

## **Young people's embodied voices: Experiences and learning in dance education practices across the world**

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### **Abstract**

In this panel, selected findings from ongoing dance research projects, which draw attention to the voices of young people, are presented. The projects are conducted in different educational, social, and cultural contexts, with children living in such different places as Northern Europe and the Middle East. The panel seeks to cast light on what seems significant in the young people's accounts of their dance experiences, while investigating the types of embodied learning that dance can generate, as well as discussing the meaning of the accounts related to their specific contexts. Through the presentation of different research projects, it becomes clear that there are some similarities in the experiences of the young people when looking at what seems meaningful to them in their dance experiences. It is important to constantly question what the specific contexts and the underlying educational philosophies mean in relation to possibilities for experiencing and learning. To question what our own voices as researchers are, and how we bring the young people's "voices" forth, is important. This is done via different methodological strategies in the four studies presented in this panel.

*Keywords:* education, multi-modal, experiences, embodiment, collaborative projects

### **The entire school dances: Dance, democracy, and embodiment in a school context (Eeva Anttila)**

This presentation illuminates selected findings from an on-going dance education project that began in 2009 and is situated in Kartanonkoski School in Vantaa, Finland. The school has approximately 700 students and 45 teachers (grades K-9). The project introduces dance and embodied learning to the entire school community in an attempt to facilitate accessibility of dance for all students despite age, gender, or socio-economic background. The five-year long project, funded by the Ministry of Education and the City of Vantaa in connection with a national art education project, aims at

understanding the role of embodiment in all learning, and at developing democratic, collaborative pedagogical practices that involve human beings and communities in a holistic way.

Since dance is not an independent subject in the Finnish national curriculum, it needs to be integrated in the school curriculum through other subjects. A professional dance teacher is responsible for dance instruction, and classroom teachers and subject teachers participate in the project by integrating creative movement activities and strategies for a focus on embodied learning in their own classrooms. The dance teacher collaborates with the classroom teachers and subject teachers in planning the content for her classes so that dance supports the learning goals of the school curriculum. The teachers suggest topics that they would like to integrate with dance, and they are also encouraged to integrate dance and creative movement activities in their own classes. The teachers have also participated in professional development training in relation to dance and embodied learning. The areas that have been covered in dance range from geometry to language arts, from history to biology, from abstract concepts like symmetry and identity, to more practical skills, such as motor and social.

The leading pedagogical principle is to apply the notion of *embodied learning* in dance classes and in other classes. The cornerstones in putting embodied learning into practice are the following:

- Body and mind work together in learning;
- Movement and concepts are connected;
- Action and thinking take place simultaneously;
- Science and art influence and support each other;
- The physical and the ideal discuss with each other;
- Reality and imagination are intertwined;
- The living body and the lived body are united in forming human consciousness. (Thompson, 2007)

The study that accompanies the project investigates the kinds of experiences and learning that dance can generate, and aims at articulating embodied learning epistemologically and theoretically. It develops a conception of learning that embraces bodily knowledge, involves the entire human being and intertwines social, physical, and imagined realities.

Methodologically, the study is inspired by collaborative action research. It intends to give voice to the school community: all students, teachers, parents, and staff, as well as to the author (Reason & Bradbury, 2008). Another inspiration comes from communicative evaluation research that considers the researcher/evaluator a tutor and a subject in the research process (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Epistemologically, the study seeks to overcome a gap between embodied and socially constructed knowledge, and demonstrates how embodied practices and experiences can be reflected through language.

Qualitative data is collected from all students and teachers of the school through interviews, written accounts, drawings, observations, and videotaping. Data collection continues throughout the dance project. Analysis focuses on the lived experiences, observations, and reflections of the students, teachers, staff, and parents in relation to the notion of embodied learning. By documenting and interpreting the experiences and observations, the study tracks the process from multiple viewpoints and illuminates how dance may be a part of developing innovative and democratic pedagogy.

While the purpose of the study is to develop and articulate the notion of embodied learning, the specific research questions are these:

- How do students of a public school describe their learning experiences related to dance?
- How does the school community (teachers, staff, parents, students) reflect on the educational value of dance in a public school context?
- What kinds of learning and knowing can dance elicit?

This presentation focused on the first question and illuminated initial thematic findings based on data from two sets of student interviews, conducted in May 2010 and in August 2011. Altogether, about 60 students have been interviewed. The students took part in interviews in pairs; two girls and two boys from each grade level participated in both sets of these semi-structured interviews that focused on students' views and experiences regarding the dance project.

**The importance of collaboration** was evident in students' accounts, like the following:

[In dance], you get to move much more and even talk to your mates. (Boy, 7th grade)

[In dance], everyone gets to do things together ... Group spirit, somehow. Then it is easy to perform together. (Girl, 9th grade)

In collaborating with their classmates, and also when solving movement tasks on their own, the students can often make decisions themselves. **The need to make their own choices** seems to be quite strong:

[In dance] you get to invent your own things and you don't have to do the same than others all the time. (Girl, 4th grade)

It is fun when you can decide the movements yourself, that you are not compelled, you do not have to do something and you have influence. (Girl, 8th grade)

**The desire to move** is also reflected in some accounts above. Some students address this desire directly:

It is just what I need, movement and action. (Boy, 3rd grade)

[In dance] you get to do things yourself and move. You don't have to sit at your desk. (Girl, 9th grade)

Some students seem to reflect on **the significance of making connections**:

I prefer doing dance and math together, because then you learn two things at the same time. (Girl, 2nd grade)

In connection to dance, you can learn for example English; it is good and easy to connect to dance ... and math, the number of steps, the counts... (Boy, 6th grade)

Some, on the other hand, speak about **the willingness to be challenged**:

[I would like] that we would have complicated things, really complicated, well, not really complicated but quite complicated so that we could create a show that I just talked about. (Boy, 3rd grade)

Last year I had too easy steps so I would like to have more difficult steps as well, sometimes. (Girl, 8th grade)

Students seem not to be content with just play, easy, or everyday steps or movements. In order to be engaged, they seem to ask for tasks that require concentration and practice. In terms of the purpose of the project and the aim of the study, it is most interesting to note that the students also demonstrated an **intuitive understanding of embodied learning**:

In dance you do not necessarily learn so much but you learn through a more pleasant way, a little bit less at one time ... you learn to remember certain things because you move at the same time. (Boy, 6th grade)

[In dance] you might learn more when you are allowed to do things yourself, with your body. You could learn much more ... If you would really start to develop this, it would really work. (Girl, 9th grade)

In some accounts above, such as the last one, the students seem to be looking towards the future, and in some sense participating in further planning the project. This aspect is very interesting from the viewpoint of collaborative research and developing community in a democratic spirit.

It seems fitting, however, to close this brief presentation of the thematic analysis by students' accounts on **the sense and joy of dance**:

Children get joy from it and still they learn something ... it is like playing and school at the same time; it is school but it still feels fun. (Boy, 4th grade)

Dance is needed so that there would be some fun in school, that there would be collaboration and such. Fun studying and a bit different and we would have good spirits in school. (Girl, 9th grade)

In all, the data illuminates students' need for more action, choice, collaboration, and fun in school. With increasing physical passivity, active, embodied methods are desperately needed. Findings in fields such as neuroscience and embodied cognition substantiate the significance of embodiment in all development and learning. The road towards change in pedagogical practices and educational philosophy seems to be long and winding. The Finnish national curriculum was revised just a month before this panel was presented, and after three years of advocacy and lobbying, dance and

drama were left out. Drama will, however, be added as a learning method when new subject curricula is written. Dance will, hopefully, be included within drama and within the increased amount of physical education.

### **The silent language of dance: Unfolding children's multi-modal experiences of dance as artistic practice (Charlotte Svendler Nielsen)**

What are children's possibilities for embodied learning when they are involved in dancing and watching professional dance pieces? With an ethnographic and phenomenologically-inspired approach, children's expressions about their experiences as dancers and as spectators of professional dance works are captured through "multi-modal interviews" (Svendler Nielsen, 2009) and "videographic participation" (Svendler Nielsen, 2012). Here, the outcomes of an intensive field study carried out at a school in a small village about an hour from the capital of Denmark (Copenhagen) are presented and discussed. As part of this research project, I followed a third grade class (9-year-olds) while they had dance lessons with a professional dancer who came to the school every day for a week, and while they went to watch a dance performance at a dance theatre. Both the performance and the dance lessons were part of the SWOP international festival for modern dance focusing on children and young people, held in Roskilde (DK) in May 2012. The focus of my work was to study the children's embodied learning possibilities while dancing and co-creating a dance piece themselves, and while being spectators watching the professional performance. Here I will give examples of how the children have expressed their experiences both as dancers and as spectators, and I will also present some tentative analyses of what the children's embodied learning processes seem to hold.

#### **What do the children experience while dancing?**

How can we "capture" children's experiences? How can we get close to their experiences? And how can we create knowledge about experiences that can only hardly be verbalized? This is a methodological challenge. To try to come about this challenge, I am working with two research methods that I have developed in order to find out about processes that are difficult to verbalize: one is "videographic participation" (Svendler Nielsen, 2012), and as part of multi-modal interviews (Svendler Nielsen, 2009), the children participate in an exercise in which they are asked to make a drawing of their favorite movement from dance. The exercise has two parts: one in which they draw themselves doing the movement that they choose, and another in which they draw their experience of doing the movement. It is not easy for all children at this age to understand this distinction, which is why I decided they make two drawings. A couple of examples follow here:



Figure 1. *To hop on one leg*. Drawing exercise of favorite movement from dance showing "me doing the movement" and "my experience doing the movement."



Figure 2. *To jump over my classmates.* Drawing exercise of favorite movement from dance showing “me doing the movement” and “my experience doing the movement.”



Figure 3. *To jump and fly.* Drawing exercise of favorite movement from dance showing “me doing the movement” and “my experience doing the movement.”



Figure 4. *To turn around.* Drawing exercise of favorite movement from dance showing “me doing the movement” and “my experience doing the movement.”

### **What do the children experience while watching a dance piece?**

As part of this dance project, the class went to watch a modern dance performance at a theater. The piece was "Ritual" by Next Zone/Lene Boel. The choreographer describes that it is a visual journey inspired by Inuit culture, urban breakdance battles, arctic nature, and global warming. The following narrative is one outcome of the analysis of a video I recorded during the performance, and an interview I did with two boys sitting on the stage just after:

*Rhythmic music [da-da-dam, da-da-dam] and voices used as instruments [ya - ya, ya, ya] are filling the space of the theatre. Two dancing men are rolling their shoulders and bending their knees rhythmically in front of each other. They are dressed in baggy white clothes. Victor is staring at them while his neck is moving silently in the rhythm of the drums: da-da-dam, da-da-dam, da-da dam. Suddenly, he turns to a boy sitting beside him, smiling, and with his blue eyes wide open, as if saying, "Did you see that?!" The sound changes to the loud noise of breaking ice flakes [hrrrrrrr]. I turn the camera towards Mehmet who sits beside Victor. He sits on his knees staring and smiling at the dancers. When the dancers move to a certain place on the stage, he moves his whole body in that direction. When they point to the ceiling, he gets higher up on his knees and bends his neck all the way back in his efforts to see what they are pointing at. The light is all blue and gives an impression of a cold and icy landscape. Victor and Mehmet do not seem to pay attention to anything else other than the two dancing men on the stage. They move closer to each other and start talking about what they see: "Hey, look there! Wow what a jump!" "Yes! And see there!" The lights go out and all of the children start clapping. The performance is over.*

*I grab Victor and Mehmet and we sit in a corner of the stage to talk about their experience. I first ask them what they think the piece was about. Mehmet answers, "It is a story that they tell in a dancing way." And I ask what the story was about. He says, "There were many stories," and Victor adds, "There were many places where they were. They were in Egypt and then they were in the jungle." Mehmet continues, "And they were looking for a treasure. And they were in the woods where there was a wolf." I ask why they thought they were in the jungle and those places. Mehmet says that he "could see that they were digging and found a coffin with a treasure." Victor says, "The music also told that. And they were moving stones." I go on asking if they saw anything which was like what they did with the dancer who taught them for some days at their school two weeks earlier. Victor recognizes "that what we did with the arms." While Victor talks, Mehmet is rolling his head toward the floor, sitting up, and then says, "There was something from the warm-up," and then he does the movement, rolling forwards again. I ask, "And they also did that in the piece?" "Yes! They did," he says while nodding. I finally ask if they would like to try to do what the dancers did. "Yes!" they say at the same time. And Mehmet continues, "I would really like to be able to do ... what they do when I grow up! Somersaults and all that." And Victor says, "Me too!" Mehmet then*

*spontaneously says, “I think everybody enjoyed this because it was ... it was really cool.”*

### **Reflection on the boys’ learning possibilities**

When looking into what the boys are *saying*, I can highlight the following as being what they have learned in the process:

- It is possible to tell a story in a “dancing way”;
- They both use their imagination and creativity to “see”/make meaning of what is going on;
- They relate to the music (it can help to tell a story and make meaning of a dance);
- They both recognize special ways of moving, which they have tried themselves;
- Mehmet sees new possibilities for his own life (he wants to dance when he grows up).

Mehmet is a boy who is having difficulties in school in different ways – both with the subjects and socially. He is sometimes isolated. In dance, he has obviously had an experience of being someone different and with other relations to his peers. His example shows that being involved in dance gives possibilities for developing personally, which might also have an influence on what it is possible for him to learn in the other subjects.

When combining what the children *say* with what they *do*, both when dancing themselves and when watching dance, it becomes visible that the children, through working with dance as an artistic practice, develop:

- An expanded bodily repertoire;
- An expanded consciousness in/and about movement, consciousness about oneself and others in movement;
- Expanded kinaesthetic empathic skills and an expanded competence to involve oneself with others (relation);
- An expanded repertoire of ways of acting and solving tasks (creativity).

The points that I have drawn out from the interviews and observations point to the following kinds of learning: new abilities/skills; new knowledge; new ways of participating; new ways of expressing oneself; and new ways of experiencing oneself, others, and the subject. Further my analysis reveals an expansion of consciousness in/and about movement. Certain pedagogical values and working methods appear to be critical in fostering these outcomes, especially the children’s active involvement in the creative and performative processes, supported by the teacher as a facilitator in democratic processes. In the creative processes, the bodily “resources” of the children become visible and everyone can participate as the body that they are.

### **Kids’ dance stories: Personal narratives from the South Pacific, Southern Mediterranean, and South China Sea (Nicholas Rowe)**

The *Our Dance Stories* research project has sought to reveal diversity in dance practices and the ways in which dance intersects with people’s lives across the Middle East, Asia, and the South Pacific. To do this, a team at the University of Auckland Dance Studies Programme has gathered hundreds of personal narratives from people in diverse socio-cultural contexts across these regions, from within refugee camps, opera houses, suburban studios, urban slums, and village halls. We have travelled through these regions, teaching workshops and conducting semi-structured

interviews with anybody who has a story to tell about dance. Through these interviews, we have specifically sought personal stories that tell of a specific place and a specific moment in time, however brief, which the storyteller has directly experienced. Through the first-hand description of people, events, or environments, such anecdotes can emphasize the uniqueness of an individual's experience and voice (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). We value such descriptive memories, as we consider that it is in such personal experiences that difference is revealed. From a post-modernist viewpoint, the phenomenological subjectivity of personal stories can allow more divergent interpretations of an event to emerge (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). By allowing unanticipated difference through often-minor descriptive details, personal narratives reveal the multiple ways in which people experience the world (Barthes, 1966; Richardson, 1990).

From a somatic perspective, the intimacy of a personal memory can prompt the visceral details of embodied knowledge in ways that do not conform to standard phrases and vocabulary associated with the moving body. When trying to distinguish the peculiarity of a particular dance moment from other dance moments, storytellers create a descriptive language that inevitably disrupts and broadens the way we currently understand and refer to dance. It is hoped through this gathering of anecdotes that we might challenge generalizations and stereotypes about what it is to dance and to be a dancer in different cultural contexts.

The *Our Dance Stories* project is culminating in three books, which present these collected stories side-by-side. Each book is based on a different region, the first of which is scheduled for release in 2013: *Talking Dance, Sharing Stories: the Southern Mediterranean* (Rowe, Buck, & Martin, 2013). Within this paper, I focus on children's dance stories from the Southern Mediterranean and present three examples of these anecdotes from Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine.

One of our key methodological concerns was about how memory can be induced and extended within an interview. We followed the premise that memories exist because they are significant moments, although their significance may not be fully realized. This ambiguity allows the personal anecdotes to reveal the past not "so much as records of those times but (as) tools by which to act in the present" (Binney, 2004, p. 75). Inducing such anecdotes can require an eliciting of tangible details and the suspension of an interviewee's desire to "get to the point." We found the recalled details of how young dance learners were sensually responding to an environment to be more unique than in the interpretation of those details. While the subsequent opinion that often concludes or precedes an anecdote (and rationalizes its retelling) is often well-refined and aligned with wider cultural viewpoints, the sensual details of a memory can suggest more diverse experiences.

The first story from Fatima, in Saida, Lebanon, reveals the emergence of a story from recent memory, possibly a story that has not been told before. This transcript illustrates a shift from generalization and cultural representation to a specific personal moment:

Dabke is our folklore, it's our tradition, so when I dance it, I feel that I am near to my country, I feel that I am a representative of my country. When we are on the stage, the position of being in front of lots of people, it gives me a special feeling, that I am a responsible girl and I have to give a special performance. I was looking into my friends' eyes [and] they were proud of me; they were clapping and it was amazing. Also, when the trainer said it was good, that was a special feeling too. Our trainer, he says "You can do it." He encourages us. I feel that he is not a teacher or a trainer; I feel that he's my big brother. He behaves as if he is

one of us. He says if someone falls down, he knows our feeling. He said, “If someone does a wrong mistake, don’t worry, just continue, just continue.

This next story is from Rula, in Sweifeh, in Amman, Jordan. It is an anecdote, with a switch from a summative biography to a more specific episode. Again, it is a story that is probably emerging for the first time:

When my parents got a divorce, I lived with my mom. I think by the time I was about nine, I started to create my own things, make up dances, things like that. I was dancing by myself mostly, actually; you know what, I used to use the reflection of the window to dance. I could only dance when it was dark, so I could see a reflection of my dancing – because then I did not have a big mirror – now I have a big mirror on my closet, so I don’t have to wait until it is dark!

But then it was just me. I’d just dance for hours in my room, my mom was busy and she didn’t care what I did, so I’d come home from school you know, and for hours that’s what I’d do. Sometimes I’d practice in the middle of the night, or early in the morning – as long as it was dark, because I thought it was really important then that I could see my reflection.

The last story is from Noora, in Ramallah. As a young woman recalling a childhood moment, it is a story from the more distant past. It has probably been told before and so has already been valued by the interviewee. This lets the story be retold much more purposefully as a specific moment:

This performance that we were doing, it was in Jerusalem and it was in Al Hakawati Theatre and I remember that day very clearly, so very clearly. I was supposed to go on stage and I was very excited, but also at the same time very afraid to go on stage in front of an audience. It was terrifying for me but I knew that I wanted to do it.

But before we got to go on stage, the Israelis came. The Israeli army came and raided the place, and I remember Khalid, who was my teacher, he literally held us all, he grabbed the kids, all of us – as many as he could – and he threw us in this very small room, to protect us from what was happening and what was going to happen. In the very tiny room there was a small window – a tiny window – and I remember my sister opening the window and I looked out. I looked out and I saw the soldiers hitting my mother, and then my sister, and then my father, and then my other sister and then taking them away. Then the soldier doing this must have seen us looking, so he threw a tear gas bomb at the window so we had to close the window.

These three stories reveal much about the diversity and uniqueness of childhood experiences of dance. How they emerged within the interview (as a singular event in the near past, as a summary of events in the distant past, and as a singular event in the distant past) also provides indications of how we might gain insights into the ways such childhood dance experiences might be brought into discourse on dance and childhood.

### **Voicing young people through pedagogical design (Tone Pernille Østern)**

SPACE ME is a research and development project that investigates learning processes among young people, teacher students, and teachers when arts and science are combined. The project aims at modeling a pedagogical design that allows for active student involvement in scientific and artistic learning about space. In this, there is an underlying wish to voice and dialogue actively with young people. Around 250 14-year-olds in two public schools in the city of Trondheim in Norway participated in the project during the 2011-12 school year. Many different artistic and scientific entrances to learning about space were tried out during the year, such as storyline, playback theatre, scientific demonstrations, and a professional dance performance spun around the stories that the young people shared in the project. The different parts of the project are described at [www.ntnu.no/plu/space-me](http://www.ntnu.no/plu/space-me), including photo and video documentation.

Staffan Selander and Gunther Kress (2010, p. 24) use the concept *pedagogical design* to direct attention to how learning processes are designed on many levels. The teacher is a designer of the teaching, and in addition, there are outer frames that have a strong influence on and power over the actual learning processes. In the end, the individual student re-designs information and intended learning aims through personal meaning-making processes. Selander and Kress (*Ibid.*, pp. 20-23) define the design concept as a forming of ideas, concepts, and patterns to create a new product or re-create an old one. Design is about adding something to the world which was not there previously, or seeing a traditional object in a new way. In this way, design changes the world, and design also changes the ways that people socialize and communicate. Design is never static and everlasting; design and re-design go on and on, changing objects, aesthetics, and ways of communicating. In the same way, Selander and Kress argue that thinking about teaching as a constantly developing work with pedagogical design directs attention to how form and content are deeply interconnected in learning processes. The concept of pedagogical design also emphasizes that there are important power issues connected to the chosen design. Design opens for something, and closes for something else. Which pedagogical designs open for the voicing of young people in their own learning processes?

In SPACE ME, learning is understood as a sign-creating activity and meaning-making communication within the frames of pedagogical design and institutional borders (Selander & Kress, 2010, p. 20). Lasse Thomas Edlev (2009, p. 20) defines artistic learning processes, in short, as a “symbolizing” attitude to phenomena, whereas scientific learning processes can be defined as “categorizing” learning processes. SPACE ME, then, is aimed at putting objective, categorizing knowledge about space in touch with subjective experiences, both students’ own and others’ creativity. This inspired the creation of a pedagogical design that opened up for the young peoples’ voices in terms of finding ways of cultivating their creativity and connecting to their own experiences. The Norwegian science curriculum (L06) encourages inquiry-based learning, and SPACE ME as a research and development project is built on a budding researcher approach. The Norwegian science curriculum says, “The universe as a theme opens for curiosity, wonder and fascination” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2006). These words are a great starting point also for artistic and pedagogical work.

The empirical material collected in SPACE ME consists of observations; video observations; interviews; a variety of written material by young people (knowledge tests, evaluations, reflective texts, and critics of the professional performance); similar written material by teachers; teacher educators, artists, and teacher students involved in the material; logs by active teachers and artists; a variety of different student products (visual products, performed products); and interviews using

visual documentation and reflection with selected informants (both young people and adults).

In the preliminary analysis of the large empirical material, the project group has identified some aspects of the pedagogical design that SPACE ME foregrounds and develops. These are aspects that all work towards engaging, voicing, and including, as well as provoking and transforming different young people in their learning processes. In the following, these aspects identified as important for this pedagogical design are briefly presented.

### **An aesthetic approach to learning**

A comprehensive aesthetic approach to learning is defined as active work in facilitating creative elaboration among the young people, but without a defined outcome. At its best, the young people can engage in a multi-layered working process. The first layer is the concrete theme: in the storyline developed in SPACE ME, for example, the concrete theme is design and training of a cyborg. The task was to design a cyborg that could survive on a long journey in space, and also train her for the different challenges she would meet. In this work, the students needed to find out objective/categorical knowledge about space and put this knowledge in touch with their own experience, common sense, and creativity. The task opened up a variety of sign-making activities, which could take multiple forms. The second layer in the working process, then, consists of this symbolizing work, with signs of the chosen modality. A third layer is metaphorical, in that the students engage in creating an overarching form for their own learning processes, and then give it a certain meaning.

### **Multimodality**

Selander and Kress (2010) describe multimodal meaning theory as an emerging area which is not very fixed, but fixed enough to make sense. Multimodal learning theory bounces off from an appreciation of the different kinds of modalities that are available in order to interpret and understand the world and create meaning. In SPACE ME, a variety of multimodal approaches to learning were developed. In the moment when the students worked with training the cyborg, they created a variety of different forms as they worked towards their goal. One group of students, for example, trained the cyborg for the experience of weightlessness through working in movement with falling and lifting. The young people, with support of a dance teacher, composed a dance using these movement elements, which served as a culminating product for the unit.

### **Multiplicity**

In SPACE ME, difference among students was seen as a generative force (Marques, 1998; Østern, 2009) in class, and the pedagogical design under exploration was stretched and re-formed instead of used to press students into an already fixed design. The main tool to accommodate the diversity among the young people was the active work with various modalities. The different kinds of products that the students produced were consciously defined as enriching. When the young people showed their different ways of training their cyborg, a teacher role-playing an enthusiastic professor helped the young people to point to and articulate the value in their product. This allowed for the different voices in the learning and teaching process to be heard. For the role-playing teacher, this demanded a high level of listening from the young people and the ability to improvise in the situation.

### **Inquiry-based learning**

The Norwegian national curriculum (L06) encourages a budding research approach for the teaching of science. Inquiry-based investigative learning is also the main way of working with creative

processes within the art subjects. In inquiry-based learning, the learning processes are positioned in the gap between “what I know” and “what I do not know.” In the empty spaces (the gaps) between what is said and what remains unsaid is a surplus of meaning, which interpretation might activate as meaning production (Østern, 2012).

### **Dramaturgical thinking in teaching**

Dramaturgical aspects are actively considered in designing SPACE ME in order to generate curiosity, “hooking” the students into the learning process, building tension, and creating variation (Karlsen, 2004). For example, the “hook” to engage the young people in the cyborg storyline was the dancer-installation cyborg. One morning when the young people arrived, the interactive cyborg just stood outside their classroom, waiting. A spacious sound accompanied her. She had lots of wires and buttons on her, with signs like “Please press the button” and “Please touch” printed on her t-shirt. Someone eventually dared to approach her and press a button. She started to dance, but only for a short while until somebody pressed another button or touched her. The meeting with the cyborg created an enormous energy among the young people; they made her dance with great enthusiasm, and from that point, it was easy to invite them into the work with their own cyborg. They were hooked. In SPACE ME, dramaturgy was understood as awareness of building tension and motivation in learning processes through the elements of composition, space, and body.

### **Embodied learning**

According to Margaret Macintyre Latta and Gayle Buck (2008), the gap between student and teacher is enfolded through embodiment. Leaning on Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s (1962/2002) phenomenological thinking, in SPACE ME, both teacher and students are understood as sensuous, affective bodies relating to each other intersubjectively. This “bodily between” is considered rich with learning possibilities.

### **Conclusion**

The aspects identified as characteristic of the pedagogical design developed in SPACE ME are the following:

- 1) An aesthetic approach to learning;
- 2) An emphasis on multimodality;
- 3) An understanding of multiplicity as a generative force in class;
- 4) Primarily inquiry-based learning;
- 5) Dramaturgical thinking;
- 6) A focus on embodied learning.

These aspects collectively are suggested for working towards engaging, voicing, and including, as well as provoking and transforming, young people in their learning processes.

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