and involves self-monitoring, self-testing and self-evaluating at the level of conscious awareness".

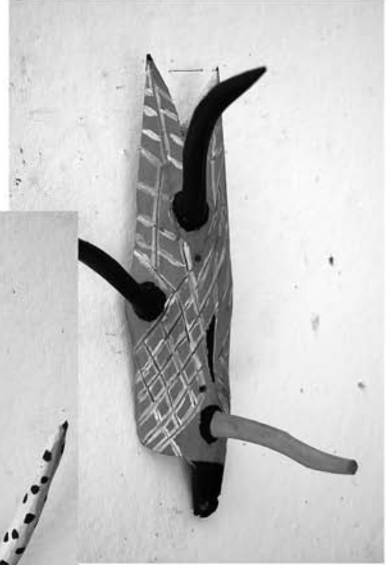
[5] *"When learners juxtapose different languages, discourses, styles and approaches, they gain substantially in metacognitive and metalinguisitc abilities and in their ability to reflect critically on complex systems and their interactions."* (Cope and Kalantzis, 2000:15)

[6] Throughout the paper I refer to 'arts and culture education' or 'arts and culture educator' as this is the terminology used in present South African education policy. I also use these terms as being inclusive of those educators working in the Visual Arts subject area at FETC phase.

[7] These South African acronyms refer to the GETC phase – General Education and Training (grades 1 to 9) and FETC phase – Further Education and Training (grades 10 to 12)

[8] It is pertinent to note that as far back as 1972 Margaret McKean, then an art education lecturer at the Johannesburg College of Education, was proposing something very similar for arts and crafts education in the then Transvaal province:
" In U.N.E.S.C.O.'s 1972 art education survey the United Kingdom put the following proposition forward, which, if it were implemented successfully would overcome many of the problems associated with art teachers;
Ideally, all art teachers should be artists and have the artist's imagination and sensibility, and they must have character, temperament and inclination the ability(sic) to place their knowledge and gifts at the service of education" (1976: 270)

[9] In *Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?*, Appiah writes of the "persistent massaging of one text after another into the surface of its own body" (1991:350)



# Creative Processes in Technology Education;

## Namibian Solutions to Namibian Problems

***Andrew Clegg***

*Summary*

Science and technology curriculum development worldwide over the last half century has taken the form of two broad waves of reform. The first was mainly associated with improving the quality of teaching by making it more learner centred with much more practical work. It was directed at the curriculum appropriate for the academic minority. The second wave was associated with the expansion of secondary education to include the whole ability range and the focus shifted from mainly understanding of content to give a greater emphasis on mastery of skills. The second wave has not been very evident yet in Africa.

The haste with which a new curriculum was introduced in Namibia following Independence introduced contradictions between the aims of the curriculum, particularly the aim that it should be learner-centred, and its detailed design. More recent reforms have not significantly addressed these contradictions and as a result, learner-centred education remains a rather elusive concept in many Namibian classrooms.

These contradictions are very evident in the 25% of the junior secondary curriculum devoted to personal, social and vocational subjects. It is intended that the introduction of a Design and Technology programme should form a major plank in the reform of this area of the curriculum. This paper argues for a clearer understanding of the nature of this new pedagogical area and, in particular, for a realisation of the importance of teaching Design as a creative subject. The paper suggests that for Design and Technology to be well taught will involve a revolution of pedagogical practices, both in the classroom and in assessment that will have wide implications beyond the confines of the subject.

It is suggested that, to address effectively, the wide prevocational needs dictated by the



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Namibian economy, the current proposal, a narrowly focused imported Design and Technology curriculum, will be inadequate. It argues that a specifically Namibian programme is needed that draws on the much wider variety of craft skills and creative traditions that are already embedded in the Namibian technological landscape.

## Introduction

This paper touches on a number of seemingly diverse educational issues and attempts to draw a synthesis from them. It suggests that the 25% or so of Namibian junior secondary curriculum time currently devoted to a disparate range of personal, social and vocational courses is in urgent need of some repair work. The paper notes that some systemic confusion entered the education reform process in Namibia at an early stage; confusion arising between tensions between the various educational influences that drove the reform, and that this confusion is still very evident.

The paper suggests that the somewhat schizoid nature of technology in Namibian education results directly from these tensions inherent in the system. It then makes proposals for rehabilitating technology education in a manner that could have an impact not only on what happens in the technology classroom, but on perceptions of learner-centred education generally and also the role of the assessment system in sustaining and promoting it.

The paper considers the following broad issues:

- Some reflections on the evolution and current state of Namibian education?
- Why teaching and learning should be learner-centred?
- What technology education is?
- The 'problem 25%' of the Namibian junior secondary curriculum
- A Namibian technology education programme

## Curriculum tensions in Namibian education

In the last fifty years or so of the last century it is possible to see two broad waves of educational reform in the western world and countries influenced by the west (Ware,1992, van den Akker, 1998, Ottevanger, 2001). Both waves were influenced by concerns that the system, as it was operating, was not properly serving national needs. The first phase was triggered in part by needs of national recovery after a devastating worldwide war but perhaps more specifically by a sudden single event in 1957, at the height of the cold war, when the USSR unexpectedly upstaged the USA by launching the first artificial

satellite. This led to a major reconsideration of educational systems and curricula in the USA and Europe, led by reforms in mathematics and science. These reforms were pushed by a massive increase in funding from both the public and private sectors.

One characteristic that emerged in this 'first wave' reform was a move to place the child, rather than the teacher, at the centre of all education activities, though the teacher remained in full control of the teaching and learning process and the class was the teaching unit. This wave of reform, influenced as it was by the need to increase the pool of high level expertise, tended to focus on high academic achievers and it was often channelled to them via selective educational systems.

The first wave, with its academic emphasis and associated selective practices was superseded by the second when the emphasis shifted towards educational equality and 'Education for All'. The move continued the process of handing responsibility for learning over from the teacher to the learner. This move, was, in part, driven by a shift of emphasis from Piagetian interpretations of the learning process towards more constructivist interpretations which tended to give more support to the view that 'Education for All' was an achievable goal.

Table 1 contrasts the main emphases of the two waves. These 'waves', like all other similar broad educational observations, should not be interpreted too rigidly. The essentials of both have, of course, been around for centuries and sound educational reformers take care to advocate that the new ideas should build on, and not displace, the best of the older system.

In southern Africa, the matriculation examination was fairly typical of a first wave reform. Being a reform that benefited mainly the academic elite, because of political and social conditions, it tended to become, however, identified mainly with the minority white population while the majority remained excluded. This was particularly the case in subjects like mathematics science and technology.

The reforms in Namibia and South Africa after majority rule, driven, as they were, by the requirement to open up educational opportunities equally to all, are, in principle, characteristic of the second wave. Herein, however, lie a number of systemic contradictions in Namibia; while the philosophy behind the reforms was clearly 'second wave', many aspects of its implementation were, (and indeed still are) 'first wave'.

***Table 1.*** *Some characteristics of first and second wave educational reforms*

| First wave | Second wave |
|---|---|
| Preparation for a career | Education for all |
| Generation of knowledge | Application of knowledge |
| Focus on the discipline | Focus on societal issues |
| Broad coverage of content | Less content making for more effective learning |
| Mastery of content | Ownership of content |
| Subject in school | Subject in the community |
| Building of conceptual models | Personal decision making |
| Teacher as originator of knowledge | Teacher as manager of learning process |
| Whole class working as a unit | Individual or group work |

*(adapted from Ware, 1992)*

Take, for example, the Namibian curriculum. Most of its components were written, in some haste and with little international research, by those whose only experience of curricula was the (white) South African one it replaced. The only significant external influence was the British company, now called Cambridge International Education which markets curricula worldwide and whose products, under the influence of the needs of its customers (and also to keep assessment procedures relatively straightforward), were deeply embedded in the 'first wave' but which, in the case of the International General Certificate of Education (IGCSE) had been given a second wave veneer. This curriculum is designed for a wider ability range and includes certain 'second wave' elements such as a skills element and clauses exhorting teaching to take cognisance of the environment and of social issues. These are mainly in an add-on introduction and are generally not subsequently reflected in the science content. Subsequent revisions have made few changes of substance.

The same arguments seem to apply to the assessment system developed after Independence. Assessment, across almost every subject relies overwhelmingly on summative examination performance. And where the concept of 'continuous assessment' is promoted it appears to be 'retrofitted'; it is added as an afterthought to the developed curriculum and is not linked in any way to specific elements of it. There are a few exceptions to this, such as the use in some

syllabuses of the portfolio and these are discussed further below. It is hardly surprising that the whole issue of continuous assessment has become a major problem that DNEA has so far solved by, in effect, statistically ignoring it.

The main tension between the intentions of the Namibian curriculum and its operationalisation, however, lies in the classroom. and this is dealt with below.

## *Why should teaching and learning be learner-centred?*

The concept of learner-centred education is a 'second wave' principle. It is a governing principle of Namibian education (MEC 1994) and has locally been much discussed and defined (see for example NIED 1999 and 2003) but unfortunately only sketchily implemented in the schools. Two questions are posed by this; why is learner centred education felt to have such importance in Namibia and why is the teaching profession so resistant to it?

Before addressing these matters the concept must be clarified. Van Harmelen (1998) lists the following as the four main characteristics of learner-centred education;

- education should meet the needs of those being educated;
- these needs would be best met if identified with the interests of children;
- the curriculum should be based on experience and discovery, and;
- rather than being subject or content based, educational programmes should focus on activities.

(Interestingly, there is nothing in this list that proscribes, for example, rote learning of multiplication tables for instance, just as long as it satisfies the four criteria. Learner centred education is an underlying philosophy upon which a superstructure can be built that can use an extensive repertoire of classroom processes, just as long as, taken as a whole, they satisfy the criteria.)

Questioning why learner centred education is regarded as so important in Namibia may seem somewhat heretical. But Vision 2030 (GRN 2004) in essence, outlines a pathway by which Namibia in the next 15 years, might mimic the Asian tiger economies. And these economies have a number of common educational characteristics, one is that they do consistently well in international science and mathematics education comparisons (TIMSS, 2006). A second

is that by and large, their classrooms are often very far from learner-centred. But their education systems serve a different purpose from Namibia's. Tiger economy education systems have tended so far to be clearly directed towards academic quality; their system is designed to produce the technicians needed to fuel their economic advance and in the process they tend to be inequitable; in Singapore, for example, students are divided into three ability streams at the end of grade 5 and from then on, the better part of the funds available are lavished on the most able who reach A-level in 13 years.

Namibia's system by contrast is designed to serve the whole population equally to the best of their abilities and a key philosophy that underpins it is *unity through diversity*, a reflection both of the culturally diverse society and of the need to address historical inequities. Given these ambitions (or constraints), it is probably wise to try and create, as products of the system, learners who are able to adapt their learning to the new situations in which they will find themselves beyond school, a characteristic that is nurtured by good learner-centred education. That the expectations placed on learner centred education have fallen short of what is required is encapsulated in the rationale for ETSIP, the Education and training Sector Improvement Programme of 2006 (MoE 2006), paragraphs 5 and 6 of which state:

> *5. Namibia receives very low international competitiveness ratings because of: its inability to meet firm's demands for skilled labour; the low absorptive capacity for existing technology at the firm level; and low investment in research and development.*
>
> *6. Shortages of skilled labour persist within a context of unmet labour market demand. For instance, unemployment levels among secondary school graduates with some level of training stands at 4%. For those with some form of tertiary education, the proportion is 2%. Given the demand for labour, a key constraint lies on the supply side – or basically, the education and training system.*

This is not a specifically Namibian problem; many other African countries are experiencing a simultaneous a shortage of skilled labour and widespread unemployment indicating a failure of those who have emerged from the educational system to turn their hand to new skill demands.

The wish to make the classroom more learner-centred is a cornerstone of educational policies

Africa-wide. It is proving universally to be a difficult issue and has been much researched (see, for example, Ottevanger (2007)). There is no single solution; reform must address simultaneously, curricula, teaching and learning materials, initial teacher education, teacher support, whole school programmes and, it is increasingly realised, parents and children, who equate learner-centred methods with a general decline in educational standards. Experience in Namibia (Clegg, 2002) with Life Science suggests that the introduction of a new programme, with a pedagogy unlike anything previously taught, may offer a Trojan Horse mechanism for reform. Design and Technology could offer such a mechanism. This may be a naive hope, however; Life Science, in many schools has now been stripped of its novel entrepreneurial elements, such as horticultural production and chicken husbandry, and reduced to something akin to the pre-Independence biology.

## *What is technology education?*

Technology education, in the sense that it is used in this paper, is a wholly 'second wave' development. At its heart is a concern for what Layton (1985) termed 'knowledge in action' for the development of *homo faber* (man the maker) as distinct from *homo sapiens*. As Layton pointed out, it is perhaps significant that the English language never has had a word that describes this educational orientation; the German word 'technik' having no direct translation. It encompasses a range of knowledge and skills that include the following:

- technological capability, the 'maker competences' that also include design skills
- technological awareness, the 'receiver competences' that allows us to recognise and acknowledge the potential of technological products
- technological application, the 'user competences'
- technological impact assessment, the ability to asses the social costs and benefits of a technological development

Clearly this educational field is far removed from the craft-based subjects characteristic of the technological curriculum that Namibia inherited in 1990. It brings with it its own epistemology, its own pedagogy, its own research base and its own curricula. How it has evolved has depended to some extent where it has evolved. In Ontario, for example, it has developed as an extension of the science curriculum, a factor which has tended to impose on it a science epistemology and pedagogy and has limited its development, particularly with regard

to the development of 'maker competences'. In England it emerged from the older craft-based programmes rather than as a child of science education. This has proved particularly positive in that it allowed the notion of design to become a central pillar and also, incidentally and largely by its early use of ICT, raised its status in the eyes of the learners, parents and the education community. Interestingly it was the desire, among a number of lead craft teachers, to raise the status of their subject that motivated many of them to experiment in the early 1980s with the possibilities of integrating microelectronics and ICT into their programmes, in the process of which they stole a march on science, by comparison with which they had previously been seen as second rate. Technology has quickly evolved into a new area of learning that has, over a remarkably short period of time, become a compulsory element in the English curriculum (DES 1988). As a consequence it has developed its own epistemology, its has become a discipline in own right and has spawned a research tradition with all the trappings such as peer reviewed journals. And many other countries have joined the bandwagon.

In Africa, Botswana was the first country and still is the only country to make this 'second wave' technology education compulsory, and to finance the process. South Africa and Namibia are following. Technology is a process constrained by context and values and this raises the as yet little debated question (sidestepped by Botswana who adopted an English curriculum) of what a technology programme in the African context should look like.

So far in this section, any attempt to define technology has been resisted. This is deliberate. technology (like 'elephant') is more easily recognised than defined. Some time ago, Edward de Bono (1971), referring to this amorphousness and ambiguity of technology concluded that 'technology is an impression rather than a definition.....the closer you get to it the more it is not there'. This paper also will resist attempting a definition but will note that at the centre of technology education is the notion of the problem solving process, the exploitation of available materials to construct an artefact that addresses a human need. At the heart of good technology teaching then is good design teaching.

## *Some features of technology education programmes*

The craft-based curricula that have been the mainstay of technical education in Namibia until now are simple skills-based programmes. They tend to lack any element of design edu-

cation; the learners are required to construct pre-designed artefacts through which they learn a few making skills. Curricula to address the complexities of technological knowledge are very different; they attempt to address all the elements of technological understanding outlined in the list above. In England, the national strategy for Design and Technology lists objectives for each grade which define what learners should be taught.

The English junior secondary curriculum identifies five components of the design process as follows. These address all components of Layton's 'technik' above and, significantly, are framed as elements of a design process.

1. *Exploring ideas and defining the task*. This involves an analysis of the problem, research work to find more information of how similar problems have been addressed in the past; drawing up the design specifications
2. *Generating ideas that will lead to possible solutions*. This should explore a wide range of techniques; look at ideas for solving similar problems; explore graphically many different ideas; recording ideas.
3. *Planning*. Produce plans that allocate time to different aspects of the solution. Make decisions about materials; review progress regularly and change plans where appropriate.
4. *Developing and modelling ideas.* Try alternative approaches for overcoming difficulties. Draw on scientific knowledge when appraising ideas against design criteria. Make the justified decisions regarding choice of materials and manufacturing processes.
5. *Evaluating*. Review progress and incorporate feedback into the process. Identify design weaknesses and propose solutions; evaluate critically the extent to which the solution meets the design criteria

In order to simplify instructional processes, English grade 11 and 12 syllabuses typically classify the different areas of technological knowledge into as few groups as possible. One English syllabus, for example (Edexcel, 2002) has three knowledge domains which are fundamentally different in nature, and hence are assessed differently

1. Classification and selection of materials and components. Preparing, processing and finishing materials. Manufacturing commercial products (this is knowledge about the technological processes)
2. Designing and making (this refers to 'maker competencies')

3. Design and market influence including wider effects of design and technology on society (this domain deals mainly with 'user competencies' and impact assessment)

Infused across these three domains are a number of cross-cutting issues such as health and safety, and social, cultural and environmental matters. Underpinning all technology education programmes is the concept of design and much debate on what makes good technology teaching is how to teach design.

Note that in this consideration, no mention has been made of any specific technological area. These domains are generic and can apply equally to very different technological fields such as food technology, textiles microelectronics and control, resistant materials (wood, metal, plastic).

Many of these UK syllabuses can be taken by approved centres worldwide and some Namibian schools have used one of those offered through The Directorate of national Examinations and Assessment (DNEA) by Cambridge International Education. The only one available, however, is the resistant materials syllabus. Why technology in Namibia has been limited only to those attracted to wood and metalwork has never been made clear but it is probably associated with the fact that the syllabus was adopted as a replacement for the old wood and metal craft syllabuses rather than as a result of a wide debate on what a Namibian technology syllabus should look like.

## *A pedagogy of design education*

The essence of design is creativity. There is a substantial body of research into the nature of creativity but it has had a mainly psychological rather than a pedagogical focus (Lewis, 2005). It is by nature a composite concept, a product not only of individual traits but also societal and environmental factors. There seems to be agreement that divergent thinking (Guilford, 1967), which yields a variety of solutions to a given problem, is a characteristic of creative minds. It also seems clear that schooling of some kind is a necessary prerequisite for the development of creativity in children; the question is, of course, what kind of schooling. Clearly it must be built on a curriculum that takes student interest and individual differences, including thinking styles, into account. Especially, the curriculum must account for the multiple intelligences among students (Gardner, 1999). The Namibian curriculum, sadly, is not particularly well-known for any of these.

What, then, in very practical terms, are the key elements of a school curriculum that would encourage creativity; six resources have been identified (Lubart, 1995) as prerequisites to creative performance;

- problem definition or redefinition,
- knowledge,
- intellectual styles,
- creative personality,
- motivation to use intellectual processes, and
- environmental context.

Some of these, such as intellectual disposition and personality, are internal to the student but others can be addressed by the curriculum and the classroom environment. To this list, in the case of design and technology, we can add a wide spectrum of skills.

None of this is very helpful, however, unless we know what, as teachers, we are trying to achieve and can recognise it when we have achieved it. Here Bruner (as always) is helpful (Bruner, 1962). He suggested that creativity is an act that produces "effective surprise" (p3). something which is surprising when first viewed but has a logic to it when viewed in retrospect. He suggested that there were different ways of achieving this surprise according to the nature of the discipline; in design technology this involve recognising how a design solution can evolve from many different apparently disparate elements. The process of teaching can then concentrate on developing systems for recognising and using these elements which may be knowledge elements or intellectual and practical skills.

'Teaching design' is, in a sense, an oxymoron; the moment an attempt is made to teach it, it loses its essential originality. In practice, design teaching tends to be a formulaic procedure in which students are taken systematically through a design 'process' which identifies the problem, researches it, develops possible solutions, assesses their relative merits, manufactures the chosen solution, applies it and analyses it. During this process, the learner has an opportunity to develop various intellectual and practical skills. This process is not technically difficult to teach, but there is always the danger that the act of teaching inevitably suppresses creativity; it leaves little room for Bruner's 'effective surprise'. This is particularly true if the original problem is defined by the teacher rather than the student. However, the skills, both physical and intellectual have to be taught somehow and teachers usually develop a constructivist approach that is initially very prescriptive but which, over time

builds on the achievements of the learner and becomes increasingly open-ended, encouraging divergent thinking which allows individual creativity to arrive at novel products.

A major issue in this Design teaching sequence that the teacher must address, is how to tolerate failure; often it is better to allow a child to fail, and to learn from failure, than to intervene early to prevent failure but in the process stifle creativity. Dealing effectively with this pedagogical compromise is the hallmark of good Design teaching.

Once the Design and Technology pedagogy has been defined, it generates implications for curriculum theorising, for assessment, for initial training and professional development and for research. There is always a danger, as with other subjects (sadly often rather obvious in Namibia) that some of these tails may come to wag the dog. The greatest danger lies in assessment because conventional forms of assessment lend themselves to assessing readily only one element of Design pedagogy, the knowledge element. The other elements, most particularly the defining one, creativity, require novel assessment structures. When is the design merely routine, when can it be called competent, and when exemplary? And what evidence do we need to ensure that these distinctions are made transparently? A system based, in the main, on a student portfolio must evolve but decisions are needed on what should go into the portfolio and what criteria should be used to assess it objectively. We need pilots to gain experience in this area; fortunately it is not a novel one and we can draw on experience from elsewhere.

## *Design and technology in African schools*

In most African countries the technical curriculum amounts to selected schools offering traditional vocational classes. These range from auto engineering, building, electrical engineering, to fabrics and food sciences. They have, in the past, been the main route into technical careers. Universally they are rightly viewed as unsatisfactory; they are typically under-supplied, expensive, under-staffed, have a low status, have few students and generally do not satisfy workplace needs. Many countries are now removing them (often with some reluctance) from the school curriculum and simultaneously reforming their TVET sectors (with varying degrees of success) in such a way that all TVET is moved wholly the further and higher education (Johanson, 2004). This has left a vocational or prevocational vacuum in the school system that has, in no country, yet been adequately filled.

Botswana, Namibia and South Africa seem to be somewhat ahead of the pack in developing prevocational programmes. The debate as to what this should look like, however, has been somewhat clouded and experiments so far, though valuable, have generally been less than successful (Farstad, 2002). Entrepreneurship, for example, seems to be currently in favour as one of the programmes to fill the space left by the removal of craft programmes from the school curriculum and Bank Windhoek is supporting the development of such a programme in Namibia. It is too early to make judgements about the likely effectiveness of what is to be on offer but entrepreneurship education in schools in African countries is not new and much has been published about the effectiveness (or lack of it) of what has been tried so far. (Farstad 2002).

Botswana has taken the lead in introducing technology in all its junior secondary schools. It has chosen to take the expensive route, providing all schools with purpose-built well equipped facilities for resistant materials technology and ICT taught by a combination of imported experienced teachers and increasingly by locally trained staff graduating from a specific programme. Informal reports suggest that the programme is successful and popular and, significantly, does not seem to suffer from the status problems that bedevilled the earlier craft-based programmes. Technology however, as has been said, is very much constrained by context and values but the context within which the Botswana (and also the Namibian) programme was developed is decidedly English; it remains very much an import with little attempt, at least formally, to consider what design education in the Botswana context might look like (or even to consider technology programmes outside the narrow confines of resistant materials).

### *Design and Technology in the Namibian context*

Approximately 25% of the Namibian junior secondary curriculum is devoted to a mix of life skills and vocational subjects. Namibian education is in a period of transition; the teaching of vocational subjects is being shifted out of the formal school system and their assessment is being taken over wholly by the new Namibia Training Authority but a new pre-vocational curriculum has not yet been clearly defined to replace them. There is also much debate around the subjects such as Arts in Culture, Religious and Moral Education, Life Skills and Basic Information Science (from the syllabus of which, the word 'Internet' is absent) which are compulsory, non-examinable subjects that are treated with varying importance from school to school.

A coherent argument can be made for replacing this mish-mash of ill-defined and often ill-taught subjects with a single clearly defined pre-vocational course based on a compulsory core with options (see Clegg 2001). Such a programme must allow for novel curriculum development, for piloting new ideas, must be responsive to needs, be gender sensitive, appropriate for all abilities, and must be Namibian in context. But it can be informed by experience elsewhere. Some parts of the programme clearly must be compulsory but others, if it is to be flexible, oriented to learner needs and responsive to context, must be optional. A modular programme with a compulsory core lends itself to these requirements.

It is proposed that the central element of the prevocational quarter of the curriculum be Design and Technology. The revised Design and Technology programme runs from grade 5 to grade 12 and has evolved from the CIE Design and Technology curriculum but for resistant materials (ie wood metal and plastic) only. Furthermore, the knowledge element of the curriculum seems to be greater – in some areas considerably so – than the CIE programme on which it is based. This expansion suggests that the essential nature of the Design programmes, that they are skills rather than knowledge-based may not have been fully understood. This Design and Technology seems to be rather restrictive for a number of reasons:

- It ignores many areas of technology that are significant in the Namibian context, failing to address many local areas of need such as entrepreneurship skills, the environment, hospitality, food sciences and fabrics, all of which are of economic significance to Namibia.
- It is, in its terms of reference and its content, very traditionally male-oriented.
- It is overloaded with academic content, particularly some quite difficult science.
- ICT and microelectronics are not integrated into the programme; areas of high skill need in the economy. This is a lost opportunity; it was the IT focus of English programmes that brought about a raising of the status of the study area and this had a knock-on effect throughout the system.
- The increased focus on knowledge is a concern; the tendency for it to be driven by traditional forms of content assessment will be difficult to resist, reducing the importance of problem solving.

Basing a Design and Technology programme on one designed for a context far removed

from Namibia represents a missed opportunity. Design and Technology programmes are essentially content-free; the content is added in order to give a context for teaching the design process. We might ask what are the knowledge and skills that form a suitable Namibian context for a Design and Technology programme. The following elements could be identified; the list is not exhaustive.

- Knowledge and skills related to Namibian crafts such as woodcarving, pottery making, spinning and weaving and basket making.
- Knowledge and skills related to the use of resistant materials such as wood and metal.
- Knowledge and skills related to the use of ICT; directed at, for example, technical support and webpage design.
- Knowledge and skills related to emerging technologies such as microelectronics and control technology.
- Knowledge and skills related to the hospitality industry.

These knowledge and skill groups could be optional components of a modular Design and Technology programme which would also have cross-cutting compulsory elements, most particularly, drawing skills. Schools would select the group or groups that they are best able to teach. A portfolio-based assessment of the programme would be common across all modules; a small part of which would be a single examination paper with optional questions addressing the different knowledge areas.

Namibia is in a unique position to integrate ICT into Design and Technology. It has the benefit of Schoolnet Namibia[1] which has ensured that the country is at the forefront of ICT education developments and it is a pilot country in the Global e-Schools and Community Initiative. Both these ensure that curriculum development in this area can be well-supported. In addition, the College of the Arts has developed ICT-based programmes that focus on creative aspects of ICT such as webpage design which means that it is an are where some experience already exists in-country

## *Design and Technology assessment issues*

The development of an appropriate assessment system for Design and Technology will be key to the success of the subject. The subject will fail if an effective transparent assessment system based on a portfolio cannot be designed. It will also fail if a traditional assessment system based mainly on summative examination papers is chosen. The prognosis, unfortunately, is not

good; the country has so far been unable to develop continuous assessment procedures that are reliable and are used without excessive moderation in public examinations.

Table 3 shows how assessment is managed by one examination company in England. They assess three different pedagogical domains, each of which requires a different assessment mix. The table shows that 60% of the overall mark is devoted to continuous assessment, the greater part of which will probably be devoted to the portfolio. Note that this scheme is content-free; it can be applied to any manifestation of Design and Technology. The successfully operation of a portfolio-based system will require a major shift in assessment practices in the country, a considerable training effort by regions, and a substantial investment in this kind of assessment which, compared with external examination papers, is costly and difficult to manage.

### *Namibian reform; Design and Technology or old subjects with new names?*

It is very seldom that any school system faces a reform as significant as the introduction of a whole know knowledge domain with its associated pedagogy. This is what faces Namibia at the moment. As has been evident elsewhere, a change of this magnitude will have an influence far beyond its own particular curriculum area. For it to be successful a whole new approach to classroom relationships is needed and this

***Table 3.*** *A Design and Technology assessment scheme*

| Domain | Coursework | Written paper | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Classification and selection of materials and components<br>Preparing, processing and finishing materials<br>Manufacturing commercial products | 5% | 15% | 20% |
| Designing and making | 50% | 10% | 60% |
| Design and market influence (including wider effects of design and technology on society) | 5% | 15% | 20% |

*Edexel GCSE Technology, England, 2002 (Edexcel 2002)*

is something that cannot easily happen within the confines of an existing subject which has its own traditional pedagogy handed on from teacher to teacher in the country. The potential exists for Design and Technology to exert a catalytic role on other subjects to show them mechanisms for breaking from the traditional limited teacher-led pedagogy.

For this to happen, however, a more adventurous Design and Technology curriculum is needed which is based more securely on Namibian needs and traditions. And not only is a curriculum required, attention must be given to the classroom environment and equipment, to the training and support of teachers, to the assessment procedures and associated training and the whole must be supported by research. Unfortunately the Namibian educational community, as a whole, has not demonstrated a very strong grasp of these elements of curriculum reform, particularly over the last decade; curriculum documents tend to be weak, support materials are largely absent; subject leadership, particularly from the University, in most subjects has been weak or absent; teacher support, particularly in scientific and technical subjects, has fallen by the wayside; school leadership has been particularly patchy and, above all; there has been little investment in quality.

The ETSIP programme, however, has recognised all this and offers an opportunity to address the deficiencies. The challenge facing Namibia now is whether it will respond to this opportunity or whether (as currently, unfortunately, seems likely) it will give in to interests long vested in the subjects that any novel prevocational programme will replace and produce a curriculum consisting of subjects that have different names but which are, in effect, a rehash of the existing dull, sterile, bookish, teacher dominated subjects. Whether the opportunity will be seized only time will tell.

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## *Footnotes*

[1] See http://www.schoolnet.na/

[2] See http://www.gesci.org

# Assessment in the Learning Area Arts and Culture:

## A South African perspective

*Liesl van der Merwe*

### *Introduction*

In the past few years assessment policy in education in South Africa has changed. Before the National Curriculum statement was implemented in schools, teaching and learning were mainly exam-driven. Outcomes-Based Education, a principle of Curriculum 2005, and now the National Curriculum statement, is learner-centred and results-orientated, with the expectation that all learners can learn and succeed. Through assessment, an umbrella term for dimensions of testing, measuring and evaluating, educators have to optimise the conditions for success (Drinkwater, 1997:2; Airasian, 2005:9). In this article I would like to investigate how we could create opportunities for success in the arts, with special reference to music, through assessment.

Evaluation is a qualitative value or merit determination that is used to make judgements about a learner's level of competence, his/her knowledge, progress and values (Airasian, 2005:9). This is where my problem starts: How do and should we make judgements about art or a learner's level of competence in the arts?

I train teachers in the Learning Area Arts and Culture: one of eight learning areas in the Intermediate and Senior Phase in the South African curriculum. The eight learning areas are Languages, Maths, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Arts and Culture, Life Orientation, Economic and Management Sciences and Technology. The Intermediate Phase consists of Grades 4-6 or ages 10-12 and the Senior Phase consists of Grades 7-9 or ages 13-15. Therefore I am often confronted with the problem of assessing the arts (Dance, Drama, Music and Visual Arts). More specifically, I am involved in Music and Dance teaching.



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### *The three questions in this article therefore are:*

1. **How does one evaluate the arts?** In other words, how does one decide what is good and what is bad in the arts for the purpose of assessment?
   - 1.1 How does one consider the expression of feelings when assessing the arts? And are feelings, thus emotions, criteria for "good" art?
   - 1.2 How can we be objective in our judgements and taste of the arts?
   - 1.3 How does culture influence our assessment of the arts?
   - 1.4 What gives the arts value? What gives meaning to the arts? What are the roles of feeling and reason in our responses to the arts?

2. **Which assessment strategies and assessment types are most suitable for Arts education?**
   - 2.1 Overview of assessment in the National Curriculum in the Learning Area Arts and Culture;
     - 2.1.1 Choosing assessment strategies in the Learning Area Arts and Culture;
   - 2.2 Assessment types most suitable for Arts education.

3. **How could we practically assess some performance tasks?**

### *1. How does one evaluate the arts?*

How many of us have not attended a music competition and did not agree with the judges? I have often questioned my ability to judge because I never fully agree with the judges. But then again, I was not aware of the assessment criteria. My assessment criteria would instinctively be: with which musician did I connect?; which musician's interpretation moved me?; with which musician's stage personality did I relate?; and which musician's technical ability was remarkable – otherwise we would not get past the notes and would not be moved.

What counts for music as art, is the way in which the music invites and sustains one's absorbed attention (Eldridge, 2003:161). When I do not agree with the judges, the music invites and sustains our attention differently because, for one, we might be listening to or perceiving different aspects of the performance. In other words, our assessment criteria differ. According to Hume (Eldridge, 2003:170), the joint verdict of true judges helps to set a standard to maintain sanity, balance and openness in evaluating art.

In my defence, Kant differs from Hume (Eldridge, 2003:170) and insists that all people must judge for themselves whether a work is artistically valuable, without deferring to experts. However, it is possible to make an erroneous judgement when one miss-assesses and misreports the causal history of the pleasure one experiences. Savile (Neill & Ridley, 2002:313) suggests that when we are involved in a kind of self-deception in our emotional response to art, our response could be called "sentimental" when we feel a certain way because we misrepresent the world to ourselves so that we can feel what we want to feel. This possibility of erroneous judgements when evaluating art presents problems when we assess arts in the Learning Area Arts and Culture.

### 1.1 How does one consider the expression of feelings when assessing the arts?

The main purpose of assessment in Arts and Culture is to help learners to grow and develop (Teacher's guide, 2003:98). Because arts often express a learner's feelings, I find that at times it is problematic to assess the arts and still contribute to the learner's personal growth and social development. For example, if one of my students composed and performed a song about her mother who passed away, and she expresses all her love, sadness or fond memories, and I were to make a negative judgement about the value and quality of her composition, even if it were only based on her use of composition techniques or other specific assessment criteria, that learner might never have the confidence to express her feelings in my class again.

A learner's feelings expressed in the arts are valuable and this should be reflected in educators' assessments. According to Wollheim (Hanfling, 2004:349), greatness in art ultimately lies in its expressive quality. One can therefore conclude that expressive quality is indeed important in aesthetic subjects.

Aesthetics deal with sensation and feelings and not with cognition, knowledge or factual truth (French & Wettstein, 2003:28). The word "aesthetics" is derived from the Greek word *aesthesis*, which means "sense perception", "sensation" or "feeling". Aesthetics are also associated with human creative productions. The artist must turn inward, striving to make contact with deep inner sources of life-experience.

*Assessment in the Learning Area Arts and Culture should therefore always:*

- ☐ be constructive and encouraging (Teacher's guide, 2003:27);
- ☐ motivate and stimulate learners;

- ☐ take place in a safe, supportive and non-judgemental environment;
- ☐ assess the process rather than just the product (Assessment guidelines, 2001:31);
- ☐ encourage learners to grow in confidence and build a positive self-esteem.

### 1.2 How can we be more objective in our judgements and taste of the arts?

As a judge I find it tricky to be objective because my taste in music would play a role in whether I like or dislike a composition, arrangement or interpretation of an existing work. Due to the personal and subjective nature of feeling and taste one needs to pose the question: How can feeling and taste then be the basis for a genuine judgement? Judgement must be objective; therefore it is crucial to use clearly defined criteria and a variety of appropriate strategies to give constructive feedback and to try to be as objective as possible (NCS Arts and Culture, 2002:98).

Beardsley (Hanfling, 2004:354) attempts to give a deductive account for safe objective judgements. A genuinely deductive reason ought to be general. Three levels of basic criteria of merit in art – unity, complexity and intensity – are provided by Beardsley. However, works of art can be unified, complex and intense, but also bad. His general reasons are not irreversible and thus not valid. Because each work of art is unique, we cannot bring them all under general rules.

Another reason why it is difficult to be **objective** is that the concept of musicianship is not something that can be weighed, seen or held. It exists only as a concept in someone's mind (Hoffer, 1993:30).

Frank Sibley (Hanfling, 2004:356) also addresses the matter of objectivity and subjectivity. He claims that aesthetic judgement is a perceptual matter (Redfern, 1986:45). Ralph Smith (Elliott, 1995:21) agrees with Sibley and explains that the term "aesthetic" suggests the perception and contemplation of things rather than their creation. Lyas (Hanfling, 2004:359) argues that perceptual judgement sometimes reports on how the world is and therefore perceptual judgements can be objective.

Sibley (Hanfling, 2004:359) differentiates between three groups of remarks: non-aesthetic remarks; aesthetic remarks, based on perception and therefore possibly objective; and overall verdicts. Lyas explains that the discussion of the elements of music, for instance, "the first movement is in C major", is an example of

a non-aesthetic remark. To say that a certain musical composition is "balanced", "jolly" or "sad" is, according to Sibley, an aesthetic judgement. Judging music as "magnificent", "worthless" or "brilliant" is an overall verdict. These groups of remarks appear to be related in the following way:

1 A non-aesthetic judgement could be linked to an aesthetic judgement. For example, "the music is jolly because it is in C major".
2 Aesthetic judgements could also be linked to overall verdicts, for example, "the music is brilliant because it is jolly".

Sibley accentuates the fact that in order to appreciate the expressiveness of a work of art we have to experience that expressiveness with our senses. That is why we can never deduce an aesthetic description from non-aesthetic descriptions. We cannot merely be told that "because the music is in C major it is jolly". We need to hear it (Hanfling, 2004:359).

Bordieu (Eldridge, 2003:155) argues that aesthetic choices belong to the set of ethical choices, which contributes to a lifestyle and a culture. This brings me to the next point, namely that differences in judgements of taste are matters of different cultural capitals.

### 1.3 How does culture influence our assessment of the arts?

It is easy to make a mistake when assessing art that one does not understand due to cultural differences. Art in other cultures has different criteria; for instance, functionality in African music is often more important than the aesthetic quality of the music (Agawu, 2001:8-16). Every individual's frame of reference and assessment criteria are therefore culture-based. The aesthetic value is determined by the aesthetic nature of the art and its historical meaning (Snyman, 1978:15). Carlson (Neill & Ridley, 2002:153) suggests that our aesthetic appreciation of art is based on our knowledge of cultural history and artistic conventions, which would be different in different cultures.

Making and responding to art are distinctive social roles (Eldridge, 2003:158). It is therefore sensible to understand a culture before you can assess works of art in that particular culture. Since social context and usage are integral aspects of some art, it would also be vital when evaluating the work of art.

One of Hume's (Eldridge, 2003:167) five features of character for people evaluating art is a person cleared of all prejudice. Although this might not be completely possible, one never-

theless cannot evaluate works of art from one's own culture as better art than works of art from other cultures, because that would be a judgement based on prejudice. Such a judgement would reflect the Eurocentricity that was typical of colonialist attitudes.

## 1.4 What gives the arts value or meaning?

What gives value to a work of art? Herrnstein Smith (Eldridge, 2003:153) gives a new-pragmatic view on this question. She ascribes all value, including artistic value, to be projected by humans on the basis of contingent, changing needs and interests. "All value," she claims, "is radically contingent, being neither a fixed attribute, an inherent quality, nor an objective property of things but, rather, an effect of multiple, continuously changing, and continuously interacting variables." Though there might be certain measures of local and temporary agreement, in the long run we just disagree about attributing artistic value. However, we could try to understand, respect and enquire about each other's value attributions in order to evaluate more objectively.

Furthermore, understanding could enter into our perception and evaluation and it need not just be judgements of taste, without reason. Value in the arts is grasped by careful reading, looking and listening. We have to experience the overall effect with our senses before we use the non-aesthetic judgements as explanations for our evaluation. Non-aesthetic judgements can never be general reasons for ascribing merit and demerit (Hanfling, 2004:362).

Another explanation of what gives art value is the hermeneutic perspective. What does the music communicate? What message does it carry or what does it mean? Meaning in the arts could be understood in terms of the artist's intentions (it is debatable whether this is at all possible), or in terms of feelings and experiences aroused by the work in the audience. Our feelings and experiences of nature, as in art, is not only based on our understanding and knowledge of it, but it is also of a less intellectual, more instinctive and emotional kind, which we might refer to as being moved by nature or being moved by the arts (Neill & Ridley, 2002:154).

Dilthey (French & Wettstein, 2003:32) uses the term "meaning" to refer to what we experience as the qualitative significance of events in life itself. Art develops from this dimension of existential meaningfulness. What goes on in the mind of the artist is only important to us insofar as the artist shares the same stream of life as we do. Art that expresses feelings or helps

us through rites of passage or have a function in our lives is meaningful and thus has value because it improves our quality of life.

Art also develops from the understanding of the meaningful context of life expressed and given form by the arts (French & Wettstein, 2003:33) This view is particularly relevant in the Learning Area Arts and Culture, where we often study arts as a reflection of culture, and where we often explore the function and meaning of art in certain cultural contexts.

Meaning in the arts is also determined by the way the works of art bring to light what is already meaningful in life. Gadamer (French & Wettstein, 2003:40) discusses this concept in the sense of *mimesis* as a letting-emerge-into-presence what it truly is and always was. Art brings forward what was otherwise hidden and withdrawn. Through the work of art, we come to know what is for the most part hidden, and we thereby come to know it as it is. In the hermeneutic perspective art is an ontological event through which reality is realised.

The value of art lies in the way it represents the aesthetic part of reality in a concrete manner (Snyman, 1978:3). Heidegger and Gadamer both felt that meaning always changes with changes in context, and there can be no final configuration of meaning for any work. Meaning in the arts is an ongoing event (French & Wettstein, 2003:41).

## *2. Which assessment strategies and assessment types are most suitable for Arts education?*

Questions could be asked as to whether assessment in the Learning Area Arts and Culture should take place at all. Many arguments, some of which I have presented here, are either in favour of or against assessment of the arts. Assessment helps to give structure to school learners' development and it motivates the learners to work and do their best. It is also necessary to provide evidence of learning (Hoffer, 1993:29).

### 2.1 Overview of assessment in the National Curriculum in the Learning Area Arts and Culture

Assessment is a continuously planned process of gathering information about learner performance, measured against assessment standards. Assessment standards are the minimum requirements to be achieved by learners in each grade. They need to demonstrate knowledge, skills and values to achieve the learning outcomes in each grade.

The learning outcomes for Arts and Culture are:

1) creating, interpreting and presenting works of art;
2) reflecting on cultural practices and arts activities;
3) participating and collaborating in arts and culture activities and
4) expressing and communicating through various art forms.

Although the learning area should be approached holistically, the assessment standards are organised under the different art forms, namely Dance, Drama, Music and Visual Arts (including Craft and Design). The organising principles should be used to cluster similar standards into modules. The organising principles are the physical, natural, social and cultural environment for the Intermediate Phase and the national, African and global environment for the Senior Phase (NCS Arts and Culture, 2002:8).

#### *2.1.1 Choosing assessment strategies in the Learning Area Arts and Culture*

Assessment strategies are ways in which we assess learners' performance. The choice of assessment strategies is subjective and unique to each teacher, grade, school and learning area. The availability of resources can also play a role in the choice. The strategies/methods chosen for assessment activities must be appropriate to the specific assessment standards and the purpose of the assessment must be clear (NCS Arts and Culture, 2002:100). A variety of strategies/methods is needed to give all learners the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and values and to ensure that inclusive Arts education takes place.

The assessment standard and the specific needs of the Learning Area Arts and Culture will guide educators to choose the appropriate assessment strategies. Assessment strategies in the Learning Area Arts and Culture must support a safe and supportive environment for them to experience and express thoughts, ideas and concepts within an atmosphere of openness and acceptance.

The following are some of the various forms/types of assessment that could be used by teachers to assess learner achievement: tests; performance-based assessment; interviews; questionnaires; structured questions; assignments; case studies; research; outings/visits; essays; concerts; presentations; practical exercises/demonstrations; projects; role-plays; simulations; aural/oral questions; observations; inter-

action; portfolios; discussions and self-report assessment (Teacher's guide, 2003:17).

Because music is a performance-orientated subject, it is necessary to assess all the knowledge, skills and values of the subject in an authentic manner using performance assessment tasks (Subject Assessment guidelines, 2005). This is one of the most important assessment strategies in the Learning Area Arts and Culture. A practical example of such performance tasks, assessment criteria and rubrics will be given at the end of this article.

Often facilitation methods could also be used as assessment strategies during:

- continuous assessment (an ongoing process that measures a learner's achievements);
- informal assessment (informal observations of which the learner is unaware);
- peer assessment (the learners assess one another's work);
- self-assessment (learners get the opportunity to reflect on their own efforts); and
- formative assessment (to monitor and support the learner's learning process and to give constructive feedback which enables the learner to grow) (Drinkwater, 2001:23).

### 2.2 Assessment types most suitable for Arts education

Another discussion point could be whether summative or formative assessment is more important in this learning area. The overall status of achievement and learning at the conclusion of a study unit is determined by summative assessment. Summative assessment is done as a summary of the work and is also referred to as product assessment (Drinkwater, 2001:12). Formative assessment is used during the process of teaching and learning to form the student. It helps teachers with planning and it helps learners to identify areas of weakness in the work to be mastered. It is also referred to as process assessment (Drinkwater, 2001:12).

Formative assessment as part of a constructive learning opportunity that does not inhibit the creative process contributes to form and supports the learners because learners get non-threatening feedback during the process that they can use to improve the product (Franks, 2002:45). Through formative assessment the process, which is as important as the product, and the product itself could be assessed. It should be an aid and diagnostic tool to find out where assistance and support are needed.

| **Facilitation methods** | **Explanations and examples according to Wilken (2005) of possible assessment strategies:** |
| --- | --- |
| Round robin | Each member of the group records their own response to a problem within a set time span. On signal rotate the response to the right. Each member adds further remarks not repeating anything that has been written on the sheet. The sheet keeps rotating. Observation as an assessment strategy could take place during this activity. |
| Numbered heads together | Learners work in groups. Each member in a group gets a different number. The teacher poses a question and the members of the groups discuss the problem to come up with a solution. The teacher calls out a number and the person identified in this way must respond. The whole group is held responsible for an incorrect answer and the whole group is praised for a correct answer. This could also develop into a competition between the groups. |
| Buzz groups | This method is not very structured. Free exchange of ideas takes place. Participants could share their ideas with each other and turn around and share their own and their partner's ideas with a third party. Peer assessment of each other's ideas can take place. |
| Co-op co-op | Participants teach the whole class and each member of a particular group makes a contribution. Every member must take part in the planning, research, demonstration/presentation. The teacher, in combination with self-assessment and peer-assessment, can assess the process and the product. |
| Pairs | Cooperative pairs work together on a problem. Think-pair-share: learners think alone, pair up and share with the class. Pairs compare their answers with other pairs in the group. |
| Brainstorming | All ideas are recorded without prior assessment thereof. If time allows, the ideas can be discussed and refined. The teacher can give feedback by assessing the ideas. |
| Gallery walk | Each group makes a poster. The posters are put up and a representative of the group stays with the poster. All the other participants walk from poster to poster and look and listen to the presentation. Rotate every 3 minutes and give feedback about observations during the walk. Peer assessment of the posters can take place. |
| Six thinking hats | The same topic is addressed by different groups from different perspectives (groups wear different colour hats), such as factual, positive response, emotive response, weaknesses of the issue, creative ideas and analytical perspective. |
| Debates | The proposition agrees with the motion and the opposition opposes the motion. The speaker defines the topic. The debate is conducted in a controlled manner and the facilitator can use summative assessment to assess each group's debate, understanding of the topic, cooperation in the group and conviction of arguments. |
| Storytelling | Participants convey information in the form of a story. Musical storytelling could be used and the group's or individual's presentation of the story could be assessed as a performance task. |

Formative assessment is crucial to understanding what the learners have understood (their critical judgement) and to find out whether they apply their knowledge effectively in authentic situations. The students also get the opportunity to find out who they fundamentally are and to develop their emotional intelligence (Franks, 2002:45). In the Learning Area Arts and Culture it is essential that assessment should be an integral part of learning and teaching.

### *3. How could we practically assess some performance tasks?*

I teach a group of approximately 130 female Foundation Phase Education students who are learning to play the guitar and recorder in 10 weeks, with one 40-minute contact session per week available. With rubrics I assess 70 students individually in 40 minutes, each at their own level.

The students choose their own level and through their choice they put themselves in a category. There are 3-5 songs in a level. During the examination and semester tests I choose one song from the level, which they prepared. These guitar and recorder assessment criteria reflect what I want them to learn. If I want to change what students learn, I change the way I assess.

Figure 1 is an example of a guitar assessment rubric that makes it possible for me to assess many students in a short time span. All the students sit in the class, ready with their guitars. I call out a student's name; write the name on the rubric and the student indicates which level (set of songs) she has prepared. Then I choose one song from that level, which the student then performs. This automatically puts the student in a certain percentage category (level 1: 70%, level 2: 80%, level 3: 90% and level 4: 100%). The maximum marks for the easiest level is 70%: they loose 30% for choosing the easiest level but they still have the opportunity to succeed if they play the easier song well.

While the student plays guitar, I observe her posture, her singing, how she executes the left hand chords, whether she strums correctly, and her musicality. On the assessment criteria in the left column, I indicate or circle her mistakes with a highlighter to make sure that she knows where she has lost marks. For every mistake, I deduct a mark and I add comments where necessary.

A student who plays a song at level 1 perfectly will obtain full marks, which are 70% in this case. It also sometimes happens that a student chooses a higher level, but performs it poorly

and obtains only 60%. Students are encouraged to play an easier song well, rather than to give a poor performance of a more difficult song. They also compete against themselves and they progress at their own tempo. They are encouraged to choose a higher level for the next assessment task.

When they have finished performing the song, I have also finished the assessment. Assistants then process and record the marks and the students get immediate feedback. This method of assessment creates opportunities for success; it is objective, because assessment criteria are used, and it is fair because the students know exactly how they will be assessed.

They are also rewarded for expressive playing in the category “musicality”. Because this is a performance task, it is the most appropriate assessment strategy for Music in the Learning Area Arts and Culture. It is also continuous assessment, because they play four practical assessment tasks and not only one.

Figure 2 is a recorder assessment rubric. Because it is a different instrument, the assessment criteria are different. Aspects such as breathing, breath control and intonation play a role in wind instruments, and the posture will be different as well. The levels and the use of the rubric are the same as in figure 1.

| **Figure 1** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Name and student number of student:**<br><br>**Guitar assessment criteria** | **Level 1 maximum marks 70%** | **Level 2 maximum marks 80%** | **Level 3 maximum marks 90%** | **Level 4 maximum marks 100%** |
| **Posture**: Thumb flat at the back; does not look on hands; crosses right leg over left leg; lifts the head of the guitar; and relaxes fingers. | /7 | /8 | /9 | /10 |
| **Singing**: Starts on the right note; sings the melody correctly; and sings with enthusiasm. | /7 | /8 | /9 | /10 |
| **LH Chords:** Uses the correct fingers on the correct strings to press the chords; changes the chords at the right places and keeps the tempo. | /7 | /8 | /9 | /10 |
| **RH strumming:** The right hand strumming stays constant throughout; uses the correct strumming or picking patterns appropriate to the metre; plays the correct strings for the particular chords. | /7 | /8 | /9 | /10 |
| **Musicality**: Breathes at the end of phrases; plays the end of phrases softer; sings and plays expres-sively; interprets the song and makes sure guitar is tuned well. | /7 | /8 | /9 | /10 |
| **Total:** | /50 | /50 | /50 | /50 |

**Figure 2**

| **Name and student number of student:**<br><br>**Recorder assessment criteria** | **Level 1: maximum marks 70%** | **Level 2: maximum marks 80%** | **Level 3: maximum marks 90%** | **Level 4: maximum marks 100%** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Posture**: Holds recorder at 45 degrees; lifts head; does not look on fingers; plays with relaxed fingers; keeps fingers close to the finger holes; feet flat on the floor and apart; elbows slightly away from body. | /7 | /8 | /9 | /10 |
| **Breathing and breath control:** Breathes at the end of phrases; plays with clear tone colour; does not blow too much or too little; keeps a constant flow of air; does not blow on each note. | /7 | /8 | /9 | /10 |
| **Notes**: Plays the correct notes with good intonation using the correct fingers with left hand at the top. | /7 | /8 | /9 | /10 |
| **Rhythm**: Plays rhythmically; keeps the same tempo throughout; plays the correct note values. | /7 | /8 | /9 | /10 |
| **Musicality**: Plays the end of phrases softer; interprets the song; plays expressively; uses the correct articulation and emphasises the first beat in a bar when applicable. | /7 | /8 | /9 | /10 |
| **Total**: | /50 | /50 | /50 | /50 |

## *4. Conclusion*

Assessment in the arts is a complex matter because of various reasons. We have to consider our learners' feelings, try to be objective, consider different cultures and decide what gives meaning to the arts.

### 4.1. How does one consider learners' feelings?

The main purpose of assessment in the Learning Area Arts and Culture is to help learners to grow and develop (Teacher's guide, 2003:98). Because art often expresses a learner's feelings, we deal with people's feelings when they express themselves in their works of art. We can reward expressiveness in the arts because expressive quality is important in aesthetic subjects with regard to a learner's musical and emotional development. This should be reflected in our assessment criteria.

### 4.2 How could we be more objective?

Subjective tastes create problems when we want to make an objective judgement. Therefore, we must use clearly defined criteria and a variety of appropriate strategies. Beardsley's attempt to give deductive accounts for safe objective judgements involves general rules, but because each work of art is unique we cannot use general rules in our assessment. Sibley claims that aesthetic judgement is a perceptual matter and therefore it can be objective. However, that expressiveness must be experienced with our senses and we must not make aesthetic judgements based on non-aesthetic descriptions.

### 4.3 How does culture affect assessment?

Unique cultures have different criteria for quality in art. Our aesthetic appreciation of art is culture-based. It is a prerequisite for assessment to understand a culture before we can assess works of art in that culture. It is important to take prejudice, one of Hume's five features of character for evaluating art, into consideration and to make sure that we are cleared of all prejudice towards other cultures when assessing art from other cultures.

### 4.4 What gives the arts value or meaning?

Different opinions exist on what gives value and meaning to the arts. A new-pragmatic view ascribes value in the arts to changing needs and interests. The hermeneutic perspective values the messages and the meaning of the messages in art. Art can also have meaning if it has existential meaningfulness and helps us, for instance, through rites of passages in our lives. Furthermore, art can also bring to light what is already meaningful in life and represent reality.

### 4.5 Assessment strategies and suitable assessment types

Assessment is an integral part of learning and teaching and if we approach assessment in the correct manner, students could experience a safe non-judgemental environment in which they feel free to be creative.

The most important assessment strategy in a practical subject such as music is performance tasks. Through performance tasks teachers could assess in an authentic way whether learners obtained the learning outcomes. Learners could be assessed according to certain specific assessment criteria. It is important to assess what a learner could do and create and not only what a learner knows.

The most important assessment type is formative assessment. Educators could assess the progress of the learners as well as the creative process. The feedback learners get enhances their learning and our teaching. Formative assessment is much more learner-centred and it allows each learner to progress at his/her own pace. Problems get noticed while there is still time to rectify them and not afterwards, when it is often already too late.

Assessment criteria and rubrics could make it easier to assess practical tasks of large groups in a small amount of time. Assessment should be constructive and not destructive, and it should be a useful tool to support, guide and assist students, build their self-esteem and enhance our teaching.

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# The "I" in multicultural music education

**Hetta Potgieter**


### Abstract

The search for identity is of critical importance: the identity of the teacher (personal), of the learners (person and group identities) and the school (social, cultural and multicultural identities). A learner's behaviour may be experienced as negative whilst the/she feels that the musical traditions of his/her culture are not recognised. The music educator should strive to equip each learner with musical knowledge and skills and provide appropriate guidance that is targeted at an appreciation for and respect of the music of other cultures. There are different models for teaching multi-cultural music education to South African learners: To begin with music (sound) as the focus of a learning process or with discussions and music of the local or a global culture to which learners relate. If learners are positive towards the type of music they study in their classes and take part in different music activities their behaviour will change.


> *No man is an Island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main; … any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee* (John Donne, English poet 1572-1634).

### Introduction

I taught music to groups for almost 10 years at a senior secondary school and was time and again floored by the reactions of individuals in the class. Whilst standing in front of a class and teaching learners to sing, listen, play instruments, dance and create music, a music educator should be very sensitive to the reaction of the learners, not only as a group but also as individuals. This reaction may be positive or negative. Of course, one is motivated by positive feedback and discouraged by negative experiences. Unfortunately educators tend to focus on the negative experiences and therefore I considered some of



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these and came to the conclusion that individuals play a significant role in a group.

Some of the situations I would like to unpack and discuss are:

- One or two learners can disrupt an enthusiastic class, create discipline problems and make it impossible to teach the entire class. (A reason could be that the learners who do not cooperate may be mischief-makers).
- In groups there are individuals who remain passive, wordless, staring in front of them, with no glimpse of enjoyment, although the class is positive and involved. (A reason could be that these learners may be ignorant about music).
- There are a few musically gifted learners who enrol for music as a Grade 12 subject, but opt not to take part when music is taught to a group. (A reason could be that these learners are exposed only to Western music and are not interested in other music genres).

The behaviour of learners is a topical issue among music educators nowadays. This applies especially to teenagers, who have an in-between status: on the way from childhood to adulthood, developing a self-image, becoming aware of their individual personalities. In 1973 Hoffer (130) had discussed the culturally disadvantaged learner, who comes from a lower socio-economic group, an ethic or racial minority, a broken home, or has poor health, low inspiration, and experiences social problems, etc. In 2006 these aspects are still a reality in most South African schools.

In a multicultural country the vision of the political leaders may be that music should bind us together, but from my experience the question could be asked: "Whose music and whose meaning do we teach, anyway?"

An outcome of a curriculum may be that through exploring the music of different cultures, learners will recognize their own culture's music and learn to appreciate other cultures' music. But then again one could ask: to which culture do I belong?

Many researchers (Primos 1993; Delport 1996; Oehrle 2002; Thorsen 2002a & b; Malan 2004) have pointed out that the curriculum in South African schools was too Eurocentric. Elliott (1995:207) remarks that "if music consists in a diversity of music cultures, then music is inherently multicultural. And if music is inherently multicultural, then music education ought to be multicultural in essence". Malan (2004:2)

states that "educators are still unsure of how to implement an alternative, unknown curriculum and therefore teach what they know best".

The reaction of the individual in group music and the influence of this on the subject matter, the other individuals (class) and the educator were for many years neglected in South Africa. Music touches the whole person; it is part of our personal, social and cultural life, especially in the emotional development of adolescents and teenagers.

Up to now I have tried to avoid the word "identity", but it is clear that the bottom line is that if a learner who has little music experience does not identify with the music discussed in the class, there may be a reaction. Identity implies a sense of belonging. According to Thorsén (2002b:5), "[t]he concept of identity points at the individual person's self-image as mirrored through others. Thus, we are looking from the learner's perspective, well aware of the fact that the individual is part of one or several communities or cultural groups". To accommodate learners with different personal, social and cultural identities is a challenge to a music educator. In this article I will discuss the following issues:

- The multiple influences on identity;
- Identity and music;
- A multicultural music education approach.

### *The multiple influences on identity*

The investigation of identity is a sign of the times. In the contemporary academic discourses of disciplines such as anthropology, geography, history, philosophy, political science, psychology, sociology, etc. identity and identification are researched extensively (Jenkins 2004:8). One could add to this list music and, more specifically, music education and cultural studies. The Latin word *identitas* stems from *idem*, "the same". The same refers to "similar", "matching", "corresponding", with the antonym being "different", which can also be described as "diverse" or "unlike" (Collins 1994:558). Identity implies a sense of belonging. These words open up two basic important points of departure:

- To classify things or persons; and
- To associate oneself with, or attach oneself to, something else (Jenkins 2004:4).

We have different kinds of identity: national identity, social identity, cultural/racial identity, class identity, familial identity, gender identity, sexual identity, etc. Identities cannot be categorised; my social identity has an influence on

my personal identity that is formed by my body identity. In other words, a person's identity is multifaceted: I am a lecturer, a wife, a mother, a grandmother, a friend, an Afrikaans-speaker, a Christian, etc. Like the concept of "culture", "identity" is not fixed; it is dynamic and change from time to time.

In South Africa "identities are in the process of being renegotiated and cultural borders are being transgressed" (Wasserman & Jacobs 2003:14). Social patterns are also not fixed; they can and will change with time. "Social identity is an awareness of the place of an individual amongst other individuals … it is a sense of the self and others that emerges from social relations" (Kruger 2006). Jenkins continues: "… all human identities are by definition social identities" and to be able to identify oneself is a "matter of meaning, and meaning always involves interaction: agreement and disagreement, convention and innovation, communication and negotiation" (Jenkins 2004:4).

Addressing this issue from another perspective, Agawu (2003:232) states that difference may well be the sign of our times! Am I "black" or "white"? Why not "brown" and "pink" as few people are literally "black" or "white"? There is more to it than just identifying the skin colour of a person. Agawu, a professor of music at Princeton University and visiting scholar as the University of Ghana, stresses the importance of this:

> *… a series of historical and social contexts that construe blackness relate to slavery, sports, entertainment, preferential politics, urban violence, and so on … Every act of perception carries implicit baggage from history and habits of constructing the world* (Agawu 2003:232).

In many recent publications researchers have focused on cultural identity. The Revised National Curriculum Statement emphasises that "learners need to recognise the value of their own culture" (South Africa 2002:6). Therefore one may ask: "What does cultural identity entail?"

> *Cultural identity expresses a flexible complex whole with many dimensions and alloys. Here the function of music is to give language for discussions in peer groups, to understand social changes in one's life, and give symbolic expressions that sum up values and memories, to feel in touch with ourselves, and our community* (Thorsén 2002a: 2).

But how can the music educator deal with the identities of learners? A possible answer comes from Jenkins (2004:17), who discusses three distinct orders of analysing identities:

- The **individual order** is the human world as made up of embodied individuals, and what-goes-on-in-their-heads;
- The **interaction order** is the human world as constituted in relationships between individuals, in what-goes-on-between-people;
- The **institutional order** is the human world of pattern and organization, of established ways-of-doing-things.

The "what-goes-on-in-their-heads" includes the personal identity of the learner, whilst the "what-goes-on-between-people" reflects the social identity and the "established ways-of-doing-things" corresponds with the cultural identity of the learner. Through understanding the learner the educator can plan and present music with insight.

### *Identity and music*

Music can be a tool in forming identities. Pavlicevic (2003:198) confirms, "**music** is pivotal in generating our social identity, and in creating a sense of 'belonging' to a social group". Different scholars have investigated the topic of music and identity, Hammond (2004:105) summarises it as follows:

Keith Roe (1996) notes that subcultures usually develop around specific musical genres, and that music is used by subcultures to articulate their chosen identities. Martin Stokes (1994) examines music as a site for the articulation of ethnic and national identity, and Naill MacKinnon (1993) investigates issue surrounding musical performance and social identity in the British folk scene.

"Who are you?" I often ask my students this question at the beginning of an academic year. The response is usually one of silence. In my music education classes there are Afrikaans- and English-speaking South Africans, Africans from different ethnic groups (Zulus, Tswanas, Xhosas, Northern-Sothos, Ndebeles, Vendas) and then students from other African countries. "Tell me more about the music you recalled from your childhood" – the aim is to hear more about their roots: "Where do you come from"? "Can you sing some of your folk/traditional songs"?

At North-West University as well as the University of Pretoria I observed that the majority of African students easily remember some of their

traditional songs and know about their tribes; Afrikaans mother tongue speakers are uncertain about their folk songs (the majority don't want to be associated with Afrikaans folk songs) but know about their family history and roots; English mother tongue speakers admit that they have little South African music to relate with as their folk songs are from Britain.

I interviewed three students, an English, *amaZulu* and *amaXhosa*, about the music they identity with. Matthew, a 19-year-old music student from North-West University reacted about the folk songs and music genre he identifies with as follows:

> *Do you mean songs like "London Bridge is burning"? That feels so stupid – I have never seen London Bridge, nor do I have any family or friends in the UK and yet that is the closest I can find an example of* ***my*** *folk song … may be I needed to go back to the UK to find myself. I listen often to English pop music … 'cause it's cool, I like it. I can tell you about the top 10 charts, I am up-to-date with the latest releases.*

Music may serve multiple roles in the formation and articulation of identity. Robertson investigates the dilemma of South African English speakers and discusses the idea of 'imagining ourselves'.

> *English-speaking listeners living in South Africa were able to affirm an identity which was not 'first and foremost South African' … they were able to imagine themselves primarily as white English-speakers, differentiated from white English-speakers in Britain or American only by the fact that they happened to be resident in South Africa* (2004: 130).

Through listening to music an individual can imaging himself to belong to a specific music genre.

"What music style(s) do you identify with"? Mbuso Ndlovu, a third year BAMus student from the Music Department of the University of Pretoria, answered:

> *I like jazz, choral and Black South African gospel. My parents were Christians, my father encouraged our family to praise the Lord through singing and later the music became a part of me. I was exposed to a type of music called* ***kwaito*** *in 1994, and R&B predominantly coming from the states. These were very popular for us teenagers. Afro-pop too. I fell deeply in love with Black South African*

*Gospel in 1999, concurrent with the participating in other types of music. It started when I joined a Christian movement in campus … in 1999. The people from my place were not as updated as those people in Pretoria. When I came here (to Pretoria), it was very new for me. I've realised that music was much wider than those from my hometown. That's how I fell deeply in love with Black South African Gospel music. It was basically American style. I listened to many CDs like Franklin and other groups who sings this type of music. Then I realised that I needed choir conducting. That is when I realised exactly what I wanted to do. [Mbuso had studied engineering]. People suggested that I study music, although it is said often that music is a way of life, but not a career. The love of music changed my whole life. I've been so involved with the music that I know what is good and interesting and what is not. In church I also played electronic keyboards, and I've conducted some choirs, and I know what is good.*

Mbuso confirms that the choristers are more than friends, "we connect on a much higher level".

Smit from Stellenbosch University states that "young people specifically identify with certain musical styles, and the formation of their identities are influenced by cultural factors which are closely linked to certain styles" (2005: no page number yet).

Tumelo Ruelo, a 21-year-old BComm student of the University of Pretoria responds to the question about the music genre he prefers.

*At this present time hip-hop suits my lifestyle … it suits me, and my personality and my creativity, its broad enough to accommodate a lot of things I can think of. I can talk about girls, the music, my state of mind, there are no limitations. I don't like boundaries … I'm in a band called 'Optical Illusion'. There are four of us. Our band all do emceeing, and others still do poetry, DJ and Graffiti … We come together twice or three times a week, usually in Johannesburg, because our performances are usually in Jo'burg. We do a lot in townships.*

*We have been given an opportunity to have an impact on other people's lives. So when we're going to townships, we see it as more empowering people, we see so many issues. We encourage people to voice their personal concerns. One of the major issues with hip-hop is to trying to break influence, that's why we try*

*to speak up, we debate the issues that's happening around. It is trying to get people open-minded. The hip-hop dancing is about feeling the music so much, that your body starts reacting to it. It just comes naturally.*

There is a tendency by adolescence to identify rather with a global culture; through their experiences with a global culture they can be guided to appreciate their local culture.

### A multi-cultural music education approach

The interview with Tumelo inspired me to implement some of his ideas in Arts and Culture in a school where the majority of learners were Africans. Up to that time the educator, Rob Matthew, a Music Education Honours student of the University of Pretoria, experienced discipline problems and a lack of interest among the learners in the music classes. His music training was exclusively Western based. We took the model of Swanwick (1999:17) and carefully selected an example of hip-hop for the Grade 7 learners to listen to, in other words the music was the starting point for musical education:

### Model 1: Music excerpts is the centre

*(Swanwick 1999:17)*

The response of the learners were immediately very positive, soon they were involved; creating words, drawing ideas for graffiti, acting the sing to rhythm patterns, discussing and searching for relevant issues, bringing news papers to the classroom, mime modern dance movements, discussing the historical background of hip-hop.

During the *27th World Conference of the International Society for Music Education* in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, (16-21 Julie 2006) David Elliott, a well-known Canadian music educa-

tor and philosopher, referred in his paper to the reason why hip-hop is popular nowadays in schools. He compared modernity (in music it reflects the aesthetic view) with post-modernity (the praxial approach to music).

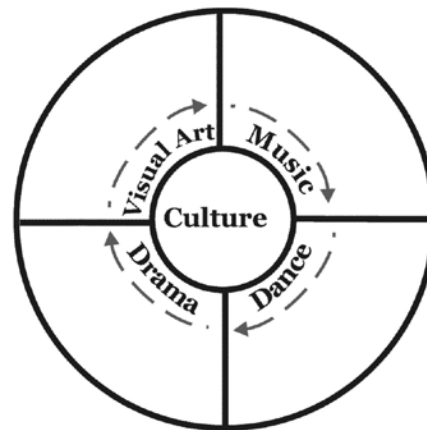
| ***Modernity (Aesthetic view)*** | ***(Postmodernism) Praxial view*** |
|---|---|
| Fixed | Fluid |
| Works alone | Works in communities |
| Autonomous | Contextual |
| "Great" music | Musics |
| | Concrete |
| Abstract | Social involvement |
| Separation | Practical |
| Non-practical | Functional |
| | Music for People in |
| Function-less | Everyday Life |
| Music for Music's Sake | The Real World |
| Ivory Tower | |

*(Elliott 2006)*

Hip-hop accommodates the "real world" of the learners. The above aspects are useful for educators to take into consideration when planning Arts and Culture lessons.

During in-service training courses for Arts and Culture educators I experience that they easier grasp the integration of the arts when discussing it from a cultural point of view. In a paper about how arts and culture educators can be empowered Malan suggests that the "selection of music/art cultures should start with the immediate cultural environments of the learners represented in a class and then proceed towards local cultural expressions, before moving further a field to include the music and arts of national and global cultures" (Malan 2004:19). The following model was used to explain this concept to educators, in other words to begin the class with a discussion of a local culture:

### *Model 2: Local culture is the centre*




The educational goal is to start with the "known" and then to expand to the "unknown" and the most obvious is to examine the different art forms from a specific South African

culture such as the Zulu or Xhosa or Afrikaans culture.

The cultural environment of the learners can also mean that global cultures have been accepted by the learners as their own, the learner imagining himself to be part of that culture and identifying with that specific music genre. Therefore culture can also be interpreted as a youth/pop culture, and then a reverse learning process takes place: starting with a global culture can open opportunities to discover one's own culture, in other words a global culture was the starting point for the class:

### *Model 3: Global culture is the centre*

Movie theatres, art galleries and pop concerts are important influences to develop a pop culture and play a significant role in the lives of teenagers.

### *Conclusion*

It seems that the search for identity is of critical importance. One can distinguish the identity of the teacher (personal), of the learners (personal and group identities) and the school (social, cultural and multicultural identities). It is a human right to be recognised as a person – it gives a person a sense of belonging and, of course, this is an integral part of our Constitution. A learner's behaviour may be experienced as negative, whilst the learner feels that his music is not recognised. During the teenage phase a learner may experience that, if his music is not accepted, he as a person is also not accepted. The music educator should strive to equip each learner with musical knowledge and skills, and guide him to appreciate and respect the music of others. There are different models for teaching multi-cultural music education to South African learners:

- To begin with music as the centre;
- To begin with the local culture as the centre;
- To begin with a global culture as the centre.

Educators in South Africa are nowadays, more that ever before, concerned about the discipline in schools. The recognition of the music of learners is a way to accept a person or a group of learners. If learners are positive towards the type of music they study in their classes and take part in different music activities their behaviour will change.

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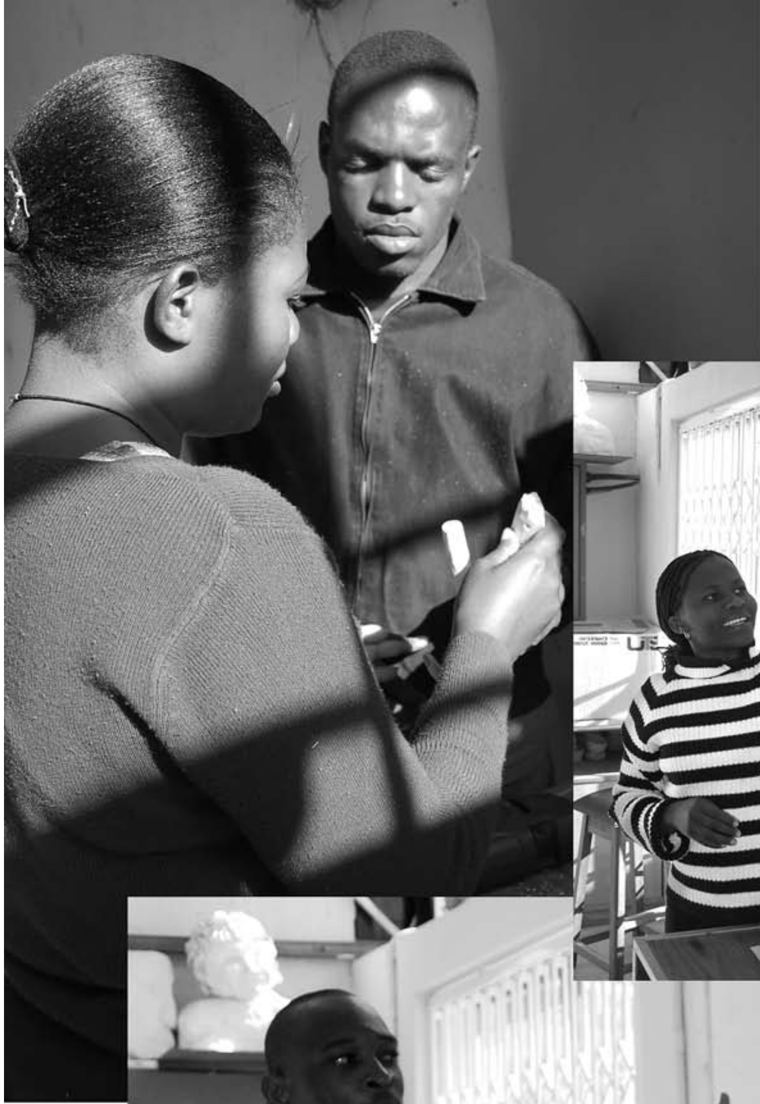

# Assessment for Learning Creative Subjects

*Kajsa Borg*

## *Introduction*

In Sweden as well as in Namibia there is a politically accepted policy to provide "Education for all" in the sense that every young person should have the same right to get education. The Namibian education policy is conceptualised in broad terms under the major goals of *Access, Equity, Quality and Democracy*[1]. These major goals are elaborated to demonstrate their wide consequences for the education system. For the majority of education practitioners the policy of 'education for all' has become equated with the concept of 'learner-centred education'. About 15 years have passed since the main guidelines for Namibian Basic Education were laid out. The goals are still the same, but the conditions for education in general have changed. Schools all over the world are nowadays being influenced by ideas of efficiency and cost-performance requirements. The broad philosophical considerations implicit in the major goals in Namibia and elsewhere are running the risk of disappearing from the educational arena and being replaced by powerful external demands (Dahlström & Mannberg, 2006).

Instead of seeing all school activities as important in the total picture of young people's intellectual and cultural development, subjects will get different weights of importance. "Basic knowledge" like reading, writing, foreign language and arithmetic are regarded as important, while the general value of education in art, crafts, sloyd, music, drama and dance is questioned. The low status of those subjects might be explained by the idea that creative ability cannot be taught or assessed. It is regarded as something innate and something for especially talented persons. Another idea is that people who do not like or cannot manage academic studies are more suited for creative studies. Those ideas are myths without any scientific ground, but they are a widely spread pattern of thinking in most educational systems all over the world.



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As long as aesthetic school subjects are regarded as extra curricular and as time for relaxation from other demanding activities in schools, it would be unnecessary to bother with assessments. But *if* sloyd, crafts, art, music, dance and drama are regarded as carriers of certain knowledge that cannot be developed without practising and studying, and *if* the students develop certain dispositions of mind while practising their aesthetic expressions, which provide them with various tools to understand and participate in society, it is a huge pedagogical task to try to reveal and discuss this type of knowledge. A subject with lack of assessments will be deprived of the quality of practice and the students' learning will not be recognized. The following quotation is about art education, but it is as important within the aesthetic education field as a whole.

> *"Whether for supporting student learning, or increasing the quality in arts instruction, arts-teachers development, or arts research, the field of arts education must tackle the challenge of assessment to assure that the students receive instructions that helps them to develop qualities that art educators prize."* (Hetland et al. 2006).

### *Teaching and learning – the same project?*

Teaching and learning are two aspects of what takes place in the meeting between teachers and students. Both teachers and students might think they are working towards the same goal, but that is not always self-evidently the case. From teachers' point of view, they teach what they think the students are supposed to learn. When asking the students, they might have learned something else. It is as if learning takes place within a "black box" out of control from the teachers' point of view (Black, 2004). Maybe everybody in the same classroom might work with parallel or different projects – without anybody being aware of the problem. The critical point will occur when it is time for making assessments, if the teachers value other aspects of knowledge than the students are aware of. This situation has been observed in ongoing, so far not reported research (Borg & Johansson, 2006). Another example of such a situation is described in the latest national evaluation of all subjects in Swedish compulsory schools, where there is a significant discrepancy between what the students in grade nine think is important for getting good grades in the sloyd (crafts) subject and what the teachers think is important (Skolverket, 2005).

Another problem is that the students' rising standards do not automatically mean that they have really learned something new. They may have been more trained or skilled in certain techniques without getting a deeper understanding or knowledge. A research project in art education in Sweden shows that the students in comprehensive schools improved their visual design and artistic skills, which comprise product criteria such as colour, form and composition and use of materials and techniques. But with regard to process criteria, referring to their capacity to work independently, evaluate their work, the students appeared to stagnate or show very slight improvement throughout the school years (Lindström, 2006).

One important point is therefore to make distinctions between achievement, performance and learning. In order to guide, support and facilitate the learning processes, teachers will need to use a repertoire of skills and resources in order to offer students the scope for developing insights that are relevant to their own construction of meaning (Dunn, 2002).

## *Assessments in general*

Education in general is guided and framed by syllabuses and other control documents. Politicians in particular believe that those documents are the backbone of teaching and learning. I would say that tests, assessments and examinations have a much more powerful impact on students' work than any course of study or textbook. Students of all ages are usually very skilful in learning how to pass examinations.

The focus of teaching has changed over the last 50 years. Earlier on there was a focus on teaching methods. Later on there has been a shift towards curriculum entitlement. Nowadays you can find many articles on education dealing with teaching and learning styles and issues related to processes of students' learning. With goal-oriented syllabuses it is the product of learning and its measurement through assessment that seem to have achieved prominence (Dunn, 2002).

Assessing students' work has always been an important part of teachers' responsibilities as well as grading, traditionally made as one-way communication. Earlier on students in Sweden were informed whether their study efforts had been a success or a failure twice a year through grades written on a piece of paper delivered in an envelope as a personal letter from the teacher to the student. At that time it was difficult for the students to understand on what grounds the teachers' judgments were made, as well

as the relationship between their own results and those of other students. Today teachers are required to make the assessment process as transparent and understandable as possible for the students and parents. One of the problems with understanding assessments is that there is a lot of implicit decision-making made by the teachers. In order to improve their way of making assessments, the teachers have to make what is implicit explicit in identifying their own theories of learning. Teachers try to fulfil this requirement with various types of documents, checklists and rubrics. The teachers' laborious task of making the assessment process totally understandable to anybody else involves risks that they might tend to assess what is easy to assess, instead of assessing required qualities, which might be more difficult to explain or recognize (Lindström & Lindberg, 2005).

In addition to the introduction of a goal-oriented syllabus in Sweden 1994, which changed the conditions for assessments, the shift, based on educational research, to focus on learning instead of teaching, it also changed the role of assessments. The theoretical base for the change in this perspective was historically described by Sadler (1989). He was especially interested in fields of knowledge where qualitative assessments are based on many different criteria, as in art, craft, drama, music, sloyd etc. Above all, assessing students' work has become a part of an educational concept, not only as a final control at the end of every semester. Nowadays we talk about stressing *formative* instead of *summative* assessment. The direction of the change is described in table 1.

***Table 1.*** *Educational assessments, earlier and current trends.*

| **A shift from** | **to** |
|---|---|
| The assessment being used primarily to control what the students have learned | The assessment being used to support and make diagnoses of learning |
| Assessment and learning being kept separate | Assessments taking place continuously |
| The teacher making assessments on his/her own | Teachers and students making assessments together about the level of knowledge and how to proceed |
| Atheoretical assessments | Assessments based on theory about how to learn a certain subject field |
| Assessment of knowledge and skills | Assessment of understanding and competence like critical thinking, creativity, communication and problem-solving in realistic settings |
| Products in focus | Processes in focus |
| The focus being placed on the "right" answers | Fruitful questions being stressed as well as the ability to learn by experience |
| Norm-related assessment | Goal- and knowledge-related assessment |
| The result being shown as a summative number of points. | Pointing out weaknesses and strengths, recognizing progress |
| The students working individually without any learning aids | The students working with peer reviews and being able to use different types of tools to remember and to make their own constructions of knowledge |
| Mainly written tests | Work with documentation like logbook, portfolios, exhibitions and CD/DVD discs |

*Author's translation from Lindström & Lindberg (2005) Pedagogisk bedömning ('Educational assessment') p.12.*

The consequences of shifting towards formative assessments are that the teachers have to find their own ways of incorporating the lessons and ideas that are listed above into their patterns of classroom work. The students also have to change from being passive recipients of knowledge offered by the teacher to becoming active learners who can take responsibility for and manage their own learning.

### *Assessment in creative subjects*

Making assessments in general requires both knowledge and experience, and making assessments in creative and aesthetic subjects is maybe even more difficult. A mixture of required individual development based on talents as well as increased subject knowledge often blurs the essence of those subjects. If teachers think that creative talents have to be innate and cannot be trained, it will be very difficult or even impossible to talk about creative knowledge or skills. Some people think that there is a great deal of *tacit knowledge* in the aesthetic subjects field. Real artists are believed to be waiting for mysterious inspiration coming from nowhere. Without being able to talk and discuss with the students, the teacher cannot give any feedback or guide the student towards deeper knowledge. Borg (2001) suggests that craft knowledge might be tacit for the novice but not for the expert. This means that the knowledge of creative subjects can be discussed and talked about among those who are trained in the field, but seems to be tacit knowledge to those who are not.

In creative subjects, all processes could be learning processes provided that the students get the opportunity to make their own observations and reflect on what they have made. Creative work contains many dimensions such as using both cultural and social resources for developing the competence of expressing through different media. Other dimensions are to accept challenges, to discover problems and to find ways to solve them. Such qualities of knowledge are not possible to measure in an objective way. There is no specified scale to use to decide the exact beauty of the product (Lindström, 2007).

If the students are to be gradually empowered to take greater responsibility for their learning, they must develop criteria of quality that are shared by the teachers. The student must finally be able to compare and relate the quality of his/her result with a required standard. The student has to have a repertoire of strategies for how to decrease the distance between what is required and what is achieved (Lindström & Lindberg, 2005).

Criteria alone are not helpful in judging the quality of a piece of work or in guiding progression, because there will always be too many variables. The key lies in knowing how to interpret the criteria in any particular case, which involves “guild knowledge”. Teachers acquire this knowledge through assessing student work, and it is this process that allows them to differentiate between grades and to gain a sense of how progress is achieved. Peer assessment and

self-assessment provide similar opportunities for students to be apprenticed into the guild, provided the criteria of quality are clearly communicated (Lindström & Lindberg, 2005).

In art and sloyd (crafts) attention needs to be paid to central activities. The rich tasks that provide students with opportunities either to extend their understanding of a concept, or to "scaffold" their ideas before creating, are to be recommended. Characteristically these tasks include small group and pair work, with the results being fed back into a whole class discussion. The students develop in that way their understanding through talk, but they also provide the teacher with the opportunity to give feedback during the process.

## Feedback

Feedback at several occasions, which is understandable for the students, is very important when using formative assessments. Paul Black[2] has listed some characteristics of formative assessment:

*Feedback in discussion.* Classroom dialogue should be managed in a way that might help the student to learn. Framing the questions worth asking, questions that explore issues that are critical to the development of students' understanding. Research has shown that teachers wait less than one second before they ask the next question if the answer did not come, or they answer themselves. This type of rapid questions and short answers are calling for memorized facts, not for more thoughtful answers. Discussion should involve students.

*Feedback through grading.* Feedback given as rewards or grades enhances ego involvement rather than task involvement. We might have the idea that it is better to combine giving grades and giving comments. Research has shown that the ability to learn did not improve when the students only got information about their results. One important factor is to give feedback, which should include information about the result. When the students got information combined with advice on what to do to improve, the result was been considerably better (Black et al., 2003). That is why teachers have to be skilful in using assessments as instruments of positive feedback in the learning process. Research experiments have established that, while students' learning can be advanced by feedback through comments, the giving of numerical scores or grades has a negative effect, in that students ignore comments when marks are also given.

*Peer- and self-assessment.* Students can achieve learning goals only if they understand the goal and can assess what they need to do to reach it. Self-assessment is essential to learning. They have to begin to develop an overview of work allowing them to manage and control it for themselves. Students are developing the capacity to work on a Meta cognitive level. Peer-assessment turns out to be an important complement to self-assessment. It is valuable because students may accept criticisms of their work from one another. Peer work is also valuable because of the verbal interchange between the students. Peer work develops the talk in the classroom. They can more easily interrupt and question each other than doing the same with the teacher. The students learn by taking the role of teachers.

In Sweden the classroom talk needs to be developed in creative subjects. There are different tools for communication in teaching and learning creative subjects. The spoken or written language is not the one and only means of instruction. Very often the teacher demonstrates how to handle tools and how to master craft techniques and the students are supposed to observe, imitate and learn. Nowadays there is also computer-based multimedia (ICT) learning aids. The language itself is, so to say, insufficient. When teaching art, crafts, music, drama or sloyd, spoken language might be used as a complement to gestures, samples and more or less silent demonstrations (Cederblad, 2007). But when there is time to evaluate or discuss the outcome of the lessons, the spoken language will play the most important role for the teacher and student to understand each other. Then the students are supposed to talk about phenomena that they have learned or experienced without words. Even the teachers themselves sometimes seem to lack an adequate vocabulary for the purpose.

### *How to use and how to train self-assessment and peer assessment*

The students might need help by using rubrics, created by themselves or by the teachers. The criteria for evaluating any learning achievement must be made transparent to students to enable them to have a clear overview both of the aims of their work and of what it means to complete it successfully. The criteria may well be abstract, but concrete examples should be used in modelling. Students should be taught the habits and skills of collaboration in peer assessment both because these are of intrinsic value and because peer assessment can help develop the objectivity required for effective self-assessment. Students should also be encouraged to keep in mind the

aims of their work, to assess their own progress towards meeting thesis aims, as they proceed with their work. Then they will be able to guide their own work and thus become independent learners. Peer assessments and self-assessment secures aims that cannot be achieved in any other way.

Lindström has developed specified seven criteria for assessing both products and processes in creative tasks.

Product criteria:
- the visibility of the intention behind the work
- colour, form, composition
- craftsmanship, material, techniques

Process criteria
- investigative work
- inventiveness
- ability to use models
- capacity for self-assessment

Lindström also did develop levels of competency in four steps (table 2, next page), inspired by Dreyfus & Dreyfus (1986), who discussed the relationship between the knowledge of novices and that of experts. Each step shows a growing ability to adapt to new situations by using knowledge and skills in increasingly flexible ways (Lindström, 2006).

***Table 2:*** *Process criteria with rubrics (Lindström, 2006)*

| **Process criteria** | **Expert** | | | **Novice** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Investigative Work | Takes considerable pains, approaches themes and problems in several different ways and uses drafts, sketches or test work to develop work. | The student does not give up in the face of difficulties, preferring to concentrate on a particular approach that she/he begins to develop and refine. | Demonstrates a degree of patience, tries out her/his own solutions and approaches, but does not develop them. | Gives up easily, does not follow her/his own ideas to completion, and only does what the teacher requires of her/him. |
| Inventiveness | Often sets up problems or reformulates the problem set by the teacher. Makes consistent progress and experiments regularly, is willing to take risks and often finds unexpected solutions to problems. | The student sometimes sets herself/himself problems. She/he develops her/his knowledge, experiments fairly often and sometimes finds unexpected solutions to problems. | Can take a problem the teacher has set and change it slightly. Shows tendencies to experiment and play with colour, form and composition, or materials and techniques. | Does not set herself/himself any problems, shows no sign of experimenting with colour, form and composition or materials and techniques. |
| Ability to use Models | Actively searches out models to emulate and can use them in her/his work in a multifaceted, independent and well integrated way. | Makes active efforts to find pictures for her/his own work. Demonstrates an ability to select images that suit her/his intentions. | The student shows an interest in other people's pictures that she/he or the teacher has found, but she/he confines herself/himself to copying from them. | Shows no interest in other people's pictures and cannot benefit from them even when the teacher has helped to find them. |
| Capacity for Self-assessment | Clearly identifies merits and shortcomings in her/his own work and can select sketches, drafts and works that illustrates her/his progress. Can justify opinions and explain why a particular result was obtained. Can produce qualified judgements of peers' work and contribute constructive criticism. | As a rule, manages to see for herself/himself the merits and shortcomings in her/his work, and can select sketches, drafts and works that illustrates her/his progress. Is beginning to produce qualified judgement of peers' work. | With some assistance, can identify her/his strengths and weaknesses and differentiate between good and less successful work. Her/his views about her/his peers' work are limited to subjective preferences. | Cannot identify strengths and weaknesses in her/his own work or differentiate between good and less successful work. Has no views about the work of her/his peers. |

The content of creative processes defined in Table 2, defined by Lindström was based on studies in Art classes. However the criteria and the level of competency are expressed in a general level and consequently possible to adapt to other creative fields. I have found the criteria interesting, using them as a tool of analysis when researching Swedish sloyd teachers' way of assessing their students. The Sloyd subject in Swedish schools is a compulsory subject where the students mainly work with design, form and function in textiles, wood and metal material. The process criteria fit very well to what is prescribed in the national syllabuses as goal for the Sloyd subject as well as for the Art subject. The result of the analyses revealed a clear unbalance between the four process criteria. The sloyd teachers put a strong emphasis on investigative work (40), while inventiveness (8), ability to use models (5) and capacity for self-assessment (10) were of less interest (Borg, 2007). That raises new questions about how to regard the criteria. Does the result show a possible difference in the processes practised in different creative subjects, in this case Art and Sloyd? Is it necessary to give different values to different criteria? Can this result be understood as that the sloyd teachers are more interested in their students working hard than that they are inventive? Why to the sloyd teacher not favour ability to use models? To answer those questions, more research has to be done.

### *Conclusions*

What have creative subjects, formative assessments and self-assessments to do with Namibian key concepts as 'Education for all', 'Learner-centred education', 'Access, Equity, Quality and Democracy'?

In creative subjects there is already a tradition of using formative assessments. Teachers and students usually have the opportunity to discuss during the creative processes. One aspect of learning quality that is not specially noted in Lindström's criteria (Table 2) is the possible importance of being taught in a community of practice and how the social interaction among students and among teachers and students affect the learning outcome. The social interaction might have a big impact on aspects connected with Access and Equity, which is still left to investigate through further and deeper research in the field.

If teachers make up classroom contracts so that everybody, teachers and students alike, are quite aware of that they work together for the same end, this will improve everyone's learning. When teachers pay attention to and reflect on

ways in which assessment can support learning, the study direction will be easier to recognize for the student. To involve the students' intentions and their own decisions in the learning process in creative subjects and to make them take active part in the assessment process will gradually take them closer to "learner-centred education". Then it is also possible to develop and strengthen the students' self esteem so that they can discuss learning outcome and self-assessment in creative subjects. Judging from a Swedish situation, peer- and self-assessments can be developed much further in order to empower every student to become an active and responsible learner. Maybe that is the situation in Namibia too.

From my point of view, working with self-assessment is to work within the framework of the major goals of education in both Namibia (1993) and in Sweden (1994)[3], where democracy is regarded as a participatory position of both teachers and learners.

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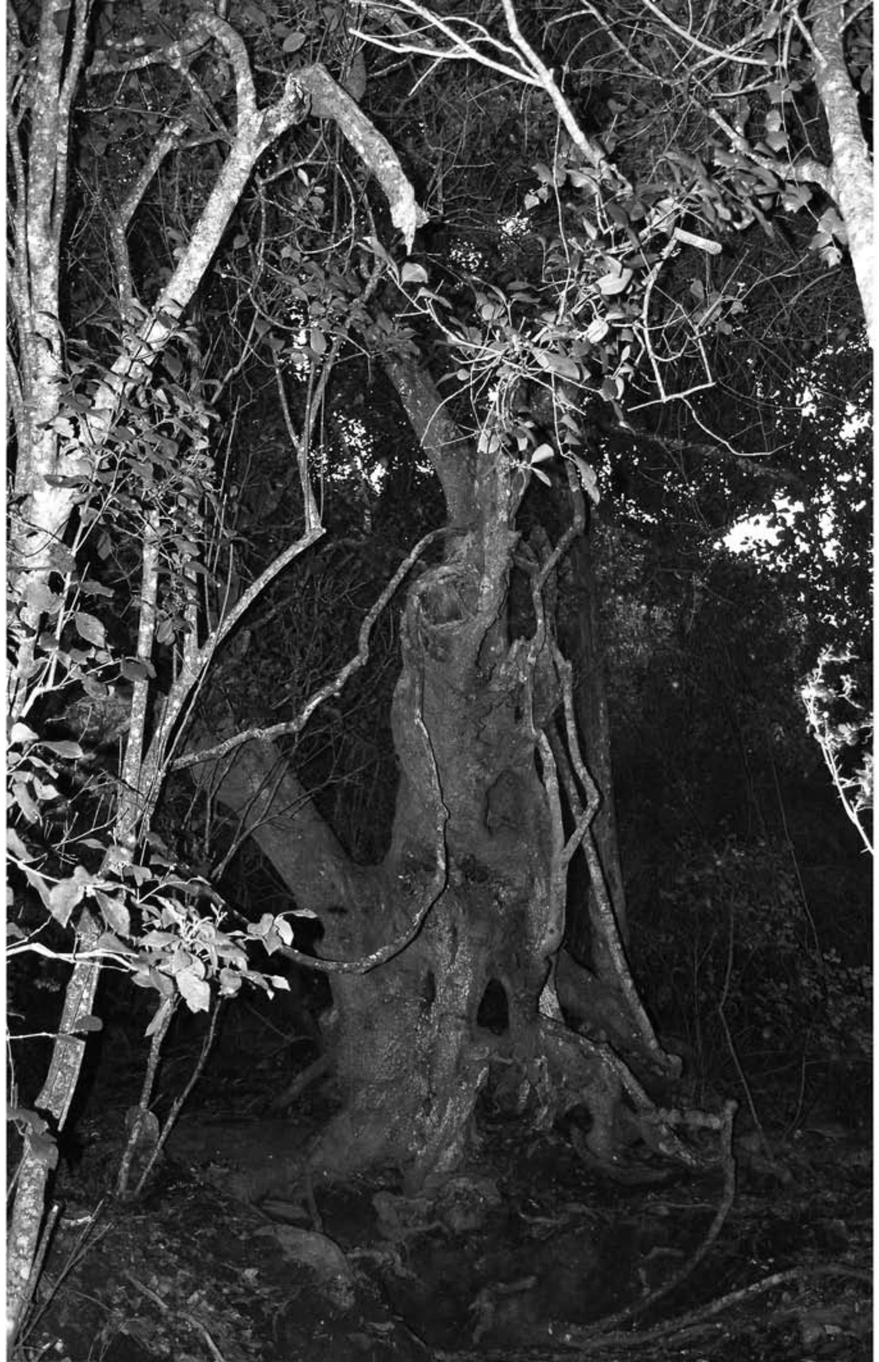
## Footnotes

[1] MEC (1993) Toward Education for All – A Development Brief for Education, Culture and Training. Gamsberg Macmillan. Windhoek, Namibia. This is one of the first policy document about education in the independent Namibia.

[2] Lecture at Stockholm Institute of Education, Stockholm, 2006 06 12.

[3] 1993 and 1994 are the years when the current national syllabuses in Namibia and Sweden were issued.



# From Written Text to Design

**Poetry for the media society**

***Per-Olof Erixon***


### *Abstract*

This article draws on a study of a creative writing project in a Swedish upper secondary school in North Sweden, entitled the “Garden of Thought”, and initiated by the school priest. His purpose was to break down the walls, as he saw it, between church and school. The essence of the project was to give students the opportunity to express their existential thoughts in the form of poetry (Erixon, 2004). Sixteen collections have been published to date. As a grand finale, each year the project ends with a big event in the school assembly hall, where those poems chosen for publication are recited are performed. The project raises issues about the teaching of writing and creativity in the media society. Theoretically, the project draws on the development of “new visual literacy”, where pictures and layout become especially important (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996; Mackey, 2002). The outcomes suggest that the students bring with them experiences, strategies and competences from different media when they write and perform their poems, which in turn enlarge the project’s possibilities for communicating meaning. This corresponds to the New London Group’s concept of “Design” which differentiates between the ’grammars’ of various semiotic systems (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000/2002).


### *Background: The Garden of Thought*

The day is the 18th of May 2005 in the northern part of Sweden. The sun is shining and the air is chilly. I am on my way to the assembly hall, where the students are preparing for an event. I open the big door slowly and in the darkness I can see some dancers stretching their legs and two presenters walking anxiously back and forth on the stage. Now and then teachers try to calm down the most nervous students. The programme is revised several times. One of the more visible signs of this is that the programme



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sheet changes colour. The final version is green and it is time to let in the audience that has been waiting patiently outside the big doors. Efficiently and in a sea of mumble the room quickly fills right down to the last seat. Soft, peaceful music comes out of the loudspeaker. After a while the music stops and the whole space is briefly filled with darkness. It is time for the show to start!

This article focuses on this project on poetry-writing called "The Garden Of Thought". The essence of the project is to give students aged 17 years the opportunity to express their existential thoughts in the form of poetry. The project procedure is that the students hand in their poems and about 100 (approximately ten percent of the material submitted) are selected for publication in a collection. Actually, the project consists of two intimately connected parts: on the one hand the published collection and on the other, an end-of-project show in the school assembly hall, a glimpse of which is given above, where selected poems are recited and year winners chosen.

## Media society

The project *Garden of Thought* developed during a decade when script culture was challenged in different ways by what Castells (2002) terms "The Galaxy of Internet", and replaced by new norms and modes. Along with new and extended means of communication, everyday life has become invaded by mass media culture, global information and communication networks. Institutions have become more visual and less dependent on written texts. Pictures and layout have become especially important. This "new visual literacy" has according to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) been developed in a society where schools retain the task of educating illiterate individuals.

Concurrently with the development of computer-mediated communication, there has been an enlargement of the conception of literacy. Since the 1980s researchers have regarded literacy as one of many discourses in an increasingly multicultural and multi-linguistic society. In order to understand the expansion of competence needed in a multi-modal society a range of conceptions of literacy have been introduced such as *computer literacy, information literacy, technology literacy, visual literacy and media literacy* (Tyner, 1998). Indeed, Australian, American and British literacy researchers from different fields came together in September 1994 to establish *The New London Group* (Cope & Kalantzis (eds), 2000/2002), and identified two important basic changes in literacy in school

and education more widely. The first was the various, different and multi-modal forms of expression, such as linguistic, visual, audible, spatial, and their relationship to each other, and the second, the simultaneous development of local differences and global connections and contacts. In the light of these events The New London Group introduced to the study of literacy the conception “Design”, which includes the ’grammars’ of various semiotic systems - of languages and other semiotic systems such as film, photography and of gesture.

The rest of this paper addresses the implications of such theoretical insights for the project *Garden of Thought* in terms both of the published collection and the final performance.

## *The entrance of media into the project*

Poetry is considered a means of shaping or presenting a personally experienced reality. It conveys things that cannot be conveyed in other ways (Bergsten, 1994). Conceptually, poetry can only be understood in an intuitive way and as associated with the language of emotion. It is regarded as a natural expression of feelings; a fusion of experience and reflection, established by an associative process which takes place beneath the conscious level. This notion is formally connected with the understanding that poetry conveys knowledge that nothing else can put into words. Each element affords a unique semantic loading, due to the restrictions that are laid upon a poetic text. The poem expresses ideas in an indirect way by displacements in the text. The intuitive and immediate side of poetry is not far from Tjukovksij’s (1975) idea that the verse is a natural vehicle for children’s feelings and thoughts.

The first collection of the *Garden of Thought* project published 1991, *About Life, About Death, About Love, About Meaning*, consisted exclusively of written texts, i.e. poems. In that respect it was a traditional collection. But already by the second collection, *Contrasts* (1992), also other semiotic tools were added/involved, such as drawings were included, which might be regarded as a common mode of expression in the school environment. The entrance of media becomes evident only some years later, at first due to a very practical problem – the printing of the first drawing. A teacher of media studies conveys the problem that occurred when the first picture was to be published on the front page of the 1994 collection *Hope in a Dark Time* (1994). The front-page picture was too dark due to the fact that the paper was too soft.

At that time teachers and students of media studies had not taken part in the project, which was largely the responsibility of mother-tongue (Swedish language) teachers. The media teacher realised that the project might fit into some of his courses on photography. He was, however, convinced that the photographs should be more than just servants to the poetry, i.e. illustrative; rather they should be independent aesthetic works. By including other media, he also believed that the collection might become more appealing to a wider audience and bring new ideas into the writing project. The seventh collection, *Another World* (1997) thus added photography.

In retrospect, the media teacher realises that this was a big step followed by other steps. The most symbolic was taken in the year 2000 when the original form of the collection was changed. The initial idea was that the book should fit into the size of a jeans' pocket. Along with other necessary things students could carry it around whenever and wherever they went. However, the new form was wider and impossible to squeeze into a jeans' pocket. Rather, it was suited to a fairly new medium of the time: the CD. But it was not only a matter of size. The change in form also related to other aspects of the media society. The small size of the original collection had primarily addressed the written text, and private reading and writing. The new, larger size made it possible to publish full-scale photographs and texts as well as recordings of the recitation of the poem.

As a researcher I met the *Garden of Thought* project steering group for the first time in August 2000. It was in the middle of both planning the coming year's collection and discussing the final performance which was to take place in the assembly hall in spring. The discussion dealt with what seemed to be a core issue for many of the members in the steering group – the shift away from the word as the basis of the project.

For example, some teacher members of the steering group were negative about the media development of the project and expressed the wish, not least from a symbolical point of view, to go back to the old jeans' pocket and script-based format. There was thus tension between different groups within the steering group. One teacher, Siv Svensson, claimed that the media was not supposed to 'take over', as she formulated it (Interview, August 2000) The whole idea of the project was to do with poetry writing that could be fitted into a jeans' pocket. Siv, supported by Ulla Johansson, underlined that

the poetry was the most important thing, not the music or the drama that framed the event in the assembly hall. Siv noted however that dance was useful in illustrating or highlighting poetry and thus make it easier for the students to appreciate the poetry medium.

Inger Karlsson's opinion differed. She identified more with students in claiming that too many poetry readings could be a bit boring. She felt that more of a performance was needed.

So, from this time different modalities were introduced into the project. The development of the collection over the years could thus be described and summarized *quantitatively* in the following way.

| Year | Poems | Drawings | Photos | Sound | Total number |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1991 | 88 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 88 |
| 1992 | 116 | 10 (8%) | 0 | 0 | 126 |
| 1993 | 110 | 20(15%) | 0 | 0 | 130 |
| 1994 | 122 | 17 (12 %) | 0 | 0 | 139 |
| 1995 | 116 | 19(14%) | 0 | 0 | 135 |
| 1996 | 125 | 25 (17%) | 0 | 0 | 150 |
| 1997 | 123 | 27 (17%) | 10 (6%) | 0 | 160 |
| 1998 | 114 | 18 (13%) | 8 (6%) | 0 | 140 |
| 1999 | 111 | 36 (23%) | 12 (8%) | 0 | 159 |
| 2000 | 112 | 31 (20 %) | 15 (9%) | 16 | 158 |
| 2001 | 113 | 24(16 %) | 12 (8%) | 0 | 149 |
| 2002 | 115 | 23 (15 %) | 11 (7%)1 | 0 | 149 |
| 2003 | 104 | 26 (18%) | 12 (8%) | 0 | 142 |
| 2004 | 104 | 18 (14%) | 11 (8%) | 0 | 133 |
| 2005 | 122 | 13 (9%) | 13 (9%) | 0 | 148 |

***Table 1:*** *Numbers of poems, drawing, photos and sound in poem collections from 1991-2005 in the project Garden of Thought.*

From the table above we can see that the number of poems within each collection, with some minor exceptions, has been quite stable over the years, i.e. varying between 110 and 125 published poems per year. After a relatively slow start in the second collection the number of drawings has also been constant over the years. The number of drawings has doubled and in the four collections from 1993 – 1996, remained at about 15 per cent of the whole. (*Hope in a Dark Time* (1994) 122 poems and 17 drawings (12 per cent), *Life Environment* (1995) 116 poems and 19 drawings (14 per cent) and *Hardware – Software* (1996) 125 poems and 25 drawings (17 per cent).

The collection, *Another World* (1997) represents, as mentioned above, a new qualitative element: photographs. Adjacent to 123 poems and 27 drawings the collection also consists of ten titled photographs in a special section in the middle. The collection of 2000, *Two Thousand Teenage Thoughts* represents something new. The new format is almost twice as wide as the original so that it can enclose a CD providing a musical setting for 16 of the published poems.

*Qualitatively*, it is notable that drawings in the 1992 collection are few and far between, located mainly in a drawings section either at the beginning or end of the four parts that comprise the collection. The drawings have an illustrative function, i.e. they are dependent upon the text. Their function is mainly to illustrate either a whole section of poems or the poems they are placed near to. One could say that the drawings are the interpreter of the poems, not the contrary. In other words, they are a representation of the subject matter. This is also emphasised by the fact that the drawings lack titles. The pattern or norms of the collection are represented by the written texts, i.e. the poems.

In the next collection, *Love, Conscience, Future, God* (1993), the drawings may be viewed as more independent. They are not only more spread out but also more autonomous; more an aesthetic production as well as non-figurative and abstract. Figurative drawings tend to rely more on a "model", i.e. are dependent on a poem or a written text or a script culture. A non-figurative illustration/drawing may be regarded as having a looser connection to the model, i.e. the poem. It makes a stronger claim to a place of its own, and, in this case, loosens symbolically its ties to the written word. It stands as 'good' in itself.

The three collections, *Another World* (1997), *Door Slightly Open* (1998) and *The Motor of*

*Life* (1999) all contain an independent section of photographs in the middle of the collection each of which has a title and the name of the photographer. In that sense the photographs are independent of the written word. The collection of 2000, *Two Thousand Teenage Thoughts* (2000) represents, as mentioned above, the new format that has been retained. The photographs still have a section of their own; in this case not one but two. The size of the two sections can be understood symbolically as an act against the hegemony of script culture, and an acceptance of the space needed for other media i.e. not only drawings and photos, but also music in various settings.

The equality between the different modes is yet more developed in the collection *Future.com(e)* (2005), in which photographs, poetry and drawings are distributed throughout the collection. There is no designated section for a specific mode and all three modes, photography, drawings and poetry are titled as well as the names of the artists (or creators) given.

### *Let the future come to us. Future.com(e). (2005)*

The final show of the project described at the beginning of this article took place in 2005. The title of the collection (and the theme of the project that year) was *Future.com(e),* a witty and ambiguous play on the Internet and the form in which Internet addresses are written. The theme thus not only actualises the issue of the future from the perspective of young people, but also the future of the communication and media society. Similar to previous collections it contains drawings, photographs and poetry.

If the poems in the collection, all written in school, express students' authentic feelings and opinions, it seems that today's young people are quite comfortable with their lives in Sweden. Research on youth cultures in the western world often emphasizes how strained and filled with anguish and sorrow young people are (Ziehe, 1989). There is, however, no intimation of this in the collection. Rather, the poetry communicates a sense of comfort and confidence. One of many explanations is that the title *Future.com*, interpreted as "let the future come", implicitly encourages students to emphasize the positive about the future.

The collection contains 122 poems which represents as indicated above, approximately 10

percent of all poems written at the school in 2005 within the auspices of the project. Consequently we know very little about the relationship between the poetry handed in and the poetry published. From interviews with teachers we know, for example, that it is difficult to get a love poem accepted because there are so many of them. We also know that the project steering group aims to represent all types of study programmes should be represented in the collection. Other aspects also affect the final content. Historically, the most popular theme has been "life" here and now, representing 35 per cent of the material submitted. The second most popular is "love", which represents 24 per cent of the material submitted. Only six per cent of poetry has focused on social issues, five per cent on ontological issues and four per cent on death.

As we might expect some of the poems in the 2005 collection play with ways of writing Internet addresses. The poem "to.mor.row" (Im.org.on) is one such example, as are:

> *do.you.want.to see*
> *so.come*
> *right.now* (26)

The students also play around with the concept "tomorrow" and "yesterday", for example in the poem titled "Tomorrow" [”I morgon”]:

> *Yesterday was the future today*
> *Today that time is yesterday* (36)]

The theme "future.com" encourages students to write poems not only about future but also about the future in terms of the media society. 83 poems (68 per cent of all published poems) deal with the future though only seven poems (six per cent) deal explicitly with the media society. In one of these, ”1975” there is a yearning back to the past:

> *I don't want to!*
> *I want to sit in my minibus from 62*
> *Listen to Led Zeppelin and smoke*
> *I don't want to!*
> *I want it to be as it used to be*
> *When it was an event to eat chocolate*
> *I don't want to!*
> *Can't we talk to each other on the phone?*
> *I hate it that we all sit at the computer*
> (52)]

The distinguishing quality of the collection is however not the harking back to old times, but

the largely positive attitude towards the future. Of all poems dealing with the future, only six communicate fear, for example, in the poem "Dear life" ("Kära liv"):

> *My friend*
> *My angel*
> *My devil*
> *My cheat*
> *Do you know anything about your future?*
> *Faith*
> *Hope*
> *Love*
> *Will they be there?*
> *Sorrow*
> *Death*
> *Agony*
> *Do I have to say more?* (28)]

Between these two polarities of hope and fear, different attitudes can be seen. The main view is that the future will probably involve both happiness and sorrow, and will come no matter what we want or are able to do. Only five poems deal with a social aspect of the future and only one poem stresses an ontological perspective on the issue of the future.

The second part of the project, i.e. the performance or the final show, adds other perspectives to the content and to media development in that different media take the stage in exciting multi-modal combinations. The performance also involves reflection on the project and its traditions. Changes occur in proximity and distance when the audience is offered not only an aesthetic experience but also a distanced reflection on what is taking place on the stage.

### *A multi- and intermodal happening.*

When everybody was ready on that day in May 2005 six dancers entered the stage. From the loudspeakers emerges cord music, probably originating from Asia. According to the green programme sheet this is to be a "*dance to"* a poem entitled "My life":

> *My life moves slowly in the ocean of the future*
> *Is floating calmly*
> *Is storming like a hurricane*
> *Eras are changing like the wind*
> *Motion, the only thing that is eternal.* (104)]

Here it is relatively easy to grasp the connection between the performance and the poem. When the performance has finished a voice relates (or speaks) the poem to the audience. Loud music and drums then break the silence and the six dancers leave the stage.

After the two presenters have introduced themselves, a so-called "dramatizing" of the poem "Freedom?" with question mark ("Frihet?") follows. The poem goes like this:

*A small dove*
*flies freely*
*until a day someone shoots it*
*Bang*
*Just in the centre*
*The little dove is rolling towards the earth*
*without having the time to say the words*
*It was about to spread the freedom to the whole world*
*but did not survive the journey.* (43)]

Seven female students in black garments enter the stage. From the loudspeaker comes soft and tuneful piano music. From one direction a female students in black construct a human wall that prevents the male student and the female students reaching each other. After a while they manage to break the wall of dancers and eventually find each other.

The female students form a ring lit by candles. Another, this time more aggressive male student enter the stage. With stern eyes he stares at the other two youngsters. He wrestles with the boy who soon afterwards gets shot in the head and the performance ends.

Then one of the sponsors, the owner of the local bookshop, gives a short speech. He stresses that all the funding for the project over the years is because of the wish to stimulate the written word.

As part of the 15th anniversary programme the researcher invited to study the project, i.e. me, is also invited to offer reflections on the project. While the bookshop owner stresses the economic motivation for the project the researcher places the project more within a cultural and sociological frame. Accordingly, the *Garden of Thought* had become both a tradition and an institution. In post-modern times when traditions are being broken down, *Garden of Thought* has created a new tradition that will continue to develop. This perspective questions the accepted view among youth culture researchers, that young people today are not interested in traditions. Rather, *Garden of Thought* shows the need for continuing and renewable traditions.

When it is time to present the best drawing of the year (im.org.on, s 27) an Art teacher underlines that this is a milestone in the development of the project since the chosen drawing is the first that has been digitally produced. The acceptance of digital techniques had thus meant

another developmental step for the project, certainly according to the Art teacher.

An award ceremony is also staged where favourite poems of the students teachers are awarded. Finally all prize-winners enter the stage and a round of applause echoes in the assembly hall. To summarize: The most conspicuous factor with this performance, which lasts about one hour, is how 'naturally' students shift between different modalities. The published poetry tradition has successfully embraced a multimodal and media reflective happening consisting of illustrations, dramatizations, drawings, photographs, dancing etc. And in this respect the jeans' pocket approach and what it stands for seems to be adapting well to today's young people and the (post) modern media society.

### Concluding remarks

*Garden of Thought* is a successful longstanding, project which will probably continue for many years to come. The essence of the project was to give students at upper secondary school the opportunity to express their existential thought in the form of poetry. (Erixon, 2004).

Students participate in a range of activities when they take part in *Garden of the Thought*. They communicate not only with their own classmates and teachers but some have their poems published in book form. Therefore the students also strive to communicate with an anonymous audience. Emphasis over the years has shifted, but generally there has been an agreement on basic issues, such as that the word should be at the centre of the project and also that all students should be involved and encouraged to express themselves.

Due to the development of the media society, the project has been forced to become more media oriented. Over the years, photography, drawings, sound and illustrations of different kinds have come to occupy a place as independent aspects of communication, alongside the written word. The larger size and widening content of the collection from 2000 onwards both illustrate and confirm this development.

*The New London Group* has identified important basic changes in school literacy and education more widely, especially the various, different and multi-modal ways of expression, such as linguistic, visual, audible, and spatial and how these relate to each other. In the light of these discoveries the group has introduced to the literacy field the concept of "Design", which includes the 'grammars' of various semiotic systems including the languages and of

other semiotic systems such as photography, gesture, drama etc.

The project *Garden of Thought* may thus be understood as a multi-modal Design project in two separate parts; both the collection and final performance confirm that the 'jeans pocket' mentality is too limiting and private for a poetry project like the *Garden of Thought* at the beginning of the 21st century. The project and its participants unanimously seem to be saying to us: Let the future come!

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# Formative Evaluation of Projects in Art Pedagogy

***Hans Örtegren***

*Abstract*

This paper discusses how formative evaluation can be used as a component of Art-pedagogical projects. One aim of formative evaluation is to use methods of evaluation during the process which contribute to strengthening the operating methods of the project. A special focus is aimed at cooperation between institutions within the art-sector and secondary schools. Three empirical examples are given in order to show implications for the relations between aim, operating method and evaluation strategy.

In concluding, it is stated that in art-pedagogical projects, it might be rewarding to employ formative evaluation in order to rise the awareness of what happens when art is used to promote learning.

## *Introduction*

This paper deals with the question of how formative evaluation can become an active part of art-pedagogical projects. Particular focus is aimed at cooperation between institutions within the art-sector and secondary schools. I would like to emphasise that these collaborations can occur between teachers and other environments outside school as well (Mathiesen & Seligman 2004; Marner & Örtegren 2003). One key issue is also to study collaborative activities outside ordinary school settings, and how evaluation can be built in to such encounters.

Theories of evaluation and good practice in art pedagogy are discussed in order to sketch some opportunities for developing cooperation between schools and institutions of Art.

The key concept in this text is that an art-pedagogical project is nourished by a process wherein evaluation is embedded as a significant component. To illustrate this I have constructed a triangular model (Figure1), where *evaluation, aim* and *method* are positioned in each corner.



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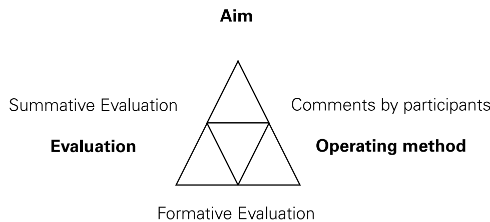


*Fig. 1 Interaction between aims, methods and evaluation in Pedagogical Art Projects*

The aim of any project, as exemplified in the figure above, is to ask *what* the content is and on questions answering *why* it is chosen, while method or form concentrates on *how to do*. Evaluation, on the other hand, judges *whether* the aim has been accomplished and if the method used is apt.

In the corners of the inner triangle, I have positioned *Summative Evaluation, Formative Evaluation* and *Comments by Participants* respectively. Different types of evaluation are discussed in Ove Karlssons book, already in its title claiming that evaluations are more than mere method (Karlsson,1999). In general, the purpose of the summative evaluation of a projects is to give qualified judgement of the results after the project has been completed, primarily in relation to the aim formulated (see Fig. 1).

The purpose of summative evaluation in teaching might be to grade the results of the students according to the criteria of assessments. When cooperating with actors outside school, it might be to report to the stakeholders on the extent to which the project has been successful in accordance with the aims of the project. Since project funders sometimes demand that an external evaluator be brought in, thus part of the evaluation process can be double-checking a project (Karlsson 1999).

Formative evaluation on the other hand is part of the project's ongoing process, and is measured first of all in relation to operating methods (see Fig.1 ). In formative evaluation, part of the purpose is not only to study the results of a process, but also to contribute to that process; this corresponds with "action research" (Rönnerman 2004). In other words: one of the aims of formative evaluation is to use methods of evaluation during the process which contribute to strengthening the operating methods of said project. In formative evaluation, we check how the process is proceeding, and determine how we can build in possible correctives along the way. We can even to a certain extent build in options designed to make slight changes in the aim of the project.

To be clear about what degree of effort is necessary to obtain a certain grade, often requires a dialogue between tutor and student. Thus one can say that evaluation, is partly linked to assessment criteria concerning reaching certain goals, completing certain courses, subjects etc. (Eisner 1996). A log can be kept by students as well as by other participants about the process – how does it work, how is the work proceeding? (Lindström 2002). Comments on the project made by participants are also featured in Fig. 1.

Below I wish to discuss projects where evaluation is seen both as as part of both the operating method and the aim. This is the main reason for explicitly displaying in the figure how evaluations on different levels can interact, in this case in a project with art-pedagogical aims. I want to stress that evaluation might imbed both summative and formative results, important factors in any pedagogical activity.

## *Participant's Reflections on Their Own Learning*

Nelson Goodman's view is that the question of art has to do with finding out when art is at stake, rather than defining the concept of *what* art is or means ( Örtegren 1992). In educational practice this is of the utmost importance. You don't have to deal with masterpiece in order to be working with art. You don't have to visit museums or galleries to work with art. You can make use of questions that artists put broach in any context, and let the students frame their questions in an artistic context. At the same time, it is often an advantageous to maintain close contact with artistic contexts like museums or galleries (Dodd & Sandell 2001).

One major aspect in all creative work, is the opportunity to expand your own understanding beyond your own established ideas. In art-pedagogical projects, a key aim – even a key rule – is to assume that the project will stimulate creativity. This works well together with the presupposition that *art* is closely linked to creativity. It also relates positively to to a broader phenomena like *visual culture*, if one stresses aspects of creativity (Freedman 2003). When we study, participate in or make art in an active and serious manner, we need to investigate time, effort and reflections about what the studied object means to us. When deciding about what meaning certain *art* holds for us, or what we bring to it, we can say that we reflect on our own learning.

Part of formative evaluation is concerned with these questions, or rather how to extract them from what is taking place in the process and

production involved in art-pedagogical projects. In art historian Ernst Gombrich's terminology, the terms "schemes" and "corrections" are derived from art practice. Formerly, the artist could depend on the exemplary works of the old masters. As it happened, often by random, the schemes changed. Even the slightest change could be part of what in later epochs came to constitute the new scheme (Gombrich 1962).

This can be seen as an indicator that mimesis (representation through likeness) does not have to stand in opposition to innovation in art, but can rather be seen as a complement to it. Transition of traditional forms is partly dependent on the very tradition it is supposed to overcome . We can compare this to the the evaluation of the "evolution" of the studied project. A competent evaluation might reveal the presuppositions and working models of the project.

Thus one aim of evaluation is to highlight what the participants already know, but they didn´t know that they knew. An evaluation that produces relevant knowledge reveals the structures and schemes of the project, but can also get a grip on the corrections that need to be made, and ultimately say something about the new thoughts that the project expressed. Christian Lundahl and Oscar Öquist quotes a similar approach for systemic epistemology (Lundahl & Öquist 2002).

### *Varieties of collaboration*

A critical aspect of all collaborative projects is to avoid conflicting aims. From the perspective of art institutions, one major aim might be getting the general public more interested in art as a unique way of acquiring different kinds of knowledge. The perspective of the students and teachers might be to show that working on art projects can be stimulating and creative, providing opportunities of communicating ideas and knowledge, as well as becoming aware of others ideas and knowledge on a particular subject.

Depending on the environments in which we find the students, teachers, and the art institutions, one can formulate three major goals of art-pedagogical projects:

- To support learning skills in the subject area studied.
- To support creative processes in the subject area studied.
- To support communication skills by and between the participants.

These *aims* relate to the *operating methods* as well as the *evaluation strategies* (see fig. 1).

### *Three Empirical Examples*

Professional exhibitions visited by students can be a starting point for the student's own projects. The aim can be to create:

- Exhibitions by students in collaboration with institutions of art and shown predominantly in school environments (Örtegren 2004; Carlgren 2007).
- Exhibitions made by students in collaboration with institutions of art and shown predominantly in art environments, i.e. galleries, museums (Malmquist 2006).

Professional exhibitions visited by students can stimulate them to make comments and remarks on professional work in art environments, continuing to do so when the students hve returned to their school environments. Furthermore, the professional exhibitions can influence the final show of the students own projects, as they compare themes, form and content in their work with the professional work seen previously.

I have selected three examples of collaborative work where museums and galleries are used as a platform for art-pedagogical work. I have also contributed to these projects as an evaluator. They have been selected to exemplify first short – term activities, secondly projects that are coordinated on a larger scale involving many different schools, and thirdly international projects involving student participants from different countries.

They have also been selected in order to illuminate the possibilities of using formative evaluation as a means to reach the aims of the respective projects. The main focus of evaluation in each Project is related to Figure 1.

### *A Short-Term Project in Namibia*

- Students at Windhoek College of Education, working in cooperation with the National Gallery of Windhoek, March 2005.

During two weeks in spring of 2005, I created a project involving 14 final – year students at Windhoek College of Education in Namibia, based on paraphrasing the display at the Windhoek Gallery of Art. Three major distinctions were presented as points of departure; form, content or style. The project was presented in a lecture, and assignments were given to students whereby they were to create paraphrases of art they found interestingly linked to their own cultural roots.

For this, the National Art Gallery in Windhoek was used, and the students picked out one object

each that brings cultural identity to mind. Then followed some time to make sketches and notes at the museum of the objects each person had chosen. The next step consisted in making a paraphrase, transforming the piece to a formal, content- or style-oriented object. During this phase, the student had to make sure distinctive visual characteristics from the object paraphrased remained, but also that significant changes and personal variations be incorporated. The new object also needed to handy in size, in order for there to be room display. The last phase was comprised of paraphrase in relation to the original object. This was conducted on site in the Gallery in connection to the paraphrased work. Finally we discussed how this type of connection with objects, could be made with objects other than works of art. Some students paraphrased pottery and other handicrafts for sale in the gallery shop. The discussion focused on how similar work could be done in primary schools. The project was documented on video, and the students also wrote a report of their working process.

In this case, finding out how the aim of the project was obtained, can include different participants; teachers, students and gallery employees alike can judge both the process and the result. The criteria for this can be built into the project, and the work evaluated might gain several advantages. Each student was asked to monitor their input, their process and the final outcome. In doing so, each student was also asked to focus on the aim of the project.

They also took part in summing up some common topics of discussion raised by the project.

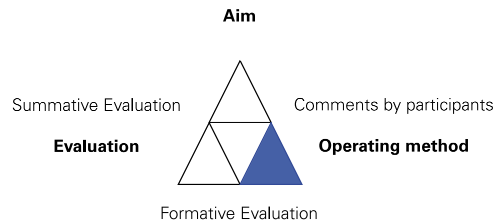


*Fig. 2 Interaction between aim, method and evaluation in Namibian Art Project.*

The main evaluation focus is inscribed in the shaded lower right triangle (Fig. 2).

The formative elements of working in this project consisted in the students made reflecting upon their processes while working, and ultimately analysing the possibilities of making similar work with their future students.

## *A Large-Scale Project in Sweden*

- KUL project – Gävle – Sweden 2001 – 2004

This project run over three years and was supported by the Swedish Art Council (Kulturrådet). I was consulted as an external evaluator during the last year of the project. The aim was to strengthen research and development in the pedagogical activities of museums and galleries. The goal was to encourage cooperation between local and regional levels, ultimately integrated into ordinary practise.

The Art Department of the Regional Museum of Gävleborg (Länsmuseum Gävleborg) applied for and recieved funding to reconstruct a children´s space, a website with information about the art gallery of the museum, and projects involving pupils, teachers and artists elaborating common projects on the theme ”Soul of the Site” ( platsens själ) ( Örtegren 2004).

In evaluating the project, I had the opportunity to make a conduct formative evaluation, due to the fact that when I got involved, there was still one more year remaining. During this time, I repeatedly visited the museum, and also took part in local school shows. Thus it was possible as an evaluator to contribute on a formative ground. Interviews and conversations with artists and project leaders were also part of the ongoing development, and some of my work consisted in participating in meetings aimed at further developing the project in the long term.

Summarizing the local school projects, it was clear that most of them were successful, and in the cases that could have worked out better, one could discern a lack of understanding between class teachers and the artists involved. Thus a key factor for a project to work out well, was to make sure that this cooperation worked smoothly and lay ground for a successful communication. It also became clear that presenting the work had a huge impact on the whole. When this phase was carried out in a way that spilled over from ordinary school work to an event attended by invited guests and in some instances covered by local media, it strengthened the project considerably.

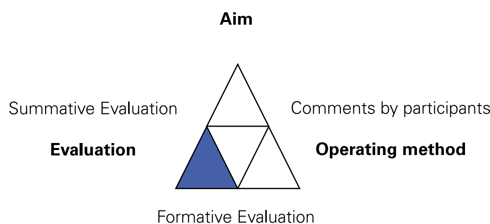


*Fig. 3 Interaction between aim, method and evaluation in KUL Project.*

The main evaluation focus is inscribed in the shaded lower left triangle (Fig. 3).

The ways for creating opportunities for new projects to arise depend on creating satisfying outcomes for the different actors involved the Project. ( in financial terms this is called ”win – win” situations). In order to do so, one must be aware and have a good understanding of the specific factors that come into play in both school enviroments and the museums. Ultimately, it was clear that the knowledge about cooperation had risen considerably as a result of the project, if we are to trust statements made during the interviews with participants from school, artists and from museum people (Örtegren 2004).

### *An International Project*

- Fantasy Design (EU project) 2001–2004

The Fantasy Design project was conducted between 2003 and 2006, implemented in close cooperation between actors in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Scotland (Kapanen & Svinhufvud 2005). External evaluators Anders Marner and the present author, visited The Lighthouse in Glasgow and The Design Museum in Helsinki. The evaluation includes observation of design educational situations and the final international exhibition. Coordinators on international and national levels and actors such as teachers, design pedagogues and professional designers have been interviewed. Documents including the original EU-application, the Fantasy Design Catalogue, websites, national and individual evaluations, magazines, articles, TV programs and pictorial documentations of different parts of the project have been studied.

In each country, schools and designers worked together with on the concept of creating “Fantasy Designed” products. Some of these were put together in touring exhibitions. Over 75 000 people visited the international exhibitions in Helsinki, Gent and Glasgow. The touring international exhibition and the national and local exhibitions made the pupils´ efforts and design education in schools visi9ble to the public. Several national introductory courses and continuing education courses have been arranged and an international teachers seminar was conducted in Oslo. Teaching material for educational projects was produced, including the exhibition catalogue. On the website, other educational material could be downloaded by teachers to use in their design education. Cooperation and means for bringing schoolchildren and designers together were successful.

The project achieved the objectives stated in the application. It focuses on complete communicative processes, in which the pupils have taken part, verifying the fact that the pupils have been taken seriously in their work. Fantasy Design also focused on teachers´ continuing education, which creates sustainability to design education in school. It is forward-looking in its ambition to educate for creativity and promote cooperative "win-win" situations between institutions like schools and museums, and also between countries ( Marner & Örtegren, 2006).

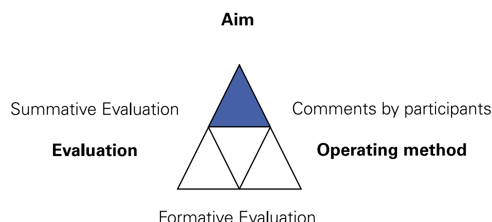


*Fig. 4 Interaction between aim, method and evaluation in Fantasy Design Project.*

The main evaluation focus is inscribed in the shaded top centre triangle ( Fig. 4).

Although I refer here to an external summative evaluation, I want to pinpoint the formative elements involved. The project as such had come to an end, but the formative input was comprised of the topics discussed with the representatives of the respective countries involved. They were also asked to complete their analyses of the projects after the interviews were conducted. Furthermore, since the idea behind summative evaluation is partly to draw conclusions for the benefit of forthcoming projects, this has in that sense a formative value. ( Marner & Örtegren 2006).

## Concluding Remarks

A variety of reasons for conducting a collaborative Art – pedagogical project have been mentioned above. I now wish to sum up by discussing how these can be supported by integrating formative evaluation into the very projects. Formative evaluation can be an important tool in supporting learning skills and creative processes. It can help participants to focus on process and product both together and separately. It can serve to aid the way those involved to see their role and what they can contribute to in the project. It can also be a part of the coordination of the project. For these reasons, it is clear that developing specific formative evaluation, should be considered when a project is sketched. My suggestion is that the aims should be defined so that the purpose and effects of formative evaluation are also included as an aim in itself.

To avoid a too normative evaluation perspective, creativity could be built in to evaluation, making changes possible as the result of formative evaluations. Formative methods of evaluation in visual art projects invite the participants to become aware of the pedagogical potential inherent in art.

One conclusion is that when schools and extramural institutions meet in project, mutual formative learning is likely to take place, especially if formative evaluation is well integrated into the design of the project. This can promote the communication skills of and between the participants.

Somewhat philosophically one can presume that any activity that has a strong pedagogical aim, (i.e. that is primarily used as a tool to promote learning) can come in conflict with a traditional definition of *what* art is about. On the other hand, using the definition of art as something that takes place *when* certain premises are at hand, it might be the pedagogical focus that helps creating an understanding of artistic concepts. The above listed aims are differently expressed in different projects, and differ depending on the participants involved, but it could be fruitful to link them together. At the same time, it is important to develop collaboration until it becomes a "win-win" situation for all participators.

In any educational project, it is pedagogically wise to make sure that an evaluation of the process followed along with the production. It is important to gather data from the process, and in many cases it is an advantageous to analyse process data while the process still is going on. In some respects, mid-evaluations, part-evaluations and so on are constructed for these purposes. In art-pedagogical projects it might be even more rewarding to use formative evaluation, in order to arise the awareness of what happens when art is used to promote learning outcomes.

As I have attended to demonstrate, evaluation focus varies according to project, but I have also emphasized the importance of the connection between aim, operating method and evaluation form. To promote understanding and the fulfilment of the aim in art-pedagogical projects, making corrections along the way is imperative. In order for this to occur, formative evaluation needs to be taken into account.

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