



EDITORIAL

THE HARD, BUT REWARDING, WORK OF COLLABORATING ACROSS SECTORS – DANCE IN CROSS-SECTORAL EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

BY: *Tone Pernille Østern¹, Kristine Høeg Karlsen² and Gunhild Brønne Bjørnstad²*

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CITE THIS ARTICLE (APA7): Østern, T.P., Karlsen, K.H., & Bjørnstad, G.B. (2023). Editorial. The hard, but rewarding, work of collaborating across sectors – dance in cross-sectoral educational collaborations. *Dance Articulated, Special Issue: Dance in Cross-Sectoral Educational Collaborations*, 9(1), 2–10. DOI: 10.5324/DA.V9I1.5596

CORRESPONDENCE TO: tone.pernille.ostern@ntnu.no. PROOF-READER: John Shepherd. DESIGN: Trine + Kim Designstudio, Oslo, Norway.

¹ NTNU Norwegian University of Science and Technology, ² Østfold University College, Norway

AUTHOR BIOS

Tone Pernille Østern (Dr. of Arts in Dance) is Professor in Arts Education with a focus on Dance at NTNU Norwegian University of Science and Technology and Visiting Professor in Dance Education in Contemporary Contexts at Stockholm University of the Arts. She is active as artist/researcher/teacher (A/R/Toographer) with a special interest in participatory arts, choreographic processes, inclusive and critical pedagogies, and performativity in teaching, learning and research. In spring 2023 she was Visiting Professor at Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg UNESCO Chair in Arts and Cultural Education.

Kristine Høeg Karlsen (PhD) is currently Professor in Education at the Faculty of Teacher Education and Languages at Østfold University College (ØUC) and Visiting Associate Professor at Oslo Metropolitan University. Recently, she has been a visiting scholar at the Curriculum and Instruction Department at Portland State University in Oregon, USA. She is the project manager of the research project *pARTiciPED: Empowering student teachers for cross-sectorial collaborations with The Cultural Schoolbag in Norwegian Schools* funded by the Research Council of Norway. Karlsen has been a member, board member, and vice-chairman of Centre for Dance Practice (SANS) for 15 years. She helped establish the Nordic Journal of Dance: Practice, Education and Research in 2010, and was the journal's first editor.

Gunhild Brønne Bjørnstad is Associate Professor of Drama/Theatre at the Faculty of Teacher Education and Languages at Østfold University College. She has previously been working at the College of Arts in Bagamoyo, Tanzania, and the Teacher Education Faculty at the University of Stavanger, Norway. She functions as the international coordinator of the faculty, leading several international projects. Bjørnstad is a project participant and researcher in the project *pARTiciPED: Empowering student teachers for cross-sectorial collaborations with The Cultural Schoolbag in Norwegian Schools* funded by the Research Council of Norway. Her research interests include performative teaching and learning, intercultural aesthetic expressions, and cross-curricular learning.

This special issue is motivated by a firm belief that cross-sectoral educational collaborations are needed and have value (see, for example, Fortier & Coulter, 2021). In this context, ‘sectors’ refer to formal or informal institutions, organisations, or disciplinary fields that operate within the realm of education, each with distinct mandates and goals for their activities. At first glance, these mandates and overarching goals may appear to align seamlessly from an outside perspective. We find numerous sectors within education sharing similar yet not entirely congruent mandates and overarching goals. Examples are teacher education institutions at universities and university colleges in correlation to schools for children and young people; teacher education institutions and independent arts organisations; schools and independent arts organisations, frequently engaging in cooperative efforts; and the disciplinary fields of dance and music, which often involve the collaboration of dancers and musicians. Another intriguing set of sectors that both complement and contradict one another at the same time, lies within the sectors of formal and non-formal dance education. In this special issue, Märtha Pastorek Gripson and co-authors (2023, p. 47), building upon the work of Fortier and Coulter (2021), define collaboration as “something that involves common goals and commitment to fulfil the different participating organisations’ agendas in long-lasting work to connect, share values, and strive for equality”. The hard, but equally rewarding work of forging such collaborations across sectors with different mandates and goals is at the heart of the eight articles included in this special issue.

In response to the recognised gap in research addressing the possibilities and challenges inherent in cross-sectoral educational collaborations, we initiated this special issue. Previous research acknowledges that “although partnership models in education and teachers’ collaborative practices have been analytically discussed (Bainer, 1997; Verger, 2012), there is a dearth of research concerning how schools experience and respond to these alliances” (Eyal & Yarm, 2018, pp. 649-650). Consequently, there is a need for further research, particularly research that includes perspectives from the educational sector. With this special issue, we therefore invited research contributions focusing on dance within cross-sectoral educational collaborations, encompassing schools, teacher education institutions, and other formal or informal educational institutions as the contextual backdrop. We specifically encouraged authors who have actively participated in cross-sectoral collaborations to co-author research articles tailored for this special issue. In response to our call, nine articles were submitted, and of these, eight were included after the peer-review process. The majority of the collaborations scrutinised in the articles pivot around the authors’ own practical work in cross-sectoral collaborations, spanning across diverse geographical regions, especially Finland, Norway and Sweden, but also Uganda and Denmark.

Cross-sectoral collaborations in the field of arts and culture have become common in the educational sector. These collaborations are there for a number of reasons, but primarily to initiate, improve, strengthen, and enhance opportunities for children and young people to meet, engage with, create, and learn in, through, with, and about arts and culture. International policy documents and reports underscore the critical need for support, reinforcement, and more research efforts within the realms of arts and culture in kindergartens, schools, and teacher education (UNESCO, 2006, 2010; Winner, Goldstein, & Vincent-Lancrin, 2013). Another aim for cross-sectoral

collaborations might be to enhance professional, as well as organisational learning in exchange and knowledge development between teachers, artists, and institutions. Well-established cross-sectoral partnerships in the arts and cultur sphere include the Lincoln Center Institute in the USA, Creative School in Sweden, Listaleyapurin in the Faroe Islands, and The Cultural Schoolbag in Norway, but there are also many less formalised collaborations going on in different geo-political contexts. The idea for this special issue stemmed from the ongoing collaborations between the editors within the Research Council Norway funded research project *pARTiCiPED: Empowering student teachers for cross-sectoral collaborations with The Cultural Schoolbag (TCS) in Norwegian Schools*. Led by Østfold University College, pARTiCiPED focuses on Norway's largest cross-sectoral partnership with schools, The Cultural Schoolbag (TCS). One of the project's key objectives is to pioneer groundbreaking methods in teacher education, enabling prospective educators to gain a deep understanding of their role in TCS and actively engage in the design and implementation of TCS initiatives. By engaging in a series of participatory development processes spanning diverse themes and utilising a range of modes of expression, pARTiCiPED explores how varied tools and techniques can foster more profound, mutual, and transformative collaborations within TCS.

This special issue is driven by the belief that dance holds untapped potential in education, particularly in the North European countries of Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, as focused on in several of the articles. In these nations, dance is not a subject on its own, nor does it hold a strong position in formal education. Consequently, one way that dance comes into existence in formal education and teacher education is through collaborations with other subjects and sectors (Svendler Nielsen et al., 2023). For dance as a field, these collaborations are of high importance, as they play a central role in ensuring the presence of dance in education and unveiling its latent possibilities.

As we initiated the special issue, we pondered around a myriad of questions: how do teachers, teacher educators, and/or teacher candidates organise, develop, implement, and carry out collaborations with external choreographers, professional dancers, and/or dance teachers? How do collaborative planning, pre-workshops among participants, or other preparatory actions before the actual school, teacher education, or other educational institution practice support transformational mutuality? How and why do obstacles, friction, and tension arise, and how are they solved in dance in cross-sectoral educational collaborations? Furthermore, how might dance in cross-sectoral educational collaborations critically challenge stereotypical views on knowledge or uneven power distribution among participants in different positions in cross-sectoral collaborations? How do collaborations with other arts fields influence, support, or complicate dance in cross-sectoral educational collaborations? Additionally, we contemplated the integration of dance and technology in cross-sectoral educational collaborations and how these two domains can complement each other. The articles included in the special issue touch on and contribute knowledge in response to these, and more, questions.

What is abundantly evident across all eight articles is that, in cross-sectoral educational collaborations, the most important part of the work is on the collaboration itself. It goes beyond merely executing the tasks that the collaboration pivots around, such as offering dance in school through an independent organisation. Active work on the team working together, laying bare the different mandates, goals, and expectations

of the involved partners, is crucial for the quality of the work that reaches the intended target group. Identifying shared values, actively working on equalising power between partners in the concrete work done, and actively bridging and hosting the visiting partner, are crucial for quality collaboration to emerge (see also Fortier & Coultier, 2021). Allocating time for actual preparatory and post-collaboration meetings where the collaboration itself is processed, is of high importance to achieve the intended goals with the collaboration. In teacher education, which serves as the backdrop for several of the articles in this special issue, teacher candidates must engage in genuine multiprofessional collaboration to be prepared for cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral dialogue in education (Korpinen & Anttila, 2023). However, although the work needed may initially appear challenging, it offers refreshing inter-disciplinary and cross-sectoral learning opportunities. The eight articles in this special issue reveal this process almost as a form of (dance) educational activism, rooted in the authors' belief in the value of collaboration and of dance. It counters the often separated and categorised teaching of different subjects and classes that make education become recognisable as 'school-like' and different from the messiness of the highly inter-disciplinary world outside of formal education. Thus, engaging in dance within cross-sectoral educational collaborations proves to be highly revealing, contributing significantly to the deep professional development of those involved.

The articles in this special issue explore the challenges, advantages, and outcomes of cross-sectoral collaboration through diverse partnerships and methodological approaches. The multitude of collaborating sectors emphasises the potentiality of dance as an important and prolific sector in such collaborations.

The article "Troubling dance education from a Nordic policy perspective: A field with an interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral potential" establishes an overview of existing structures for dance education in the public educational systems and cross-sectoral collaborations in Denmark, Norway, and Finland. In the Nordic countries, dance is not a school subject on its own, but exists on the margins of school. The authors, Charlotte Svendler Nielsen, Tone Pernille Østern, Kristine Høeg Karlsen, Eeva Anttila and Rose Martin, also look to Aotearoa/New Zealand as a country that has included dance as an independent subject in school, which allows them to imagine what dance education might become in the future also in the Nordic region. Through the cross-case analysis of the state of dance in the education systems of Norway, Finland, and Denmark compared with the situation in Aotearoa/New Zealand, it becomes obvious that when dance is formalised as a subject in its own right, or where there are clear demands from the ministry level as to what students need to learn and be assessed on, the field of dance is developed and strengthened.

The aim of the article "It ended up being a bit too advanced'- discourses on dance collaborations in a Swedish holistic educational landscape" by Märtha Pastorek Gripson, Torun Mattsson, and Anna Lindqvist is to describe and problematise beliefs, norms, and experiences that are articulated in descriptions of collaboration surrounding dance teaching in educational contexts in Sweden. The authors utilise focus group interviews with dance teachers, pre-school teachers, and school-age educate center teachers. In the interviews, most of the educators explained that children appreciate dance and benefit from participating, and dance in general is appreciated in schools and pre-

schools. When professional dance teachers are engaged in pre-schools, opportunities are given for pre-school teachers to gain insights into dance as an area of knowledge. However, the authors argue that cooperation is common, but collaborations are not. For a collaboration to be established, shared values, alignment, and equal power relations need to be developed. The importance of combining dance competence with pedagogical competence adapted to the specific educational setting is central. Long-lasting collaboration would be beneficial for dance teachers and educators in the formal education system to develop dance education designed for a specific group of children and specific educational context together.

The educational design research project explored in the article “The potential of multiprofessional collaboration in integrating dance in early additional language education in primary school” by Kaisa Korpinen and Eeva Anttila focuses on the collaborative process of a design team combining dance with the teaching of Swedish as an additional language in grade 1 in a Finnish primary school. The project was framed by the notion of embodied learning understood as the holistic engagement of learners within their socio-material surroundings. The team cut across disciplines (dance, language, and primary school pedagogy), institutions (primary school, dance institute, and teacher education), and sectors (the public sector, including the school and teacher education, and the third sector including the dance institute). The insights generated revealed the challenging and deeply pedagogical processes of becoming and designing practices as a multiprofessional team. An important insight is that continuous multiprofessional collaborative work is crucial, as this encouraged professional development. The team became more than the sum of the parts in co-designing pedagogical practices that truly entangled the subjects of language and dance. The authors offer the dance related concepts of how the multiprofessional collaboration included the *crossing*, *bending*, *stretching*, *blurring*, and *balancing* of boundaries in a process which involved pedagogical successes, tensions, and frictions.

The article “Arts, crafts, and dance - developing aesthetic learning processes in arts and crafts through a general teacher education and higher dance education collaboration” also pivots around an educational design research project. An educational design team consisting of the authors of the article, Tone Pernille Østern, Anne-Line Bakken, Anette Lund, Anne Grut Sørum, Camilla Myhre, and Caroline Wahlstrøm Nesse carried out a cross-sectoral collaborative project in teacher education. The University College of Dance Art in Oslo, Norway, visited the general teacher education study programme in arts and crafts at the NTNU Norwegian University of Science and Technology with the intention of exploring how a workshop collaboration with the topic “body and spaces” can produce insights into aesthetic learning processes in arts and crafts. Central insights offered as an outcome were the importance of the quality of the collaboration in the design-team itself; that active connections to the traditions and pedagogies of the hosting subject, in this case arts and crafts, need to be made by the hosting teacher educators in order to support the teacher candidates’ learning; and that dance engages specifically the elements of *body*, *space*, *embodied collaboration*, and *play* in arts and crafts aesthetic learning processes.

Gunhild Brønne Bjørnstad and Kristine Høeg Karlsen explore a cross-sectoral collaboration between a teacher education institution and a higher dance education

institution. In the article “An artful encounter with dance – empowering future teachers in cross-sectoral collaborations with the Cultural Schoolbag as an example” they develop arts-based methodology utilising the material of clay to explore teacher candidates’ experiences of the practical collaboration with dance students. In the project, the generalist teacher candidates collaborated with dance students to create an artful encounter for the children in schools during their practice placement. The artful encounters were collaboratively designed by the teacher candidates and the dance students. To process their experiences, groups of teacher candidates were asked to develop a joint sculpture of modelling clay as a way of articulating their collaboration with the dance students. The analysis showed that the arts-based language of using clay helped them to unpack the dramaturgies of the process they had gone through. It also showed that teacher candidates experienced a difference in status, where they regarded themselves as less creative and mainly functioning as supporting the dancers, but that this changed when the teacher candidates could more clearly work with the educational aspects of the collaboration.

Kristine Høeg Karlsen, Jessica P. B. Hansen, Birgitte Nordahl Husebye and Stine Brynildsen have contributed the article «Det er jo dans, det her også ...?

– Styrking av dans i kroppsøvingslærerutdanningen i tverrfaglige og tverrsektorielle profesjonsfelleskap» [This is dance too, isn't it ...? Strengthening dance in physical teacher education through interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral professional learning communities.] In the article they examine physical education teacher education students’ work with creative dance in an interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral collaboration between a teacher education programme at a mid-sized University College in Southern Norway and the Norwegian Center for Dance Practice (SANS). The authors – with backgrounds in diverse subject disciplinary fields in teacher education - analyse how students utilise various semiotic resources to convey meaning through dance as a form of expression through the use of iPad and the video editing app Clips. The analysis shows that the students need to become more aware of how semiotic resources can be used to create, perform, and interpret messages in dance, and that more experience with dance can expand the students’ understanding of dance as a means of communication and dance as something more than counting bars, synchronous movements, and ready-made steps from social dances.

Cross-sectoral collaboration in teaching, learning, and unlearning processes is the premise of Ronald Kibirge’s article “Dance-Musicking: Non-prescriptive dance, music, and dance-music engagement in cross-sectoral collaborative teaching and learning”. The sectors pinpointed are formal and non-formal learning contexts of dance and music. Kibirge asks how interdependent engagement with dance and music in their teaching and learning contexts challenges and disrupts uneven institutional hierarchies, and how it cultivates a more holistic understanding of, and access to, the knowledge embedded in the dancing and dance-musicking processes. The discussion is informed by dance, music, and dance-music practices in formal and non-formal contexts in East Africa, and offers a critical observation of how dance and music knowledge has grown more into an institutionalised form than a communal one. Rhythm, rhyme, and time are explored as major structuring mechanisms for dance and dance-music practitioners, and the concept of dance-musicking as a cross-sectoral collaborative process, lived and experienced in

teaching and learning contexts, is articulated. The article highlights core elements of ‘communitarian’ teaching and learning approaches, which have not favourably evolved alongside formal education, and argues that this situation is attributed to a lack in cross-sectoral complementarity between the formal and non-formal dance and music knowledge base.

The deep interconnectedness between dance and music is also in focus in the article “Better together: toward a joint pedagogy in folk dance and music” by Petri Kauppinen, Aale Luusua, Niina Susan Sassali, Osmo Hakosalo, and Petri Hoppu. According to the authors it is a problem that the education and practices of folk music and dance are firmly separate in Finland, both in amateur activities and in professional education, and that the focus is mainly on performing arts rather than participatory activities. As a result, folk dance and music are seen as two distinct art forms. To break this wall between folk music and dance, the five authors started the KanTaMus project. The constant and intimate interplay between folk dance and music is the pedagogical core of the project, which creates something new and innovative, while simultaneously including a return to the roots of the tradition. As a result of the project, the authors define their theoretical model: the Pedagogy of Collaborative Flourishing, building on existing pedagogical building blocks in folk dance and music teaching and learning. The model is rooted in human embodiment and situatedness seen in a social context, with an emphasis on the concepts of presence, inclusion, and interaction.

We warmly invite readers to actively immerse themselves in these articles, as each presents a unique viewpoint and profound insights into the complex landscape of dance in cross-sectoral educational collaborations. In doing so, we hope to ignite a passion for this important topic within the hearts and minds of our readers, inspiring transformative and collaborative approaches to dance education.

Acknowledgements

This special issue is supported by the Research Council of Norway funded research project *pARTiciPED: Empowering student teachers for cross-sectoral collaborations with The Cultural Schoolbag (TCS) in Norwegian Schools*.

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