Article

When Students Teach Creativities: Exploring Student Reports on Creative Teaching

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Abstract

In this article, I share a journey of research on student teacher reports regarding creativity pedagogies. The empirical material comprises student reports on teaching for creativity. The text draws on the literatures of creativities, creativity pedagogies, and professional improvisation, inspired by a backdrop of literature on narrativity and narrative writing. The text aims to discuss how creativity pedagogies can take place in different practical surroundings and to provide an example of how teaching in higher education can both contribute to research and be research-based. My research question is *What characterizes student teachers' reports on designs and choices when facilitating creative learning processes, and which interpretations and reflections do these reports evoke within their teacher?* In comparing student papers, I have conceptualized their common features into the following concepts: *context, skills, design*, and *trust*. Within the text, each of these concepts is addressed through example narratives extracted from the student reports. I conclude that a combination of aspects from each of the four concepts can be said to construct a liminal room of immersion.

> . . . [T]he best teachers apply immense creativity and profound content knowledge to their jobs, both in advance preparation and from moment to moment while in the classroom.
>
> Sawyer (2004, p. 12)

I often think of myself as a "new old teacher." Having had different occupations during my working life, I was never fully engaged as a teacher until the age of 53. As a new university college teacher, I have often reflected on such questions as: What sort of teacher do I want to be? What are my intrinsic values? How can I rehearse and learn to become a good teacher? What are my strengths and weaknesses? How can I be of service to my students? In this text, I share the story of my immersion in my students' written answers to a task. My work with these texts has been conducted to promote a better understanding of students' contextual environments when teaching for creativity, as well as to explore the usefulness of taking a research approach to everyday teaching and writing.

Before taking on a position as an arts pedagogy teacher on a small campus in Western Norway, I worked as a creative producer of concerts for children. For this reason, during the first year of my new job at our college, I was asked to conduct a number of small performative student projects in a project-based learning format (Tobias, Campbell, & Greco, 2015). During this work, I noticed that creative processes and projects were more meaningful and of higher quality when their means and directions of creation were not completely free, but, rather, were given a certain structure and intention regulated by the teacher. This thought interested me, and I decided to elaborate on it further. I launched a student task called *Teaching for Creativity*, which asked respondents about the ways in which pedagogical and thematic learning activity designs can restrain or promote pupils' creative processes. My students are master students specializing in either music or visual arts who are attending the study program *Creative Subjects and Learning Processes*.[1]

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A short version of the original student task looks like this:

> Elaborate a learning activity focusing on creative processes for an optional group of learners. Carry through one lesson. Observe, note, and evaluate. Based on your experiences, design a new lesson. It can be an elaboration of the prior lesson or it can be something else, but it has to build on experiences from the first intervention.[2]

The intervention–reflection–iteration process is inspired by the methods in Educational Design Research (McKenney & Reeves, 2012).

The assignment was elaborated for the first time, spring 2014, and was changed in response to feedback from colleagues before being presented to the students. Changes have also been made every year in response to assessments of students' abilities to carry through the task and student negotiations. The present exploration of student reports represents another opportunity for review.

This text displays features of creativity pedagogies that can be of use to future students, to me as their teacher, and to my readers. The intention of the article is to propose how an educator might research and report on her own teaching practice within the practicalities of her work flow. "Research based teaching" (Hyllseth, 2001) in higher education is forwarded by the Norwegian government as highly desirable, and this text represents one way in which such an approach might be understood, addressed, and applied.

My students teach in different environments ranging from kindergarten to upper secondary. Some lack teaching practices of their own, but have managed to complete the task regardless. Each year for the last 3 years, between 10 and 13 students in total have handed in answers to this assignment. Of these, I have worked with 13 of reports that both display direct empirical experience and resonate with my research question. The chosen 13 reports form the background material for this text. Direct examples and citations in the text are drawn from the reports of Alice, Anna, Lasse, Astrid, John, and Mia.

The Road Toward an Article

When I first received these student reports, I viewed them as narratives of processes, products, and engagement. I was inspired to jot down corresponding points, original ideas, and related thoughts to gather knowledge to support my process of learning to become teacher. After a while, I realized that my ritual with the reports was forming the beginnings of a research process. The reports seemed to be embedded with many aspects of creativity in teaching and learning. My interests began to circle around descriptions of processes concerning the relationships among pedagogical designs, teachers' functions, and pupils' opportunities to be creative.

During my wanderings through the landscape of student reports, theories, and reflections on creative pedagogy, I formulated my research question as follows:

> What characterizes student teachers' reports on designs and choices when facilitating creative learning processes, and which interpretations and reflections do these reports evoke within their teacher?

I have worked close with my material, searching for possible ways to inform this research question, aiming at describing, explaining, and discussing incidents and concepts as they are discovered.

In discussing rigor, Barrett and Stauffer (2009) state that "[r]esearch, of any kind, conducted well, is meticulously planned and carefully implemented and requires an investment of time, energy and resources" (p. 24). Researching my encounters with student work, however, has not been as planned or as scripted as these writers suggest it should be. Instead, the process has involved a spiraling series of discoveries. During readings, my thematic focus on creative teaching seemed to be more clearly addressed in some papers than others. By re-reading relevant papers and taking analytic research notes, I was able to extract relevant points. Later, I took up article writing, prepared and presented my work-in-progress at conferences (Holdhus, 2016a, 2016b), obtained feedback from listeners, read theories on both creative teaching and narrative methods and writing, sent article drafts to students, obtained feedback from them, read again, and rewrote in an iterative cycle (Richardson & St. Pierre, 1994). These activities have constituted my method, contributing to the building of analytic lenses and functioning as a process of triangulation designed to build trustworthiness (Flick, 2009). Chase (2005) states that "[c]ontemporary narrative inquiry can be characterised as an amalgam of interdisciplinary analytic lenses, diverse disciplinary approaches, and both traditional and innovative methods—all revolving around biographical particulars as narrated by the one who lives them" (p. 651), and I believe that these words accurately describe my activities. My analysis is thematic (Riessman, 2008) and I extracted the contents of texts and discussed themes as they became visible and related, using a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2014) and singling out conceptions that were frequent or appeared strong within the material.

When analyzing, my lens is that of the teacher, not that of the student or of the pupils taught by students. My interpretations, emphases, and choices in this text, thus, stem from my personal and professional background. In this context, my voice can be seen as authoritative because it is my construction of narrative that is forwarded (Chase, 2005). I consider myself to be a stakeholder because I am the one

who has determined the task, read and compared the reports, and interpreted them based on my own activities of reading and search for theories concerning creative education and narrativity. My approach, thus, raises some power issues. Specifically, to what extent am I entitled to re-shape, interpret, and comment on other people's texts, making them part of my story? I consider myself both a "storyteller" and a "story analyst" (Smith & Sparkes, 2008), and both I and my reader should remember that the texts from which I draw my material were not initially produced by me. Following power, there is also vulnerability. In this research case, I felt slightly uneasy displaying interpretations to report owners. How would they react to my interpretation of their work and to how the stories were written?

Creativity, Possibility Thinking, and Improvisation as Vehicles for Aesthetic Learning Processes

Creativity might be seen as an *essentially contested concept* (Gallie, 1956), which has an array of understandings and meanings that can be disputed, and where the discussion will never come to an end. It is acknowledged that all humans are creative, at least at an everyday level (Craft, Chappell, & Slade, 2014), and the issue of creativity is applicable to all of society. Creativity, thus, must draw on global and individual ethics and be perceived as a socially embedded cultural practice, the manifestations of which are restricted by cultural discourses (Burnard, 2012; Chappell & Craft, 2011).

Like other contested concepts, creativity must be contextualized and made relevant to where it is meant to function—in our case, public art education contexts. One definition of creativity useful in educational contexts is proposed by Craft et al. (2014):

> . . . at its most fundamental, inherent to creativity is generating new approaches or questions that facilitate transition from what is known ("what is") to what is new ("what might be"). (p. 18)

This definition's acknowledgment of a starting point where something is "known" to the individual is appealing to me as a constructivist teacher. My student Alice, a music teacher working with 2-year-olds in a kindergarten, automatically starts at this point:

> I chose to conduct a lesson based on the children's empirical knowledge, thus building on, communicating with and playing with their prior sensuous, feeling-based and reflexive experiences.[3] (From Alice's report)

Alice invites the children into play and communication that encourages them to move from "what is" to "what might be." In this example, she also points at how small children relate to the world in a holistic and sensuous way.

Austring and Sørensen (2006) propose three kinds of learning, which, though they are functionally integrative, gradually emerge from early childhood. In our first year(s), we learn empirically. Then, discursive learning is added. Aesthetic learning is suggested as the third kind of learning. Aesthetic learning comprises the two first kinds of learning, as well as the ability to treat metaphors and symbols and the preparation of experiences through sensuous, feeling-based, and ambiguous actions and interpretations. These aspects of aesthetic learning function as underlying factors to creative pedagogies (Austring & Sørensen, 2006).

Alice's approach to her lesson can be seen as a practical scaffolding of creativity. As learners, even when we are very young, we possess a knowledge base that is culturally constructed. To enhance learning, we try to use this knowledge base to understand the world (Vygotsky, 1978). However, the things we can learn from ourselves and our prior knowledge base are limited. According to Vygotsky (1978), though, there are traces of understanding or of mastering new things that are latent in our prior knowledge but can be fulfilled with others' help, and this latency is called *the zone of proximal development*. The helpers can be anyone: peers, family, or teachers. As we need helpers to learn, Vygotsky (1978) states that learning is an inherently social and relational enterprise. Bruner (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976), elaborating on Vygotsky's (1978) theories, claims that in teachers' professional scaffolding, there lies a diminishing and steering of the learner's choices to support personal aims. Scaffolds can comprise planned frames of content and lesson design; however, frames and plans cannot rule education totally. To scaffold adequately, teachers must also be able to improvise according to student and group needs (Sawyer, 2011).

A vehicle for creative teaching and learning is *an enabling context* (Craft, 2010) within which creative pedagogy can unfold. According to Craft (2010), a pupil's role is based on the pupil's agency, whereas the teacher's role should be characterized by "standing back." This might appear to be a passive approach to teacher agency; however, adding "actively" to "standing back" converts this role to the equivalent of scaffolding, as posed by Wood, Bruner & Ross (1976). In Craft's (2010) description, teachers who are "actively standing back" know "how and when to intervene, provoke, clarify, narrow down, inform, demonstrate and help children draw conclusions, through closely attentive and sensitive observation" (p. 52). Problems and ideas are elaborated through the pupils' and teacher's play, innovation, risk-taking, self-termination, intentionality, and imagination. To be able to scaffold, or actively stand back, both pedagogical improvisation and pre-designed frames are necessary educational tools (Sawyer, 2011). In our everyday lives, we improvise throughout the day. However, as Sawyer (2011) points out, education requires a more structured, conscious, and rehearsed type of

improvisation. Sawyer (2011) purports that professional improvisation in education is situated between structure and freedom; thus, it corresponds to my initial wondering and subsequent student task using structuring themes and pedagogical frames to both regulate and facilitate creativity.

My Concepts

Jeffrey and Craft (2004) distinguish between teaching creatively and teaching for creativity. However, I wonder whether it is possible to teach for creativity without teaching creatively; thus, I will avoid this dichotomy by using the term "creative pedagogies," encompassing both the teaching and the learning of creativities (Lin, 2011). By using *creativities* and *pedagogies* in the plural, I point toward a possible diversity of pedagogies and creativities (Burnard, 2012).

From students' direct addressing of processes and contexts in their reports, I have selected four concepts related to both student reports and prior research and books on creativities (Davies et al., 2013) and disciplined improvisation (Holdhus et al., 2016). These concepts are *context, skills, design*, and *trust*.

I certainly could have labeled these concepts otherwise, and another person could have and likely would have shaped this material differently. My framework, however, appears functional and relevant for discussing how students conduct and report the task *teaching for creativity*.

The concepts in question are "slippery" because they appear to be dependent on one another. They are intertwined; thus, it is difficult to address one theme without pointing to one or more of the other themes. To me, this points to relations both between concepts and material and among concepts themselves.

Inspired by Craft (2010), I have decided to use *context* as a concept that comprises, surrounds, and enables my themes. Aspects of all the themes, whether enabling or not, help to build the character of the context. *Trust* operates within *context*. Like the protagonist of a story, *trust* depends on well-functioning helpers and is attacked by antagonists. My two other concepts, *design* and *skills*, circle around inside *context*, sometimes bumping into trust, sometimes into context, and sometimes into one another. Context, craft, and design all appear to be double-faced characters, sometimes contributing to and sometimes limiting trust.

C for Context

In his work as a music teacher in upper secondary school, John tried to work out his creativity task while simultaneously coping with his school's framework. It seemed impossible for him to take a break from regular curricular activities to explore creativity designs with his class. As a substitute, he reported on two lessons on composing music for films. The tasks were to be handed in and graded, and they were individual. John did not seem to require pupils to provide feedback to one another, and his report included no reflections on the choice of or need for an individual approach. My interpretation, therefore, is that this approach was discursive, or "the way we do it." On the contrary, this choice could also have been made in order to efficiently achieve curricular demands. Group processes can take time, and using a group process without knowing if it will meet curricular demands for results can be daring. This points to aspects of confidence and vulnerability (or trust) within group creativity as effective learning tools (Sawyer, 2003). In this case, was there an underlying fear that teaching groups would endanger these pupils' learning or grades? Group processes might produce something incapable of fitting the ruling conceptions and subsequent evaluation of quality. In John's case, therefore, the traditional method of teaching and grading seemed to be the safer and better-known option.

Music teacher Mia, who taught in lower secondary school, on the contrary, dared to plunge into teaching creative groups, even if the results were graded. She reflected, "The social setting and group mechanisms seem to stimulate the work flow rather than being obstacles to progression" (from Mia's report).

John pointed out that some of his pupils had a performance approach to their work. In other words, they saw the teacher as an authority figure and worked to please him. Others relied more on their own competency (Bernstein, 2000). John's aim when scaffolding the performance-oriented students was to attempt to shift their approach toward a more self-confident way of creating music. John worked on posing the right questions and balancing supportive and a neutral/honest feedback. He referred to Beghetto and Kaufman (2011), who claim that it is important to find "a 'just right' balance between fluid encouragement and more critical feedback" (p. 103). John's approach, then, is an example of Beghetto and Kaufman's (2011) metaphor of *the Goldilocks principle*. Goldilocks, as we remember from the story of the three bears, worked systematically to find "just right" equipment and food in the bears' house. Beghetto and Kaufman (2011) urge teachers to rehearse to achieve this balance with pupils. John reflected on his pupils' approach to their work, claiming that the performance-oriented pupils were extrinsically motivated, while the competency-oriented pupils seemed to be intrinsically motivated. In such a situation, Beghetto and Kaufman (2011) advise to "minimize or 'immunize' the influence of extrinsic motivators by providing fluid options within more fixed menus of learning tasks—so that students might focus on the features of a task that are interesting and personally meaningful" (p. 107).

John's context seemed to rely heavily on grades and systems within a certain quality paradigm. In a way, these extrinsic motivating factors overruled the values of intrinsic motivation. This was a paradox for John, since, within music education, especially concerning the enterprise of "musical composition," there must be room for creativity, and creativity derives from intrinsic motivation (Amabile,

1985). John's attempts to amend the situation involved encouraging intrinsic motivation within the curricular and structural framework he was provided for his work.

According to Beghetto and Kaufman (2011), most teachers value student creativity. However, on the contrary, they also fear losing control over the intended learning. This is *the teaching paradox*: "teachers find themselves balancing two inverse tensions; 1) teaching requisite academic subject matter while still wanting to foster student creativity; and 2) wanting to allow for creativity yet fearing curricular chaos" (p. 94).

Readers may remember that, as I originally designed it, the *teaching for creativity* assignment contained an intervention. That is, my students were urged to try two different lesson designs: one very open and another more restricted. The purpose of this approach was to investigate whether a frame or a restricted task would be more rewarding to creative pedagogy than an open task. Not all of my students seemed to accomplish the intended objective. Students reporting from authentic institutional teaching situations, having restricted time to deliver results according to plans and curricula seemed to have problems carrying through an intervention. To me, their presented lessons seemed caught in a flow of planning, exploring learning material, handing in or performing results, and experiencing the subsequent grading of these results.

Society and school, as contributors to the *enabling context* for creative pedagogy (Craft, 2010), were described by my students—either explicitly or through emergence—as powerful constructing elements that enabled or restricted the occurrence of creative pedagogy. Beghetto and Kaufman (2011) claim that one should deliberately consider that, in most cases, schools represent diverse and sometimes limiting representations of enabling contexts. They thus emphasize the need for pragmatic advice for facilitating creativity within a not-so-enabling context. Within busy educational environments, teachers might seek out spaces, times, and occasions in which creativity can flourish, as the perfect situation for creativity teaching seldom occurs. Creativity and improvisation must be rehearsed (Sawyer, 2011); therefore, they must be facilitated even in suboptimal contexts.

I often become caught up in the practicalities, possibilities, and restraints displayed in the reports. In particular, I am fascinated by the reports from "real" school environments, where students have tried to accomplish their tasks within their everyday context.

One of the features of creative pedagogy is encouraging pupils' self-determination and intentionality (Craft, 2010). Student reports, however, display a great deal of personal insecurity regarding creative pedagogies. Neither my students, their pupils, nor I are acquainted with or trained in coping with methods or ideas of creative pedagogy. I suspect that creative pedagogy and the rehearsal of creative process work are sparsely used in a systematic and professional way in Norwegian schools and teacher education. I illustrate this with a small story from arts and crafts teacher Anna's report. From the pupil's reaction, I draw the conclusion that "using my own imagination" is not something that is allowed every day at her school.

> Pupil: Teacher, am I allowed to do it this way?
> Anna: Yes, you can. As long as your collage represents yourself.
> Pupil: Seriously? Can I use that sort of text?
> Anna: Yes . . .
> Pupil: OMG! This is so fun! I am allowed to use my own imagination! (From Anna's report)

During the first year of their master's program, many of my students become engaged with the public education system on a higher and more involved level. How often in their earlier education have they been allowed to immerse and play in educational situations where creativity has been facilitated by a teacher in a professional way? How can we expect future teachers to teach creatively if they do not attain personal experiences with creative pedagogy during their years of schooling and study? Sawyer (2011) claims that pedagogical improvisation must be rehearsed, pointing to his findings that experienced and expert teachers perform pedagogical improvisation more often and in more profound ways than novice teachers due to their accumulated base of knowledge and experience. The point of rehearsing and discussing improvisation methodically in teacher education then is to equip even younger teachers with improvisation as a tool in the classroom.

S for Skills

Astrid, an arts and crafts student who had no teaching practice of her own, was able to "borrow" a class of fifth graders from a friend who was a teacher. Astrid is a skilled designer, and she planned for the pupils to sew using rubber materials. The lesson as such was a failure. Astrid found that very few of the 11-year-olds in her classroom had any experience with sewing at all; thus, sewing in rubber was too challenging for them. The pupils' lack of experience with a needle and thread was an obstacle for creativity within her project. Astrid's "cure" was to improvise a task to rehearse sewing skills during the first lesson and then try to work with creations in rubber in the second lesson. Thus, she actually learnt something from this lesson after all: to find an improvisatory solution to a problem.

I think that this small story shows that a certain amount of vocational training or skills can positively contribute to pupils' performance of creativity within a specific discipline. If one is able to sew, cut, draw, sing, and maintain a

pulse, such crafts can function as tools for creativity. They are "things of use" that are in many ways necessary to produce "things of beauty" (Barone, 1983), which can be brilliantly elaborated ideas represented by thoroughly crafted artifacts. To be able to break rules and transcend the conventional in creative ways, one must be aware of these rules and their practical meanings. Davies et al. (2013) claim that ongoing creative classroom practices of everyday pedagogy are necessary to maintain creativity pedagogy because of the skills pupils learn within crafts as well as processes. Eisner (2004) purports that creativity is embedded in the social context—and thus, in the skills and knowledge in which people are trained and to which they have access. Astrid's 11-year-olds had never before been offered the opportunity to work with needle and thread, so they were not yet able to express themselves creatively through this medium.

For John, the music teacher in upper secondary school, crafts certainly played a role. However, one interesting aspect of his report was that crafts appear to be tacit. Both John and his pupils took their musical skills and skills in computer music composition programs for granted, seeing them as mere vehicles for compositional creativity. In this example, the task is to compose music to a small film:

> Pupil: I have made a motive that repeats itself many times, but it lacks variation, and in between there are empty bars where I haven't concluded yet. I don't get any ideas for solutions. I feel stuck. Can you help me?
> John: Well . . . Your theme is great and should be used several times, perhaps when there are overviews in the film. What kind of music would you like to assign to the different characters in the film? And when the dog is stuck, what about illustrating with a musical stop? (From John's report)

John's reflection on this incident considered whether he was too concrete in his suggestions. However, his report does not discuss crafts as contributing to results; instead, John expects pupils at this stage to master the equipment and to have a certain degree of theoretical and practical skills in music that enables this way of working.

Mia, the music teacher in lower secondary school, described craft as a feature of what pupils can accomplish. All 10th graders at her school completed a project in which groups were to choose, arrange, rehearse, stage, and perform a song to one another over the span of 5 weeks, with only one lesson each week. Mia noted, "To be able to produce and rehearse a product in such a short time, the pupils need to possess playing skills on beforehand." In other words, the project involved contextual limitations: If the pupils did not know how to play music and were told to produce and stage a song in only 5 hr,

the task would have been impossible for them to accomplish, as it would have fallen outside of their zone of proximal development.

Creativity, however, can be separate from skills. In other words, it is possible for both learners and teachers to be creative without deep subject knowledge. Alice, the student who works to facilitate creativities among 2-year-olds would certainly applaud this perspective. There are numerous factors that contribute to creativity. Some of these are context-specific and vocative, but many also depend on other features. When Baer and Kaufman (2005) were working with experts contributing to their book, they registered,

> . . . [a]lmost all the experts noted connections of various kinds between the personality traits or skills necessary for creativity in other domains. At the same time, almost all contributors also pointed to differences between domains in the cognitive processes, specific content knowledge, personality traits and ways of working that lead to creative performance. (p. 13)

Here, they point at differences in how creativity can unfold due to various reasons, like personality, context, and the possession of content knowledge and skills.

Nevertheless, the issue of skills is significant in the present student reports. I perceive skills—here understood as vocative and subject-specific—as contributing to confidence (which again might be a constructing element of intrinsic motivation) and supporting *trust*. Thus, the everyday teacher of aesthetic subjects can be seen as a provider of skill and must possess content knowledge and craft that can be of use to his or her pupils, as in John's case. In different ways, John's and Astrid's reports display teacher's knowledge of pupils as crucial for scaffolding (Wood, Bruner & Ross 1976).

D for Design

Anna is an arts and crafts student who chose to work on self-representation with her eighth graders, whom she knew well. She first designed a "loose" creativity task around a short sentence: Create a representation of yourself on paper.

The result was a bundle of collages picturing pupils and their parents, siblings, peers, favorite actors, and pop stars, as well as texts beginning with sentences like "I am a 14-year-old girl who lives in . . . "

After evaluating the process and the products, Anna decided to implement tighter task frames for another class of the same age. With this class, she told pupils to make collages to represent themselves, but only symbolically—no faces, no persons. The eighth graders expressed frustration over this task, as they had not previously reflected on the notion of a "symbol" in this context.

> Pupils started noting keywords, and they tended to centre around physical attributes, like hair/eye colour, where they lived, what sort of phone/iPad they had and so on. When I discovered this approach, I asked how they perceived themselves as a person. It was at this point that many pupils started to regard the task as difficult. It seemed strange for them to portray themselves without pointing to looks or other concretes that had become a part of their lives. (From Anna's report)

Anna then asked the pupils to evaluate the task. She wanted them to suggest changes necessary for meaningful work. During this conversation, the task was altered to include some of Anna's intended learning goals and the pupils' suggested approaches.

By walking along the tables, supporting, pointing, searching the Internet, and chatting with groups of pupils, Anna managed to create interest among the pupils regarding how each of them would describe themselves using symbols. Classmates began to support each other by suggesting symbols that could represent their peers' personalities. In the end, pupils reported working with the task as deeply meaningful, stating that they had gained deeper knowledge of one another through their work.

Anna's original frames for this second class could have been problematic. Her flexibility, improvisational choices, and actions in the teaching situation seemed functional for the class and, thus, a resource for her pupils' task fulfillment. Here, I want to underline the issue of ownership: The task was redesigned using the pupils' critiques, and their views were heard and implemented. Craft (2010) considers such agency and ownership to be important for immersion, both individually and across groups.

The initial intended lesson design and content must, as we have seen in the prior example, be the teacher's responsibility. A problem in constructivist pedagogy, Biesta (2012) claims, is that facilitation can make the teacher a bystander to pupils' learning processes. He warns against a shift focusing on mere learning that omits the fact that there is an education going on. Biesta points at a difference between learning and education, claiming that to achieve education, not mere learning, there has to be teaching going on. Even if there are negotiations, teachers must take content, purpose, and relationships into account when embarking such negotiations, to keep classroom activities a part of a larger educational enterprise instead of appearing as fragmented learning activities.

T for Trust

Music teacher student Lasse did not have a teaching practice of his own. He decided to catch up with music students from our bachelor class in music teacher education. In his first lesson, he rehearsed a tune with the group in a traditional manner, but also asked for ideas and solutions. After the lesson, he reflected on how to maintain and develop all of the bubbling creativity and skills that he had felt unfolded during the first lesson. He decided to try a free improvisational approach in the next lesson "[b]ecause we know each other so well and share taste" (from Lasse's report). In the second lesson, he assumed the role of a leader or facilitator (Hattie, 2008), rather than that of a teacher. The role of facilitator emerged naturally, and Lasse recognized this as a deeply improvisational way of teaching. He began to wonder about how to maintain and nourish creativity in a group and searched for literature on creativity and "group flow" (Sawyer, 2003). The group stated its principles as "no pressure, no limitation, no condemnation" (Wiggins, 2011).

I have already emphasized *trust* as a central issue within creative pedagogy—and, in many ways, as the protagonist of our story. Trust emerges in the reports as a prerequisite for a creative and educational process. Trust seems to demand the full contribution of the participants' agencies, as well as supporting, professional and flexible frames from the educational environment. To me, trust encompasses all other efforts related to creative educational activities and appears to be a kind of air that keeps all the other features in the creative teaching process (e.g., play, innovation, using one's imagination) alive. At the same time, trust is dependent on these other concepts; if they are lacking or are low in quality, trust will fade.

Why is this emphasis on trust so important? The reason is that trust is connected to a key concept in creativity: risk (Sawyer, 2011). Risk cannot be taken unless people dare to make themselves vulnerable, and daring to fail is most likely to happen in a trustful environment (Brown, 2012). Therefore, when working with creative pedagogy, the first thing to secure is a trustful environment.

Lasse's design and improvisation are surely not possible for every teacher and learner. The musicians in Lasse's group were skilled and they knew and trusted one another; thus, they dared to take risks. They were able to establish mutual rules through negotiation, they emerged as partners, and they regarded their leader as a fellow musician as well as a learning facilitator. The teacher's role as fellow and facilitator diminished the power differences in the group, enabling a state of equity in which contributions were allowed and expected to differ (Butler, Lind, & McKoy, 2007).

Lisa, a musician, experienced a more complex situation. She conducted two 90-min music lessons for beginner all-round teacher students. The students did not know each other well, and some of them were only meeting Lisa for the first time in these classes. She worked with the same students twice, conducting different frames each time. As the first lesson was successful, Lisa planned the next one to contain more challenges. However, this second lesson was ultimately more problematic than the first. Lisa reflected on this problem in her report:

The progression from "framed" to "loose" could have been too quick. "All possibilities" is perhaps more challenging than tighter frames. The reasons why the group's sounding expression turned out blurred could be because of unclear instructions from me, or that I overestimated their abilities to work with rhythms. (From Lisa's report)

First, Lisa considered this to be a problem with either her teaching or the students' skills, among other factors. However, I noted one pupil's comment in the report on the first lesson: "It was a lesson of calmness; nothing was dangerous along the way." Many things must have shifted from the first lesson to the second. Frames were loosened, and skill perhaps became more of a prerequisite. The group in the second lesson also consisted of fewer members, making the situation more transparent.

Could it be that the members of this group restricted their own abilities because of a lack of several forms of trust? As the tasks grew more advanced, individuals could have begun to doubt their personal abilities in music, becoming too critical in their self-evaluations (Sawyer, 2003). Being surrounded by unfamiliar classmates could have added to this insecurity. Finally, an unknown teacher with intentions as both a musician and as a researcher could have been seen as a threat.

Lisa's intended and practical focus for these lessons, however, was the opposite. She noticed problems occurring, and to diminish individual challenges, she chose to respond by directing the group toward joint musicking (Small, 1998). She joined the group as a musician, attempting to evoke a group focus on improvisational musical content and ideas, with the goal of moving away from student self-awareness and insecurity. She reflected upon safety and trust as co-constructing elements within this musicking:

What is the connection between listening, sound production, music making, group, individual and improvisation? If safety and trust are such central factors for musical group improvisation as I think they are, it makes little sense to treat these factors entirely as separate units. (From Lisa's report)

Lisa's improvisational solution to redesign the lesson on the spot was to improvise pedagogically by using music as a means to turn the students away from crippling self-awareness and self-evaluation. Instead, she sought to direct the participants' attention toward the aesthetic object of the music, thus creating immersion. Immersion can create a liminal room in which play, innovation, risk-taking, self-termination, intentionality, and imagination can be set free; however, as seen in Lisa's example, to achieve an immersive state of collective attention that enables all aspects of creativity, trust is a critical vehicle.

A Liminal Room

Turner (1969) characterizes contemporary leisure time, freedom, and play as modern, liminoid modalities. Within the liminal room, people gain the possibility of falling under the protection of fiction (Ross, 1984).

In contemporary aesthetics and pedagogy, the liminal room seems to be an important and common trait, though it has been described with different philosophical angles and languages. Winnicott (1971) and Ross (1984) describe the "potential space" as contributing to aesthetic learning processes; Bourriaud's (2002) relational aesthetic explores artistic "interstices"; the performative happening transforms its participants into a liminal state (Fischer-Lichte, 2008); and relational pedagogy is negotiated within "the gap" (Biesta, 2004).

When describing aspects of the concepts of *context, skills, design*, and *trust* within this text, I can see that they all may either enable or limit creativity. In the end, I claim that, at their best, all may contribute positively to *immersion*, which is, in my opinion, central for a functioning liminal room. An enabling context, the well-conducted design, and enactment of scripted and unscripted teaching, the existence of sufficient vocative and improvisational skills and a measure of trust among participants seem to be vehicles suited to the creation of a liminal room of immersion within which creativity can thrive.

Afterthought I: Why Creativity Pedagogies?

In this text, I have illustrated and discussed my interpretations of the contents of several of my students' reports. It has been my privilege to consider all these texts as research material and to have the opportunity to identify what I believe to be common features and constraints.

Literature on narrative research emphasizes social change, such that narrativity is perceived as a means to make silent and silenced voices heard (Smith & Sparkes, 2008). This particular narrative of creative pedagogy, which was conducted in a small, rich, northern country, will neither change the world nor make oppressed people heard. However, I often find that creativity, as an essentially contested concept, is spoken of in general terms and seldom connected to pedagogical methods. Attempts to break the illusory and romantic conception of creativity by exploring its pedagogy may, therefore, enable people to claim creativity as something to which everyone has a right. Creativity pedagogies can function not only as vehicles for creativity but also as means for agency, responsibility, and self-determination—and, therefore, as salvations for personal and relational societal values and possibilities.

Afterthought II: A New Old Teacher as a Researcher

Chase (2005) states that narrative is "retrospective meaning making—the shaping or ordering of past experience" (p. 656). This may be true, but in this case, both my research-based teaching and my teaching-based research function as shaping elements in my everyday life as a teacher. As new situations emerge, they steadily build up the narrative of my engagement. In this respect, I can relate to Clandinin and Connelly's (1986) approach to narrativity in educational contexts as rhythmic, temporal, and cyclic, though evolving in a spiraling movement. I have begun to look forward to the yearly reoccurrence of the creativity task, or at least the most recent version of it. Advising on and inquiring about student reports on this task feels like prolonged engagement (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Last week, my student Ray came to my office and asked, "I'll start to work with the creativity teaching task, but I only have one-to-one guitar pupils. Does this teaching have to be within a group?"

I certainly had a vision of him and everyone else teaching groups, and I opened my mouth to tell him that he had to find a group of some sort, but then I remembered two things from my research: (a) teacher and pupils need to know each other to construct trust and be creative, and (b) listen and negotiate. Therefore, I replied, "I think you should conduct this task with pupils you know. The group thing isn't that important. How do you plan to carry through with this creative work between you and your pupils?" Thus, negotiations began.

After our talk, ideas started to emerge in my head: What about challenging the tradition of one-to-one instrumental teaching by putting together a class of these lonely guitarists? Would they then all know their teacher, but not necessarily one another? If the material and frames were not too challenging, what would happen? I am confident of my finding that trust and group familiarity are mutually dependent, but would it be possible to regulate a lack of familiarity through conscious framing?

It was then that I realized I was back where this entire exploration started: wondering about framing.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

Funding

Notes

1. Most Norwegian students have part-time jobs, and many master students in education have their own teaching practices in addition to their studies.
2. The original student task text is longer and more complicated; however, due to the article format, I will not discuss the text any further here.
3. All citations from student reports are translated from Norwegian.

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