

Arts Education in Swedish Teacher Training – What’s at Stake?

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Abstract: Swedish teacher education has undergone several reforms in recent decades aimed at incorporating teacher education into the university setting and strengthening the teaching profession. In view of earlier research that has shown how arts education in schools is ruled by dominant knowledge ideologies, the purpose of the project is to critically scrutinize current discourses related to arts learning and arts education in teacher education. The study is based on social constructionist theory and data were collected by various means, including 19 focus group interviews with teachers and students at 10 Swedish teacher education institutes.

Our analysis shows that an academic discourse focusing on theory, reflection and textual production has pushed aside skills-based practice. A second discourse, characterized by subjectivity and relativism vis-à-vis the concept of quality, is also found in the material. Finally, a therapeutic discourse is articulated and legitimized based on an idea that student teachers should be emotionally balanced.

Introduction

Artistic expression in teacher education has been a topic of discussion since the post-war era. The status of creative arts subjects and their place in teacher education has been repeatedly questioned over the years in Sweden and elsewhere in the Western world. However, although the arts have in recent decades been increasingly included in professional development programs for general education teachers in the United States, many teachers lack confidence in their ability to use the arts in teaching (Oreck, 2004). The equivalent has been shown in several studies from other countries. An Australian study shows that primary school teachers do not feel they acquired adequate skills in the creative arts during their education (Alter, Hays & O’Hara, 2009). In Sweden arts courses are provided for all teacher categories in the general education, legitimized on the basis of social development and flexible thinking. This study investigates prevailing discourses on arts education in Swedish teacher education. The data-collection includes 19 focus group interviews with

teachers and students from 10 different Swedish teacher education institutes.

Artistic Expression in Swedish Teacher Education

In Sweden, the discussion of artistic expression in teacher education has primarily focused on the degree of subject specialization. Over the years, teacher education programs have also been shaped by non-uniformity, depending on the target age group of the program. The education of primary school teachers at teacher education institutes encompassed training in all school subjects, including the creative arts, while teacher education for secondary school teachers in music, for example, required longer single-subject training as a music director at a school of music. Other teacher categories educated at university were offered no courses in the arts. These traditions would prove to be persistent. However, attempts to even out the differences have been made throughout the post-war era. As early as 1950, several government committees attempted to create uniform teacher education at the teacher education institutes, but there was strong resistance to abandoning the old tradition, particularly within the universities and institutes offering single-subject programs (Rudvall, 2001). A new program in which this situation finally began to dissipate was not introduced until 1988, when prospective teachers of younger children could select an arts subject as an advanced course, and future music teachers could integrate more subjects into their education.

However, the current teacher education program in Sweden, based on the 1999 teacher education reform (Swedish Government Report 1999:63), can be interpreted as a discursive break. Here, knowledge in the creative arts is seen as a key area for all teachers regardless of subject specialization and school form. Arts courses are provided for all teacher categories in the general education field. In relation to earlier Swedish education policy documents, this can be seen as a shift toward an expanded target audience, as well as a broader interpretation of arts education. This greater focus on the arts in pedagogical contexts has frequently been legitimized on the basis of social development and the higher demands of modern society for creative and flexible thinking. It is considered essential that children and adolescents—and thus future teachers—are given opportunities to express their experiences artistically. Several education policy initiatives have been made in recent years in the form of research and development projects aimed at facilitating this evolution toward a more arts-oriented school system and teacher education.

The political conflicts of the post-war era with regard to demands for arts subject competence in teacher education are reflected to a certain extent in the research. The arts education research field may be governed by questions of which ideals should guide arts education. Should learning be controlled by the inherent value of art or by a more pragmatic, individual-oriented perspective (Elliot, 1995; Reimer, 1997)? Another way of describing this antagonism is to either focus on the subjective (pupil-centered) or the objective (the content delivered to the pupil) side of knowledge. However, scholarly discussions of a more subject-didactic nature continue

concerning the existential versus the functional orientation of the arts (Lindberg, 1991). Here, all artistic expressions are described as offering discrete invitations to interpret and create meaning. Each of the arts has unique content to manage and just as experiences can be given shape in speech or in writing, they can be depicted visually and physically. People can, if they hone their skills, express themselves in a variety of artistic forms, and the option to choose between only a couple of them is seen as a constraint on pupils because the artistic form they use to solve various problems is not insignificant (Nielsen, 1994; Eisner, 1982; Harland, Kinder, Lord, Stott, Schagen & Haynes, 2000; Elsner, 2000). This subject-didactic oriented discussion may contradict the discussion of the creative arts in general education, where the latter has been argued in both education policy and scholarly contexts in recent years. Within this direction, the point of departure is taken in pedagogical work where the aesthetic perspective or aesthetic aspects are given a more general pedagogical function. The theories are likely to be linked to discussions of the aesthetification of everyday life, youth culture, and questions of identity and democracy (Fornäs, Lindberg & Sernhede, 1984, 1988; Featherstone, 1994; Fornäs, 1996; Schou, 1999; Persson & Thavenius, 2003), and, with respect to younger children's learning, questions of children's creative play (Lindqvist, 1995; Paulsen, 1996; Nilsson, 2002).

Discourses on arts education

The study, on which this paper is based, connects to previous research related to arts discourses in primary education, where this operational area has been shown to have strong associations with power structures (Ericsson, 2006; Lindgren, 2007; Ericsson & Lindgren, 2007). How the concept of the arts in educational settings is controlled by dominant preconceptions that set the limits of action for both teachers and pupils emerges in the discursive boundaries set by teachers and school administrators concerning the arts in primary education. These preconceptions are mainly linked to pupils' social and emotional development rather than their subject-related knowledge development. Arts activities are represented as prophylactic or therapeutic methods connected to children's needs and based on varying beliefs about the "normal" pupil. Likewise, teachers primarily build their identity in the field on social aspects and position themselves based on a notion of arts education as liberating and facilitative of human personal development. Based on a subject-didactic and artistic perspective, there appears to be a need for greater critical awareness concerning questions of learning and teacher identity in the area of arts education. In this discussion, we see teacher education as pivotal. Unlike teacher education at schools of art and music, courses within the framework of general teacher education are more subject-integrated and are usually oriented towards professional work with younger children in preschool or the early primary years. The directions of the various institutes are not entirely identical in format; however, they may have a common focus on children's artistic creativity and cultural expression. Previous research related to arts education in Swedish teacher education has primarily been oriented toward student teachers at schools of art and music,

and their views on a specific arts subject in relation to their own education and/or future profession (Brändström & Wiklund, 1995; Bouij, 1998; Kruger, 1998; Bladh, 2002; Ericsson, 2006). The aim of this paper is thus to identify and discuss prevailing discourses on arts education in Swedish teacher education outside schools of art and music.

Theoretical and methodological framework

In post-structuralist theory, the point of departure for this study, people are seen as permeated by discourses, continuously created and recreated in specific cultural and historical settings, and largely controlled by the power inherent in the discourses. Knowledge is regarded as a product of complex power relationships created in collectively constructed discourses. Starting with this perspective, our primary interest for this research project was discourse as a social action, where object and subject are created in interactive linguistic action in specific social practices (Howarth, 2000; Mills, 2004). Because we regard teacher education as a practice in which language plays an essential role, theories related to language as action (Austin, 1962) and the consequences of linguistic actions (Edwards & Potter, 1992) are central to the study. With regard to the view of the subject, we have used the theoretical discussions in Michel Foucault's later works (1984/1990), which permit a subject that is both controlled by the discourses and capable of active resistance. However, because Foucault's theories lack any deeper interest in the individual subject and its construction, we saw the need to augment this with a micro-sociological perspective, whose clearer subject theory can explain the subject's identity formation and action based on its rhetorical organization of the language (Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

The method that we used was discussions in focus groups. The participants were active teacher educators and student teachers in 10 Swedish teacher education programs. In order to obtain the broadest possible empirical material, composition of the sample was based on the size and geographical placement of the teacher education programs and the range of arts courses offered. We also considered the gender, education and disciplinary affiliation of the teacher educators and the gender and academic profile of the student teachers. The discussions were held at 10 higher education institutions that offer teacher education programs. Each group was composed of four to five individuals, and there were a total of 19 group discussions, each lasting for 60-90 minutes. The point of departure and basis for the loosely structured discussions were the course syllabi for arts courses in each program. Since the emphasis of the research project was verbal interaction in focus group discussions about teacher education, we found that discourse analysis was a suitable analysis method. Based on the definition of discourse provided above, we began with an interactionist perspective on discourse, inspired by discourse psychology (Billig, 1991; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Edwards & Stoke, 2004; Wetherell & Potter, 1992) and critical discourse psychology (Parker, 2002). In brief, the analysis is based on posing a number of questions to the material: What constructions of arts education can be identified and what is at stake in how they are represented? What rhetorical strategies do actors use to

legitimize their views on arts education in teacher education? What are the functions and effects of various statements made for rhetorical purposes? Can any form of the dilemma be discerned in the statements?

We have also found useful Laclau & Mouffe's (1985) discourse theory, a perspective that provides scope to discuss the elements or components from which a discourse is built in order to expose and discuss how seemingly incompatible elements are articulated together and result in discursive change. One such example in the material is when inadequate subject knowledge is articulated in a discourse on teacher competence. Discourse theory contributes here with analytical tools that make it possible to identify and discuss problematic discursive formations, while discourse psychology provides tools for describing the rhetoric with which the discursive formation is legitimized.

The discourse psychological microanalysis was started by reading the transcribed interviews several times with the attention on formulations that legitimized a certain way to position oneself towards the aim of teacher education in the arts. Such a formulation is for example when a teacher educator states that a teacher student must be confident with herself before it is possible to start teaching. Such a statement is underpinning that the teacher student's personal development is the most important aspect of the education. When several rhetorical constructions with similar messages were identified in the material a discourse slowly emerged, which was further analyzed and discussed by discourse theory. Here we focused on discursive change and transformation, discussed by analyzing the elements of the discourses outlined in the microanalysis.

Results

Our analysis shows that arts education in teacher education has been challenged by more general pedagogical discourses. Three discourses are found in the material: an academic discourse, a therapeutic discourse and a third discourse, which is characterized by subjectivity and relativism towards the conception of quality.

Arts education as academic knowledge

One general discourse expressed in the conversations about teacher education is that of arts education as academic knowledge. Within the framework of this construction, the contents of arts subjects have largely been shifted from the previous orientation toward subject skills, and how these should be taught, to something related to written language and text. Activities in subjects like music, art and handicrafts have been abandoned for talk about the creative arts and the search for a new or alternative kind of aesthetic knowledge. Elements such as multimodal mediation, interpretation, forms of communication, productions, creation of meaning, reflection, radicalness, and portfolio are central to this discourse. The drive to abandon the represented idea as an outmoded way of understanding arts education is expressed in several of the

statements. For example, one of the student teachers describes the necessity of being able to “understand how an urban landscape communicates in various ways” within the framework of creative arts courses. Another teacher brings up the distinction between aesthetics and creative arts subjects in schools, where “visual competence” is represented as something other than (visual) art as a subject, where the former does not focus primarily on technical art skills. It is instead a matter of learning about visual communication, which is an essential skill in our high-tech media society.

Likewise, music is represented as something other than singing and playing instruments. At one of the institutes, someone expressed disappointment about their colleagues’ narrow view of arts subjects because they wanted songs and live music included in courses. One of the teacher educators remarked, “It’s not about being able to play the guitar well, or being able to draw a fire truck”. At another institute, the student teachers agree that music and art are not “practical knowledge” but more “a tool, a form for encounters or discussions”. In the group discussions, concepts and language were generally articulated as utterly essential. It was considered important that future teachers gain an “understanding of concepts and the ability to formulate and justify arts education in the schools”. For instance, preschool education students at one institute must show in reports and examinations that they have processed and assimilated the creative arts as a concept by means of “sound productions”, “visual productions” and “kinaesthetic productions”. At this institute, the transformation of music, art and movement into new concepts is seen as a radicalization of and reaction to the creative arts traditionally linked to teaching practices.

This redefinition of the content of arts education also sets the tone at other institutes. Here, arts education is called by other names to ensure that it fits into a politically correct teacher education discourse in terms of education policy. Practical work in drama, art and music is arranged under titles like “leadership”, “conflict management” and “group processes”. Teacher educators in the creative arts subjects position themselves within the framework of these discourses that are more oriented toward general education and can thus be given a mandate to work within the confines of the discourse. At certain institutes, there is also strong antagonism toward the academic discourse. The concern here is that teaching has become increasingly oriented toward teaching in relation to theoretical arguments about learning and teaching at the expense of practical teaching methods. “Research connections” and “literature seminars” “steal time” from the practical work, and “playing guitar feels like something low-class”. The antagonism toward the academic discourse results in a view of knowledge that aims to create, at any cost, greater opportunity for student teachers to spend their study hours singing, playing guitar, painting, dancing, or making creative environments. The rhetoric is based on an assumption that personal, practical experience is required in order to work as a teacher in pedagogical contexts.

There are, however, two other prominent ways to construct and legitimize arts education in teacher education, which may be regarded as two discourses, albeit strongly related to each other. The point here is not to acquire pedagogical or technical skills with the intent of using them in teaching situations. Instead, arts education is characterized as either personal therapy or as a forum for relativizing the concept of quality in relation to

artistic expression. Both constructions are built of a number of elements that can be presumed to be their essential constituents.

Arts Education As Therapy And Personal Development

The premise of this construction is that teachers must first be secure with themselves if they are to be at all capable of working in a preschool or school. This is represented as a primary goal of teacher education that must be attained before education can continue to focus on children and their learning. The discourse is centered around elements such as the education is a “personal journey” and the focus is on “personal development”, and that student teachers must “find their own identity” and have “faith in their ability”. Furthermore, they must have the “courage to assert themselves” and “feel a sense of security as a teacher”, and “have the courage to lose control”, that is they must acquire capacity for self-distance. Dramatic statements are found in the empirical material, which may be regarded as rhetoric, emphasizing the needs of student teachers for arts education with a significant therapeutic dimension. One of the participating teachers in the study asserts, for instance, that three quarters of the students are “shaking in their boots” during lessons because they feel uncomfortable with creative arts activities. One student emphasizes work with visual arts within university courses as a way of getting in touch with her feelings in connection with her divorce. Articulating therapy as utterly essential to teacher education sends certain signals. If, in line with the quotation above, students are fearful about part of their future profession, this begs the question of whether becoming a teacher might have been the wrong choice. Also, when it is presented as if three quarters of the future generation of teachers must first undergo therapy, it becomes possible to ask whether it would not be more justifiable, in terms of public spending, to instead invest in people who feel happy and expectant about their future occupation. Rhetoric of this kind naturally serves a purpose, and one assumption is that discrete contextual circumstances are highly significant to constructing legitimacy for arts education in teacher education. This will be discussed below.

There are also statements whose message is that subject knowledge is of secondary importance, which confirms the existence of a hierarchy with regard to the abilities represented as important for teachers to acquire. Social skills and leadership thus outstrip subject-specific knowledge. Such a discourse has links to the therapeutic discourse described above, wherein arts education is articulated as therapy and thus not an activity for which subject knowledge is the primary goal. However, it is also based on the construction of the teacher primarily as a transferor of learning skills rather than subject knowledge, a notion established in the 1990s in pace with an increasingly indefinite information and knowledge society, which diminished opportunities for teachers to take the traditional position of source of knowledge (Ericsson, 2006).

The Relativization Of The Concept Of Quality And Deficient Knowledge As Educational And Therapeutic Tools

The other way of constructing arts education in teacher education has a great deal in common with the preceding description. There is a therapeutic dimension in the construction because a prominent element is that teachers who know themselves are well aware of their inadequate ability to express themselves artistically but still have the courage to do so. This ability can be presumed to have been generated in activities with distinct elements of therapy. Its construction is articulated via statements such as: “Everyone can sing, even if we all sound different”; “We learned in the course that there is no wrong way of doing things”; “Everything goes as long as it’s fun”; “Because how they saw it was like ... the teacher is learning too”; “I tell them I am not very talented at music”; and “You don’t always have to be the one who is teaching”.

The relativization of the concept of quality is a prominent element of the construction. Through this kind of rhetoric, scope is created for the teacher to take a subject position where there are no criteria for what is right or wrong and good or bad in artistic expression. The experience is subjective and artistic work cannot be assessed. This also creates legitimacy for teachers who lack traditional subject knowledge.

What is most remarkable, however, is that lack of subject knowledge is articulated as a marker of teacher quality. By virtue of the fact that the teacher (the role model) lacks skill in a form of artistic expression and has the courage to be open about this to the pupil, the pupil takes on the same candor. The therapeutic discourse is found again here, but the focus has now been shifted from the teacher’s emancipation to the pupil’s. In other words, inadequate subject knowledge is constructed as a pedagogical tool, and the result is that lack of subject knowledge is articulated in a discourse on teacher competence.

Contextual Influential Factors

It should be important to connect the argument to the context in which arts education in teacher education is found, since this can be presumed in certain aspects essential to the established discourse. One key question in this context is which prerequisites are necessary to construct legitimacy around the creative arts subjects, since the construction of legitimacy must rely on what can actually be done under the circumstances at hand. Resources are one such circumstance. Often the intention is not to provide teaching qualifications in creative arts subjects, but rather that these subjects should function as a complement to other teaching. This naturally impacts the entire perspective on arts education and affects the allocation of resources, which may be presumed too small to enable construction of legitimacy around the fact that student teachers are acquiring the skills and knowledge necessary to satisfactorily provide high-quality teaching. There are statements, for example, wherein arts education is described as a sort of “band-aid”, referencing the paucity of resources. Another side of the coin is that many of the students have absolutely no pre-existing knowledge, which would be unthinkable for students at schools of art and music. There is also a wide selection of courses at the various institutes, which range from concentrations on forms of expression in the creative arts via elective courses to general education

courses, and fragmentary elements in courses, whose main content is not oriented toward the creative arts. Based on these factors, it seems entirely plausible that some students may feel both unmotivated and insecure in the face of various forms of arts education. Against this backdrop, it also seems entirely logical and strategically correct to construct legitimacy for arts education by representing student teachers as being in need of therapy. This is, however, not to say that this can be regarded as less problematic. Few resources are devoted to academic training in arts education. A great deal of work is done as independent studies such as text production and reflection. Lectures may take place in large groups, and seminars may also be held in relatively large groups.

Another aspect that influences the discourse is that several different forms of expression in the creative arts are represented in a single course. This is not unproblematic since there are characteristic elements in each art form that may be incompatible in certain respects. Visual art, music and drama are the forms of expression most frequently represented in the empirical material, and the aforementioned discourses are to various extents and from a variety of angles connected to the respective subjects. To make a connection with the foregoing argument on resources, we state, for example, that music differs from visual art and drama because music requires considerable resources if the focus is to be on the student developing technical skills in singing and playing instruments. Arts education as therapy and personal development recurs in all three forms of expression, but the goal is represented in various ways. For drama, the subject is centered around the student teacher's identity formation, and the pupil perspective is virtually absent. In other words, the point is not to learn exercises with the primary purpose of putting them to work in the schools, but mainly to use drama as a tool for working with the self. Because future professional practice and the pupil are obscured, there is no need to represent drama as a craft that requires certain skills in order to work with it in the schools. For music, the elements of therapy and personal development are still there, but they are articulated along with the specific practice of music in a classroom setting. In this case, the difference with drama is that its education is aimed at attaining a general sense of security as a teacher, while the point of music education is to gain a sense of security in situations involving singing and playing, that is in connection with the concrete technical skills of music. In order to feel secure in making music without mastering the craft, it is necessary to also build on the relativization of the concept of quality discussed above. As for visual art, this subject is perhaps extensively based on relativization of the concept of quality. In the empirical material, pictorial interpretation is represented as primary and quality as something that cannot be assessed using criteria based on traditional technical skill. Instead, it should begin with the student teacher's personal experience of the process of pictorial interpretation. As a result, there is a shift between the two forms of expression, where technical skill is seen as more important in music than in art. This is also inspired by the change in the nature of the subject of visual art in pace with the development of new information and communication technology. Traditional forms of production and reproduction are no longer represented as dominant. However, there are also traces of the construction of arts education as therapy and personal

development, since the creation of pictures is said to be an activity that makes it possible for people to get in touch with their feelings.

Conclusion

It can be said that certain parts of the discourses that emerge in this study of arts education in teacher education are identical to those of the primary school system. Arts education as a set of therapeutic methods based on notions of student teachers' lack of secure and stable identities as teachers corresponds here to the primary school system's construction of the non-free and non-evolved pupils' need for a teacher of art liberation (Ericsson, 2006; Lindgren, 2006). Against the backdrop of the research field's questions about which ideals should govern—those of art or those of the individual—it becomes clear that the value of art (in this case training in a creative arts subject) becomes marginalized in this discourse. Developing student teachers' personalities, social skills and leadership abilities are articulated as the primary concern of teacher education. Notions about people's fear of the arts and artistic practice and the possibility of liberation via such practice can be seen as a control technique (Foucault, 1978/1991). The intention is to look after people's freedom and needs, albeit based on certain norms and specific reasons (Dean, 1999).

It is also possible to discuss both the therapeutic dimension of arts education in teacher education and the articulation of inadequate subject knowledge in a discourse about the competent teacher as a form of subjectification (Ziehe, 1986b). This phenomenon can be regarded as an expression of a cultural bid for orientation in the late modern society, where the search for emotional and identity-based awareness is a central aspect. The articulation of inadequate subject knowledge combined with teacher competence also lends itself to a discussion based on another of Ziehe's (1986a) concepts: intimization. The concept outlines that the teacher in the late modern school, shaped by progressivism and alternative educational methods, strives to create a friendly and informal relationship with the pupil. Revealing their own inadequacies can be a way for teachers to create this open and intimized relationship, while also being a kind of therapy for pupils, aimed at reinforcing their self-esteem. Combined with the previously discussed contextual factors, this can be presumed a contributor to the construction of the discourses.

What then is at stake in the aesthetic field of teacher education? What specific reasons underlie this control? Borg (2007) argues that one consequence of the academification of teacher education has been that handicrafts teachers have more limited subject knowledge specific to handicrafts, which is seen as a pedagogical dilemma since an experimental and exploratory approach in the teaching context is predicated on a wide repertoire of technical skills. The consequence, she believes, is an "amateurisation" (p. 223) of teacher education. Despite the intention of teacher education reforms to increase the quality of education, the reductions in teaching time and the students' diminished pre-existing knowledge in the subject of handicrafts have contributed to deprofessionalization. Based on the results of our study, we can

agree with this argument to a certain extent. Due to contextual influential factors, such as resources and student teachers' pre-existing knowledge, teacher educators and student teachers in arts courses are forced to legitimize their activities based on types of discursive constructions other than the purely subject-didactic. However, we see the academification of teacher education in the creative arts subjects as perhaps the most effective legitimation strategy, which also reinforces both student teachers in arts courses and the teaching profession as a whole.

A critical conversation about the didactics of creative arts subjects vitalizes the field in many ways. Earlier research has pointed out how the field of arts education in Sweden is seen as something that is unproblematic and good (Trondman, 1997; Persson & Thavenius, 2003; Ericsson, 2006; Lindgren, 2006; Ericsson & Lindgren, 2007). We therefore believe there is a need for more analysis and reflection about these types of activities. If academification means a scholarly and critical approach in which teachers and students scrutinize themselves, their values and their activities, we understand this is a good foundation for teacher education. It is, however, debatable whether the academic discourse that emerges in this study can be deemed part of this critical conversation. Many of the statements involve tying together theory and practice, and uncritically adopting certain pedagogical theories and truths in course literature. The redefinition of concepts in the field, and the stress on verbal and written linguistic competence, lacks critical impact. In cases where criticism is expressed against what is presented as the effects of academification, the criticism is limited by a retrospective view of teacher education in the past when focus was on technical skills and craftsmanship. We believe the field of teacher education would benefit from a critical dialogue in which political and academic claims to essential qualifications for future teachers are presented against the backdrop of a less simplistic picture of skills and knowledge in the creative arts. The late modern society of today demands a teaching profession, inside and outside the aesthetic field that does not shun critical discussion of subject-didactic issues in relation to, for example, media technological development, popular culture, cultural heritage, ethnicity, and gender.

Yet again, what is at stake in arts education in Swedish teacher education? We can explain that it is not mainly a struggle concerning discrete artistic directions (Lindberg, 1991). Nor are issues of democracy and youth culture (Fornäs, Lindberg & Sernhede, 1984; Persson & Thavenius, 2003) on the discursive agenda. Likewise, the didactic dilemma of popular music (Lindgren & Ericsson, 2010; Ericson & Lindgren, in press) is conspicuous by its absence from teacher education discourses. Instead, we see the discursive field of teacher education as closely linked to more or less internal matters of the institutes' own organization, resources and competencies, or else the personal and social development of student teachers. What is at stake is the entire aesthetic field of teacher education and its existence or non-existence. The three constructions discussed above may be regarded as strategies that legitimize activities that no longer have a clear identity in the teacher education context. The discourse on technical skills in the creative arts that previously took a hegemonic position in the discursive field has fallen apart, allowing other discourses to take root. The common denominator of these discussions is that they are not based on forms of knowledge specific to

artistic expression, but instead relate to a wider type of knowledge formation. This is perhaps necessary for the survival of arts education in teacher education and may be understood as a consequence of shaky legitimacy from the perspective of knowledge and cultural theory. Yet, it might also be understood as vulnerability in a neo-liberal era in which artistic expression is marginalized (Dimitriadis, Cole & Costello, 2009).

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